

ISAIAH

Volume I

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

ISAIAH

Volume I

by

Paul T. Butler

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P R E F A C E

The righteousness of God, apart from the law, was manifested in Jesus Christ. The New Testament is a record of that perfect and final manifestation. But the law and the prophets bore witness to that manifestation (Rom. 3:21).

Of all the "law and the prophets", Isaiah is the chief witness to that "righteousness of God" manifested in Jesus Christ. Isaiah is appropriately called, "The Gospel Prophet." The Messiah's coming, His nature, His work are most graphically and abundantly predicted by Isaiah. The Messiah's kingdom, its coming, its nature, its citizenry, its universality and its victory over its enemies are most vividly portrayed by Isaiah.

We have deliberately refrained from dealing with highly technical problems of textual nature in order to concentrate on application of Isaiah's message to our needs. If the student wishes further study of a more technical nature, other works more competent than ours are available.

Our fourteen years of classroom instruction in the prophets coupled with class notes of V.K. Allison, former professor of Old Testament at San Jose Bible College, form the basis for these volumes.

We commit them to God and His church, the Israel of God, and pray they may glorify His servant, Immanuel, and bring us all to a deeper participation in His glorious Zion, the universal kingdom of God.

My sincerest thanks to two secretaries whose assistance helped make this volume possible, Mrs. Darlene Ashcraft and Mrs. Sherry Lankford.

THIS VOLUME
IS
DEDICATED
TO
Roberta Kenoyer
a true servant of God
and a
friend, helper and encourager
to
anyone
in need.

ISAI AH

by Sherry Butler Lankford

Isaiah son of Amoz, in an hour of meditation
saw God enthroned in splendor . . . he would never be the same.
Looked inside himself and realized
he was needy and unworthy; repentance brought him healing.

Sixty years were spent in preaching
writing prophecies, predicting . . . thru stormy days
and sunlit season love for God brought dignity.
He fixed his heart and set his hand,
to do the thing God did command:
"Thou'll keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

Deep convictions, kingly courage, not a coward soul was he;
bore hardships, perils, disappointment . . .
thru God's strength had victory.
He saw heaven's glories shining and
this gave his words more meaning as they came to human ears:
"Fear not, I am with thee, for I am God; I help thee."

Isaiah son of Amoz, spent his life in bringing the Remnant
to communion with the Father and a knowledge of His word,
to sense something of His loveliness and
to feel His precious nearness
to trust His holy guidance, what a worthy aim for us.
"Flowers fade and grass will wither, but the word of God's forever."

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SPECIAL STUDY

THE KEY TO PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION

By Gorden H. Patten
Missionary - Seoul, Korea

What am I to make of the Prophets?

Of What did they speak?

Can I understand them?

Why is there so much controversy about them?

Why did the apostles use them with such convincing power?

Why don't they carry the same impact today?

Can the position of the word of the prophets be restored so that their word is as final now as it was to the New Testament Christians? Yes, we believe it can. But the first steps we make with the prophets sets our course which we will follow throughout our concourse with them; so these first steps we take are so vitally important.

Should we employ a strictly literal interpretation? Should we employ a spiritual interpretation? Should we pay close attention to every detail? How did the early New Testament writers use the prophets? How did they handle them?

There is a great controversy going on in theological circles about the millennial question. Some don't want to discuss it because they have never bothered to look into the matter seriously enough and they never plan to do so. They resort to the flippant answer, "Well, you'll never change anyone's belief in this matter anyway," or they will sneer, "Oh, that's all he wants to talk about," or "Oh, he just wants to argue for argument's sake."

None of these amount to anything as far as a student of the Word of God is concerned. Admittedly much damage has been done by arrogant dogmatists on either side of the issue. This is not an issue to hold dissenters in contempt for or to mock and chide them. There have been sound evangelical scholars on both sides. Nothing is gained by such an attitude. If we are not afraid for our position why can we not listen to an objective presentation even if it is counter to our concept? Also one should

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ask, "Why do you accept your present position?" Most people stumble on to a position by "hit or miss" method then keep on the lookout for ideas to substantiate their position. A much wiser and saner approach is to examine several sides on such an issue as this, compare them, analyze them with a view of the scripture: then formulate one's own idea. I have discussed this issue with many people who do not have the slightest idea what the opposing views are. They don't try to understand. A standard attitude is this: "I know the Bible: what the premillennialists teach is just what the Bible teaches. That's all I want. That's good enough for me." But this is a narrow, legalistic approach. It is not exegetically sound for interpretation of other parts of the Bible. All the positions use the Bible, but they base their opposing views on the same scriptures.

What is needed is a key; a divinely inspired method of interpretation so that we may know if we are even on the right road or not. Is there any such thing available? For instance the Premillennialist accuses the Amillennialists of spiritualizing everything. They say the Amillennialist takes all the glory and beauty from everything. All that's left is a spiritual vacuum in an unreal utopia. This is an over simplification of the issue. Where the Premillennialist calls "Spiritualizing, Spiritualizing, Spiritualizing" out to the Amillennialist, it is just as easy and effective to turn the chide around and have the Amillennialists cry "Literalist, Literalist, Literalist" to the Premillennialist. But neither position really accomplishes much. It would be much more to the point to notice that each position has a basic method of interpretation which is pursued throughout this discussion, and so the basic approach or method of interpretation accounts for such a divergent conclusion in the end.

So the key to the issue is in the approach or method of interpretation. May we hesitate long enough to ask if we have a divinely inspired key so as to know if our approach is correct? I believe we do. There are 300 Old Testament prophecies quoted in the New Testament. Some of these are extensive quotations

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and some exegetical evaluation is made in most of the quotations by the New Testament writers. We believe they were also moved by the Holy Spirit to write the message of God. Here is then a key. Here is God's prophecy interpreted hundreds of years later by God's inspired apostles. How did they proceed? What method did they employ? To what events did they apply the prophetic messages they quoted? To what did they not apply their quotations? Did they employ a literal approach? Did they employ a spiritual approach? Did they employ an altogether different approach? What would happen if we did just what they did? Would it be wrong for us to go beyond what they did? Is it right for us to use a different method because we live in such a later date in the world's history? Does the premillennialist follow this example of the New Testament writers? Do the Amillennialists? Is there not a way here for us to be safe and sure at the same time?

These and related questions demand some answers. To ask some of them is to answer them. If we answer them correctly we will be a long ways down the road in resolving this conflict. This is not an impossible issue. It can be resolved. It should be resolved.

The main things we will want to watch in this survey are, "To what does the New Testament writer apply his quotation? How does he use it? In what does he not apply it?"

I. The earliest Advocates to Proclaim that Jesus Christ was the Messiah the Old Testament Prophets spoke of.

1. The first interpreter of Old Testament prophecy to indicate that Jesus was, indeed, the very object of the Old Testament prophetic oracles was the angel Gabriel. He was clear in his implications. No one who knows the prophets need misunderstand what he said. He must have spoken with the greatest authority and dignity. No one can set aside the message he delivered.

Gabriel speaking to Zechariah

A. Luke 1:17a quoting Mal. 4:4, 5.

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“And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just . . .”

It is most obvious that this is quoting Malachi. Malachi said, “Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come,” while Gabriel said “. . . He shall go before His face.” The “His Face” doesn’t have an antecedent, but it is very clear that it is “Jehovah” or “Lord” or the “Messiah.”

John the Baptist was a fore-runner of Christ. He preached to thousands and told them to, “Repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Many responded to his message and were immersed by him; and many of these turned from following John to Jesus when Jesus started preaching.

Gabriel continuing to speak to Zechariah.

B. Luke 1:17b quoting Mal. 4:4, 5 and Isa. 40:3.

“. . . To make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him.”

Here Gabriel refers to both Mal. 4:4, 5 and Isa. 40:3 as these prophets foretold the coming of the harbinger of Christ and the work he would do. John said he was that “voice in the wilderness,” Jn. 1:19-23; and Jesus said, “This is Elijah if you’ll believe it.” Matt. 11:14.

Gabriel speaking to Mary.

C. Luke 1:32 quoting Isa. 9:7.

“He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto the throne of his father David.”

Here Gabriel spoke of his deity. Jesus spoke of this relationship and the rulers wanted to stone Him to death (see Jn. 10:29-33). The Jews understood that Jesus was making Himself equal to God. But Jesus would not recant these implications. Then Gabriel called Him the exalted king who was to fulfill all that David only dreamed of doing. We cannot help but see how he quoted Isa. 9:7 especially; and from there, other related and parallel passages as Isa. 16:5, 32:1; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 6:13, etc.

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This was in accordance to God's promise to David personally. See I Chron. 17:10-15; I Chron. 22:9-13; 28:4-7. God there spoke of a son who would reign forever. Solomon never fulfilled this. All know it rings with Messianic implications.

Then Matthew and Luke are very careful to trace both Mary and Joseph the foster father back to Davidic lineage because of the widespread knowledge of this oracle.

Gabriel continuing with Mary.

- D. Lu. 1:33 quoting Isa. 9:7, Dan. 2:44, Isa. 2:1-4.

"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The emphasis here is upon the eternal duration of His kingdom. It then speaks of something more than frail man who lives and is soon gone. See Isa. 40:6, 7. This kingdom shall not only stand forever - but the increase of it shall always be. It is not stagnant or stale.

2. Zechariah speaking by the Holy Spirit.

- A. Lu. 1:68 quoting Isa. 40:10.

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has visited and wrought redemption for his people."

Here it is the Lord God of Israel who has visited. There are many Old Testament prophecies of the divinity of the Messiah, as the one cited, "Behold the Lord Jehovah will come . . ." Isa. 40:10. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of their rejection of Him and their consequent total destruction assigning this as the justifiable reason. Lu. 11:44. ". . . Because you did not know the hour of your visitation." You were so blind, you were so prejudiced against Me you did not even recognize God when he stood before you face to face!

- B. Lu. 1:69 quoting thoughts from Zech. 9:9, Isa. 12:2, 3.

"And (He) has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."

The "horn" speaks of power and rule and authority. Earlier Gabriel assigned as a reason for His name - "Jesus" - See Matt. 1:21 - "He shall save his people from

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their sins." We can not help but see the implications of Zech. 9:9 even if it is not here quoted directly. ". . . Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is just, and having salvation . . ." or who could fail to see application of Isa. 12:2, 3. ". . . (Jehovah) is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall he draw water out of the wells of salvation." Then once again He is spoken of as a son of David. See our earlier comments on this.

C. Lu. 1:70 Zechariah still speaking.

"As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been of old."

Zechariah here plainly tells us he is alluding to so many prophetic oracles that he doesn't want to take the time and space to delineate them all.

D. Lu. 1:71 quoting Isa. 11:13-15.

"Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us."

This idea is surely found in Isa. 11:13-16. We believe this warfare and conquest is spiritual. The weapons are the sword of the Spirit, etc. See Eph. 6:1-14. As the church successfully evangelizes and spreads the borders of its kingdom all over the world it will in a very effective and efficient way subdue all its enemies; and thus the Lord will reward her with peace and safety.

E. Lu. 1:76 quoting Isa. 40:2, 3.

"For you shall go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways;"

Here Zechariah predicts this as applicable to his son John the Baptist who prepared the way for his cousin who was none other than the Messiah of God! So Zechariah here is saying what Gabriel said earlier.

F. Lu. 1:78 quoting Mal. 4:2.

". . . Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us."

We believe there are few who would deny that the seed thought for these words find their origin in Mal. 4:3 even if it is not a direct quotation. The ideas are so parallel

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that the point can not be missed. "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; . . ."

Here the healing of Luke 1:77 is emphasized. The day-spring is definitely parallel with Malachi's "Arise." Also this visitation is parallel with what we spoke of earlier in #2a, Lu. 1:68. See above.

G. Lu. 1:79a quoting Isa. 9:1-3.

"To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death."

This has to refer to Isa. 9:1, 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined." But it is also parallel to Isa. 49:6; 42:6; 60:1, etc. Then we think of Jesus' transfiguration, appearance to Saul on the Damascus road, or to John on the isle of Patmos, Rev. 1:12-17; and when he said, "I am the light of the world," Jn. 12:46 and Heb. 1:3 he is called "The effulgence of God's glory." We are overwhelmed. Who could miss seeing it unless he didn't want to see? Surely the message is plain enough!

H. Lu. 1:79b quoting Isa. 11:6-9.

"To guide our feet into the way of peace." He is called, "The Prince of Peace," Isa. 9:6. Isa. 42:3 is certainly a picture of His peaceful and tranquil reign. "A bruised reed will he not break . . ."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publishes peace . . ." Isa. 52:7. This is the beautiful picture of peace in His kingdom when vicious men are converted and become humble, gentle, ambassadors even as Paul himself. Phil. 4:7. "And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." Paul is living testimony of what is spoken of here.

3. An Angel speaking to the Shepherds.

A. Lu. 2:10 quoting Isa. 52:7.

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“And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people.” Again this is perhaps not a direct quote of the prophets as such, but who could fail to see the ecstasy of Isa. 52:7 in it? “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace, that brings good tidings of good things . . .” There are other such thoughts in the prophets. The angel was first to be able to fulfill it, later John, Jesus and the apostles completed the preaching of these glad tidings which unfolded in the full message of salvation announced through the church.

B. Lu. 2:11 alluding to Micah 5:2, Isa. 53:10, 12.

“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

This brings to mind the prediction of Micah that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. “But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah which are little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. And to Isaiah 53:12 “. . . Yet he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors!”

He is of the city of David; He sits and reigns from David’s throne. He is king. But as the angels emphasize here He is savior too. He saves His people from their sins. See Matt. 1:21. He is from everlasting. See Jn. 17:5; or as in Dan. 7:22 “. . . Until the Ancient of Days came.” The Ancient of Days there is the Messiah. Psa. 102:25-27. “. . . And thy years shall have no end;” and the Hebrew writer applies this to Jesus. Heb. 1:10, 12. See also Heb. 13:8 and Prov. 8:22, 23.

C. Lu. 2:14 alluding to Isa. 9:6.

“Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased.” “His name shall be called . . . prince of peace.” There are many other sections referring to peace in the Messianic

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kingdom. See Isa. 32:1, 16, 17.

4. Simeon speaking of the Christ child in his arms.

- A. "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;"

This is the prophetic meaning of Isaiah's name. See Isa. 8:18, "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah has given to me are for signs and wonders . . ." Hosea's children's names also carried very significant prophetic messages. Hosea means "deliverer" and Isaiah means the "salvation of God."

This salvation is open to all people not just to the Jews. It is spiritual salvation and not political. See the following section.

- B. Lu. 2:32 quoting Isa. 49:6; 42:6; 60:1, 9.

"A light for revelation to the Gentiles . . ." This is exactly as Isaiah said ". . . I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Isa. 49:6.

"And I will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isa. 42:6.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." Isa. 60:1. ". . . The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined." Isa. 9:2.

The light and the glory of Lu. 2:32 is so well spoken of by these prophecies; many more could be cited.

Gabriel, Zechariah, and Simeon were the first to declare that Jesus the Bethlehem-born carpenter's son from Nazareth was actually and indeed the Christ - the anointed Messiah of God predicted by all the prophets. They tell us how to interpret Old Testament prophecy.

II. Early Gospel Quotations of the Old Testament Prophets.

1. It has always been intriguing to me to see how the New

Testament begins with such a vivid emphasis on the prophets. They are telling us something. God has a plan. God told us many years ahead of time about this plan. God fulfilled all He predicted of the Messiah in Jesus. Therefore God has given you a sure foundation upon which to build your faith. He does not call upon you to make a blind leap into darkness. He calls you to order your life on a message He has substantiated.

2. The first reference Matthew makes to Messianic prophecy is in the first verse. He calls Jesus Christ the Son of David and the son of Abraham. Anyone knowing the sacred scriptures of the Jews will know immediately that this is the ultimate. Even Solomon, David's son of the flesh, was never addressed like this. Then Matthew gives a genealogy to show how this was biologically true of Jesus. Matthew wastes no time. Immediately the import of the prophet is quoted and it is assumed that the message is well understood just by quoting the prophet.

3. This is followed by a quotation in Matt. 1:23 of Isa. 7:14.

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel! Which is being interpreted, God with us!" Matt. 1:22, 23.

With what Matthew says in verses 18 and 25 we know he very definitely intended us to understand the emphasis is upon the word virgin. Matthew plainly tells us what God predicted in Isa. 7:14 He has fulfilled in the virgin born son of Abraham, son of Joseph and son of Mary. Then by way of emphasis he interprets for the Greek speaking people to whom he writes the Hebrew word "Immanuel," "God with us." God has visited this planet. His message is of paramount importance. It can not be over-emphasized. We have a divine Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. The next quotation Matthew makes, 2:6, is of Micah 5:2.

"And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written through the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, land

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of Judah, are in no wise least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel." Matt. 2:5, 6.

It's interesting to notice that no sooner is the question asked than the answer is given. They could have asked hundreds of questions more and in like manner the answers could have been given by the very men who knew the word of the prophets. In this section of the Messiah is called, (1) King of the Jews, (2) the governor of Judah, (3) the shepherd of Israel and (4) He is worthy of worship. Only God can be worshipped. He is our Divine Deliverer.

5. Then Matthew quotes (2:15) a section in Hosea 11:1.

" . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophets, saying, out of Egypt did I call my son." Matt. 2:15.

This section speaks first of Israel in the flesh called out of Egypt through the prophet Moses: but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Matthew tells us there is a fuller application to the Messiah who was called as a child out of Egypt to live in Nazareth of Galilee.

6. The next quotation (2:18) is from the prophet Jeremiah 31:15.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 'a voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not.' " Matt. 2:17-19.

It speaks of the massacre of the innocent by Herod when he tried to kill the Christ child. God spoke of it 60 years before it happened. Anyone can see this if he will take time to study the prophets.

7. Matt. 2:23 quoting Isa. 11:1 etc.

"He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene." Matt. 2:23.

The last verse in Chapter 2, verse 23 is a remarkable text in that Matthew plainly tells us he is quoting the prophets and he makes no distinction from what he was

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doing before; so we conclude that he quotes from Isa. 11:1.

In the Hebrew the word for "branch," and "Nazareth" is very similar. The same idea is in Zech. 6:12. We may call this a loose use of the prophets. The Jews said check the prophets. You know that no prophet is to come out of Galilee. Jn. 7:41, 52. But after contemplation Matthew quotes this text and claims the Jewish leaders were wrong. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit we are made to understand that the prophet was to come out of Galilee.

8. Matt. 3:3 quotes Isa. 40:3.

"For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness make ye ready the way if the Lord. Make His paths straight." Matt. 3:3.

It is applied by Matthew to John the Baptist, the harbinger of the Messiah. See Mark 1:18, and Luke 3:1-6; John 1:19-23; and Luke 7:27.

9. The next is a series of quotations related to Jesus' wilderness temptation.

Matt. 4:4 quotes Deut. 8:3 - Jesus speaking.

Matt. 4:6 quotes Psa. 91:11, 12 - Satan speaking.

Matt. 4:7 quotes Deut. 6:16 - Jesus speaking.

Matt. 4:10 quotes Deut. 6:13 - Jesus speaking.

Here it is evident that the Psalms and the law spoke of the Messiah and Jesus was well aware that He fulfilled many O.T. prophecies in His daily ministry.

10. The next messianic prophecy, 4:15, 16 quotes Isa. 9:1, 2.

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying; the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, towards the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." Matt. 4:14, 16.

This is a very significant text which had long been held by the leaders of Israel as messianic in nature. Matthew said Jesus' ministry itself is an exegesis of it even from its inception.

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11. Now let us go to Luke and view his account of Jesus' ministry as it began. Luke 4:16-30. In this section Jesus quoted Isa. 6:1-2.

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant . . . (and said) 'Today has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.' " Lu. 4:17-21.

Jesus used as His text Isa. 61:1-2.

This is the beginning of a section in Isaiah dealing with the "Mighty Servant" of Jehovah as opposed to the "Suffering Servant" prophecies as in Isa. 53:1-14, etc. Some Rabbis thought these represented two separate servants of God; but Jesus fulfilled both. In choosing this text He couldn't have been more obvious or blunt. He is making His debut with a grand-slam homer. There is no mistaking His position or intention. It was not a process of growth and development in Jesus' mind. "Today has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." If this is true then it is also true that every other Messianic prophecy is either fulfilled or will be very shortly by Him. It's interesting to note the response of the home town. At first they are filled with amazement but somewhat willing to accept or at least hear what He has to say. But then He moved to His second division predicting the very chiding they would use against Him.

(1) Physician heal yourself.

(2) Work great miracles here too.

(3) A prophet is unacceptable in his own country.

But His word about: (1) The widow of Zarephath, and (2) Naaman the leper was the clincher. This was more than they could bear. So they sought to kill Him. So leading off with a "Mighty Servant of Jehovah" text, His first sermon leads

Him in beginning to fulfill the "Suffering Servant" prophecies. So from the very first day of His ministry Jesus is laying claim to fulfillment of both types of Messianic prophecy. But in passing you will please notice Jesus didn't say part of this verse is fulfilled; He did not say this part applies to me now and that part will apply 3,000 years later. He just plainly said; "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

From what follows we know that there was both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment of this text.

III. Jesus' use of the prophets.

It is a sorry thing for us, but we do not have the sermons Jesus preached verbatim. We know He resorted to the prophets very often. What was His attitude? What was His approach? What was His method? Though we don't have all He said on the matter, at least we have enough to know what bridges He crossed and which forks of the road He took. This is clear from what He said to those on the way to Emmaus.

(1) "Oh foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken! . . . and beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:24-27. He must have begun with Deut. 18:15-22. We know He claimed this spoke of Him.

(2) "And He said unto them, these are my words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets and psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44. This wasn't anything new to them. This is the kind of thing He had been saying all along. It just took on more significance in light of the recent crucifixion and resurrection. But notice the emphasis Luke makes in verse 27; The prophecies of (1) Moses (2) all the prophets and (3) all the scriptures. Luke does this again later in verse 44; (1) Moses, (2) the prophets, (3) and the Psalms. Then on top of this verse 25, "slow in

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heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Luke understands Jesus to have fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies. As Jesus Himself said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished." Matt. 5:17-18. If you look at the Olivet discourse aright and study the works of Josephus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. you would say that to the Jewish mind heaven and earth did pass away then (70 A.D.). So we conclude that all that the Old Testament prophets predicted of the Messiah was fulfilled by then.

(3) Luke 7:22-23; Matt. 11:2-6.

Go tell John. "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; now that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached, and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

John is in trouble. He is low in spirit. He needs reassurance. He sent the request to Jesus: "Please tell us plainly if you are the Christ or look we for another?" With this kind of question Jesus was non-committal to His actual brothers or to the chiding crowd. But here was a chance to help his friend. But when I first read this answer I felt that Jesus dodged the issue here. That was because I didn't know the message of the Bible. But John did know the prophets very well. Undoubtedly he preached from the prophets again and again. So rather than dodging the issue Jesus was so very forthright with John in his hour of need. Jesus did not just say "Yes," or "Yes, I am the Messiah." He said, in essence, "John, you know the Messianic prophecies; Isa. 61:1-3; 35:11; 29:11, etc. What do they say the Messiah will do? And what am I doing; I am fulfilling to the very letter both physically and spiritually all that the prophets predicted of me! You know I am the Messiah! These prove beyond all doubt to those who look for the consolation of God that I am the

Messiah." So John was more than satisfied. In His answer Jesus has a compound corelation of the texts we have delineated; It is a loose quotation comprising all the points expressed in these several oracles. Jesus fulfilled them all in His ministry! John has great reason to be fully satisfied. Indeed the Messiah has come! We do not look for another!

(4) Luke 16:16 and Matt. 11:13. Prophets lasted unto John.

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Why? He of whom the prophets spoke is here; He is working! Luke 21:32. He has His kingdom open so men can come into it. "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." Jesus did not expect us to use the prophets to apply them to something way beyond our day. He fulfilled what they spoke of.

(5) The Triumphal entry. Luke 19:30-46. Matt. 21:5 quoting Zech. 9:9 and Isa. 62:11. This is the only day of coronation Jesus knew in His earthly ministry. But this is nothing compared to His enthroned splendor with which He rules the universe.

It is obvious to all that Jesus, by example of life, is a living exegesis of this; "Jerusalem receive your king." "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king comes unto you; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. 9:9.

Then to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion by saying "I tell you that if these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out," verse 40. So Jesus intentionally intends for us to understand, "Because you did not know the time of your visitation" applies to the Messianic visitation. They did not know or believe therefore He predicted as Judgment the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred 36 years later. What a terror filled devastation it was. "Be sure your sins will find you out." Num. 32:23. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Prov. 13:15. They paid dearly for their

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rejection and unbelief. Now we understand the significance of His word, "This generation shall not pass away until all is fulfilled."

(6) Luke 20:42-44 quoting Psa. 110:1.

"And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.' David therefore called Him Lord, how is he then his son?"

Though the Messiah is son of David by ancestral lineage, He is David's Lord by Divine heritage. This Divinity of the Messiah was predicted by the prophets again and again. So Jesus, aware of both angles, asks a question which baffled them but it is very clear to us. Every Christian ought to understand it clearly.

(7) Luke 21:32. All is accomplished.

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

The context here would indicate that Jesus was talking of the end of the world. But actually He speaks of the end of the Jewish dispensation. The whole Olivet discourse is not easy to unravel. Special study needs to be spent on it. But we will not take time here to do so. The conclusion we will seek to emphasize is, so much of what Jesus and the prophets said was fulfilled was fulfilled in the First Coming of Christ and the establishment of His Church and its conquest in this world. They did not often go beyond this at all. This was uppermost in their minds.

(8) Matt. 12:17-21 quoting Isa. 42:6ff.

"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. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

Here is the Mighty Servant of Jehovah; yet He is tender and understanding, careful not to run over anyone who is

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really trying no matter how small that effort may be. He will fully succeed. The Gentiles didn't hear of Him until after His death. It was then His judgments and victory began to be realized by them. This is one of the top Messianic prophecies. Jesus plainly applies it unto Himself.

(9) Matt. 13:14, 15 quoting Isa. 6:9-10.

"And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand, and in seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them.'" Matt. 13:14-15.

Some people see, believe and obey, and are saved. Some see, reject, rebel and are lost. The trouble is not in the Messiah nor His message. The trouble is in the evil hearts of men who do not want to accept the message and will not allow God's leading place in their life. God saw this and spoke of it millenniums ago. We are without excuse.

(10) Matt. 17:10-13 referring to Mal. 4:5, 6.

"Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Mal. 4:5, 6.

Jesus plainly explained that this is another reference to John the Baptist. "That great and terrible day when Jehovah comes" speaks of the divine nature of the Messiah and His Judgments as final. It refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Judgment which fell on the Jews because they rejected their Messiah.

(11) Matt. 21:42 quoting Psa. 118:22ff.

"And Jesus said unto them, 'Did you never read the scriptures? "The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes."'" Matt. 21:42-43.

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Jesus is a precious building stone chosen of the Father, rejected by the builders (they in unbelief stumbled over Him); still God exalted Him to the position of Chief corner stone. We can't but help to think of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, see Dan. 2, which filled the earth. Here is the stone upon which the church is securely built, see Matt. 16:16.

(12) Matt. 27:9 quoting Zech. 11:12 and 13.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price." Zech. 11:12, 13.

This is attributed to Jeremiah by Matthew, but it is a prophecy of Zechariah as we have it in our Bibles today.

It speaks of the money of Judas' betrayal of his Master for 30 pieces of silver.

(13) John 7:38 referring to Isa. 12:3; 35:1, 7.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, 'From within shall flow rivers of living water.'" Jn. 7:38.

There are other such thoughts from the pen of the Prophets, though it looks like John is making a paraphrase, not an exact quotation. But certainly the thought is there in the Prophets again and again, and certainly Jesus fulfilled all that was written.

(14) John 12:38-40 quoting Isa. 53:1; 6:9, 10.

"That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, 'Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, 'He has blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; lest they should see with their heart, and I should heal them.'" Jn. 12:38-40. Much of Jesus' ministry was rejected. At the beginning He was unknown; for a while popular, then rejected and crucified. Thinking of the masses of the world for whom He died as compared to those who embrace Him, certainly the number is small warranting this question.

(15) John 13:18 quoting Psa. 41:9.

“. . . He that eateth my bread lifteth up his heel against me.” Jn. 13:18.

Judas, one of the inner circle kicked up his heel against Jesus, betrayed Him and accepted his desolation or judgment.

(16) John 15:25 quoting Psa. 35:19.

“But this came to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that was written in their law; they hated me without a cause.” Jn. 15:25.

These last few prophecies are from the “Suffering Servant of Jehovah” section. Jesus fulfilled them all. These were necessary to perform our redemption. Once completed He was exalted higher than the heavens and now fulfills even more the aspects of the “Mighty Servant of Jehovah” predictions.

IV. Early Preachers use of the Prophets.

Jesus taught with many parables and teachings originating with Himself. These were novel with the people and recorded by those who heard Him. So much of what He did was an exegesis of the prophets’ message, we do not have many references recorded which reveal the use Jesus made of the prophets. But we have enough to be sure that He did make extensive use of them and that He left nothing wanting in their fulfillment.

As we turn from the Gospels we notice immediately in Acts the extensive use of the prophets made by the first gospel preachers. Anyone reading the New Testament for the first time is bound to notice this.

(1) Acts 1:16-26 quotes Psa. 69:25, 26 and 109:8.

“Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus . . . For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and His office let another take.’ ” Acts 1:16-20.

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They realized the replacement of Judas was a fulfillment of the prophets.

(2) Acts 2:16-27 quotes Joel 2:28-30.

“But this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel; ‘and it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my hand-maidens in those days will I pour forth of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!’ ” Acts 2:16-21.

In the first gospel message Peter fittingly turned to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-30, showing how the establishment of the Church was in accordance to the word of the prophets. And preceding the quoting of the section Peter said, “This is that.” Notice, he did not quote just a few words. He quoted a complete section. He did not say part of this applies to our day and part of it will apply later after two thousand years elapse. He said “This is that.” We leave it with him. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit. He preached and Luke wrote what the Holy Spirit wanted communicated. He said “This is that.” So we leave it right there. Though the whole language sounds like a description of the end of the world, in actual fact it is apocalyptic literature referring to the end of Judaism and not of the world, and the beginning of the church age or the age of the Holy Spirit. Peter very definitely intends for us to see that the words, “Before the great and notable day of the Lord come” applies to this very hour. The Lord came and offered the salvation spoken of in the next lines and 3,000 were baptized. Therefore there was either a literal or spiritual fulfillment of all the rest of the message recorded there. We see not the slightest inclination on

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Peter's part to refer any of this to anything beyond his own day. We don't believe we should either. His use of this text is what is called a spiritual interpretation today.

(3) Acts 2:25-31 referring to Psa. 16:10.

"For David said concerning him, "I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope; because you will not leave my soul in hades, neither will you give your Holy One to see corruption. You made known unto me the ways of life; You shall make me full of gladness with your countenance." Acts 2:25-28.

Peter clearly shows that this text speaks of the double resurrection of Christ. He was raised from the dead - not as a spirit entity, as we see in spiritism, Shammanism or Animism, but He was raised both in body and in spirit. His Spirit was not left in Hades and His body was not left in the tomb. Thus their witness of the resurrection is vindicated by God who had predicted it 1,000 years earlier by David. The significance of this prophecy is tremendous. That is why the New Testament writers used it several times as we will see later. The prophets had predicted that the Messiah would die and rise again from the dead. Early in His ministry Jesus predicted it in plain language; yet the disciples didn't know what He was talking about. But after it was an accomplished fact they saw it so very clearly. Here is a vital link of evidence that was given to break down the unbelief of man. "Reject it if you will but be assured when the history of the world is concluded God will hold you without excuse; He will say, 'I plainly told you; you could have believed if you had wanted to. But you didn't want to bother yourself with a world shaking matter of a crucified Messiah risen from the dead for your propitiation. So now I can't be bothered with you. Away with all who sell their soul out to flippant, eroding platitudes of this world. If they spurn my only provision for their eternal salvation, if they want to "go it on their own" let them keep on "going it on their

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own." 'I'll honor their choice.' There was absolutely nothing wrong with the message I gave, the method I chose, or the Messiah I sent. The fault lies totally within the man. He is accountable for his own decisions; I honor the choice he made in his life."

(4) Acts 3:18-26. Things God foreshowed.

"But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled." Acts 3:18.

Peter's use of the prophets in this section is constant and with a great deal of finality. God has a plan. God revealed the plan. God fulfilled the plan as depicted by the prophets. What God has so emphasized we dare not call insignificant. We must pay attention.

(5) Acts 3:21-23. Peter here quotes Deut. 18:15-18.

". . . Whereof God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old. Moses indeed said, 'A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; to him shall you harken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not harken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'" Acts 3:21-23.

Jesus is that distinguished prophet that Moses spoke of. There was only one; none is to follow. Now notice 3:24, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Here Peter is quoted as saying that all the prophets looked to this day. Again his language nearly or completely forbids going beyond that period for its fulfillment.

Then he applied the Abrahamic promise to Christ and the blessings His church brings to the families of earth, "And in thy seed shall all the families of earth be blessed." Gen. 12:3, 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.

(6) Acts 4:11. Rejection of the Chief Corner Stone.

There are several references to this as seen in this study. See III. #(11).

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(7) Acts 4:25 quoting Psalms 28:1.

“Who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, did say, ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his anointed?’ ” Acts 4:25, 26.

This speaks of all who stand opposed to God in rejecting the Messiah He sent into the world. The Psalm continues to show God’s complete victory and their complete and eternal loss in this rejection. But it came as no surprise to God.

(8) Acts 7:37 quoting Deut. 18:15-18, same as Acts 3:18-26. Please refer to section #5 of IV.

(9) Acts 8:28-40 quoting Isa. 53:5-8.

“Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this; He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearers is dumb. So he opened not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth . . . And Philip . . . beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.” Acts 8:32-35.

The key to this experience is verse 35. Philip told the Eunuch plainly that the section from which he was reading referred to Jesus. This is a “Suffering Servant” section of Old Testament prophecy. If this part applies to Jesus the whole section does.

Again the significance of this prophecy and its God inspired interpretation can not be over emphasized. Either the Bible is man-made and therefore a hoax and should be banned and burned or else it is a book from God and all men had better buckle down and submit to its oracles. If God went to the extent of the cross (the predicted Messiah - the Suffering Servant died) it was for some great reason. To flout this message is to spit in God’s face. There is no middle ground. If God predicted these things then fulfilled them all to the very letter, you had better be sure that when

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He predicted the Second Coming of Christ, it shall be as He said: When He predicted the great judgment morning, you can be sure He'll be on time. When you are subpoenaed to this court session it will be too late to seek a lawyer and a defense attorney. Extra time will not be granted to prepare the defense. When questioned, you too will be speechless. Matt. 22:12.

(10) Acts 9:22. Paul confounded the Jews?

How did Paul confound the Jews? Any one who admits Old Testament prophecy is in fact Messianic prophecy has no defense left. The life of Jesus so fulfills all that the prophets predicted the only escape left is to deny the prophecy is Messianic. This of course makes havoc of the Old Testament and hence of the whole Bible and ultimately of one's soul. That is a disastrous road to follow. But it is the road the Jews as a nation chose; this is one reason for rank atheism in their camp so much in our day. They destroyed the foundation for their faith.

(11) Acts 10:43.

Peter says it is a matter of concern. If you are concerned; its just a matter of checking the record. If you are not concerned, you will not be actually persuaded even if the rocks began to break open.

(12) Acts 13:22, 23. Jesus son of David.

Matthew and Luke intentionally trace back the genealogy of Jesus to David to show He fulfills this prophecy. You can deny it if you will: but God has plainly shown it is so.

(13) Acts 13:33 quoting Psalms 2.

“ . . . as also it is written in the second Psalm; ‘thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.’ ”

While we may have applied this only to the birth of Christ, it is very obvious that God intended for men to see that this “begotten” extends over to and includes even the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Yea, verily, this is the important significance of the prophecy as interpreted by Paul. He then quotes Isa. 55:3 but all the Messianic element of the chapter is applied here, even as we quote the first line of a song and

imply all its message. See the last verse: "It shall be unto Jehovah for a name for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The sign of Christianity is once and for all the cross. Because Jesus died and rose again He has established a sign that shall not be cut off. Hence the emphasis Paul here makes concerning the resurrection citing this text is vindicated.

(14) Acts 13:35 quoting Psa. 16:10.

Then He quotes Psa. 16:10 even as Peter did in Acts 2:25-31. We need not comment further here; please see #3 of IV.

(15) Acts 13:41 quoting Hab. 1:5.

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you."

To reject the resurrection of Christ is to reject everything - there is nothing further to say. But still they will be held accountable for their unbelief.

(16) Acts 13:47 quoting Isa. 49:6.

"For so has the Lord commanded us, saying; I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 13:47.

This is related to Isa. 9:1, 2, 60:1, which is implied by Jesus in John 12:35, 36, 46. He is the light of the world. This is a very popular theme with the prophets. See Heb. 1:1, 2 and II Cor. 4:4-6.

(17) Acts 15:15-18 quoting Amos 9:11, 12.

"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who makes these things known from old." Acts 15:15-18.

The tabernacle is fallen. Here God plainly says He had predicted these things He has thus fulfilled. This would speak of the establishment of the church upon the foundation

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of Judaism which itself came into disrepute and obliteration a few years later when Titus with his Roman Legions marched against Jerusalem and destroyed it completely. But from among the rubble God raised up an impressive institution which has stood against the tests of time which opened its doors to the Gentiles hence it has spread to every corner of the earth since that day. The apostles and New Testament prophets saw clearly the fulfillment of this text; hence just a quoting of it was sufficient without comment to show that what God had predicted by Amos had been fulfilled by their lives and activities. They did not go beyond their day for the fulfillment of any word of the prophet.

(18) Acts 18:28. Paul confuted the Jews.

“He powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.” What Scriptures? The scriptures the Jews accepted of course. What were these? The Old Testament prophets.

We’ve heard them testify today with our own ears that these very prophets we use are the very ones they have used for millenniums. How did he powerfully confute the Jews? By quoting the prophets again and again and showing that Jesus fulfilled it all and this is the exact meaning of the writing they handled. “This is that” as Peter said at Pentecost. What the prophets said Jesus did.

(19) Acts 26:27. “Do you believe the prophets?”

If one believes the prophets he must believe that Jesus is the Christ. If Jesus is the Christ then Paul has successfully vindicated himself of all charges brought against him. The clarity and certainty of the matter must here be emphasized. If you want to believe, all you have to do is examine the records and check the life of Christ. The noble ones (Acts 17:11) do, unto eternal life. The ignoble ones don’t, unto their eternal destruction.

(20) Acts 28:23. Persuading them all day long.

They were persuaded when they listened to Paul. They are persuaded even today when they listen to Moses and the prophets and see how Jesus fulfills it all.

(21) Acts 28:25-27 quoting Isa. 6:9, 10.

See Matt. 13:14, 15, #9 of III where we commented on this section.

The last prophecy of Acts is pathetic. God knew from of Old that blind people in unbelief would not pay attention, hence the quotation of Isa. 6:9, 19. But look at what a great expense they turn from the prophets . . . "And I should heal them." To neglect them is to neglect the only healing balm from Gilead. Jer. 8:22.

V. The prophets in the Epistles.

1. Romans.

A. Introductory remarks from the Old Testament.

The first use of the Old Testament by Paul in Romans is 3:10-18 which is a series of quotes but they are not necessarily Messianic so we will not quote or comment on them. We will just acknowledge their locations:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1) Psa. 14:1 | 5) Psa. 14:7 |
| 2) Psa. 53:1 | 6) Isa. 59:7 |
| 3) Psa. 5:9 | 7) Psa. 36:7 |
| 4) Psa. 140:3 | |

This section Paul uses to show all men are under sin. Then in Chapter 4:7-8 again he quotes the prophets (Psa. 32:1) to get a person to desire relief from the guilt of sin. Then he speaks of the victorious suffering of the saints in 8:36 as he quotes Psa. 94:32.

B. In chapter 9:25-30 quoting Hos. 2:23; 1:10.

"As he said also in Hosea, 'I will call that my people, which was not my people; and her beloved, that was not beloved, and it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people. There shall they be called sons of the living God.' " Rom. 9:25, 26.

His first real use of Messianic prophecy is Hosea 2:23 and 1:10. Here a little understanding of the prophet Hosea is required to get the full implication of what Paul is driving at. Hosea's wife turned from faithfulness to

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whoredom and ended up as a destitute slave. In mercy Hosea bought her and as a slave she had to obey orders which she transgressed as a free woman. When she obeyed he re-established her in her role as a mother of his family. The illegitimate children were also accepted into the family. What Hosea did to his wife, God sought to do for adulterous Israel in Hosea's day. But here Paul is truly pointing out that there is a third dialogue going along with this drama at the same time. The third level of this discourse is here applied by Paul to the Messiah: He drew us back and adopted us into His family. Now we are sons of God because in Christ we have been bought from the slavery of sin and now we obey orders of God which we hadn't obeyed before so He adopts us into His family and calls us by His name. By His mercy and sacrifice, family unity and respect has been re-established.

Hosea's second child's name is Lo-rahamah; it means "unpitied." The name of his third child is Lo-ammi; it means "not my people." But in both cases he elided the "Lo" and the meaning changed to "pitied" and "my people" respectfully. So also in the family of God the "unpitied" through the Messiah is "pitied" and the "not my people" are "sons of the living God!" "Behold what manner of love of father has been bestowed upon us that we might be called children of God." 1 Jn. 3:1.

C. In Rom. 9:27 Paul quotes Isa. 9:22.

"And Isaiah cried concerning Israel, 'If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved!' " Rom. 9:27.

There are other places which state it is a remnant of Israel which was predicted by the prophets which would be saved. This remnant we definitely believe is the remnant or group which would obey the Messiah. He then quoted Isa. 1:9 in Rom. 9:29 which shows us it was a very small remnant which was to be saved. God has made broader preparations than what people take advantage of; so if they are not saved, it is not God's fault.

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D. He closes the chapter (9:33) with a quotation which we have seen before, Isa. 28:16. Matt. 21:42, #11 of III.

In Zion, the city of the great King, a stone: strong, safe, secure, and immovable. A stone of stumbling because the Jewish leaders stumbled over it. They did not recognize in Jesus their Messiah even though God went to the end of the world to make it so very plain and obvious. He is the rock of offense because so many of His kinsmen have been offended in Him since the day He started preaching. But the believer shall not be put to shame, yea, verily, He shall fully and readily be saved through the exalted chief corner stone.

E. Then in Rom. 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32.

Paul quotes a part of the section of Joel 2:32 which Peter quoted more extensively on the day of Pentecost when the church was established. Please note the comments there. Acts 2:16. See #2 of IV.

F. Rom. 10:15 quoting Isa. 52:7.

“... even as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!’ ” Rom. 10:15.

G. Rom. 10:16 quoting Isa. 55:1.

“For Isaiah said; ‘Lord who has believed our report.’ ” Rom. 10:16.

H. Rom. 10:18 quoting Psa. 19:4.

“Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Rom. 10:18.

I. Rom. 10:19 quoting Deut. 32:21.

“First Moses said, ‘I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you!’ ” Rom. 10:19.

J. Rom. 10:20 quoting Isa. 65:1.

“And Isaiah is very bold, and said, ‘I was found of them that sought me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me.’ ” Rom. 10:20.

K. Rom. 10:21 quoting Isa. 65:2.

“But as to Israel he said, ‘all day long did I spread

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out my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.' ”
Rom. 10:21.

In sections F - K Paul quotes from the prophets as Luke did at the close of the book of Acts to show how God had spoken beforehand how people would refuse Him even if He told them thousands of years ahead of time, and then fulfilled it all in the death of His Son. Here he is saying, “Men don’t care; men are intentionally blind. They don’t want to be helped. Any that want help, healing or deliverance will turn to me and receive it. But the rest will not turn to me with the heart no matter what I do. If I break the rocks and scare them they tremble a few days; but for the most part they are unchanged. But in the process heaven is being peopled. All who desire may enter in. If they don’t desire, I’ll not force them; if they choose to rebel, if they choose the wrong road I’ll allow them, but it is for all eternity; and the choice is theirs. Woe be unto their sin sick souls as Jeremiah said, “A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will you do in the end thereof?” Jer. 5:30.

L. Rom. 11:8-9 quotes Isa. 29:10; Deut. 29:4; Psa. 69:22.

“And David said, ‘Let their table be a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow thou down their back always.’ ” Rom. 11:9, 10.

All of this is a continuation of what we have in the last of chapter 10 . . . Turning a deaf ear to God will one day bring its just reward.

M. Rom. 11:26 quotes Isa. 59:20.

“And so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, ‘there shall come out of Zion the deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.’ ” Rom. 11:26, 27.

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This section is quite similar to Joel 2:28ff, which Peter quoted on Pentecost and it is quite similar to Isa. 61:1ff which Jesus quoted as He entered His ministry. Here the emphasis is upon the Messianic entry into Zion with salvation from sin as in Zech. 9:9. "Behold your King comes unto you . . . having salvation." "He who has ears to hear let him hear." God has spoken plainly enough. If it had been political salvation they would have heard Him - but salvation from sin is disinteresting to Jew and Greek alike. But that is not God's fault. He knows it is the real and vital and imperative need of man, so He has provided it.

N. Rom. 14:11 quotes Isa. 45:23.

"For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.' "

Rom. 14:11.

God is not mocked. God will call all mankind into judgment. The Holy Spirit convicts men in respect of sin and righteousness and judgment. Of sin - I have sinned; of righteousness - Jesus is righteous, in Him is no guile; of judgment because the devil is judged. His Kingdom is fallen and all who throw in their lot with him are fallen too. This could refer to the Great Judgment Day at the close of earth's history. It doesn't have to; but it may; if it does we must acknowledge that it is the first and only prophecy so far in the New Testament which is applied to anything beyond the age of the apostles. It really makes better sense in the context not to extend this to the end of the world's judgment; but we acknowledge it may. It will come up again in Phil. 2:10 where Paul makes a looser quote of it or states the whole idea more clearly and emphatically through the spirit of prophecy and inspiration given to him irrespective of what is meant in Isa. 45:23 or Rom. 14:11.

O. Rom. 14:3 quotes Psa. 69:9.

"For Christ also pleased not himself; but as it is written; the reproaches of them that reproach thee fell

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upon me." Rom. 15:3.

Many have been abused, mocked, chided and killed because of faith in Christ. But this is nothing more than what happened to Jesus. In the end God vindicated Him and in the end He will vindicate all who have trusted in Him.

P. Rom. 15:9-12 quotes Psa. 18:49; II Sam. 22:50; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 117:1; Isa. 11:1, 10.

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, 'therefore will I give praise unto thee among Gentiles, and sing unto thy name! And again he said; rejoice, ye Gentiles, with the people. And again; praise the Lord, ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him. And again Isaiah said; there shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope.' " Rom. 15:9-12.

In each of these prophecies Paul is plainly showing that it was manifestly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. Yes! But it was no new thing; in fact it was not his idea; it was his commission. See Acts 26:17-19. But here Paul resorts to the prophets to vindicate himself and his mission and his ministry and to hold out the gospel of hope to the Gentiles at Rome. This is as God planned and predicted.

Q. Rom. 15:21 quotes Isa. 52:15.

"But as it is written; they shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand." Rom. 15:21.

Paul continues to emphasize the same things discussed earlier.

2. I Corinthians.

A. I Cor. 1:19 quotes Isa. 29:14.

"For it is written; 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.' " I Cor. 1:19. This prophecy leads up to a description of the ministry of the Messiah. Later when

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John's servants came asking Jesus for a sign He quoted this Messianic prophecy and told them they were seeing it fulfilled every day as they watched Him work. Here Paul is quoting this leading thought which shows the hardness of men's hearts. They see God working before their very eyes and fail to believe. Woe unto those who make wisdom their God and reason and intellect their only Lord. God easily destroys the wisdom of the wisest men with His foolishness or less complicated act. How shall we stand against Him in His strength?

B. I Cor. 2:9 quotes Isa. 64:4.

"But as it is written, 'things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.' " I Cor. 2:9.

God saves blessings untold to those who walk by faith and in patience all the days of their life wait to the day when God will exalt them. I Pet. 5:5, 6.

C. I Cor. 15:27 quoting Psa. 8:6.

"For he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he said, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him." I Cor. 15:27.

Through the spirit of prophecy in him it appears that Paul is amplifying this prophecy beyond what we can see in the text so that it then included something beyond his and our day. It goes clear to the conclusion of the history of the world itself. So here is a first definite or second possible reference we have found which is applied to Christian eschatology.

D. I Cor. 15:54 quotes Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14.

"But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written; 'Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy victory, O death where is thy sting?' " I Cor. 15:54, 55.

This, again, could as in Isaiah's text, all be applied to

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our being made alive in Christ, though we were dead because of our trespasses and sins. But here Paul applies it to something beyond us in time. The context fairly demands it. So here we have either the second definite or maybe a third Old Testament prophecy quoted and applied to a day way on the other side of the apostles. It speaks of the consummation of the Christian's life and victory in Jesus Christ.

Here in Hos. 13:14 is a third definite or possible fourth Old Testament prophecy applied by a New Testament writer to a day millenniums beyond his day, and is paralleled with what we have just seen in the 55th verse. Christ arose from the dead. We will be raised to reign with Him when the fullness of time comes according to what God has allotted on His eternal calendar.

In all three cases the quotes are brief and no elaborate system is built of the text by the New Testament writer. Just a casual mention of victory itself is enough.

3. II Corinthians.

A. II Cor. 6:2 quotes Isa. 49:8.

"For he said, 'at an acceptable time I hearkened unto you, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee.'" II Cor. 6:2.

Paul applies this to the urgency of the present hour. Sinful man ought not keep God waiting. He may too soon run out of time with no recourse left to him.

B. II Cor. 6:16 quotes Lev. 26:12.

"I will walk among you;" Ex. 29:45, "I will dwell among them;" Ex. 29:45, "I will dwell among them;" Ez. 37:27, "My tabernacle shall be among them;" Jer. 31:1 "I shall be God to all the families of Israel and they shall be my people." Isa. 52:11, "touch no unclean thing." Hos. 1:10, "Ye are the people of the living God." Isa. 43:6, "Bring my daughters from the ends of the earth." There are also many other such quotes which could be applied to this section. But the meaning is clear: under the Messiah God would have new, closer affiliation

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with His people. Jer. 31:31-33 is a more full aspect of this prophetic oracle.

C. II Cor. 8:15 quoting Ex. 16:18.

“As it is written, ‘He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.’ ” II Cor. 8:15.

God has always sought a measure of equality among His people. We are brothers together. The advancement of Christ’s Kingdom anywhere in the world is my particular gain and advantage. We need to see and realize this. Also see Matt. 19:29.

D. II Cor. 9:9 quoting Psa. 112:9.

“As it is written, ‘He has scattered abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness abides forever.’ ” II Cor. 9:9.

God watches over His children. In all His righteous goodness He waits an opportunity to bless His Saints.

E. II Cor. 10:17 quotes Jer. 9:24.

“But he that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” II Cor. 10:17.

This is the same as II Cor. 1:31. We do not exalt in men. Men fail us. Jesus is exonerated. We trust in and praise Him. We do not call ourselves after the names of the reformers. We call ourselves by Jesus’ name. We glory in the Lord. See also Gal. 6:16, Isa. 62:2 and 65:15. We go by the name he gave us. It is His church; He died for it. It is Christ’s church: we are Christians with no aliases.

4. Galatians.

A. Gal. 3:8 quotes Gen. 12:3.

“In thee shall all the nations be blessed.” Gal. 3:8.

This is definitely Messianic. Abraham’s seed is Christ, (see Gal. 3:16) the seed of woman, the saviour of men. See Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 17:8. Through Him all the families of the earth are blessed.

B. Gal. 3:13 quotes Deut. 21:23.

“For it is written, ‘cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.’ ” Gal. 3:13.

Jesus tasted of ignominy to cleanse us from sin. All our

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sins were cast upon Him. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6.

C. Gal. 4:4 quotes Gen. 3:15.

"But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under Law." Gal. 4:4.

The oldest prophecy of the Bible speaks of the ultimate victory of Christ, The seed of woman, over satan and all his seed (cohorts).

D. Gal. 4:27 quotes Isa. 54:1.

"For it is written, 'Rejoice, thou barren that beareth not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband.' " Gal. 4:27.

Jesus Himself had no children. This was a disgrace to a Jew. But through the Word of God and the New Birth untold millions have been born into the family of the faith so that in actuality Jesus has a greater posterity than any other man of the history of the world. And it is a perfected family which shall stand for all eternity. He is proud of His family. He gladly shares His inheritance together with them. Rom. 8:16, 17. He fully accomplished His purpose.

5. Ephesians.

A. Eph. 4:8 quotes Psa. 68:18.

"Wherefore he said, 'when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' " Eph. 4:8.

This speaks of the conquest of the Messiah. He shall make conquest in the Name of God. He shall establish the rule of God in the hearts of men. He shall succeed. His conquest shall not be small. He shall fully realize His purpose.

B. Eph. 5:14 quotes Jer. 1:12.

"Wherefore he said, 'awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.' " Eph. 5:14.

The sleeping almond was the first plant to blossom from the long winter sleep. It was first to show life from what appeared to be dead, so see Isa. 60:1 and 66:24.

6. Philippians.
7. Colossians.
8. I & II Thessalonians.
9. I & II Timothy.
10. Titus.
11. Philemon.

It is an amazing thing to me that in these eight epistles Paul does not make direct use of the prophets at all. Certainly it is a break from what he did in Romans and Corinthians and from what we find in Acts. These are addressed to Gentiles and those more unacquainted with the Old Testament, hence we assume he made less use of the prophets.

12. Hebrews.

A. Heb. 1:1.

“God, having of olden time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions in divers manners.” Heb. 1:1.

Immediately the writer speaks of the work of the prophets as occupying a prominent part in the program of God and His plan for the history of man on the earth.

B. Heb. 1:5 quoting Psa. 2:7.

“For unto which of the angels said he at any time, ‘you are my son, this day have I begotten thee?’ ” Heb. 1:5.

This, as interpreted by Paul in Acts 13:33, refers to or was fulfilled by the resurrection of Christ. Here it seems to speak of His office or position.

C. Heb. 1:5 quotes II Sam. 7:14.

“And again, ‘I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.’ ” Heb. 1:5.

The son of David was to sit on his throne forever. So though the next text speaks of Solomon in particular it has also some prophetic implications because David’s spiritual son was to reign and complete all that David started and dreamed of in expanding the borders of the kingdom of God and securing peace and prosperity for the people of God.

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D. Heb. 1:6 quoting Deut. 32:43, Psa. 97:7.

“And when he again bringeth in the first born into the world he saith, ‘and let all the angels of God worship him.’ ” Heb. 1:6.

There are many prophetic utterances relating to the divine nature of the Messiah. Here, this utterance, with the command for angels to worship Him, reveals that He is more than lofty, more than prophet, He is worthy of worship - only God is worthy of worship. Hence He is divine. All this was told beforehand by the prophets.

E. Heb. 1:7 quotes Psa. 104:4.

“And of the angels he saith, ‘who makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire,’ ” Heb. 1:7.

He lays a foundation for the following verse which completes the contrast.

F. Heb. 1:8 quotes Psa. 45:7.

“But of the son he said, ‘thy throne O God, is for ever and ever; and the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom.’ ” Heb. 1:8.

This is a Messianic Psalm pointing out His lofty position, person, and attributes.

G. Heb. 1:10-12 quotes Psa. 102:25.

“You, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish; but you continue; and they all shall wax old as does a garment, and as a mantle shall you roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed: but thou are the same, and thy years shall not fail.” Heb. 1:10-12.

The prophets by prophetic vision looked back into the ancient past instead of the distant future and saw the Messianic position in the act of creation. All that is made is the work of His hands. Here stress is laid on His lofty position again.

H. Heb. 1:13 quotes Psa. 110:1.

“But of which of the angels has he said at any time, ‘Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?’ ” Heb. 1:13.

The obvious answer to the question of the verse is, None; He never did. But He did to His Son, the Messiah, hence, He is greater than any or all of the angels.

I. Heb. 2:6-8 quoting Psa. 8:4.

“But one has somewhere testified, saying, ‘What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands; you did put all things in subjection under his feet!’ ” Heb. 2:6-8.

Here a description of the nature of man is used as a foundation of a contrast depicting the divine nature of the Messiah.

J. Heb. 2:12 quoting Psa. 22:22.

“Saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise.” Heb. 2:12.

This is accomplished in the church. Jesus is our elder brother. We are joint heirs with Him. Rom. 8:16, 17.

K. Heb. 2:13 quoting Psa. 22:8.

“I will put my trust in Him.” Jesus did this. In fact they chided Him on the cross with these very words. Matt. 27:43.

L. Heb. 2:13 quoting Isa. 8:17.

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.” Heb. 2:13.

The same kind of thing we spoke of earlier; though He had no natural children He did have numerous spiritual children.

M. Heb. 3:7-11 quoting Psa. 95:7.

“Harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation. . . . As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.” Heb. 3:7-11.

The writer works with this scripture through the rest of the chapter and on into the middle of the next and he culminates it in verse 9 with the words, “There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.” This is now the fourth example and may be the fifth we have

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found where a New Testament writer may have gone beyond his day for the fulfillment of prophecy of which he is dealing. This may speak of our eternal abode with God.

N. Heb. 5:5 quoting Psa. 2:7.

“ . . . This day have I begotten thee.”

As we have seen earlier in 1:5 and once again this time the verse is applied to His office and how He got into it.

O. Heb. 5:6 quoting Psa. 110:4.

“As he said also in another place; ‘thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’ ” Heb. 5:6.

This also speaks of the dignity of His office and again in Heb. 7:17 and 21. It is much higher and filled with more dignity than that of Aaron.

P. Heb. 8:5 quoting Ex. 25:40.

“Even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for ‘See,’ saith he, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount.’ ” Heb. 8:5.

This calls to mind how the tabernacle of God was to be built. We also expect in establishing the church to see everything built according to the pattern. We must be careful how we build. I Cor. 3:12-14. Those building with wood, hay and stubble had their works burned up; they suffered the loss of their lifetime of labor. Those building with silver, gold and precious stone endured the testing of fire and were eternally blessed. If we build according to the pattern we will be eternally blessed. If we pay no attention to the pattern and build according to the dictates of men we will suffer eternal loss of reward.

Q. Heb. 8:8-12 quoting Jer. 31:31ff.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord for this is the covenant that I will

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make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother saying, know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." Heb. 8:8-12.

This is one of the most extensive quotations of the O.T. prophets. It is one of the two extensive Messianic prophecies we find from the pen of Jeremiah. Its meaning is very clear.

The only thing some people miss is why Christians don't teach "every man," "know the Lord." The Jews had to do this because they were born Jews and had to learn of their faith later. But a Christian becomes a Christian only after he "knows the Lord." He is not born a Christian, he becomes a Christian by choice. Once becoming a Christian then it is not necessary to teach him to "know the Lord" because this is the very knowledge he has learned which caused him to become a Christian. But the only application the writer makes here is the "new covenant," which replaces the "old covenant." This fact could have been as well established by Jeremiah's other extensive Messianic prophecy too. See Ch. 3 of Jeremiah.

R. Heb. 10:5-7 quoting Psa. 40:6.

"Wherefore when he came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not, but a body did you prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings as sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure:' then said I, 'Lo, I am come (in the roll of a book it is written of me), to do thy will, O, God.' " Heb. 10:5-7.

This is applied to the incarnation of the Messiah which led the way to the sacrifice for sin which He made. Again the writer concludes from the text that there is a new sacrifice or a new covenant separate from Judaism.

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S. Heb. 10:16 quoting Jer. 31:33f.

Going back to Jeremiah, having established the idea of a new covenant, he wants to emphasize the thorough, extensive forgiveness from sin we have through the blood of Jesus. Ours is a much better covenant! See Q above.

T. Heb. 10:37-38 quoting Hab. 2:3, 4.

“For yet a very little while, He that commeth shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous ones shall live by faith.” Heb. 10:37, 38.

Some would quickly conclude that this is applied to the Second Coming of Christ. But Habakkuk spoke of a judgment and we believe as Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem in His Olivet discourse He spoke of His coming in judgment. That came just seven years after this epistle was written and is probably closer to the context. “The righteous living” here would be the Christians who escaped this destruction because they believed the warnings of Christ and left before Jerusalem fell. But though it is doubtful, in passing we will say that this admits the interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ if we ignore the context and the people addressed in the epistle and their living situation.

U. Heb. 12:5 quoting Prov. 3:11.

“My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd of him; for whom the Lord loves he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Heb. 12:5, 6.

Here the family father is paralleled with the heavenly Father in His roll of dealing with Christians as His children to perfect them.

V. Heb. 12:22-24. You have come to Zion.

“But you are come

1. unto Mount Zion, and
2. unto the city of the living God,
3. the heavenly Jerusalem, and
4. to innumerable hosts of angels,
5. to the general assembly and

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6. the church of the First born
7. who are enrolled in heaven, and
8. to God the Judge of all, and
9. to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and
10. to Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant, and
11. to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel."

The significance of Zion in Isa. 2:1-4 is so very important in rightly interpreting that section of Messianic prophecy. But in this contrast the Hebrew writer is making between the Church of Christ and the religion of the Jews (see Heb. 12:18-24) it can not be mistaken. The church is the Zion of which the prophets spoke. This whole list of titles in fact are titles used by the prophets in describing the utopia which the Jews looked forward to which would be established by their Messiah. Look how Zion is used in these Messianic sections: Isa. 28:16; "Behold I lay in Zion a Foundation Stone." Isa. 35:10; "Come with singing into Zion." Isa. 40:9; "Oh, thou that bringest tidings to Zion." Isa. 52:7; "That says to Zion, 'Behold thy God reigns.'" Zech. 2:10; "Rejoice oh daughter of Zion." Zech. 9:9; "Zion - thy King comes." Here the Hebrew writer is claiming they all speak of the Christian Church. He is doing like Peter did in I Pet. 2:9. All those titles were used exclusively of the Jews in their special relationship to God because of their being a chosen people. But Peter applies them all to the Christians. They have taken the place of the Jews who fell because of rebellion and refusal to accept their Messiah when He came. But those who accepted Him take on these significant titles and receive these special privileges no matter what their national background may be. Paul did the same thing in Gal. 6:16 where he called the Christians the "Israel of God," irrespective of national descent or race. So here the Hebrew writer is doing the same thing except his list is fuller and more complete.

1. We come to Jesus by way of "Mount Zion" because

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the church was established there and the law went forth from there. (see Isa. 2:1-4).

2. We come to "the city of the living God," because he is perfecting us unto his city. "Our citizenship in heaven." Phil. 3:20. Heaven is a prepared place for the prepared people. We are prepared for it by the sacrifice of Christ. I Cor. 1:30.
3. We come to "Heavenly Jerusalem." This is not a new idea; it is a further description of the last statement. We are in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. At death we do not enter into a new kingdom. We cross the threshold into a fuller realization of this present kingdom.
4. "To hosts of angels." All we need to do is reflect on the material the author has just presented and we will see that this clause is applicable to the church today also. We do not have to go beyond our day to see its fulfillment. In chapter 11, the author speaks of the saints in God's Hall of Fame. Then verses 1 and 2 of the next chapter are a conclusion of that chapter and should not be divided from it. "Seeing we are encompassed by such a cloud of witnesses." We are on the field; the ball is in our hand right now. Eyes are focused on us. Let's do our best. These I believe are angelic eyes as well as eyes of Old Testament saints plus New Testament saints who have finished their course. As Elijah requested, "Lord open his eyes," then he saw the mountains filled with horses and chariots of fire. We in the church of Christ are also "come to innumerable hosts of angels." See II Kings 6:17.
5. "The general assembly." This is a general name for the church rather than something specific. It is the gathering together of those who belong to Jesus. We are called out from the world to serve Christ.
6. "The church of the First Born." This is much more specific, the word "church" here connotes the same

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things as "assembly" did in the last clause. The "First Born" here would speak first of all of Jesus Christ, "The First-born from the dead," Rev. 1:15. It is His Church, see Matt. 16:18. We come to His church. But I believe this term is extended to all those twice born ones over whom the power of the second death has no influence. It is powerless over them because they were spiritually born again or born-first - prior to the finality of death hence they too are first-born. The church is comprised of those born again from the dead or first-born ones.

7. "Enrolled in Heaven" (see Luke 10:20 and Rev. 20:15) A Christian is now ready if he remains faithful, Rev. 3:5. (See Mal. 3:16; Dan. 12:1; and Psa. 69:28)
8. We come to God - we are unshamed. Col. 1:22, we are presented without blemish and faultness. We have no fear of judgment because of what Christ has done for us.
9. "Spirits of just men made perfect." Just men, because of the sacrifice of Christ. We are justified by the blood of His cross, Rom. 5:1. We are made perfect because we have a perfect saviour, a perfect sacrifice, a perfect high priest, a perfect new covenant and a perfect word of God to instruct us. God sees us not as we are but as we can be through Christ. God sees us not as we are, but just as we look through a telescope to see distant stars, so God looks through the telescope of Jesus Christ Himself and sees us perfected. (see I Cor. 1:30).
10. "To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant." This absolutely identifies this as the present Church of Christ rather than some future millennium. (see Matt. 26:26) Jeremiah spoke graphically of this new covenant; 31:31ff and 3:14-18. This is the new testament or new covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If this speaks of the church and it most certainly does, and if numbers 5 and 6 do too, and

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they do, and so does #11; *then all the rest of them do too!* This whole business speaks of the church as having taken on the significant titles of Judaism. So what the prophets foretold as a glorious future for the Jews is fulfilled by us who are called by the name of Christ. The prophet's glorious day or better day is realized in the church of Christ today!

11. "The blood . . . of Abel." Most commentators want to apply this to Abel's blood; but we believe it speaks of the blood of his sacrifice which was accepted while his brother's was rejected. It was accepted because it was offered in faith and obedience. But he didn't realize that God looked forward to the blood of Christ to forgive him because Heb. 10:4 tells us the blood of bulls and goats couldn't take away sin. So ours is a better sacrifice because it doesn't look through and on into another era and age, ours is efficacious because of itself. Abel's was efficacious because of a perfect sacrifice made later. Ours then is better than Abel's.

Jesus is the long awaited Messiah of the Jews. He is deliverer to those who follow Him. His own people rejected him. John 1:11; so He made those to become His people who were outside the chosen circle. He brought them in and at the same time cast those who were inside by election out. So now those who were not Jews are the real Jews and the real Jews are not Jews really. So the Jewish Messiah makes Messianic Jews. But these Messianic Jews are not those many people expected them to be.

So in a graft the foreign wood becomes the genuine fruit bearer while the real tree is cut away to make room for it. So has God done with His church. How thankful we are, unworthy as we are, to be grafted into the vine of Christ that we might bear much fruit. Jn. 15:5.

W. Heb. 12:26 quoting Hag. 2:6.

“... Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven.” Heb. 12:26.

The “shaking” here would apply first to Judaism and then to anything else which does not find itself anchored in Jesus and the kingdom He is establishing in the hearts of men. As Daniel says, “it shall stand forever.” Dan. 2:44. It is eternal. It can not be shaken. So the context is clear. They, the Hebrew Christians, should not drag their feet in changing from the old and decaying covenant to another of great glory; from one kingdom to another. But they should make the transition quickly while they yet have opportunity. It is a wise and very profitable thing to do.

X. Heb. 13:6 quoting Psa. 118:6.

“... The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?” Heb. 13:6.

We have nothing in this world or of this world to fear. God is for us. Who can be against us. To die is to enter directly into heavenly bliss; to live is to serve Jesus and fulfill plans God laid so very long ago. We can't miss unless we reject the very thing that impressed the prophets so.

13. James. He does not make direct use of O.T. prophecy as such.

14. I Peter.

A. I Pet. 1:10-12. Prophets spoke of the grace we have.

“Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but to you, did they minister these things. . . .” I Pet. 1:10-12.

Peter emphasizes that the prophets ministered not to themselves but unto us in the Christian faith. We have revealed through the preached gospel the epitome of what the prophets spoke.

B. I Pet. 1:24 quoting Isa. 40:6.

“The word of the Lord abides forever.” I Pet. 1:24, 25.

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What word of the Lord? The gospel Peter preached; the gospel of which the prophets spoke in grand detail.

C. I Pet. 2:6-8 quoting Isa. 28:14-16, Psa. 118:22, etc. See Matt. 21:42, #11 of III.

Jesus, the Chief corner stone was rejected by the builders. They stumbled over it not seeing its beauty, value or worth; but God exalted it to the position of being the Chief corner stone, the very most important part of the building in Jewish architecture.

15. II Peter.

16. I John.

17. II John.

18. III John.

These also do not make direct quotes from O.T. prophets.

This makes a total of 14 short epistles which do not use the O.T. prophets.

19. Jude.

Jude 14 "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, 'Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones . . .'"

This is not found anywhere in the Old Testament.

It seems to be a quote from the apocrypha. Jude 14 speaks of the Second Coming of Christ. But we know this is not an Old Testament prophecy. Without passing sentence on its validity either way we are just plainly stating a fact that it is not an O.T. prophecy as we have it. But the Old Testament as we have it is the only Old Testament we have. So this verse does not contribute directly to our discussion.

VI. Old Testament Prophets in Revelation.

1. Revelation.

While John quotes extensively from Jewish history and thought, he does not quote any Old Testament prophet directly and amplify it or apply it to any future message he has to deliver. This is an amazing thing. If Premillennialists

followed his example the whole idea of premillennialism would fall crumbling and broken to the ground. They claim their authority from the Bible and say we have to listen to them but they are not using the Bible as did Philip, Peter, Paul or John. When they quote an Old Testament prophet they do not apply it to anything the New Testament writers did. Why can they do something entirely different than the New Testament writers did and expect us, demand of us, that we accept their interpretation as the only canonized interpretation of eschatology?

VII. What the New Testament writers did not do with the Old Testament prophets.

Can I understand the prophets? Jesus intended His disciples to. He called them foolish and slow to learn because of their ignorance of the prophets. Paul and Apollos powerfully confuted the Jews, proving from the prophets that Jesus was Christ. We ought also to be able to understand and use the prophets. The two on the way to Emmaus said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He opened unto us the scriptures?" Lu. 24:32. Any student of the prophets ought to be able to truly say this many times as he studies and comes to an understanding of the prophets. Their message carries the same impact today that it ever did. Why is there so much controversy about them? Because people try to make the prophets say what they want them to say, without paying any attention to how the New Testament writers used and applied them. But if we return to the method of interpretation the New Testament writers used and stand with a united voice declaring the same thing from the prophets they did, then the voice of controversy and confusion will be shattered and the prophets will be restored to their original position of import.

We find some literal application of the prophets applied by New Testament writers. But for the most part it was a figurative or spiritual interpretation. It was applied only to the Christ and His church as it was established and made

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conquest in the world. It was a very rare thing indeed for them to go beyond their own time. When they did the application was short and uninvolved. They very seldom paid close attention to details or sideline issues of the prophets. The general thrust of the prophecy was emphasized and being a final voice the issue was dropped. Never once did they give a word for word application of every thought raised by the prophet. We are left to assume that many times the prophetic oracle was robed in apocalyptic garb which spoke of the great significance of the occasion rather than a scientific, literal unfolding of the exact details spoken of, such as real stars falling or the moon dripping with blood.

1. They did not once quote an Old Testament prophet to apply his message to a millennial kingdom.
2. They did not once apply an elaborate prophetic test or system to anything beyond their own day.
3. Less than one percent of the time did they ever apply an Old Testament prophecy to any date beyond their own age.
4. They always applied the Old Testament prophet's message to their situation even if it did sound apocalyptic.
5. They never did say part of their text was part of what the prophets said, while the rest was to come millenniums later.
6. Not once do we ever find a series of Old Testament prophecies quoted in support of a second or third coming of Christ.
7. There are only four prophecies quoted in reference to any aspect of Christian eschatology. None of these are elaborate or extensive, and some are questionable.
8. Anyone can see that the New Testament writers employed what is called a spiritual interpretation to Old Testament prophets. What they did we must do. We are in the same age or dispensation as they were in; "Now is the last hour." They did not feel they were taking all the glory from the prophets. Counterwise they emphasized the glory and splendor of the present kingdom especially in

the mind of God. In this we do not deny the beautiful eschatology of the Christian faith; No, not at all! We believe there is a beautiful eternal heritage for every true believer. But we are saying it is vain and antiscritptural to turn to the Old Testament prophets to establish any long drawn-out doctrine concerning these ending things of the Christian faith. It is a misuse of the Old Testament. The inspired New Testament writers didn't do it. There is no living man who can give us a more clear interpretation of the Old Testament prophets than the New Testament inspired writers did. We don't have anything more dependable to rely on to guide us. To rely on tradition is a bankrupt, helpless, inexcusable method to follow. Rather we have a key. Let's use it; let's follow it. Let's be sure of the ground upon which we build our faith. How can we be wrong if we do not go beyond what the New Testament writers did?

Rather than taking all the glory and beauty out of eschatology just the opposite is accomplished. The real glory and beauty and significance of the present system is emphasized. What are we really involved in now? What does Christ think of His church? How is it compared to the world of Judaism? This is the outcome of a study of this nature. We do not reject the idea of a utopia. We maintain that once the utopia begins it is filled with more glory and splendor than the premillennialist speaks of for the millennium, but it is not something transitory; it is for all eternity. There is no need of a transitory kingdom between the Church age and eternity. In fact the Church is the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It goes right on through time into eternity without an interruption of 1,000 years delay of the millennial kingdom. That's why the New Testament writers speak of Christians as having citizenship in heaven, now! The transition is from earth to heaven. It is not delayed for 1,000 years in between. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we shall be

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changed." I Cor. 15:52.

There are characteristic themes descriptive of the Messiah recurring in the prophets again and again such as:

1. That day - The latter day
2. The King
3. The light
4. The shoot or branch
5. Righteousness and/or peace
6. The highway
7. The water in a dry place
8. The stone
9. The kingdom
10. Conquest
11. Jehovah will come
12. Singing and everlasting joy
13. Vengeance of God

The New Testament writers apply all of these to Christ His first advent. The premillennialists want to reserve numbers 2, 9, 10, etc. to the second advent or to the future millennium; but there are no such reservations on the part of the New Testament writers at all. Actually by the time they finish there isn't anything left which is descriptive of a future utopia after the Christian era this side of eternal bliss of heaven itself. They applied almost everything to Christ of His conquering church.

The burden of Old Testament eschatology is the end of Judaism and the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom in this world. The burden of the New Testament eschatology is the eternal bliss with perfection with God in heaven. The two are not the same. Old Testament and New Testament prophets did not see the same mountains as some interpreters report.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION:

I. The personality of Isaiah

1. His name - "Yesha-yahu" (Heb.) meaning "the salvation of Jehovah," comparable to Hezekiah, which means "the strength of Jehovah;" and to Zedekiah, meaning "the righteousness of Jehovah." In this case the name is very appropriate since the salvation of Jehovah is the great theme of the book.
2. Parentage and family - son of Amoz, 1:1; 2:1; 13:1. Isaiah has two sons whose names are connected with his prophetic office: "Shear-jashub" and "Maher-shalal-hash-baz."
3. The date - he saw a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. 1:1. He was very likely born some 35 or 40 years before the death of Uzziah, and perhaps lived for some time contemporaneous with Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, which would place him about 90 years of age at his death, living between the years 780-690 B.C.
4. His position - a Jew in good position dwelling in Jerusalem; a man who had familiar contact with Jewish kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah, 7:3-16; 37:21-35; 39:3-8. Tribe of Judah.

He received his call early in life, probably about the age of 20. From II Chron. 26:22, 32:32, it would seem that he was officially appointed historiographer, at the Hebrew court, during the reign of Jotham, and later during the reign of Hezekiah, for the book of Kings.

His name in office was that of prophet or preacher to both King and People.

It is not certain that we possess all of his prophecies, for the book as it comes down to us is fragmentary in character and appears to be a compilation. Recently discovered MSS have added nothing more.

5. His call - his first call is unrecorded which is the case of most of the prophets. A very solemn call is related in the 6th chapter, but this would not be the original one. He was

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probably 35 or 40 years old.

6. His prophetic career.

- (1) Began in the reign of Uzziah (Azariah), perhaps late in his reign. Uzziah was a leper at this time, II Kings 15:5. The first five chapters were likely produced at this time. Chapter 6:1, his second call, either just before or after Uzziah's death - more likely after.
- (2) Chapter 6 is the only one of his extant writings that can be definitely assigned to the *next 16 years*; as a prophet he seems to be silent during the reign of Jotham.
- (3) Beginning with the reign of Ahaz (743 B.C.) there was a period of great prophetic activity.

From 7:1 to 10:4 the prophecies have a structural connection and unity of purpose which unite them in a single body, and belongs evidently to that portion of Ahaz's reign when he was engaged in war with Syria and the 10 northern tribes (Israel).

A prophecy in 14:28-32 also belongs to the last year of Ahaz.

- (4) There are sufficient reasons for assigning to the reign of Hezekiah the entire series of prophecies following 10:5 with exception of the above mentioned passage (14:28-32).

The *contents* of the prophecies tend to spread them out over the different periods of Hezekiah's reign and shows the activity of the prophet over its entire duration.

- (5) A portion of the prophecies contained in the book are thought by some to belong to Manasseh's reign, and Jewish tradition places his death under the reign of Manasseh.

7. His character.

- (1) He was bold, earnest, and unafraid; he lived under five different kings, only one of whom was religious and God-fearing; he was uncompromising, was no boot-licker or back-patter, 7:13; 38:1; he denounces

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in the strongest terms the injustice, oppression, coveteousness, and sensuality of the people; 1:10-23; 2:11-17; 3:9-15. He does not curry favor with the people, 1:21, 1:4, 29:13; 30:9.

- (2) He was tender and compassionate, 22:4; 15:5; 16:9-11; 21:3-4.
- (3) He delights in the victory and exaltation of the people and their admission into the final kingdom of the Messiah, 2:2; 11:10-12.
- (4) He is world-wide in his sympathy, yet is not so cosmopolitan as to be devoid of patriotism or to view with unconcern anything which affects the welfare of his country, city, or people.

He is indignant at Syria and Ephraim that plot against Judah; he is contemptuous of Sennacherib who comes to invade the borders of Judah, 7:5-9; 37:22.

He nurses a deep seated hostility against Babylon as the destroyer of the Holy City and ravager of the Holy Land, which shows itself in almost every section of the book, 13:1-22; 14:4-23; 21:1-10.

He is sarcastic and satirical, 3:16-24; 7:4; 44:12-17.

- (5) He is deeply reverent and spiritual; he has no use for the formal outward manifestations of religion, nothing is important but the inward spiritual life; temples are worthless, 66:1; sacrifices are of no account, 1:11-13; 66:3; the observance of days are worthless, 1:14; nothing has any value with God but real purity of heart and life, 46:2.
8. His death - Tradition tells that Isaiah, during the reign of Manasseh, was placed between two planks and sawn asunder; it is possible that Paul was referring to the Prophet Isaiah in Heb. 11:37.

II. Historical background of Isaiah's prophecy.

1. He grew to manhood as a subject of the Judean kingdom,

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during the period of the two kingdoms known as Judah and Israel.

- (1) Israel was nearing the end of its existence.
- (2) Isaiah was about ten years old when the Assyrian Pul came against the land; liberty, however, was bought with ransom, 2 Kings 15:19.
- (3) Twenty years later, Tiglath-Pileser II, 745 B.C. - a coalition formed against him by kings of Syria and Palestine, under Rezin of Damascus.
- (4) Ahaz refused to enter this coalition, recognizing in both Syria and Israel enemies of his kingdom.
- (5) Whereon they attempted to coerce him or place on Judah's throne a king who would accept the Syrian policy.
- (6) Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria marched into Judah and inflicted severe defeats on Ahaz, II Chron. 28:5-6, and went on to besiege Jerusalem, II Kings 16:5.
- (7) Ahaz then placed himself under the protection of Tiglath-Pileser, (Pul) declaring himself to be his servant. Tiglath-Pileser complied and marched a great army to Damascus; slew Rezin, defeated Pekah, and carried a large part of the Israelites into captivity. II Kings 15:29; 16:9; I Chron. 5:26.
Ahaz thence reigned as vassal of the Assyrian Monarch.
- (8) In 724 B.C. Isaiah about 55 years old - Shalmaneser V determined to destroy the last vestige of Israelite independence, laid siege to Samaria for three years, but finally captured it in 722 just as Sargon took the throne from him.
- (9) Sargon claimed the glory and carried off nearly 30,000 prisoners.
- (10) Judah now has no independent neighbors. Only Ahaz's subservience to the Assyrian king put off the day of their doom. II Kings 16:10-18.
- (11) With the accession of Hezekiah, 727, Judah adopts

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a bolder policy. He rebels against the Assyrian king. II Kings 18:7. Isaiah aids him in this policy for he had always urged his countrymen not to be afraid of the Assyrians. 10:24; 37:6.

- (12) Isaiah counseled that no foreign alliance be made, but to depend on God who would protect his own people.
- (13) The king's other counselors, Shebna and Eliakim, however, counseled an alliance with some great world power. The simple faith of the prophet was to them fanaticism and folly.
- (14) At this time there was only one possible rival to Assyria - Egypt - (Ethiopia).
- (15) Not known exactly the time when Assyria began to threaten Hezekiah with vengeance. Sargon made several expeditions into Syria (Isa. 20:1) and even into Philistia and in one place calls himself the "Conqueror of Judah."
- (16) It was not till Sennacherib had come to the throne in 704 that conquest of the rebellious Jews was actually taken in hand by the great monarch.
- (17) But the danger had shadowed the land all thru Hezekiah's reign. Now, as it became more imminent, the counsellors of the Anti-religious party prevail. Ambassadors go to Egypt. 30:2-4.
- (18) The alliance is made and the reigning Pharaoh, Shabatok and Tirhakah, promise an army to aid Hezekiah in case he is invaded.
- (19) The invasion came. Sennacherib overran the valleys and captured 46 fortified cities. Hezekiah received no aid by Egypt. Bought off the enemy . . . II Kings 18:14-16 . . . with treasures from the temple. Sennacherib withdrew and Hezekiah submitted to his rule.
- (20) Neither trusted the other and soon war broke out again. Isaiah prevailed with Hezekiah to resist invasion by appealing to God; and the destruction of the

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Assyrian host resulted. II Kings 19:35-37.

2. Judea was for considerable space of time free from all threat of invasion. The closing years of Hezekiah's reign were prosperous. II Chron. 32:23, 27-29. Yet did Isaiah's life set in the blood red clouds of persecution.

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KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
Uzziah (Azariah) becomes king of Judah, 790 B.C. (2 Ki. 14:21—15:2; 2 Chron. 26:1-3)	Jeroboam II, king of Israel, 793 B.C.	812-782 B.C. Adad-nirari III, King of Assyria
<i>Isaiah probably born about 780 B.C.</i>		782-773 B.C. Shalmaneser IV, King of Assyria
Character of Uzziah (2 Ki. 15:3; 2 Chron. 26:4-5)		772-755 B.C. Ashur-dan, King of Assyria
Spiritual Condition of Kingdom (2 Ki. 15:4)		
Uzziah's Prosperous Years (2 Ki. 14:4; 2 Chron. 26:6-15)	Death of Jeroboam II, 2 Ki. 14:28-29, 753 B.C.	754-745 Ashur-Nirari V, King of Assyria
Uzziah's Sin, 2 Ki. 15:5a; 2 Chron. 26:16-21a	Zechariah, king of Israel for one year, (2 Ki. 14:29b; 15:8) 753 B.C.	
Jotham begins co-reign with his father, Uzziah, 751 B.C.	Death of Zechariah, 2 Ki. 15:10-12, 752 B.C.	
<i>Isaiah's first five chapters of his book probably speak of this era.</i>	Shallum, king of Israel for one month, 2 Ki. 15:13-15	
	Menahem, king of Israel, (2 Ki. 15:16-20), 752 B.C.	
	Pekah establishes rival gov. in Gilead, 752 B.C.	744-727 Tiglath Pileser (Pul), King of Assyria
	Death of Menahem, (2 Ki. 15:21-22a), 742 B.C.	
	Pekahiah, king of Israel, 2 Ki. 15:22b-23, 742 B.C.	
	Death of Pekahiah, 2 Ki. 15:25-26, 740 B.C.	737 B.C. Tiglath Pileser comes against Israel; Beginning of Captivity of Israel, 1 Chron. 5:25-26 (also I Chron. 5:6).
Death of Uzziah, 2 Ki. 15:6-7; 2 Chron. 26:22-23a, 739 B.C.	Pekah reigns alone in Israel, 2 Ki. 15:27, 740 B.C.	
<i>Second Call of Isaiah, Isa. 6:1ff</i>		

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BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Jotham reigns alone in Judah, 2 Ki. 15:7-35; 2 Chron. 26:23—27:6</p>		
<p>War Between Jotham and Rezin and Pekah, 2 Kings 15:37</p>		
<p>Death of Jotham, 2 Ki. 15:36-38; 2 Chron. 27:7-9, 736 B.C.</p>		
<p>Ahaz, king of Judah, 2 Ki. 15:38b—16:4; 2 Chron. 27:9b—28:4 736 B.C.</p>		
<p>War Between Ahaz, Rezin and Pekah, 2 Ki. 16:5-6; 2 Chron. 28:5-8</p>		
<p>Oded, the prophet, Procures the Release of the Jewish Captives, 2 Chron. 28:9-15</p>		
<p>Edomite & Philistine Invasion of Judah, 2 Chron. 28:17-19</p>		
<p><i>Isaiah, chapter 7 probably here 734 B.C.</i></p>		
<p>Ahaz seeks help from Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Ki. 16:7-8; 2 Chron. 28:16-21</p>		
<p>Ahaz Becomes Tributary to Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Ki. 16:10a 2 Chron. 28:20</p>		<p>Tiglath-Pileser Captures Damascus, 2 Ki. 16:9 732 B.C.</p>
<p>Ahaz Copies Idolatry of Damascus, 2 Ki. 16:10b-18 (cf. also 2 Chron. ch. 21-25)</p>	<p>Death of Pekah, 2 Ki. 15:30-31</p>	<p>Tiglath-Pileser Wars Against Israel in Alliance with Ahaz.</p>
<p>Death of Ahaz, 2 Ki. 16:19-20a 2 Chron. 28:26-27a, 728 B.C.</p>	<p>Hoshea, king of Israel, 2 Ki. 17:1-2, 732 B.C.</p>	<p>Many Israelites Deported to Assyria, 2 Ki. 15:29</p>
<p>Hezekiah becomes king of Judah 2 Ki. 16:20bff; 2 Chron. 28:27b—29:2, 728 B.C.</p>		
<p>The Cleansing of the Temple 2 Chron. 29:3-19 The Reconsecration of the Temple, 2 Chron. 29:20-36</p>		

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BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Hezekiah throws off the Assyrian Yoke, 2 Ki. 18: 7b-8 704 B.C.</p> <p>Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah, 2 Ki. 18:13-16; 2 Chron. 32:1-8; 701 B.C.</p> <p>Sennacherib's advance toward Jerusalem; Rabshakeh's message, 2 Ki. 18:17-25; 2 Chron. 32:9-15</p> <p><i>Isaiah, chapters 36-38 here 704-700 B.C. approx.</i></p> <p>Reply of Hezekiah's Ministers 2 Ki. 18:26</p> <p>Further insolence of Rabshakeh, 2 Ki. 18:27-35; 2 Chron. 32:16-19</p> <p>The Despair of Hezekiah's Ministers, 2 Ki. 18:36-37</p> <p>Hezekiah's Message to Isaiah, 2 Ki. 19:1-5</p> <p>Isaiah's Answer, 2 Ki. 19:6-7</p> <p>Rabshaken's Departure, 2 Ki. 19:8</p> <p>Sennacherib's Letter to Hezekiah, 2 Ki. 19:9-13; 2 Chron. 32:17</p> <p>Hezekiah's Prayer, 2 Ki. 19:14-19; 2 Chron. 32:20</p> <p>Jehovah's Answer through Isaiah 2 Ki. 19:20-34</p> <p>The Overthrow of the Assyrians, 2 Ki. 19:35-36; 2 Chron. 32:21-22</p> <p>Hezekiah's Reception of the Babylonian Embassy, 2 Ki. 20:12-19; 2 Chron. 32:25-26,31</p> <p>Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery, 2 Ki. 20:1-11; 2 Chron. 32:24</p>		<p>Sennacherib, King of Assyria 704-681 B.C.</p>

BIBLICAL OUTLINE

BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Hezekiah once more prosperous 2 Chron. 32:23</p>		
<p><i>Isaiah 39 here, approx. 695 B.C.</i></p>		
<p>Death of Hezekiah, 2 Ki. 20:20-21, 2 Chron. 32:32-33</p>		
<p>Accession of Manasseh, 2 Ki. 20:21—21:1; 2 Chron. 32:33—31:1, 695-642 B.C.</p>		
<p>Manasseh's excessive idolatries 2 Ki. 21:2-9; 2 Chron. 33:2-9</p>		
<p><i>Isaiah 40-66 written before —Isaiah's Death approx. 690 B.C.</i></p>		
<p>Jehovah's Message by His Servants the Prophets, 2 Ki. 21:10-15; 2 Chron. 33:10</p>		
<p>Manasseh's Crimes and Captivity, 2 Ki. 21:16; 2 Chron. 33:11</p>		
<p>Manasseh's Repentance and Restoration, 2 Chron. 33:12-16</p>		
<p>Spiritual Condition of the People, 2 Chron. 33:17</p>		
<p>Manasseh's Death, 2 Ki. 21:17-18; 2 Chron. 33:18-20 642 B.C.</p>		
		<p>Sennacherib's Death, 2 Ki. 19:37; 2 Chron. 32:21, 681 B.C.</p>
		<p>Esar-haddon, King of Assyria 2 Ki. 19:37b, 680 B.C.</p>
		<p>Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria 668 B.C. — 626 B.C.</p>

IS A I A H

THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT

(Isaiah 1-35)

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(Isaiah 40-66)

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ISAIAH

PURPOSE

Isaiah was called by God at one of the most critical and unique moments in the history of the covenant people. It was a time when men needed to be turned away from their own self-conceived and carnally-oriented schemes of utopianism. They were bent on saving themselves in their own way. They were certain that salvation was merely a matter of making the correct sacrifices and observing the proper rituals and making the right political alliances.

Isaiah's era and message form the precise historical and theological pivotal point between the theocracy and the church, between Moses and Christ. There were definite predictions and historical inferences that the old order and old relationships were to pass away and God was preparing to deal with all mankind (including Gentiles) through a new order and new relationships. The crucial questions were, where is Judah's place in this unfolding drama? and, how is Judah to fulfill her function, once it is known? The problem facing Isaiah was, will Judah prepare herself to be and do what Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, has planned for her in this great drama of redemption? Will Judah allow herself to be purged? Will she repent and become a messianically-prepared people—a light to lighten the Gentiles—or would she fall into the darkness by turning to the pagan nations around her and become like them?

The history of man from his first sin was one long account of man's attempts to save himself in his sins, by his self-centered methods. But man grew more and more wicked. God judged the world by a great flood. Not long after that men made another attempt to storm the ramparts of heaven by building a tower to reach up to God at Babel. Again, their attempt to save themselves resulted in an awful judgement of God when he confounded their speech and scattered them abroad. Thus God would not permit sin to be concentrated in one place where mankind could concentrate all his efforts in a united way to save himself. Nations and societies arose. From among them God chose one particular nation to be for Him a kingdom of priests—to exemplify in the

PURPOSE

earth, among the nations, His plan for redemption and man's necessity to give up self-conceived ways of saving himself and trust in God.

But the covenant people faltered. They begged for "a king like the nations." They divided into warring camps (Israel and Judah). They both eventually became, in fact, worse than the pagan nations about them. In addition to this age of particularism (many nations, cults, cultures) the old spirit of Babel again asserted itself. In such world-wide nationalism and particularism, man could not unite to find his utopia, so, as never before in the history of the world the idea of conquest gained ground and one nation sought to subdue other nations and to make them a part of itself. Thus the powerful Assyrian monarch appeared on the scene and his appearance signaled the striving of man for a new world-order—universalism. It would be followed in succession by four great, universal, world-empires. There would be no tower reaching to heaven, but there would be a world-empire. Mankind would not be concentrated in one spot; he would cover the earth but would belong to one kingdom, the kingdom of man. Man was to rule and extend his sway, and man's kingdom was to cover the world so that man alone would be exalted through such universalism. Sound familiar? It should, for this is prevalent in our own country with "one-worlders" and United Nations devotees.

Where would the covenant people fit into this scheme? Were they to be swallowed up in the world kingdom, or would they, for some reason or other, resist the march of civilization and universalism? The covenant people seemed to be infatuated with the prospects of being like the nations about them—even guardedly in favor of universalism. God's purposes for man stood in diametric opposition to such an idea. He had made it known in the past that He and He alone was capable of bringing man to salvation. Man must learn that his deliverance cannot come from himself. To God alone must he look.

The exile, (the captivities of the Jews) that period of God's great indignation, must come upon the covenant people in order that through the exile a holy remnant might pass and return

and from this remnant the Suffering Servant, the Saviour, might finally come. They must understand that the bondage to Babylon (just like the bondage of their forefathers in Egypt) from which Cyrus (God's Servant in type, Isa. 44:28—45:1ff) would free them was but a type of the greater bondage to which all men are enslaved, that bondage of a spiritual nature. They must learn that salvation is not in human universality. Isaiah, in glowing, emotive, figurative language which hopefully his contemporaries would best understand, predicted that the experiences of the covenant people past and present were merely types of the redemptive work which God was going to culminate in "Zion" (the N.T. Church) through the Servant of the Lord (the One, Unknown, yet so well known), the Redeemer. He will accomplish the purpose of God as the nation itself could never do.

To explain to the people of God that the old order of God's method in carrying out His plan of redemption, that is, in a particular nation, was passing away and that the new order (universal salvation) was approaching in a universal Kingdom of God was the task of Isaiah, the prophet. The covenant people had defaulted their commission to be a light to lighten the world. They must be purged. Captivity will come. But a "faithful remnant" is seen by the prophet which will, at some future time, return to the land and out of this remnant will come the "seed of woman" to bruise the serpent's head. Then will be fulfilled the covenant made with Abraham, "from thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." It is no wonder that Isaiah has been called "The Gospel Prophet."

But now, in Isaiah's own day, as never before, the covenant people had to know that their help was in Jehovah. The threatening appearance of Assyria had to be explained for the people of Judah were tempted to turn to Assyria for help. But in spite of Isaiah's warning and predictions that God was able and had already planned to deliver them, they still turned to Assyria. They turned to the one who was to accomplish their destruction, and so the Lord, who overrules all things for His glory, brought upon them what they had asked for, even the king of Assyria (Isa. 7:17). The king of Assyria did come, and the whole course

PURPOSE

of human history was changed. Isaiah advised one after another of the kings of Judah against dependence upon Assyria, but to no avail. It became his God-appointed duty, therefore, to explain the course of events that would follow (Babylonian exile, restoration, Messianic glories) so that the faithful remnant might be encouraged to even greater faithfulness in the midst of dire circumstances.

All the forces of the world are subject to Jehovah. The great empires, though they are free to exert their own will, unconsciously fulfill the will of God in His plan of redemption. He uses their evil for both judgement and chastening. The heathen empires rage against God (Psa. 2:1-11), but He will not allow them to utterly annihilate His people. A "faithful remnant" will survive. To this end Isaiah is called to predict its survival and its glorious destiny. Jerusalem (meaning, of course, the faithful remnant which grows into the N.T. church) shall remain inviolate. Judah may be overrun by the heathen but Jerusalem can not fail.

Jerusalem, it must be remembered, was the one spot on earth where Jehovah was worshipped. His shrine was there. There lived the only community on earth which preserved for mankind the true knowledge of Jehovah and His purposes. The little band of faithful Jews to whom Isaiah committed His testimony and revelation was there. The preservation and continued existence in the world of this *spiritual Israel* culminating in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:28; 11:26) is what Isaiah proclaims with such unwearied assurance against both the fears of the rulers of Judah and the arrogance of the heathen who sought their overthrow.

So the gist of Isaiah's prophecy is this: The sinners having been destroyed (1:28), and Jerusalem purified, the city shall be a city of righteousness (1:25ff), under a righteous ruler (9:7; 11:4ff). But above all Jehovah's own presence and government shall be very manifest, with exceeding joy and glory. As a result, men shall abandon all their idols (2:20, etc.), the worship of which had not wholly disappeared from Israel, in spite of the fact that the national religion was that of Jehovah. With righteousness

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shall come peace (2:40), and with peace the renewed fertility, and the free enjoyment of the fruits of such prosperity (1:19; 4:2; 30:23-26, etc.). Over all a wonderful light shall be shed, dispersing the people's gloom. Moreover, the nations shall willingly come to "Jerusalem" to be taught of Israel's God and His law.

I. PERVERSITY AND PROPHET - CHAPTERS 1 - 6

CHAPTER ONE

A. THE IMPEACHING ACCUSATION

1. CONTROVERSY DECLARED 1:1-20

a. JEHOVAH'S COMPLAINT

TEXT: 1:1-9

- 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.
- 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
- 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.
- 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! They have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward.
- 5 Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
- 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.
- 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.

- 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.
9 Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

QUERIES

- a. Why mention the fact that Uzziah was dead?
- b. Why compare people with animals?
- c. What sickness did the people have?

PARAPHRASE

These are the messages that came to Isaiah, son of Amoz, in the visions he saw during the reigns of King Uzziah, King Jotham, King Ahaz, and King Hezekiah—all kings of Judah. In these messages God showed him what was going to happen to Judah and Jerusalem in the days ahead. Listen, O heaven and earth, to what the Lord is saying: the children I raised and cared for so long and tenderly have turned against Me. Even the animals—the donkey and the ox—know their owner and appreciate his care for them, but not My people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still don't care. Oh, what a sinful nation they are! They walk in reverse from the way I have asked them to walk. Their fathers before them were evil too. Born to be bad, they have turned their backs upon the Lord, and have despised the Holy One of Israel. They have cut themselves off from My help. Oh, my people, haven't you had enough of punishment? Why will you force Me to whip you again and again? Must you forever rebel? From head to foot you are sick and weak and faint, covered with bruises and welts and infected wounds, untreated and unbound. Your country lies in ruins; your cities are burned; while you watch, foreigners are destroying

and plundering everything they see. You stand there helpless and abandoned like a watchman's shanty in the field when the harvest time is over—or when the crop is stripped and robbed. If the Lord of Hosts had not stepped in to save a few of us, we would have been wiped out as Sodom and Gommorah were.

COMMENTS

v. 1 The first chapter is a prototype of the entire book. Contains the basic outline of the whole message: (a) sinfulness of Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 3-8); (b) appeals for repentance (vv. 16-19); (c) the coming judgment (vv. 24, 25, 29-31); (d) the blessings of the salvation to come (vv. 26, 27). The combined reigns of the four kings mentioned covered some 81 years. II Chron. 32:32 suggests that Isaiah may have outlived Hezekiah. The prophecy concerns the destinies of Judah and Jerusalem—not the Second Coming of Christ—the preservation of the covenant people and points toward a fulfillment in the First Advent of Christ.

v. 2 Jehovah's complaint is expressed in terms of Fatherhood (Cf. Hosea 11:1-7). When God chose Israel she was a small and insignificant people. He reared her and nourished her to a position of eminence and exaltation through special gifts and protections. Then she rebelled against Him and spurned His love (Cf. Ezek. 16:1-63).

v. 3 This sin on the part of Israel is unnatural. It is animalistic, brutish, unreasoning. They behave worse than the most unintelligent, instinctive brute, for even the ass and the ox know enough to know who feeds them. Men often allow sin to degrade them; they behave worse than animals (Cf. Hosea 10:11-12; Jer. 5:8; II Pet. 2:12; Psa. 73:22; Isa. 56:9-12; Rom. 1:18-32). When men "exchange the truth of God for a lie and serve the creature rather than the Creator" they "live in the passions of their flesh," following the (animal) desires of body and mind" (Cf. Eph. 2:1-3). Evolutionism as a philosophy teaches that man has no Creator and such a philosophy is responsible for much of the animalistic behavior of men and women in our age.

v. 4 Notice the sins of which they were guilty: Inconsiderate-

ness; Sins of their forefathers (grumbling, idolatry, etc.); Crooked dealing; Forsaking the Lord; Going backward (backsliding); Reducing their worship to a mere formality; Despising the Holy One of Israel. Unbelief usually first manifests itself in the sin of Ingratitude (Inconsiderateness) (Rom. 1:21; Deut. 8:11-20; I Cor. 10:1-10).

v. 5 It amazes the Lord that in spite of the afflictions He has allowed to come upon them, they persist in the hard way of the transgressor. (Cf. Ezek. 33:10-11) So useless, uncalled for, but as long as they continue in sin they will be stricken. Jesus "marvelled" at the unbelief of the people of His home town (Mk. 6:6). With all the advantages, liberties, and blessings of people in countries where the Gospel has been preached for centuries, it is nothing short of amazing to behold the unbelief, ingratitude and despising of the Holy God.

v. 6 What is the explanation? The head is sick and diseased. The intellectual and moral life of the nation is diseased. They think wrong, because they love sin (Cf. John 3:18-20). "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," (Prov. 14:34). You cannot *think* wrong and *be* right! "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," (Prov. 23:7). The malignant cancer of sin is in all four receptacles of the heart (intellect; emotions; will; conscience). The whole man is diseased! The immortal heart pours its poison to every facet of life.

v. 7 Note the use of both figurative and literal language. The country is desolate and literally burned with fire because of the spiritual conditions described figuratively. Desolation—burned cities—foreigners occupying their farms. Who the invaders were we do not know for certain. Possibilities: Edomites and Philistines who invaded Judea in the time of Ahaz; Israelites under Amaziah; Assyrians under Sargon.

v. 8 Because of this condition Jerusalem is left humiliated like a frail, lonely, neglected watchman's shack in a vineyard or a cucumber patch. She was surrounded by her enemies and cut off from the rest of the nations like a besieged city.

v. 9 But there is one hope—a remnant, literally, a very small number which remains righteous and thus saved from the coming

judgment. Only a few thousand remained faithful through the captivity and returned to restore the commonwealth of the covenant people with Ezra, Nehemiah, et al. Had it not been for this faithful remnant, Judah and Jerusalem would have been utterly obliterated like Sodom and Gomorrah. Ed. J. Young says, "Whereas, however, the delay of judgment also involves postponement of blessing, nevertheless the fact of the choice of the remnant is evidence that God is fulfilling His purposes in history. Here, then, is the true philosophy of history. It is because of the righteous remnant that the world remains. The wickedness of the world is permitted to continue until, in the counsel of God's infinite wisdom, the time of punishment has come. That time is delayed for God is truly the God of the heathen also, a God of longsuffering and mercy. At the same time, in that delay, the delay of the full accomplishment of the blessing is also involved. The preserving of a remnant, however, is a step toward the fulfillment of the promise of blessing." This applies to the blessings of redemption fulfilled in the First Coming of Christ and applies to the redemption and ultimate salvation to be fulfilled in the Second Coming of Christ.

QUIZ

1. How many years are spanned by the four kings who reigned during Isaiah's ministry?
2. What makes men act like animals?
3. What is usually the first sign of unbelief?
4. Where does spiritual sickness start?
5. What is a "booth" in a vineyard?
6. Who is the "remnant" remaining?

b. JEHOVAH'S CORRECTION

TEXT: 1:10-17

- 10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.
- 11 What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough 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.
- 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts?
- 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with; it is iniquity and the solemn meeting.
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them.
- 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.
- 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
- 17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

QUERIES

- a. Is God here contradicting His commandments to make sacrifices?
- b. Does God really refuse to hear anyone's prayer?
- c. How were the people to "wash" themselves clean?

PARAPHRASE

An apt comparison! Listen, you leaders of Israel, you men of

Sodom and Gomorrah, as I call you now. Listen to the Lord. Hear what he is telling you! I am sick of your sacrifices. Don't bring Me any more of them. I don't want your fat rams; I don't want to see the blood from your offerings. Who wants your sacrifices when you have no sorrow for your sins? The incense you bring Me is a stench in my nostrils. Your holy celebrations of the new moon and sabbath, and your special days for fasting—even your most pious meetings—all are frauds! I want nothing more to do with them. I hate them all; I can't stand the sight of them.

From now on, when you pray with your hands stretched out to heaven, I won't look or listen. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are those of murderers; they are covered with the blood of your innocent victims.

O, wash yourselves! Be clean! Let Me no longer see you doing all these wicked things; quit your evil ways. Learn to do good, to be fair and to help the poor, the fatherless and widows.

COMMENTS

v. 10 **THE CALL TO CONSIDER:** Be still and give attention for it is Jehovah who speaks. One does not truly hear God's Word unless he obeys that word (Cf. Jas. 1:22). Until a person is in an attitude of willingness to do the Lord's will, he cannot know it (Cf. John 17:17). If one does not obey, it is as though he had not even heard.

v. 11-15 **THE FALSE APPROACH:** Sacrifices without their heart in them. Sacrifices without faith in the One (God) to whom they were supposedly being offered. Ceremony without obedience (Cf. I Sam. 15:22; Jer. 6:16-20; Amos 5:21-24). To worship without doing God's commandments in the rest of life is no true worship, and any ritual of worship without faith is a hollow mockery. All that is done in a religious way if it is not accompanied with faith in the Person of God is vain and offensive to God (Cf. Matt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23). Without faith it is *impossible* to please God! And, of course, worshipping Him in

violation of any expressed commandment is to make void the Word of God. Worship and sacrifice and solemn assembly, without faith, becomes a "weariness" to God—it vexes His innermost soul—it disgusts Him. Who required of them such a steady stream of traffic in faithless sacrifices? Not God! They willfully forced these rituals upon Him. He loathed them. Their worship and their living were incongruous—they did not go together—because iniquity and solemn assembly are totally incompatible. God was fed up with them, sick of them, tired of them and would "spew them out of His mouth" (Cf. Rev. 3:16). They were there in bodily presence but their hearts were far from Him. This is totally unacceptable to God. Goodness, love and faith begins in the mind and heart—this is what God wants!

v. 16-17 **THE TRUE APPROACH:** Get your heart right! Wash, cleanse, repent! The O.T. abounds in the use of the figure of washing to refer to repentance (Cf. Psa. 51:2, 7; Jer. 4:14; Ezek. 36:24-26; Zech. 13:1). Repentance is the condition which God demands in order to work His cleansing in man, (Cf. I Pet. 1:22-23). Repentance is: "ceasing to do evil—learning (become skilled in) to do well." Doing well is: being just and seeing that justice is given; correcting and chastening the oppressor; championing the orphans' cause and that of the widow. God cannot even be approached by man unless man is in an attitude of repentance (change of mind). Wm. Chamberlain, in his book, *The Meaning Of Repentance*, defines repentance: "A pilgrimage from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ." Repentance is surrender; a change of thinking, willing, acting; a life directed toward the will of God as revealed in His Word.

QUIZ

1. When does one hear the Word of God?
2. Why is worship without faith unacceptable to God?
3. What is God's attitude toward faithless sacrifice?
4. Why must worship and manner of life go together?
5. When does God cleanse us?

6. What is repentance?
7. How is repentance manifested in one's life?

c. JEHOVAH'S CALL

TEXT: 1:18-20

- 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
- 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:
20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Is God's invitation to "reason together" an invitation to us to help Him decide our means of being saved?
- b. Does obedience save a man?

PARAPHRASE

Come! Think about this matter! says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool! If you will only be willing to let Me help you, if you will only obey, then I will make you rich. But if you keep on turning your backs and refusing to listen to Me, you will be killed by your enemies; I, the Lord, have spoken.

COMMENTS

v. 18 THE INVITATION: Come is in the imperative—a command. The invitation is to think—not to make any decisions about the means of one's salvation. God alone can lay down the arbitrary conditions for salvation, for He is infinitely knowledgeable, wise, loving and powerful. On the basis of past *historical* demonstrations of God's omniscience and omnipotence, man is commanded to come and use his mind to remember, to think, to reason. If God has been absolutely faithful in keeping His word in the past, it should stand to reason that He will do so in the future. Man must think God's thoughts—man must conform his thinking to the revealed thoughts of God in order to be reasonable. To be reasonable is to obey the commands which God has given and the promises He has made. All sin and rebellion, whether in deed or thinking, is unreasonable. "Come to your right mind, and sin no more" (I Cor. 15:34). ". . . they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened . . . claiming to be wise, they became fools . . ." (Rom. 1:21-22). ". . . irrational animals . . ." (II Pet. 2:10-13). In the light of the historically established evidence and the pragmatic proof of the commandments and promises of God's Word, unbelief is irrational, unreasonable and immoral. Only God knows where man came from, what man's purpose in existing is, and what man's destiny is. All other thinking about these ultimates, unless conformed to God's revealed thinking, is irrational and untrue.

v. 18 THE PROMISE: The bloodiest sin can be erased and the sinner transformed into such purity as the whitest snow or wool. God pardons the penitent sinner vicariously and judicially. That is, the sinner does not merit his own pardon. When the sinner turns to God in faith, trust and repentance, God forgives and erases his past and pronounces him righteous, even though the sinner himself could never do enough or be perfect enough to earn this forgiveness. Lest anyone should think, however, that this was an offer of unconditional pardon, whether there was faith or repentance or obedience on the part of the sinner, the

Lord immediately calls the attention of the nation to the need for repentance and obedience.

v. 19-20 **THE ALTERNATIVE:** The alternative to blessing is curse! God wants willing obedience—not the obedience of force. One translation has it: “If ye be willing and hearken . . .” To hearken is to obey. “If any man hears these words of mine and does them, he is like the wise man. . . .” “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man . . .” (Matt. 7:24-27). The alternative to salvation is destruction. Such alternatives are inevitable in a moral universe!

QUIZ

1. Is God inviting man to help Him figure out how to save man?
2. What is God inviting man to do? .
3. Why is sin unreasonable?
4. How is man pardoned from his sin?
5. What is the alternative to pardon?
6. Does one have to obey the Word of God to truly hear it?

2. THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED 1:21-31

a. REASON FOR JUDGMENT, THE CORRUPT CITY

TEXT: 1:21-23

- 21 How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of justice! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers.
- 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water
- 23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

QUERIES

- a. Why use the word "harlot" to describe Jerusalem?
- b. Why the condemnation of the "princes"?

PARAPHRASE

Jerusalem, once My faithful wife! And now a prostitute! Running after other gods. Once the city of Fair Play, but now a gang of murderers. Once like sterling silver; now mixed with worthless alloy! Once so pure, but now diluted like watered-down wine! Your leaders are rebels, companions of thieves; all of them take bribes and won't defend the widows and orphans.

COMMENTS

v. 21 JERUSALEM HAD BECOME A HARLOT: a profligate, sensual, mercenary city, worshipping idols. It was no longer wed to God, sharing His nature and His goals. People make up a city. The city is what the people make it. Some cities have parks, flowers, trees, churches, justice and peace some have saloons, brothels, gambling halls, law-breaking and fear. The spirit of harlotry is the spirit of promiscuousness (see our comments on Hosea, in *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press). Jerusalem left her first love and prostituted herself to pagan idolatry (which is in reality selling oneself to Satan who exploits for his own prideful purposes anyone who will do so).

v. 21 WISDOM AND JUSTICE WERE LOST: Justice and righteousness had found permanent residence in Jerusalem before (probably in the days of David and Solomon, I Kings 3:9-28; II Chron. 19:5-11, or the days of Jehoshaphat). Jerusalem had been known throughout the world for her wise and just men—but now she was known for her profligacy, injustice and murderers.

v. 22 GREAT MEN HAVE BECOME CONTAMINATED: Silver represents nobility—but it had been mixed with "dross" (the scum

or refuse matter thrown off from molten ore or metal). Her great men had deteriorated. They had been weakened by mixing in sin like wine is weakened when mixed with water. The further a nation gets from God, the harder to find men with elements of greatness; faith, vision, initiative, moral integrity, humility, unselfishness. When a nation allows its young men to be taught unbelief and sin, its noble manhood is weakened to little men with enlarged egos—self-serving, greedy, stupid men, drunk with the intoxication of their self-importance.

v. 23 **REBELLIOUS PRINCES:** The royal household (princes) were in rebellion against the true king (God). The princes were companions of thieves—in league with criminals, involved in bribery and graft. Men sworn to uphold law and decency using their position and power to defraud the very people they are supposed to govern and protect. They are greedy shepherds devouring the flock over which they have been made overseers (Cf. Ezek. 34; John 10). They use the law for lawless purposes—for selfish ends. Could such a scathing condemnation be true of some of the leaders of God's kingdom (the Church) today? Unquestionably!

QUIZ

1. What makes a city a "harlot"?
2. What does Satan do with those who prostitute themselves spiritually?
3. In what era was Jerusalem known for righteousness and justice?
4. What does silver symbolize?
5. What is the figurative picture induced by "water-weakened wine"?
6. In what way were the princes rebelling?

b. THE RESULTS OF JUDGMENT, A CLEANSED CITY

TEXT: 1:24-31

- 24 Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies;
- 25 and I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin;
- 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, a faithful town.
- 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness.
- 28 But the destruction of transgressors and sinners shall be together, and they that forsake Jehovah shall be consumed.
- 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.
- 30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
- 31 And the strong shall be as two, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

QUERIES

- a. When is this "purging" of the city to take place?
- b. Who are the "converts" of Zion?
- c. What are the "oaks" they desired?

PARAPHRASE

Therefore the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, says: I will pour out My anger on you, My enemies! I Myself will melt you in a smelting pot, and skim off your slag. And afterwards

I will give you good judges and wise counsellors like those you used to have. Then your city shall again be called "The City of Justice," and "The Faithful Town." Those who return to the Lord, who are just and good, shall be redeemed. (But all sinners shall utterly perish, for they refuse to come to Me.) Shame will cover you, and you will blush to think of all those times you sacrificed to idols in your groves of "sacred" oaks. You will perish like a withered tree or a garden without water. The strongest among you will disappear like burning straw; your evil deeds are the spark that sets the straw on fire, and no one will be able to put it out.

COMMENTS

v. 24-27 RESTORATION: The impenitent sinner is the enemy of Almighty God! The sinner is a burden to God—the sinner's rebellion is unreasonable and unjust in the light of God's love. Therefore God is justified in avenging Himself of impenitent rebels. But in the process God's wrath also works chastening, repentance and purification of some. Smelting silver ore is a radical process; purifying sinners is a radical process demanding the death of self! But when the purification has been accomplished, the beauty and utility of the finished product is well worth enduring the crucible. The promises given in verses 26-27 are not that of mere restoration of physical conditions, but the introduction of new conditions that never, in their fullest sense, prevailed before. There may be some temporary reference to the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth after the exile, but this restored commonwealth was only typical of the Messianic kingdom to come, so that the fundamental meaning of the prophecy is that there will come a time, typified by the former reign of David (righteousness and justice) in which true righteousness and justice will be found, namely, the Messianic Age (Cf. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9ff; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24, etc.). This purifying reign of justice and righteousness would be accomplished by the redemption wrought through Jesus Christ (Cf. Lk.

1:67-79; Acts 13:34-40; Titus 2:11-14). The "converts" of Zion are Christians, both Jew and Gentile, of the N.T. Church.

v. 28-31 REPROBATION: The doom of the apostates. They will reap what they have sown—they will be paid shameful, confounding, condemning wages for their shameful, confounding, condemning deeds (Cf. Rom. 6:20-23; Gal. 6:7-9; Rom. 1:18-32, etc.). Those who turn to dumb idols will one day be brought face to face with the brutal reality that their false gods are dumb, impotent and useless—and they will be ashamed. The "oak groves" where they set up idols to worship would incriminate them in their shameful apostacy—places they would like to forget when God's judgment begins to fall. The nation would be seared and withered by the heat of God's wrath as well as by their own spiritual starvation. They would not be like a tree planted by the water (Psa. 1:1-6). They would be as the "tow" (the coarse and broken part of flax) used for burning. All of man's strength—whether intellectual or physical—will be consumed and disappear as rapidly as tow when God's judgment breaks out. This judgment is much more than the exile and captivity. The sin, spiritual in nature, if not forgiven, will be rewarded with spiritual punishment—eternal punishment in Hell.

QUIZ

1. Why is God justified in condemning impenitent sinners?
2. What does God's judgment work upon those who trust Him?
3. What is the goal or fulfillment in the ultimate sense of the promises of Zion's redemption? Prove it!
4. Who are Zion's converts?
5. What is the destiny of the enemies of God?
6. How helpful is the strength of man's intellectual abilities when the wrath of God begins to fall?

B. THE IMPLORING APPEAL - CHAPTERS 2 - 4

CHAPTER TWO

1. VISION OF THE COMING MESSIANIC AGE

THE LORD'S HOUSE ESTABLISHED

TEXT: 2:1-4

- 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, 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 Jehovah from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

QUERIES

- a. When are the "latter days"?
- b. Who are the "people" of verse 3?
- c. When will the cessation of war take place?

PARAPHRASE

And this is the message to Isaiah from the Lord concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the closing days of the Old Testament era the faithful people of God's remnant will grow into a great and spectacular kingdom into which people from all the nations

and races on the earth will come for membership. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, into this universal kingdom, saying, Let us join with this faithful remnant and learn of the One True God of Israel; He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. Out of this Heavenly Community shall go forth the revealed will and word of God. And God, Himself, through His word will arbitrate between citizens of this new kingdom. Its citizens shall be people of peace and love and they will not fight against one another any more. All their activities and attributes will be directed toward fruitful and productive ends.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **THE TIME:** In the latter days of Judah and Jerusalem as the exclusive covenant people of God. "Latter days" does not refer to the end of time or the Second Advent of Christ or the so-called millenium. The N.T. definitely and clearly applies the phrase "latter days" to that period of time which began to run its course with the first advent of Christ (Cf. Acts 2:17 with Joel 2:28; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; I Pet. 1:5, 20; II Pet. 3:3 and I John 2:18). Literally the phrase is, "the last parts of the days," and means, "the end of the ages" (Cf. I Cor. 10:11). So the Lord's house is to be established in its glorified and pre-eminent state in the last parts of the days of the Jewish Dispensation. In these "last days" of Judah, Herod the Great was King and he was the first foreigner ever to be King over Judah. This is a fulfillment of Gen. 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh (Christ) come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the people be." It is not the present upon which the eyes of the Israelites are to be directed, but a time which is the end or goal of the contemporary course of events, when the Messiah will have come and the breach which sin had introduced between man and God will be healed (Cf. our comments in *Daniel*, College Press, chapter 9). The figure of Zion being exalted above the hills is significant. At the

time when Isaiah spoke, the very reverse was the case—many other “hills” were “higher” than Zion (Cf. Psa. 67:16). The Temple in Isaiah’s day was situated on Zion, but the false gods had their mountains as well: the Captiol, Olympus, Albordash, Meru, and Zaphon. But Zion, which, in Isaiah’s day and up to Christ, was comparatively insignificant will one day surpass all others. Even Sinai, the mount of law, will recede into the background, for the new covenant is superior to the old. This is the meaning of Hebrews 12:18-24 where Sinai represents the old covenant and Zion represents the new covenant, or the church. See also Daniel 2:35, 44; Jer. 31:12a; 51:44.

v. 2 THE SCOPE: All peoples! No longer exclusively to the Jews. A constant accession of converts streaming (flowing) from all parts of the world upward to God’s house. This high and pre-eminent mount (Zion—the church) is to serve as a unifying force for the whole world. It is to be a reversal of the dispersion (Babel). (Cf. Matt. 8:10-11; Lk. 13:29; Jn. 10:16; Acts 13:44-47, etc.).

v.3 THE NATURE: Enlightenment! The “law” here is not the law of Moses for that went forth from Sinai. It is the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” It is the “perfect law of liberty.” It is the word of the Lord that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ’s name beginning from Jerusalem (Cf. Lk. 24:47). It will be *missionary and evangelistic*! “Many people will go and say, Come ye . . .” No national or racial boundaries. It will be didactic and doctrinal. Those who come to it will necessarily be taught His way. As a consequence of being taught, men will want to walk in God’s way. True doctrine places within one’s heart the desire to walk in the law of God. Truth leads to godliness, and when one has been truly instructed, he will want to do God’s will. One must be instructed first before he can walk in God’s way. Doctrine and ethics must go hand in hand. There can be no right obedience nor any right worship, until first one has learned of God (Cf. Heb. 8:8-13; Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11-15; John 6:44-46). It is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be declared (Eph. 3:10). The church’s work is to produce a ministry for evangelizing and

edifying (Eph. 4:11-16). God's Word is the only source and foundation of truth. Those who preach must preach the Word! This passage teaches that what unbelievers need above all else is teaching which is indoctrination. The missionary and evangelistic activity of the church must be doctrinal in character. The great need of the world is the preaching of revealed absolutes (restrictive and difficult though it may be). The world does not need speculative and theoretical philosophies and theologies of men. There will be some who will reject His Way (Cf. Jer. 6:16-21; Isa. 42:24; Acts 9:2, etc.).

v. 4 THE RESULTS: Peace! is the result of this establishing of the Lord's house. When men are brought into the kingdom of God, the church, they are brought to peace—peace with God and peace with their fellow citizens of the kingdom (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 3:15; Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom. 14:17, etc.). It does not necessarily demand the cessation of all literal human or physical war for the fulfillment of this prophecy. There will be war between human beings as long as there are unregenerate people. But if all men knew and did the will of God war would cease. Peace comes through knowing and doing (voluntarily, not by force) the will of God. There can not be war in the kingdom of God, the church, for it is recreated in the image of God and knows no man anymore after a human (unregenerate) point of view (Cf. II Cor. 5:16-21). If the peace of Christ rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15), this will arbitrate any disagreement we might have as Christians (Cf. I Cor. 5:9—6:8). The Christian, "if possible, so far as it depends upon him, must live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). When the exalted, universal house of the Lord is established and people are so taught His Way that they want to walk in it, the result will be peace and productivity. The instruments of their bodies, the talents they have, formerly used for unrighteousness, will now be "beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks" and used for productive profitable ends (glorifying God and serving others) (Cf. Rom. 6:12-23).

QUIZ

1. When ("latter days") is the Lord's house to be established?
2. Cite two scriptures to show that Mount Zion is typical or prophetic of the church in the N.T.
3. Who is to be included in the exalted house of the Lord?
4. What will be the essential nature of the establishing of this house?
5. What will be the result of it?

2. THE VIOLENCE OF CORRUPTION AND JUDGMENT

2:5-22

a. LIGHT UPON THE DARKNESS

TEXT: 2:5-9

- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.
- 6 For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with customs from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.
- 7 And their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.
- 8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.
- 9 And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low: therefore forgive them not.

QUERIES

- a. What is wrong with the "customs of the east"?
- b. What is "striking hands"?

c. Who is the "mean man"?

PARAPHRASE

If the nations are going to seek to walk in His ways, O house of Jacob, then, come, let us walk in the light of Jehovah also! But, thou O Jehovah, hast withdrawn thy mercy from the house of Jacob because they are filled with the superstition and idolatry of the eastern peoples and God's sons have become like a nation of uncircumcised Philistines; they reject their own godly heritage to fraternize with foreign unbelievers and their pagan life. They have become money mad and filled the land with the machinery of war. More heinous than that, however, is their inordinate, insatiable hunger to practice idolatry—the land is filled with idols. The common men and the great men all bow down before things they have invented with their own hands. Do not forgive them, O lord!

COMMENTS

v. 5 THE APPEAL TO WALK IN THE LIGHT: In view of the vision which has just preceded this of the Gentiles voluntarily coming to walk in the ways of Jehovah, Isaiah attempts to provoke the house of Jacob to seek His ways. To walk in the light of Jehovah they would have to give up all their materialism and idolatry.

v. 6 GOD HAS FORSAKEN THEM: This does not mean God would not turn and heal them should they repent, but it means He must forsake them as long as they forsake Him. If they will not have Him, He cannot have them. They are granted the freedom to choose whom they will serve—they chose the pagan superstition and idolatry of their eastern neighbors (Syrians, Assyrians, Ammonites, Babylonians, etc.) "Striking hands" (literally, "to clap hands with") means to fraternize with, approve or associate with to the extent of cooperation, indulgence appropriation. It is not wrong in itself to be found in the midst of foreigners or sinners, but to participate in their sin is what the house of Jacob was doing and this is a rejection of Him. Judah

was "filled" with heathen customs of all kinds: animism, sexual sins, human sacrifices, divination, etc. (Cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). It was not that God did not want them—they did not want God!

v. 7 **MATERIALISM:** In the law of Moses (Deut. 17:17) the king was forbidden to multiply silver and gold, for these would tend toward an indulgent and profligate life. Those who possess much silver and gold generally are never satisfied with what they have but always seek to procure more (Cf. I Chron. 29:4; II Chron. 8:18; 9:10). It is not the silver and gold in themselves which are condemned, but the filling of the land with them—they were money mad! When God's people are filled with the fullness which the world offers, they are empty toward God (Cf. Lk. 12:21). God's people should be filled with those things in which the world is empty (Cf. Eph. 5:18). They also filled their land with the machinery of war—horses and chariots. A standing army for the purpose of self defense is not wrong and is even advocated specifically in the O.T. and in principle in the N.T. But multiplying a "military-industrial complex" inevitably leads men to trust more in their own power than in God. The multiplication of horses and chariots was another prohibition of the Mosaic law for kings (Deut. 17:17). The military might of a nation can be made into an idol by proud and vain men (Nazi Germany, Communist Russia and China, Roman Empire, etc.).

v. 8 **IDOLATRY:** Generally speaking, it can be established that there was no national idolatry under Uzziah and Jotham. But by the time of Ahaz, there had been such a wide practice of private idolatry by the people, it had become a national policy. Ahaz promoted it personally. Showing the stupidity of idolatry is one of Isaiah's recurring themes (Cf. Isa. 40:18-31; 41:21-29; 44:9-20, etc.). The utter stupidity of bowing down and worshipping and asking help from a figurine which owes its existence to the one bowing down should be manifest to any intelligent being. Then to receive no utterance or oracle from a block of wood or granite should convince the idolator of his folly, (Cf. Acts 17:22-31). But men have continued for nearly as long as the world has existed to prostitute themselves to objects fashioned

by their own hands, or the hands of others, and called them gods.

V. 9 DEGRADATION: All classes of men are brought low and degraded as a result of Judah's sin. Two Hebrew words for man are used here—*adam*, the general word or "mean" word for man (common mankind), and *ish*, the word for men of importance. All men, high and low, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, are bowing themselves before idols. It is a national disease. Therefore, the prophet commands (imperative), "forgive them not." Isaiah asks that his message be vindicated—God is asked to withhold His forgiveness so long as Judah remains in stubborn rebellion and idolatry. This is what Isaiah proclaimed—now God will establish the truth of what Isaiah preached.

QUERIES

1. Upon what basis does the prophet exhort Jacob to walk in the light of God?
2. When does God "forsake" His people?
3. What is "striking of hands"?
4. Why did God forbid the accumulation of silver and gold?
5. Why did God forbid the accumulation of horses and chariots?
6. Why is idolatry stupid?
7. How extensive was idolatry in Judah at this time?

b. LOSS OF DIGNITY

TEXT: 2:10-22

- 10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it

- shall be brought low;
- 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,
- 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,
- 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall,
- 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery.
- 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.
- 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats;
- 21 to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

QUERIES

- a. Why command the sinful people to try to hide from God?
- b. Why does God bring His wrath upon nature and things?
- c. What does "cease ye from man . . ." mean?

PARAPHRASE

There is only one recourse left to you, Come, crawl into the depressions in the rocks or holes in the earth and try to hide from the terror and majesty of Jehovah's inexorable judgment. For

the day is coming when your proud looks will be turned into looks of terror and shame and God alone will be exalted. On that day the Lord of Hosts will act against the proud and haughty and bring them down into the dust. All the tall cedars of Lebanon and the mighty oaks of Bashan which you admire and feel secure about will bend low. All the high mountains and hills, and every military tower and fortified wall, and all the proud ocean ships which bring you commercial treasure and all the trim pleasure craft which you enjoy so—all shall be crushed before the Lord that day. All the glory of mankind will bow low; the pride of men will lie impotent in the dust, and the Lord alone shall be exalted. Finally, idolatry shall be utterly abolished and destroyed. When the Lord stands up from His throne to shake the earth, His enemies will crawl with fear into the holes in the rocks and into the caves because of the glory of His majesty. Then will be the time when they will at last abandon their gold and silver idols to the moles and bats, and crawl into the caverns to hide among the jagged rocks at the tops of the cliffs to try to get away from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty when He rises to terrify the earth. Quit placing your confidence for salvation in puny man! Man's life is extremely transitory! He is nothing compared to God!

COMMENTS

v. 10-11 **TERROR OF JEHOVAH:** In view of the sin of Judah and the inexorable judgment of God because of it, Judah's only recourse is to attempt to hide from God in the limestone rocks of Palestine which are filled with crevices in which people often took cover from threatened danger (Cf. Judges 6:2; I Sam. 13:6, etc.). Of course, it is impossible for man to hide from God. But Isaiah is emphasizing that the time for repentance is past—the only hope for Judah (which is no hope at all) is to try to hide. This is the judgment which is to come upon Judah in the devastation of the Babylonian captivities, but it typifies and foreshadows the final judgment of God (Cf. Rev. 6:15-17; and our Special Study on *The Day of the Lord in Minor Prophets*,

College Press). The appearance of Jehovah in judgment is both glorious and terrible at the same time! God's glory is manifested in His judgment as well as in His grace! Isaiah's appeal to the fear of God's judgment as a motive in preaching runs contrary to most modern psychological theories which assert that it is wrong to use fear as a motive in preaching and teaching. How different God's methods! Judgment is set before sinful men as a terrible reality! Men must turn from sin if they are to escape such judgment. This is the only motive that will prevail with rebellious sinners. The only way to run from God is to run to Him!

v. 12-17 **MAN, AND HIS PRIDE BROUGHT LOW:** Isaiah announces the judgment of God upon a number of objects in which man had placed his confidence. The cedars of Lebanon—used in the Temple (I Kings 5:6); for masts of ships (Ezek. 27:5); as a symbol of beauty (Jer. 22:6; Zech. 11:1ff); particularly admired by Jews (Cf. Psa. 92:12; 104:16; Ezek. 31:3). Because of man's sin, even the great and beautiful things of creation will suffer His judgment. Things created by man's hand—his buildings for wealth, show and fortification will never survive the judgment of God. One only has to read the notes of archaeologists to verify this statement. The greatest fortifications that the mind of man can devise and the hand of man can build can be destroyed by the least, most insignificant handiwork of God. God is able to direct and send the smallest insect to ruin and make helpless the most complex electronic defense instrument ever devised by man! God can shake the tallest and thickest wall or bridge or sky-scraper to rubble and dust through an earthquake. Objects which bring to man the necessities and luxuries of life—ships of commerce from Tarshish which was a critical lifeline of the nation of Judah would be cut off. Also the ships of pleasure which the rich people of Judah used for selfish pleasure would be destroyed. Verses 11 and 17, beginning and ending of specifying judgments, emphasize that God's eye of judgment is upon the evil of man and not on things. Man's sin has perverted the object and the objects have become a cause of man's sin and so God will remove the cause.

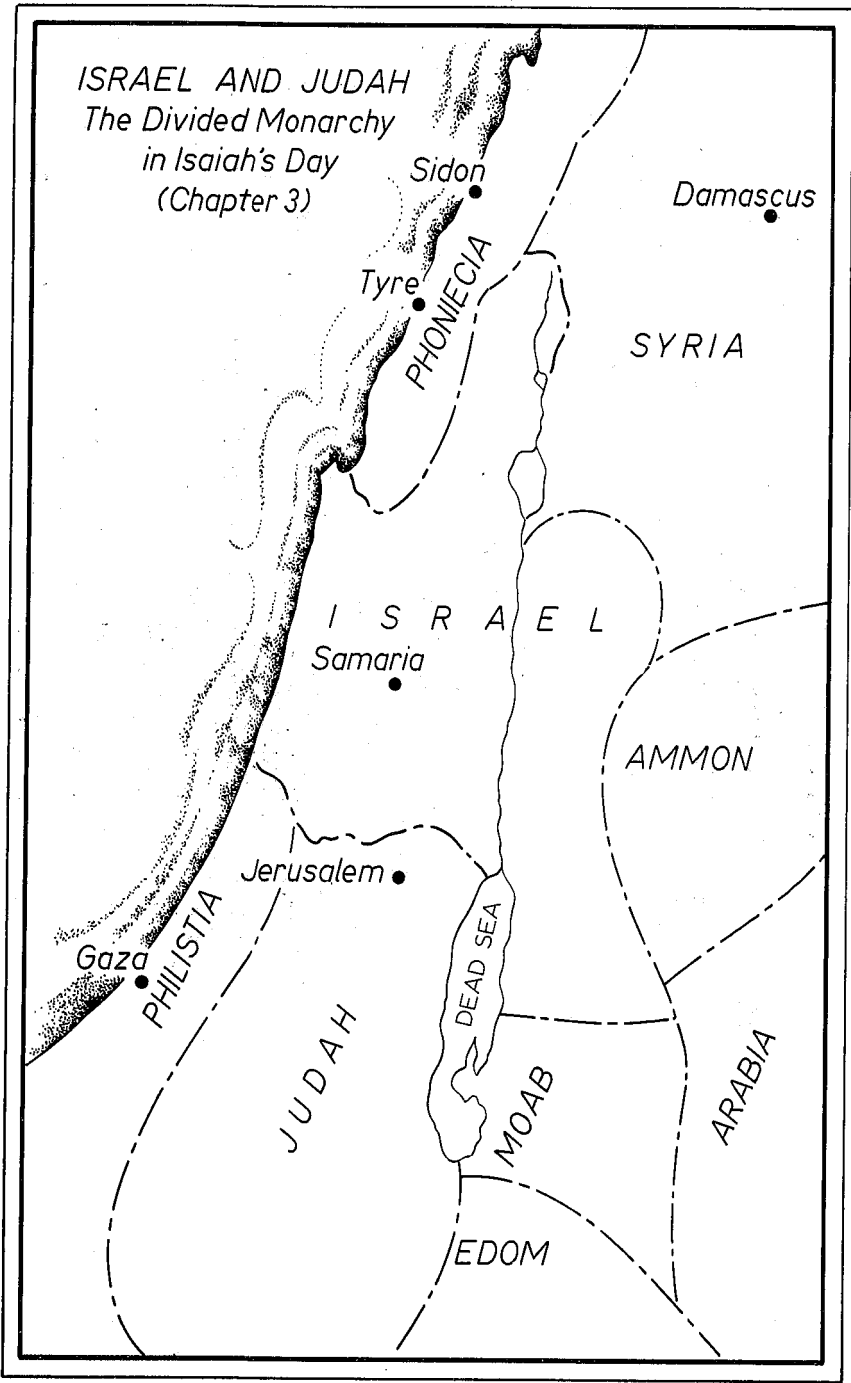
v. 18-21 **IDOLATRY TO BE DESTROYED:** When God begins to act in judgment, the impotence of their idols and their own stupidity in trusting in them will be so evident the people will cast them away in shame. Also, the people will be so intent upon escaping during these terrible times they will consider their idols only hindrances, encumbering their attempts to escape, and they will leave them behind for the heathen to carry off as booty. The destruction of idols is mentioned last because idolatry is the root sin that causes all the rest. Covetousness (the desire to have more) is called idolatry in the N.T. The captives destroyed forever the practice of idolatry among the Jews.

v. 22 **TRUST IN MAN TO BE DESTROYED:** Trust in idolatry is, in a sense, trust in man himself, for the idols are the products of his ingenuity and creative powers. But any trust in any man for salvation of the soul, for redemption is to be stopped! Man's knowledge, limited by the finitude of his being, is not only unable to extricate him from his predicament, but when trusted in to the exclusion of God, buries man deeper and deeper in his own predicament—ignorance and immorality. Man's life is extremely transitory (Cf. Psa. 146:3-4; 118:8; 104:29; Eccl. 12:7; Psa. 33:10; Jas. 4:13-17, etc.). What can man do against the wrath of God? The answer is: Nothing! Man without God is lost!

QUERIES

1. Why would Isaiah direct men to try the impossible—hide from God?
2. Is an appeal to fear God a proper avenue of motivation?
3. Why will God bring His wrath upon the objects of creation as well as persons?
4. Why would the people of Judah "cast away" their idols?
5. Why not trust in man?

ISRAEL AND JUDAH
The Divided Monarchy
in Isaiah's Day
(Chapter 3)



Damascus

SYRIA

PHONICIA

Tyre

Sidon

I S R A E L

Samaria

AMMON

Jerusalem

Gaza

PHILISTIA

JUDAH

DEAD SEA

MOAB

ARABIA

EDOM



CHAPTER THREE

3. THE VENGEANCE UPON DECADENCE 3:1—4:1

a. THE WEALTHY

TEXT: 3:1-15

- 1 For, behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water;
- 2 the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the elder;
- 3 the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the expert artificer, and the skillful enchanter.
- 4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
- 5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable.
- 6 When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand;
- 7 in that day shall he lift up his voice, saying, I will not be a healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the people.
- 8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory.
- 9 The show 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 done evil unto themselves.
- 10 Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
- 11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him.

- 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.
- 13 Jehovah standeth up to contend, and standeth to judge the peoples.
- 14 Jehovah will enter into judgment with the elders of his people, and the princes thereof; It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses:
- 15 what mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

QUERIES

- a. What is the meaning of "babes" ruling over them?
- b. Why did they not hide their sin?
- c. How were "children" their oppressors?

PARAPHRASE

The Lord of Hosts is about to cut off Jerusalem's and Judah's food and water supplies; He is about to kill her leaders; He will destroy her armies, judges, prophets, elders, army officers, businessmen, lawyers, expert craftsmen and magicians. Israel's kings will be immature boys and they will rule like capricious children. And the worst sort of anarchy will prevail—everyone stepping on someone else, neighbors fighting neighbors, youths revolting against authority, criminals sneering at honorable men. The days will be characterized by such widespread poverty, ruin and destitution, that when men find one of their brethren who seems to be prosperous they will try to force him to be their king, saying, you have extra clothing, so you be our king and take care of this mess we are all in. He will reply, Absolutely not! I do not want any part of leadership in such a state of affairs as these. Judah's civil government will be in utter ruin because its people have spoken against all that God stands for and have acted in the same way. They have refused to worship Him; they have exhibited their brazen rebellion before the eyes

of His glorious presence. The evil thoughts of their heart they brazenly manifest in their facial expressions. And they boast about their sins being as bad as those of Sodom—they show no shame about it at all. How utterly horrible! They have sealed their own doom! Still, all will be well for the godly man. Tell him that he will be rewarded with goodness because he has done goodness. But say to the wicked, Your doom is certain! You too shall be rewarded according to what you have done—evil! O My people! Can you not see what fools your rulers are? They are as weak and vacillating as women. They are as foolish and capricious as little children, playing at being king. True leaders? No, misleaders! They are leading you down the path of evil unto destruction. Look! The Lord is standing up—He is preparing to act as Prosecutor and Judge—to convict and sentence. First to feel the wrath of his judgment will be the elders and the princes, for they have defrauded the poor. They have grown prosperous with the properties they have extorted from the helpless poor. They have literally consumed the poor. How dare you grind My people by your greedy oppression into nothingness. You press them and squeeze them until there is nothing left of them. This is the accusation of the Lord God of Hosts!

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 **RUINED GOVERNMENT.** Every necessity will be taken away from Jerusalem and Judah. Every stay and staff. Bread and water are essential for physical life, but they would disappear when God stepped forth to judge the land for its sins. Civil and cultural stay and staff (perhaps even more necessary than bread and water) would also be taken away. Every form of authority would disappear:

- a. mighty man — hero; man of valor already tested in battle
- b. man of war — common soldier; lower in rank than mighty man
- c. judge — civil officer who arbitrated civil cases
- d. prophet — one who delivered God's revelation to the people (with the prophet gone would come a "famine of

hearing the words of the Lord . . ." Cf. Amos 8:11)

- e. diviner — not a legitimate support, but one depended upon, nevertheless, by the people. The entire present order of things, the "Judean way of life" was to be changed radically.
- f. captain of fifty — designates a particular officer (Cf. II Kings 1:9; Exodus 18:25; I Sam. 8:12).
- g. honorable men — "favored persons"—those who had the favor of the king, probably occupied positions of responsibility
- h. counsellor — one who served the public in counselling
- i. expert artificer — one who is wise or skillful with respect to arts (Cf. II Kings 24:14ff; Jer. 24:1; 29:2).
- j. skillful enchanter — one who whispered or muttered magical formulas; not a legitimate office

In the place of experienced and sagacious adult authorities, God would cause "children" and "babes" (literally: puerilities) to rule over them. Incompetent, inexperienced, childish, bratlike rulers would be substituted for Jerusalem and Judah. A whole line of youthful kings followed Hezekiah. After him, only one was 25 years of age (the legal age of a Jew was 30):

Jehoahaz - 23 yrs. old; II Kings 23:31

Amon - 22 yrs. old; II Kings 21:19

Zedekaih - 21 yrs. old; II Kings 24:18

Jehoiachim - 18 yrs. old; II Kings 24:8

Mannasseh - 12 yrs. old; II Kings 21:1

Josiah - 8 yrs. old; II Kings 22:1

It is the hotheadedness, the over-confidence, and the recklessness of youth that is stressed here. The lack of maturity in judgment and decision would be the ruin of the nation. As an Arabian writer said, "A blow in the face by an axe is easier to take than the rule of a boy." Young writes: "When respect for age goes, moral anarchy is at hand . . . Respect for old age had been coupled in the law with the fear of God (Lev. 19:32). When all authority passes, respect for age also passes. One evidence of the degeneration of a government and people is seen in the manner in which the aged are treated." The N.T. clearly teaches Christians to respect the authority of age (especially of those appointed

elders and overseers of the Lord's church) (Cf. I Tim. 3:1-13; 5:1-24; II Tim. 3:2; Titus 3:1ff; Heb. 13:7; 13:17; I Pet. 5:5; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20, etc.). The childish vexation of Ahab, king of Israel, because he could not have Naboth's vineyard, (Cf. I Kings 21:1ff) is a pointed example of what type of rulers would soon come to Judah because of their sin, (Cf. Eccl. 10:5-7; 10:16-17).

v. 5-7 **RESULTING CHAOS.** Social chaos is inevitable. Oppression by one another ("everyman did that which was right in his own eyes, for there was no king in Israel" [Judges 17:6, etc.]), is the certain result of such moral anarchy. The spirit of Rehoboam (rebellion) would take precedence over the spirit of Solomon (wise judgment) and the result would be rashness, recklessness and failure. Those who should occupy a place of subserviency arrogate to themselves places of power. Men will seek to appoint rulers on the mere basis of possessing a few garments. The extremely critical condition of Judah appears in this prophecy. Anyone who possesses extra clothing will be accosted and forced to try to rescue the nation from civil economic and international ruin. The one accosted will vehemently refuse the pressure. In the first place he does not consider himself to possess the means necessary to alleviate the existing conditions; and in the second place he considers the circumstances impossible—the ruined nation beyond all help—and he does not want the responsibility. He refuses to be a "healer" because Judah is beyond being "healed." It is indeed tragic, in nation or church, that conditions can become so calamitous that a righteous man will refuse to undertake the responsibilities of leadership!

v. 8-12 **THE REASON—THE PEOPLE.** In word and in deed—speaking and acting in rebellion against the Lord. It is not out of ignorance they have sinned! It is deliberate sin. They have done it knowing full well the eyes of the Lord of Glory are upon it—their brazenness is like that of Sodom. They boast of their sin (Cf. Jude 8-16; II Pet. 2:1-22; II Tim. 4:3-4; Rom. 1:32).

By such blatant disregard of the moral and spiritual government of God, they have earned for themselves the consequences of moral and spiritual anarchy. They have "cut off their noses to

spite their faces." They have done evil to themselves! If man and his universe is to be governed by any moral principles of right and wrong at all, then wrong must be punished. Anyone who deliberately does wrong deserves punishment, he deserves the fruit of his doings.

But God is not unjust or unmerciful to forget the intentions and deeds of the righteous. God is fair! God is merciful! If a man is righteous of heart (wanting to do right) and righteous of deed (doing right—though sometimes sinning ignorantly), God will reward that man with the fruit of his doings, (Cf. Matt. 25:31-46). God's judgment is not indiscriminate—He judges omnisciently as well as omnipotently.

Those who were supposed to lead the people were oppressing them and leading them into abject slavery, morally and politically. Their rulers were capricious as children and vacillating as women. They lacked the stability that grown men naturally had.

v. 13-15 RESPONSE OF JEHOVAH. It is not merely with foreign nations they shall have to contend—Almighty God, the Lord of Hosts, arises to contend with this people. The great sin of the time was oppression of the poor by the rich. God is represented as the advocate and helper for the cause of the downtrodden. He enters into judgment with the leaders and elders of Judah and accuses them of having oppressed and defrauded His people (Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, accuses the rich of "skinning the poor alive!"). Such sin exemplifies precisely the injustice, greed, and irresponsibility of the rich and ruling and is a perfect example of the cruelty which God hates. The rich and ruling had devoured for themselves what did not belong to them—God's own people ("vineyard"). When the prophets came to warn them to leave the harvest of God's vineyard to Him, they killed the prophets. And when the Heir (the Son) came, they killed him (Cf. Lk. 20:9-18). How brazen could they be—how did they dare to mistreat the precious heritage of the Almighty God?

QUIZ

1. Why mention the taking away of bread and water only?
2. What is a “mighty man” and an “expert artificer”?
3. What is meant by saying that “children and babes” would rule Judah?
4. Why seek a man with clothing to be ruler?
5. Why would such a man refuse to rule?
6. Why mention the righteous here?
7. Did women actually rule over the nation of Judah at this time? What does verse 12 mean?

b. THE WOMEN

TEXT: 3:16—4:1

- 16 Moreover Jehovah said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet;
- 17 therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts.
- 18 In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets; and the cauls, and the crescents;
- 19 the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers;
- 20 the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets;
- 21 the rings, and the nose jewels;
- 22 the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels;
- 23 the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils.
- 24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a robe, a gird-

ing of sackcloth; branding instead of beauty.

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

26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she shall be desolate and sit upon the ground.

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

QUERIES

- a. What are "mincing" steps?
- b. Why was God displeased with the finery of the women?
- c. Why would seven women plead with one man to become his wife?

PARAPHRASE

In addition to the foregoing judgments, Jehovah will judge the haughty women of Judah who walk along with their noses in the air, looking suggestively and seductively at men with their eyes; mincing and affecting their steps so that the tinkling bracelets on their ankles will direct attention to them. Because of their unashamed haughtiness, the Lord will strike them with repugnant scabs and wounds to ornament their heads, and those who delight in immodest exposure the Lord will permit to be immodestly exposed at the hands of vile men. No longer shall they call attention to themselves by tinkling as they walk. For the Lord will strip away their facade of beauty when He takes away their anklets, amulets, crescents, pendants, bracelets, veils, headdresses, armbands, sashes, perfume boxes, charms, rings and nose jewels, holiday dresses, overtunics, cloaks, ornate purses and combs, mirrors, lovely lingerie, beautiful dresses and veils. Instead of smelling of perfume, they shall stink; for sashes they shall wear ropes like prisoners and slaves; their well-kept

hair will begin to fall out; they will wear sackcloth instead of robes. Their beauty will be marred with the branding iron of their captors. Their husbands shall die in battle; the women, alone and helpless, shall mourn. The city herself shall be desolate and alone and have nothing left to do but sit and mourn. At that time so few men will be left alive that seven women, all fearing childlessness, will all fight over one man and say, Let us all become your wives! We will furnish our own food and clothing—only give us a name and children.

COMMENTS

v. 16 **THE REASON:** Wantonness (i.e., undisciplined; unruly; unchaste; lewd; licentious; extravagant; arrogant recklessness) of the women. "The daughters of Zion" means the women of the covenant nation. The women were haughty and proud and concerned with luxurious adornment of themselves in order to bring attention to themselves. This is immodesty! They copied every fad and fashion of their heathen neighbors. "Outstretched necks" probably means walking with the "nose in the air." "Mincing steps" means to walk with short little steps so as to affect primness or daintiness. It was all exaggeration in order to draw attention to themselves. Fabulous amounts of money were spent on adornment. Many hours of each day were wasted by these women primping and beautifying themselves. When women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay has begun to consume a nation or a people. Proper adornment and true beauty in women should never call attention to themselves but should direct the beholder's attention to God and His Son. When women cultivate beauty only for itself, they are infringing upon and detracting from the glory of God. Such vainglory might be expected in women of the world, but "the daughters of Zion" (which today is the church) must exemplify the beauty of holiness!

Is Isaiah, or the Bible, against all feminine or masculine adornment? Hardly! It is the misuse of adornment against which

the Bible speaks. In fact, God has made certain parts of the human body to be alluring and attractive. The Song of Solomon gives a great deal of detail about both natural beauty of the human body and the adornment of it. But the Song does not indicate such beauty and adornment should be used for prideful purposes, rather for God-ordained purposes of love.

When one pauses to consider the disparity between the billions of dollars spent each year by American females (and males) on vain and selfish cosmetics and clothing and the few dollars given each year to the work of the Gospel which transforms men and women into the beauty of holiness, one wonders what God must think!

v. 17-24 THE JUDGMENT: They will reap what they sow. Those who delight in immodest exposure will be rewarded with immodest exposure at the hands of vile men. Why are those women who delight in overtly attracting men by their immodesty always so shocked and offended when immodest and vulgar men demonstrate their attractions?! "Laying bare their secret parts" probably means they will be raped by pagan soldiers. Their indulgences will inevitably result in physical afflictions and loss of real beauty. There will be a loss of their luxury when their pagan neighbors, attracted by their exaggerated showiness, will plunder their jewels and finery.

- a. anklets: ornamental chains with bangles attached which made a tinkling sound when they "minced" along.
- b. cauls: front-bands, head-bands, amulets
- c. crescents: some sort of metallic jewelry in the shape of moons
- d. pendants: like small pearl earring, or tear-drop shaped earrings.
- e. bracelets: decorated bands to fit about the arms (or necks)
- f. mufflers: or veils, to muffle the face
- g. headtires: diadems, or circlets of gold or silver
- h. ankle chains: may have been chains designed to force short steps
- i. sashes: wide, gaudy, expensive bands of cloth around the waist

- j. perfume boxes: probably like the alabaster boxes of Lk. 7:37 etc.
- k. amulets: charms, probably inscribed with incantations,
- l. rings: finger rings with jewels, etc.
- m. nose jewels: nose rings, (Cf. Esth. 3:12; Gen. 41:42; 24:22, 47).
- n. festival robes: festal robes, state gowns, holiday dresses
- o. mantles: overtunics
- p. shawls: cloaks
- q. satchels: purses
- r. hand-mirrors: small metallic mirrors, highly polished metal
- s. fine linen: lingerie, undergarments of expensive cloth
- t. turbans: head wrappings, head garments
- u. veils: same as mufflers

Isaiah predicts that all this finery will be replaced with ugliness because of their selfish, haughty, unbelieving perversion of it all. Instead of rich sashes, they will wear the ropes of captivity and slavery around their waists; instead of intricately coiffed hair-dos, their hair will either fall out or be cut off by their enemies; instead of rich garments, they will be wearing the sack-cloth of mourning; instead of beauty marks, they will wear the ugly scars of the branding-irons, (it was a practice of pagan armies in that day to brand or disfigure slaves—especially by castrating men and using branding-irons on women—to forever mark them as slaves).

v. 25—4:1 FINAL DEGRADATION: With the moral decay of womanhood comes the weakening of all the fibres of the nation—including its men. When its male leaders become morally weak the nation becomes filled with rebellion, anarchy and conflict. War is a consequence. The male population will be destroyed in war (Cf. Lam. 2:21). A great disproportion between the sexes will appear. Instead of the God-intended ratio of one woman for one man, there will be seven or more women for every male.

The great curse of the Hebrew female was to be unmarried and childless. (Cf. Sarah and Abraham, Hannah, etc.). It was the fear of a lack of seed that had led the daughters of Lot to act in

the shameful manner described in Gen. 19:32ff. Women to whom Isaiah preached would some day no longer live as normal women—they would have no offspring since their husbands would be slain in the wars. For this reason they would abandon their natural modesty and take the initiative in a bold and shameful way, openly asking a man to marry them. Thus the order instituted in Eden is reversed. No longer is man the head of the wife. He does not seek her, but she him.

And so, womanhood, always the last stronghold of a people's morality, strength of character, and hope for the future, crumbles and falls into decadent disarray. With it goes the whole nation. God-fearing women have always been the handmaidens of the Lord (Moses' mother; Samuel's mother; women judges; Ruth; Esther; John the Baptist's mother; Jesus' mother, etc.). God-fearing women have wrought salvation of whole nations through their faith. But when women go bad, their degradation can cause such an upheaval in society that the very foundations of that society are destroyed.

QUIZ

1. Why did the prophet condemn the women for adorning themselves?
2. What is "mincing"?
3. What is the meaning of "laying bare their secret parts"?
4. Is adornment categorically condemned by all the Bible?
5. Why mention "branding"?
6. Why were seven women concerned to marry one man?
7. How important is God-fearing womanhood to any nation?

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE VICTORY OF THE CLEANSED 4:2-6

TEXT: 4:2-6

- 2 In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.
- 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;
- 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 justice and by the spirit of burning.
- 5 And Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a covering.
- 6 And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "branch" of Jehovah?
- b. Why is Jehovah going to create a "cloud" and a "flaming fire" over Zion?
- c. What is the pavilion?

PARAPHRASE

In those latter days when the glorious future of the mountain of the house of the Lord comes to pass, the Messiah, the Branch

of the house of David, will bring God's people their true beauty and glory; this Branch in His humanity will be the offspring of Israel and will exhibit the true beauty and godliness which only God's saved-ones recognize as the true glory of humanity. And all those who have escaped the wrath of God and have found salvation in Zion will be named holy. These have their names written down in God's book of life. This will all be done for God's people when God has brought about a washing away of the filth of sin like that which has contaminated the women of Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit of God will accomplish this through a judgment and purging. Then the Lord will create over the whole covenant people, wherever they may assemble, divine guidance, divine protection and divine access. Over all of His saved people God will create a shelter which will afford them divine protection and refreshment sufficient to meet every danger and need.

COMMENTS

v. 2 THE MESSIAH: "In that day," is a flashback to chapter 2:2, ". . . in the latter days." Israel and Judah have been punished 2:6—4:1; a remnant has escaped; out of that remnant another day (far in the future) a better day, has come. This "branch" has to be The Branch, The Messiah (Cf. Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12) if the context is to be taken into account. The Branch, Jesus Christ, is to come and demonstrate the true beauty and glory of Israel. The "fruit of the land" probably refers to the Messiah's humanity having its connection to the nation of Israel (Cf. Num. 13 for "the land of Canaan," which God gave to Israel). The writer of Hebrews probably had this prophecy in mind when he wrote, "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah . . ." (Heb. 7:14). Edward J. Young points to four reasons "the fruit of the land" refers to the Messiah: (a) The parallelism between branch and fruit (Cf. Jn. 12:24); (b) In many passages of Scripture there is reference to the fruitfulness of the Messianic age; (c) The text provides no contrast between fruitfulness and barrenness; (d) Only when the phrase

“fruit of the land” refers to the Messiah is there a satisfactory connection with what follows. It might be, however, that the “fruit of the land” is the product of the Branch, and not the Branch Himself. In this case it would be the redeemed community, the church, Christians.

v. 3 MESSIANIC PEOPLE: In those “latter days” the people who have escaped the wrath of God and have had their names recorded in God’s book of life will have done so because they have been washed and cleansed (v. 4). An important parallel to this whole context is the passage in Joel 2:28—3:3 where practically the same figurative language is used to describe the Messianic age. Those “left in Zion” will be truly called holy in contrast with those of Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day who were claiming to be holy but were filthy. The apostle Paul leaves no doubt that the “Zion” of prophecy is the New Testament church (Cf. Heb. 12:22ff).

v. 4 THE MESSIANIC CLEANSING: The Lord Himself will take action to cleanse “Zion” of the filth of sin such as the women of Jerusalem were guilty. The only point at which God could have brought about cleansing, in any ultimate sense, through perfect justice was at the cross of Christ (Cf. Romans 3:21-26). God punished man’s sins in Christ and was perfectly just in keeping His word of judgment upon sin, while at the same time He was perfectly merciful in imputing to man the righteousness of Christ (Cf. II Cor. 5:14-21). Zechariah proclaims this great cleansing (Zech. 12:10—13:9). This spirit of “burning” is portrayed in Malachi as taking place when the Messiah came to purge “the sons of Levi” (Cf. Malachi 3:1-4). All this cleansing began to take place when Jesus came and offered Himself as both the divine agent to satisfy God’s demands and the divine power to meet man’s needs for purification. It is still taking place through the work of the Holy Spirit as His message of conviction (Jn. 16) is preached and men respond in faith. But it will find its consummation in God’s great and final Day of Judgment and Salvation.

v. 5-6 THE MESSIANIC PRESENCE: It is significant that the word “create” is from the same Hebrew word, *bara*, used in Genesis 1! That which is to come to pass will be brought into

being exclusively by the personal and direct power of God. When the future glory of Zion comes, God is going to "create" a new Jerusalem (Cf. Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-23, etc.). The "cloud" and the "flaming fire" are figures borrowed from the wilderness wandering of the covenant people. They depict Divine guidance, protection and access to God's presence. Over the whole redeemed community of the new "Zion" God is going to spread a canopy. Just as over the Jewish wedding ceremony there was a protective canopy, so here there will also be one to protect God's bride, the church. There will also be a "booth" (pavilion) for refreshing shelter and rest and a refuge from the storms. The booth was a small, protective structure, such as was used by Israel in the wilderness at the Feast of Booths. The "covert" is a hiding place. There are so many New Testament figures brought to our mind here—Jesus speaks of the man who builds his house upon the rock for protection from the storms; our life is said to be hid with Christ in God, etc.

It is reassuring to listen to these sweet words of hope from the prophet squarely in the midst of his thundering of the judgments of God upon sin. It reminds us that the message of God is always two-fold; judgment upon sin, but salvation for faith and repentance.

QUIZ

1. What "day" is referred to in verse 2?
2. Who are those that "are escaped of Israel"?
3. How are they to be named holy?
4. What is the "spirit of justice"? — the "spirit of burning"?
5. How does the N.T. become the fulfillment of all these figures of protection?

CHAPTER FIVE

C. THE IMPRECAATION OF ABANDONMENT 5:1-30

1. THE WORDS OF ACCUSATION

TEXT: 5:1-7

- 1 Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:
- 2 and he digged 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 hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.
- 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
- 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?
- 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:
- 6 and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
- 7 For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.

QUERIES

- a. Did Isaiah actually put this in the form of a song?
- b. What are the "wild grapes" brought forth?

c. Why use the figure of a "vineyard"?

PARAPHRASE

Now I shall sing indeed of my Beloved a song of my Beloved about His vineyard. My Beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He plowed it carefully and took out all the rocks and planted His vineyard with the choicest vines. He built a sturdy watchtower in the middle of it to aid in its protection and cut a permanent wine-press out of the solid rock. Then He patiently waited anticipating a bountiful harvest of sweet grapes. But the grapes that grew were wild and putrid. Now, men of Jerusalem and Judah, you have heard the case! You be the judges! What more could I have done? Why did My vineyard give Me wild grapes instead of sweet? Now I would indeed have you to know what I am about to do to My vineyard; I shall remove the fence of hedge and the vineyard shall be consumed by predators and I shall break down its wall of stone and it shall be trampled down by wild beasts. I will not prune it or cultivate it any more. Briers and thorns will grow up and strangle the vines; I will command the clouds not to rain on it any more. I have been giving you the case of God's chosen people. They are the vineyard I have been speaking about. Israel and Judah were His pleasant plantings. He expected justice, but they produced bloodshed instead. He expected righteousness, but the cries of deep oppression came to Him.

COMMENTS

v. 1 POSSESSOR OF THE VINEYARD: The vineyard belongs to The Beloved, God. Even the song about the vineyard is *of* the Beloved—that is, originates with the Beloved. The prophet sings the song on behalf of the Beloved. This seems to be a song composed rather like some of our contemporary folk-songs—by on-the-spot improvisation. Whether sung to the accompaniment of

an instrument or not is immaterial. This song was intended for teaching, not entertainment! The vineyard was a favorite subject for parabolic instruction, both in the O.T. and the N.T. (Cf. *Psa.* 80:8ff; *Hosea* 10:1; *Jer.* 2:21; *Ezek.* 15:6; 17:1ff; 19:10ff; *Matt.* 20:1-16; 21:33-43; *Jn.* 15:1-11).

v. 2 PROVISION FOR THE VINEYARD: It is God's vineyard by absolute right. He planted it upon land which was His. He planted it in a very productive, conspicuous place in the midst of civilization (on a fertile hill); He cleared it of all hindrances of foreigners (gathered out the stones); He built protective fortresses within it (watchtower); He made provisions to use the fruits of the nation (built a winepress). Then with Divine patience and long-suffering He cultivated this nation with great blessings of deliverance and chastening. He sent His servants the leaders and prophets to tend it. He had every right to anticipate an abundant harvest of sweetness; instead it produced wildness, putridness and rotteness.

v. 3-4 PETITION AGAINST THE VINEYARD: It is the very essence of the righteous dealings of God with man that such dealings, when perverted, bring inevitable self-condemnation upon the perverters. Here, the guilty are petitioned to make a judgment as to where justice lies between the Owner and His vineyard. It reminds one of Jesus asking the Jews to make such judgments upon themselves (Cf. *Matt.* 21:28-32; 21:33-43, etc.). There comes a point in God's dealing with man beyond which God can do no more to produce good fruit in man's life. There is a point where God is forced, by the very nature of the moral being of man, to give up. Man, left to his own devices, falls into complete ruin.

v. 5-6 PUNISHMENT OF THE VINEYARD: Really all that God has to do is withdraw Divine protection and sustenance and leave men to their own selfish, evil devices, and that would be punishment enough (Cf. *Romans* 1:18-32). When God withdrew His protection from Judah, the "wild bull" of Assyria (*Isa.* 10:13) and the "lion, bear, leopard and iron beast" of the book of Daniel all trampled the "vineyard" down. When God withdrew His sustenance from Judah, she suffered famine and hunger

(both spiritual and physical) in her captivities. Often times the prophets use rain to symbolize the refreshing presence of the Spirit of God. Ezekiel represents the Spirit of God leaving the temple of God in Jerusalem near the end of the national existence of Judah (Cf. Ezek. 11:23).

V. 7 PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE VINEYARD'S IDENTITY: If the audience of the prophet has not already surmised who was being evaluated, the prophet would not leave it to doubt. The vineyard is Judah—God's covenant people (Israel does not here necessarily refer to the northern kingdom, but is synonymous with covenant-people). This is like Nathan's statement to David, "thou art the man!" God looked for His people, with all their advantages of having His word and being sustained by His power and seeing His love, mercy, justice and goodness exhibited, to produce the same kind of character—justice and righteousness. Having all this and appropriating it are two different things! This people appropriated the nature of the pagan gods they were so enamored of (Cf. Hosea 9:10). Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also!

QUIZ

1. What kind of song was sung by the prophet?
2. Why use the figure of a vineyard?
3. Why did God have a right to expect the vineyard to produce a certain kind of harvest?
4. Why does God not do more to bring about the right kind of fruit in this vineyard?
5. How is God going to punish this vineyard?
6. Who will the beasts likely be that will trample down the vineyard?
7. What kind of character did the covenant people produce?

2. THE WOES OF APPLICATION

TEXT: 5:8-23

- 8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!
- 9 In mine ears saith Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.
- 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.
- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!
- 12 And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst.
- 14 Therefore Sheol hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend into it.
- 15 And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty are humbled:
- 16 but Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.
- 17 Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture, and the waste places of the fat ones shall wanderers eat.
- 18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope;
- 19 that say, Let him make speed, let him 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!
- 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!

- 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!
- 22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;
- 23 that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

QUERIES

- a. What is wrong with acquiring houses and fields?
- b. What is "drawing iniquity with cords of falsehood"?
- c. Who would call "evil good, and good evil"?

PARAPHRASE

Woe to you who acquire property so others have no place to live. Your homes are built on great estates so you can be alone in the midst of great expanses of land! But the Lord of Hosts has sworn your awful fate—with my own ears I heard Him say, Many a beautiful home will lie deserted, their owners killed or gone. Ten acres of vineyard will produce less than ten gallons of wine, and ten bushels of seed will produce less than one bushel of grain. Woe to you who get up very early in the morning to debauch and debase yourselves with endless carousing and drinking of strong drink. Your addiction is insatiable and you drink yourselves into a stupor. By the riotous merriment of your festivities accompanied by the loud, pagan music, you have very effectively turned your attention away from the work of the Lord and have made yourself insensible to His ways. Sin has so darkened your spiritual understanding you are as good as banished from the Lord's presence into captivity—there is no alternative left to Him but to punish the leaders and the people of this nation with the consequences of their rebellions. There will be both spiritual and physical starvation. Death and the grave are waiting with

mouths wide open to devour the multitudes that will die. Those who revel in injustice, drunkenness, and pompousness will be swallowed up in God's punishment. In that day the haughty shall be brought down to the dust; the proud shall be humbled; and the Lord of Hosts will be exalted above all, for He alone is holy, just and good. The devastation of what was once the vineyard of the Lord will be so complete as to turn the glorious land into pastures for wandering flocks of sheep and goats. Woe to those who are so enslaved to their sins that they drag them along with them everywhere they go like dumb oxen pulling carts. The ropes which bind them to their sins are the lying vanities with which they have deceived themselves. They are so brazen as to mock the Holy One of Israel and dare the Lord to punish them. Hurry up and punish us, O Lord, they say, We want to see what You can do! Woe to them that turn all values upside down and say that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right; that black is white and white is black; bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. Woe to those who are wise and shrewd in their own estimation! Woe to those who are heroes when it comes to getting drunk, and boast about the wine they can hold. Woe to those who pervert justice by taking bribes, letting the guilty go free and putting innocent men in prison.

COMMENTS

After the general warning conveyed to Judah by the song or parable of the vineyard, six sins are pointed out as those which have especially provoked God to give the warning. He now pronounces woes of application against each of these sins.

v. 8-10 **WOE AGAINST MONOPOLY AND GREED:** Selfishness - greed for possession of land and houses. Many rich people are notorious for this sin. They are not satisfied to own a small business, however well paying; they must monopolize. It gives them a sense of security and power. God never intended for a few to control the wealth of the world. These men of Isaiah's day were "land-grabbers" to the extent that there was no room left

for the poor man who must either live on the property of the land-owners as slaves or immigrate to another territory. This violated the Mosaic law which had apportioned a parcel of land to each family head. This land was to remain in the family. If it should have to be sold, it was to be returned to the original family in the year of Jubilee. God's judgment is spoken directly into the ear of Isaiah. There can be no mistake—God will judge! Desolate houses; barren and unfruitful land. Ten acres of vineyard normally should produce 4,000 gallons of wine instead of 8 gallons. The land would produce but 1/10th the seed sown.

v. 11-17 WOE AGAINST DISSIPATION: Misuse of God's beneficence. They rise early, not to work and live constructively, but to revel and play in riotous music, feasting and dancing. A greedy, grasping, monopolizing people. Luxury loving, drinking, feasting and reveling. Consuming the land—while the rest of the people lived like slaves. The only liberty they care for is a selfish liberty—license to do as they please. There is no room in their drink-weakened, pleasure-loving brains for serious thought of sober government. Their only thought is how to enjoy this moment, this day; and they squeeze every day dry and fling it to one side after it is finished.

Captivity is the inevitable consequence of such dissipation. Moral, intellectual, political and spiritual enslavement surely follows such decadence. Loss of personal worth, personal identity and death await such actions. In this instance, the people, their wealth, and their haughtiness will come to an end. Both high and low will meet the same end—captivity.

The lambs and sheep of foreigners will feed in their land. The places formerly owned by the wealthy shall be occupied and used by strangers. Assyrians, Arabs, Samaritans and other nomadic tribes inhabited this land during their captivities.

v. 18-19 WOE AGAINST UNBELIEF: Not having faith in God they sin openly as those who draw or pull after them a load of sin with cords or ropes. They are so enslaved to their sins and to Satan, they are like harnessed oxen who pull heavy burdens; the difference being men voluntarily wish it to be so while animals have no choice. And we call animals, "dumb"! And far from

being penitent, they are brazen. When told of God's coming judgment, instead of fleeing to hide in the rocks, they scoff, "What is God waiting for—tell Him to come on. We would like to see Him come in judgment!" The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Absence of the fear of the Lord leads to stupidity (Cf. II Tim. chapters 3 and 4).

V. 20 **WOE AGAINST MORAL CONFUSION:** Moral confusion always results from unbelief (Cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Where there is no faith in God there are no clear-cut moral distinctions—no clear conception of what is right and wrong. There can only be moral relativism—a thing is right because we want it to be—moral anarchy. Dostoevski has his priest character say, in *The Brothers Karamasov*, "If there is no God everything is permissible." Nietzsche, the insane German philosopher, insisted that what the world needed was a "transvaluation of values." Nietzsche was simply carrying out his evolutionary atheism to its rational end. When unbelief takes over, all values are turned upside-down. What is good is said to be bad; what is bad is said to be good. The playboyism of our 20th century attempts to convince people that Christian ethics (especially in sex) are evil. Where this reversal of values occurs, cowardice becomes caution; recklessness becomes courage; stinginess becomes thrift; prodigality becomes generosity; sin becomes maladjustment! Right or wrong becomes a matter of custom. Cursing, drinking, promiscuous sexual activity, gambling are all justified on pragmatic bases. There appear as many ethical standards as there are individuals. People make up their own laws to suit their own purposes. Recognition of authority, except for oneself, disappears. Society soon resembles a chicken with its head cut off—no coordination, no purpose, no control. Moral anarchy results in civil and social destruction and death.

V. 21 **WOE AGAINST CONCEIT:** Not only do they sin blatantly—they take pride in their adeptness in sinning. They are wise in their own eyes. The farther men drift from God in unbelief the more conceited they become (Cf. Rom. 1:18-32; II Pet. 3:3-7; II Cor. 10:7-12). God becomes something to set on a table as a kind of ornament. Religion becomes a fetish, having no real place,

no real function in life. The real issues and problems of society are made relative to selfish interests. Pride is the snare of the devil. Pride brought the judgment of God upon angels.

v. 22-23 **WOE AGAINST PERVERSION OF JUSTICE:** Selfishness is the first step into degradation. Selfishness means dethronement of God. As a result of such dethronement men turn to false securities—false gods. Wine, sex, money all are sought as replacements for God. The leaders of Judah become sots—alcoholics. Drunkards administered the government! In America we have drunken legislators, drunken government executives, and drunken military leaders administering our government! Drunkenness, graft, bribery, injustice, corruption of all kinds were rampant in Judah at this time. The justification for such action was cynical unbelief. One important issue of such living is moral anarchy. The inevitable consequence of such a society is arrogant rulers and an oppressed populace. The leaders of the country boasted and prided themselves, not in how well they ruled, but in how well they mixed drinks and how drunken they were able to become.

QUIZ

1. Name the sins for which the rulers are judged guilty in this section.
2. Show how unbelief leads to social, political and intellectual enslavement.
3. When have such sins been prevalent in men other than in Isaiah's day?

3. THE WRATH OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 5:24-30

24 Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be

as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

- 25 Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them; and the mountains tremble, and their dead bodies are as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.
- 26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss for them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly;
- 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:
- 28 whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent: their horses' hoofs shall be accounted as flint, and their wheels as a whirlwind;
- 29 their roaring shall be like a lioness, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and there shall be none to deliver.
- 30 And they shall roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and distress; and the light is darkened in the clouds thereof.

QUERIES

- a. Why is God's anger so fierce?
- b. What is the "ensign to the nations" in v. 26?
- c. How successful will be God's punishment?

PARAPHRASE

Therefore God will deal with them and burn them. They will disappear like straw on fire. Their roots will rot and their flowers wither, for they have thrown away the laws of God and despised

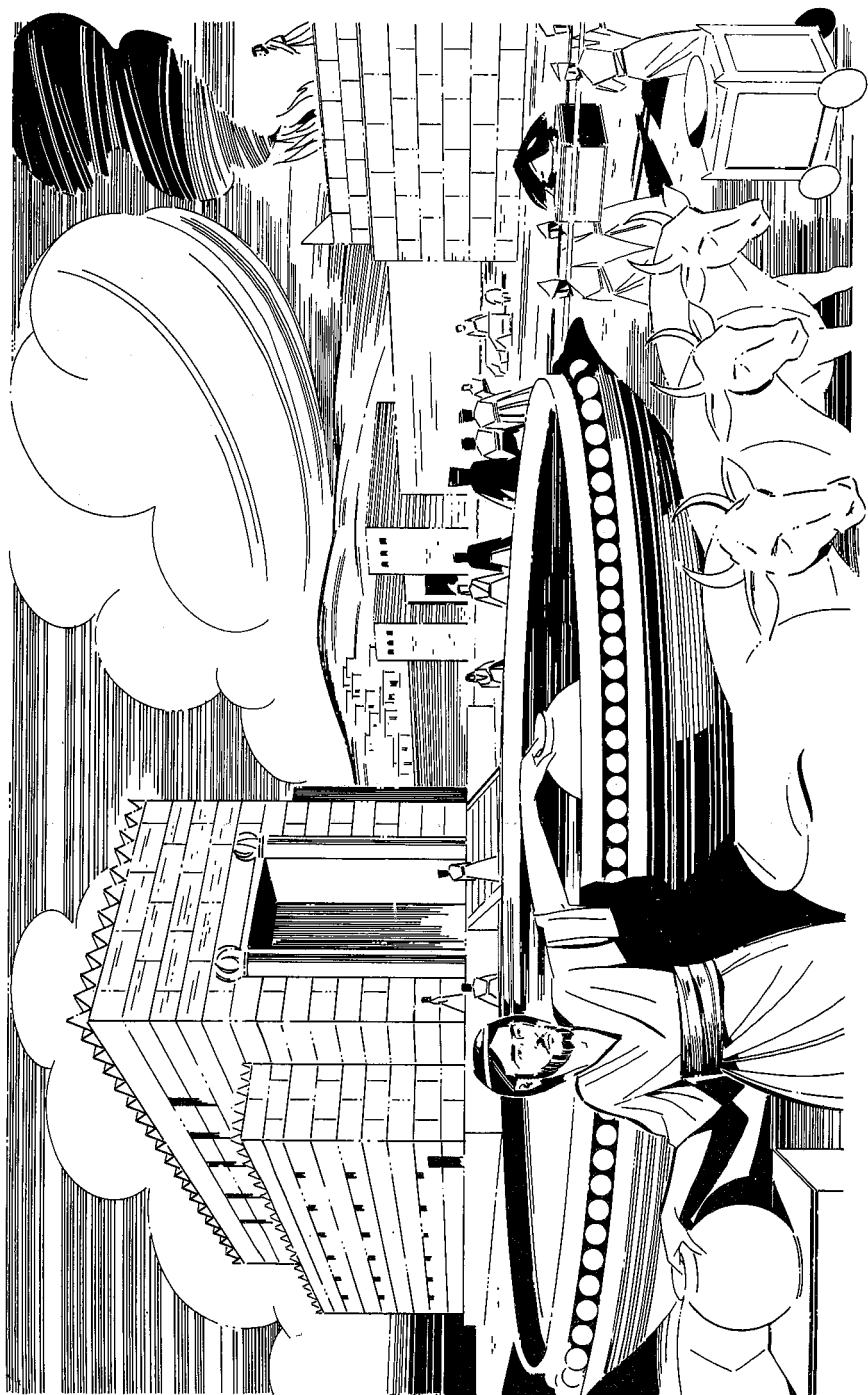
the Word of the Holy One of Israel. That is why the anger of the Lord is hot against His people; that is why He has reached out His hand to smash them. The hills will tremble, and the rotting bodies of His people will be thrown as refuse in the streets. But even so, His anger is not ended; His hand is heavy on them still. He will send a signal to the nations far away, whistling to those at the ends of the earth, and they will come racing toward Jerusalem. They never weary, never stumble, never stop; their belts are tight, their bootstraps strong; they run without stopping for rest or for sleep. Their arrows are sharp; their bows are bent; sparks fly from their horses' hoofs, and the wheels of their chariots spin like the wind. They roar like lions and pounce upon the prey. They seize My people and carry them off into captivity with none to rescue them. They growl over the victims like the roaring of the sea. Over all Israel lies a pall of darkness and sorrow and the heavens are black.

COMMENTS

v. 24-25 THE ANGER OF GOD: The people are to be smitten. What happens to them will be in proportions of earthquake "shaking mightily the earth." Great numbers to be slain. His anger still unappeased. This judgment does not end in a single day or week or even a month. The fundamental cause for all their sin is the rejection of God's law (Cf. Jer. 6:19; 8:9; Isa. 30:9, 12). They not only reject His law, they *despise* it. (Hosea 4:6).

v. 26-28 THE ANGER STRIKES: The scourge comes. God is perfectly equipped. This scourging instrument is the invading armies of Assyria, composed of a conglomeration of peoples. God gives the signal - "Lift up an ensign" (a signal of some sort) He will hiss (whistle). These armies did not come except through His will and purpose. Strong - trained - efficiently accoutered. God sends His signal (stirs up the spirit of nations and rulers) and they serve Him (Cf. Obad. 1; II Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Isa. 44:28; 45:1; 10:5ff).

v. 29 GOD IS TERRIBLY FIERCE: Unwearied - courageous -

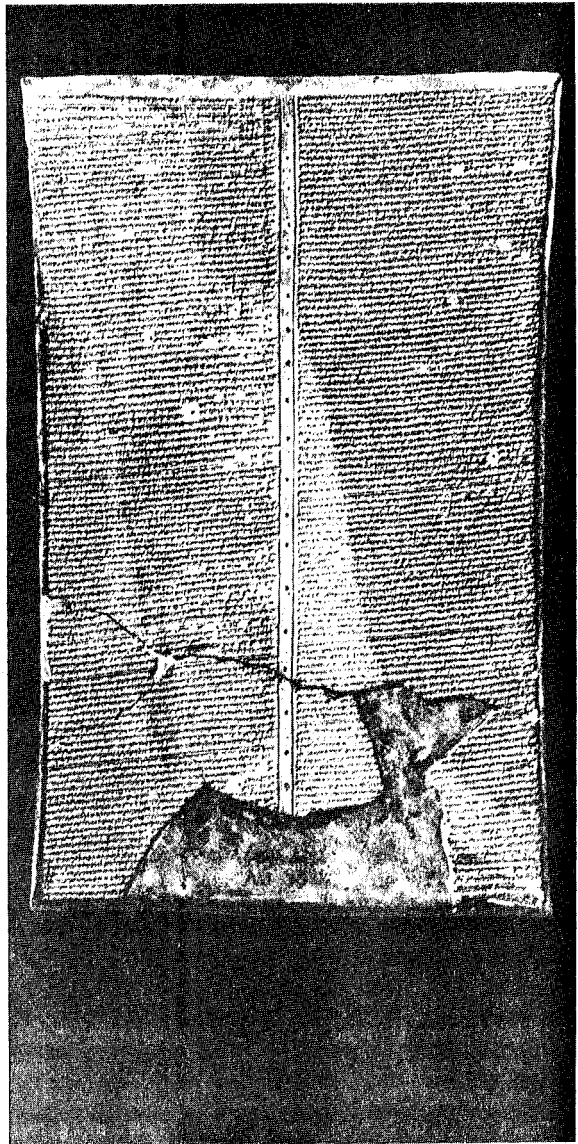


"Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria . . ."

(II Kings 17:5-6).

"I besieged and captured Samaria, and carried off 27,290 of its inhabitants as booty."

The Assyrian text of this victory inscription of Sargon II dealing with his campaign in Israel, which is preserved in the original, reads like a confirmation of the biblical statement.



powerful - ferocious - cruel - bloodthirsty and terrifying - swift.

v. 30 GOD IS COMPLETELY OR OVERWHELMINGLY SUCCESSFUL: As a lioness overwhelms her prey and carries it away. The land is utterly desolated. And if Israel from Assyrian captivity looks toward the home land they will see only the darkness of a cloudy and obscure future. A future and a land darkened by divine judgement.

CHAPTER SIX

D. ILLUMINATION FROM THE ALMIGHTY 6:1-13

1. THE PROPHET SEES GOD 6:1-7

a. THE GLORY

TEXT: 6:1-4

- 1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.
- 2 Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
- 3 And one cried into another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.
- 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

QUERIES

- a. Why mention that Uzziah had died?
- b. Who are the "seraphim"?
- c. What does the shaking of the thresholds symbolize?

PARAPHRASE

The year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord! He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the Temple was filled with His glory. Hovering about Him were mighty, six-winged seraphs. With two of their wings they covered their faces; with two others they covered their feet, and with two they flew. In a great antiphonal chorus they sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory." Such singing it was! It shook the Temple to its foundations, and suddenly the entire sanctuary was filled with smoke.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 **THE GLORY:** The throne of David is the throne of God on earth. Ex. 19:4-6; I Sam. 8:7; II Sam. 7:12-16 it should be established forever. I Chron. 29-23. Now the King is dead, the throne is vacant till a new King is crowned. Knowing the helpless, weak, vacillating condition of the people, a sense of impending national trouble comes to Isaiah. At this time is granted to him a vision of the glory of God. God is on the throne! Supremacy! Permanence and Power! *The earthly throne may be vacant, the scepter fallen from dead hands; but here is One whose throne is never vacant, from whose hand the scepter never falls.* Here is assurance, positive and beyond doubt that however weak man had corrupted the earthly counterpart of God's throne, God still reigns and controls all things. His "train," skirts, robes, fill the "Temple," His house, palace. Flowing robes of priestly royalty fill the temple. *No room for human glory and authority in God's house.* "Seraphim" - "Fiery ones." Cf. Rev. 4:8. "Four living creatures." Six wings - rapidity in carrying out God's orders, God's will. In the Holy Presence, however, the Seraphim covered his face with his wings from the intolerable effulgence of Divine Glory; another pair of wings covered the feet, soiled in their various ministrations, unmeet for all pure presence; while the third pair of wings sustained him in his place near the throne.

Ceaseless activity in God's service. One cried - "kept crying" (Cf. Rev. 4:8). This cry of worship and adoration was a result of their vision. Its first note is the affirmation of the holiness of God. Its second is the declaration that the earth is full of His glory.

A Sermon from Seraphim

1. The lowliest Reverence becomes the Highest Created Beings v. 2
2. The Heavenly Life is largely spent in active service v. 2
3. The Celestial Intelligences have a keen appreciation of the Divine Holiness v. 3
4. The highest Intelligences see all things in their relation to God v. 3

The earthquake symbolizes that material, earthly things are temporary and shaken. Though the very temple itself be shaken and Old Testament religion itself undergo a change and old established customs of worship and institutions of administration pass away, God's throne and authority are eternal. In this vision of Isaiah we have a prelude or a preparation for what Isaiah is going to teach about the Messiah and His Kingdom. Isaiah will soon begin to proclaim that when the Messiah comes and establishes His Kingdom (the church), it will seem to the Jews as if the throne of God had been abandoned. All the Old Testament institutions were to be replaced. But what the Jews would need to understand was that God was still on His throne and that all the Messianic activity would really be God ruling. Paul deals with this Jewish problem in Hebrews (esp. 12:18-29). The word "holy" attributed to God emphasizes His absolute separation from man. He is Lord and not a man. Although the creation depends upon Him, He himself is entirely independent thereof. This is the heart and core of Isaiah's theology. God's holiness is a necessity if we are to be able to entrust our eternal destiny to Him.

QUIZ

1. What is the connection between Uzziah's death and Isaiah's vision?
2. What do we learn about Heaven from the actions of the Seraphim?
3. When would the O.T. religion be "shaken"?
4. Why is the holiness of God an absolute necessity?

b. THE GRACE

TEXT: 6:5-7

- 5 Then I said, 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, Jehovah of hosts.
- 6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:
- 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

QUERIES

- a. Why did Isaiah consider himself "undone"?
- b. What does the altar signify?
- c. Why touch Isaiah's lips?

PARAPHRASE

Then I said, "My doom is sealed for I am a foul-mouthed sinner a member of a foul-mouthed, sinful nation, and I have looked upon the Holy King. Then one of the seraphs flew over

to the altar and with a pair of tongs picked out a burning coal. He touched my lips with it and said, "Now you are pronounced 'Not guilty' because this coal has touched your lips. Your sins are all forgiven."

COMMENTS

v. 5-7 **THE GRACE:** The cry of need. v. 5. Isaiah's vision of the Holiness and glory of Jehovah brought conviction of his own sinfulness.

- (a) "I am cut off," "destroyed." He had seen God and could not expect to live. Ex. 33:20. Doomed to die.
- (b) "My lips are unclean!" And if his lips are unclean, then his heart is unclean. Jas. 3:2; Matt. 12:34.
- (c) My people are unclean, I Cor. 15:33.
- (d) Mine eyes have seen the king - *The Real King*.

The divine Response. v. 6. A glowing coal from the altar - a "hot stone." Altar of Incense - Prayer. Isaiah's prayer of confession of sin is answered as the angel takes a coal from Altar of Prayer to cleanse his impure lips. Here is revealed the Grace of God:

1. The prayer of the sinner is heard.
2. The song of the Seraphim is hushed that the prayer of the sinner might be answered.

Divine forgiveness. v. 7. "Thy sin is forgiven."

- (a) Sin can be purged.
- (b) The highest angelic nature alone cannot purge it.
- (c) God never acts alone in saving men from sin.
- (d) Forgiveness from sin is always conditional upon the following:
 - 1 Desire on part of sinner
 - 2 Intervention of second person (messenger - servant)
 - 3 Application of divinely appointed means.

2. THE PROPHET SEES THE WORLD 6:8-13

a. THE COMMISSION 6:8-10

TEXT: 6:8-10

- 8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.
- 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.
- 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 turn again and be healed.

QUERIES

- a. Why does God speak to Himself in the "plural"? v. 8
- b. How does one make another person's heart "fat"? v. 10
- c. Did God hope that the people would *not* turn and be healed? v. 10

PARAPHRASE

Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom shall I send as a messenger to My people? Who will go?" And I said, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." And He said, "Yes, go. But tell My people 'Though you hear My words repeatedly, you won't understand them. Though you watch and watch as I perform My miracles, still you won't know what they mean.' Dull their understanding, close their ears and shut their eyes. I don't want them to see or to hear or to understand, or to turn to Me to heal them."

COMMENTS

v. 8 WHO WILL GO: Someone must go to the nation with this message that God is still upon His throne. Someone must deliver the message that God is going to shake old institutions and provide the real believers (all believers) with a Heavenly King and a Heavenly Kingdom. Considering the present carnal, materialistic attitudes of the people, the messenger must feel a divine compulsion and be commissioned with a divine commission. God speaks of Himself and to Himself in the plural "us" referring, undoubtedly, to the triune Godhead. The concept of more than one Person in the Godhead is not absolutely foreign to the Old Testament (Cf. Gen. 1:26 and Proverbs 8 where Wisdom of the Word of God is personified). The word *Elohim* (God) is always in the plural in the original language of the O.T. And, of course, the O.T. prophets have a great deal to say about the Messiah who will be the incarnation of the Omnipotent God. Isaiah, having been captured mind, heart and will by the divine experience he had just participated in, immediately met the challenge—Here am I; send me! No man is ready to do God's special work of preaching His revelation until that man has grasped the holiness of God, his own total inadequateness and sinfulness, and the magnificent grace of God which cleanses him when he did not deserve it! This is, for all practical purposes, the same experience Saul of Tarsus had which turned him into Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

v. 9-10 TELL THIS PEOPLE . . . hear what I am saying but . . . do not understand. What a strange commission. It will appear that Isaiah's ministry is a complete failure. People will hear him but not understand. In fact, the more they hear the more adamant they will be against what they hear. They will become "fat hearted," smug, self-satisfied. Their thoughts will be so thoroughly world-oriented they will be deaf and blind to spiritual things. God, using some *irony* of His own, commands Isaiah to tell the people to continue in this condition. Both Jesus and Paul repeated this characterization of Jews in their own ages (Matt. 13:14-15; Acts 28:26-27). Because Isaiah told them the

truth the people would not believe. Truth has the awesome power to harden the one who morally rejects it. The more he told the truth, the more they (the majority) refused to accept it. Noah faced the same attitude in his preaching. Jesus faced it (John 8:39-47). Ezekiel and Jeremiah faced it (Jer. 1:17-19; Ezek. 2:1—3:15). How many men would be willing to say, Here am I; send me, today, if they knew that their mission would be as difficult and bereft of any apparent success (as the world measures success)? Yet we all need to renew in our minds the promise of Jesus, the servant is not above his Master. If they rejected Jesus, they will reject the messengers of Jesus. But we are not to become discouraged. God does not measure success like the world measures it. God demands faithfulness—and He, Himself, takes care of the success.

QUIZ

1. What does the O.T. say about the plurality of Persons in the Godhead?
2. How did Isaiah's vision prepare him to volunteer for God's service?
3. What awesome power does truth hold for those who continue to reject it?
4. Why would Isaiah not need to be concerned with the success of his mission?

b. THE CONSEQUENCES

TEXT: 6:11-13

- 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? and he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, and the land become utterly waste,
- 12 and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.

13 And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak whose stock remaineth, when they are falled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.

QUERIES

- a. Why did Isaiah ask "how long"?
- b. Why did God use a "tenth" to speak of those remaining?
- c. What is the "holy seed"?

PARAPHRASE

Then I said, "Lord, how long will it be before they are ready to listen?" And he replied, "Not until their cities are destroyed . . . and without a person left . . . and the whole country is an utter wasteland. And they are all taken away, and all the land of Israel lies deserted! Yet a tenth . . . a remnant . . . will survive; and though Israel is invaded again and again and destroyed, yet Israel will be like a tree cut down, whose stump still lives to grow again."

COMMENTS

v. 11-12 **HOW LONG:** This was a natural reaction. If his ministry was to be fraught with such apparent failure, how long would the Lord expect him to preach to deaf ears? Even Jesus indicated that the time comes when God's messenger should refrain from "giving that which is holy to the dogs and casting pearls before swine." God's answer is that the prophet is to preach until the captivity takes everyone away and there are no more people to whom to preach. For Israel, the northern kingdom, that would be only twenty years hence. For Judah approximately 136 years. Isaiah, of course, would not be alive when Judah was exiled, but his prophecy would live on in written form.

V. 13 A HOLY SEED SAVED: this will be the result of Isaiah's faithful persistence. Whatever or whomever is salvaged from apostacy by the ministry of Isaiah will be purged again by some form of testing (probably the captivity). "Tenth" is what we would call a "round number." A figure of speech to indicate a small percentage of return for his preaching. But even that will undergo further purging. God is interested primarily in quality. When the message of God's truth is preached without compromise quality will be the result. But when the messenger of God is inordinately concerned with quantity, there is a tendency to compromise the message. God demands that His messengers be faithful to the message and He will see to the quantity (numbers). Our success in the eyes of God is not judged on the basis of numbers.

There will be a small number of people turned back to the Lord through Isaiah's ministry and they will form the faithful remnant. This faithful remnant will continue through the captivity and pass on from generation to generation a faithfulness to the Lord and a hope in His promises. These generations will succeed one another in walking in the way of the Lord through 700 years until one of them, a virgin by the name of Mary of the tribe of Judah, will surrender herself to become the "handmaiden of the Lord" and give birth to the Incarnate Son of God. These generations will succeed one another until some of them become the nucleus of the Kingdom of God (the church).

God's judgment would not result in annihilation of the people. Here is expressed the Messianic potentialities of the people of God. They will continue to exist (a remnant of them) till Shiloh comes (Cf. Gen. 49:10). "The scepter shall not depart from Judah; nor the rulers staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come." This prophecy was fulfilled in an amazing way. There never was a ruler of the Jews not from the tribe of Judah until Herod the Great who was King of the Jews when Jesus was born. Herod was an Idumean by birth and not even a Jew. The Christ is "Shiloh" and when He came the scepter had departed from Judah. He came and established the rule of the royal family forever! Now we see why the "tenth" had to be purged again!

The Messiah must have a faithful, sanctified remnant through which to come!

QUIZ

1. What was God's answer to Isaiah's "How long?"
2. Why did God indicate that the "tenth" would be purged again?
3. What was the result of the purging?
4. Who is "Shiloh" and when was He to come into the world?

SPECIAL STUDY

THE PROPHET—MAN, MESSAGE, MEDIUM

by

John D. Pommert

THE MAN

I. Names and designations for the prophet.

The O. T. Prophets are called by many names and referred to in several ways each indicating something of the character of the man or the nature of his message.

1. "Man of God" Deut. 33:1; I Sam. 9:6; I Kings 12:22; 13:5; II Kings 5:14; Jer. 35:4; II Chron. 8:14; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 3:17. This name indicates the moral character of the prophet and the ethical quality of his message. (Cf. the N. T. designation "holy prophets"—Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; Eph. 3:5; II Pet. 1:21).
2. "Servants of God" I Chron. 6:49; I Kings 14:18; 18:36; II Kings 9:7; 14:25; Tit. 1:1. Similar to the above but indicating a "serving" status.
3. "Messenger of Jehovah" Isa. 42:19; 44:26; 6:9; Jer. 26:12-15; Ezek. 21:1-10; Jer. 20:7. An emphasis upon the

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teaching or preaching function.

4. "Interpreter" Isa. 43:27; Cf. II Pet. 1:20,21. These men explained as well as announced the message.
5. "Man of Spirit" Hos. 9:7 Cf. I Cor. 1:21; 4:10; Acts 26:24; Mic. 3:8 (also translated "fool, mad, or wind" indicating the people's opinion of this speaker of strange words).
6. "Watchman" Ezek. 3:17. He is to the people spiritually what the watchman on the tower is to the city physically. Both have important functions; both are responsible for the message; both are to be believed by the people.
7. "Seer" I Chron. 29:29; I Sam. 9:9. He was a man of insight moved by the Spirit of God to see what others could not.
8. "Prophet" Ex. 7:1,2 etc. The most common term used indicating one who speaks for another—in this case, one who speaks forth for God. Again, a special relationship to God is indicated by this term.
9. "Sons of the Prophets" I Kings 20:35; II Kings 2:3-15; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1-7; I Sam. 10:5,10; 19:20. Indicating that the prophets were not holy ascetics but men who trained others to carry on their work.¹

II. Personality of the prophets.

What type of men were these holy prophets? Clovis Chappell summarizes them as follows: (1) human—they had the same feelings and frailties of other men—they were not angels or superhuman creatures; (2) men of insight—who could see (by aid of the Holy Spirit) God's meanings in daily events; (3) individualists—each has his own peculiarities and personality which refused compromise; (4) fiery zealots—men who did not preach a "Believe-what-you-want" message but with a "Thus-saith-the-Lord" authority and urgency; (5) unpopular men—who endured fire and sword and death because they refused to compromise their message (Heb. 11).² Too often we make these men something other than men whom God used. They were holy men, dynamic men, inspired men, courageous men, but MEN!

III. MARKS of a Prophet

Kyle Yates shows us a different side of these men when he outlines the marks of a prophet.³ He sees the prophet to differ from other men in: (1) his uncompromising individuality; (2) his consciousness of his divine call to be a mouthpiece for God; (3) his awareness of his privileged access to the inner counsel of God; (4) his boldness expressed in action and not just theory—he always commands attention; (5) his awareness of God's authority and backing in every emergency even when he is a lone man against a mob; (6) his prayer life and communion with God which often results in a separation from men; (7) his cleanness of life and holy moral character (none of the genuine prophets receive even a breath of scandal concerning moral lapses); (8) his outspoken and fearless criticism of social evils; (9) his ability to foresee and reveal the future.

IV. Social Position and Background of the Prophets

Brant Lee Doty has an interesting two paragraphs about the backgrounds of these men when he writes:

God used a most heterogeneous selection of men for this purpose. Some were of royal blood, while others knew poverty and the hard life of farm or field. Some began their labors while yet virtually children, whereas others did not step fully into the position until well advanced in years. A few probably knew personal wealth, but the great majority were of humble, lowly background. Regardless of these factors of age or wealth or station, the messages came from God and must be delivered fearlessly.

The prophets were not trained by some standardized procedure. Some were called instantly from their occupations, perhaps without prior hint of their selection. Some spent a part of their lives in schools introduced by the time of Samuel (I Sam. 10:5,10; 19:20). They learned from the compounded wisdom of earlier men, with special attention to a full mastery of the laws of God, preparing their hearts in anticipation of

THE MAN

the call from heaven, and springing to their tasks when this call clearly came.⁴

V. Comparison to Modern Day Preachers

Some have compared the prophets to modern day preachers who also preach the Word of God. However, there are several differences—mainly that the prophet's message was directed by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21) whereas the present day preacher can claim no special guidance. The preacher has a regular congregation and receives a set salary while the prophet was not called by the people, did not preach regularly to the same group, and did not receive any pay. The preacher is under the authority of an eldership while the prophet was answerable only to God. The preacher plans his preaching and can even announce his text in advance; the prophet spoke at odd times and in odd places. The preacher spoke in a religious context to religious people; the prophet usually spoke outside to whatever people were present. Other differences could be noted all indicating the apparent similarity of preacher and prophet to be only in a few particulars.⁵

VI. A Summing Up

To sum up the O. T. prophet, we should think of him as a "holy man" (i.e., one set apart with a special mission) speaking a message from God to an impenitent people. His message was often indicative (Webster's second definition of this word—"pointing out, giving intimation or knowledge"), sometimes predictive, but always productive (for God's Word does not return unto Him void.)

THE MESSAGE

I. The Context of the Message

1. The prophet always declared that his message was not his

own but came from God. Young in *My Servants the Prophets* uses up four pages simply listing the declarations of Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord," "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," etc. These men were convinced that the message they preached came from God. In fact, they were not always happy in their ministry nor with the responsibility to preach but were faithful to its delivery nonetheless (Cf. Jer. 15:16ff; 20:7ff; Ezek. 3:3).

2. This message frequently contained predictions concerning future events, but the main burden of the message dealt with present evils and a call for immediate repentance. *Harper's Dictionary*⁶ summed up the tension between today and tomorrow by noting, "Though prophecy was primarily concerned with current situations, the prophets realized that tomorrow is inherent in today."
3. This gave rise to double-prophecy—a message which had relevance for those of that day as well as also foreshadowing a far distant event such as the return of Christ from Egypt.

II. The Content of the Message

"What, then, did these men preach? In terms of today they presented doctrine and duty. The doctrine had to do first of all and most of all with God. On the basis of what they believed about God, the prophets also dealt largely and boldly with ethics."⁷ The prophets came with a message but it was not a new message primarily for as Martin Buber notes,

Generally speaking, it is not a new teaching they advance, but they fashion its form to fit the changing historical situations and have different demands, and they perfect a teaching they have received but where is the beginning of this teaching?⁸

They always point back to the Mosaic law or the Abrahamic covenant as a basis for their preaching. God's people have a special relationship to God and thus have certain obligations to Him and the world. When this call to repentance failed, they reached judgment, destruction, and hope. Halley summarizes

THE MESSAGE

the mission and message of the prophets under five heads: (1) To try to save the nation from idolatry and wickedness; (2) With little response, to announce impending destruction; (3) But to give hope in that a remnant will be saved; (4) From this remnant will come an influence that will change the world; (5) That Influence will be none other than the Son of David, Jesus.⁹

III. The Style of The Message

1. The prophets employed the noblest characteristics of the Hebrew people (at least in the writing prophets) as they used the poetical forms of that day with its balanced statement, parallelisms, etc. This structure added a structural force to the meaning of their words. A message delivered in a striking and memorable way has greater impact than the same message sloppily given.
2. They used many types and symbols.
3. They found that dramatic approaches made the message more urgent.

IV. The Audience

1. Primarily, the prophets preached to all people as exemplified by Amos in the marketplace.
2. Sometimes the message was directed to the king or higher authorities (Nathan, Jonah.)
3. It was not restricted to Jewish audiences but also extended to foreign peoples (Cf. Amos, Jonah, Obadiah).
4. The prophets made use of every circumstance be it a home (II Kings 5:9), a wayside (I Kings 20:38), in the court (II Sam. 24:11), or in the temple (Amos 7:10ff).¹⁰

THE MEDIUM

... To the prophet

1. The message came to the prophet in a variety of ways.

Sometimes it came in a dream as with Joseph (Gen. 37). But the prophet knew that it was the voice of God and not just a bit of undigested mutton.

2. The message might come in a vision or a series of visions such as those Ezekiel received. The prophet understood these scenes as containing a revelation from God and was able to interpret these to the people.
3. The message seems to come "directly" to the prophet in most instances. The means are not described, but the prophet is sure that the message came from Jehovah (II Pet. 1:21). I found this comment from the *Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary* quite interesting:

The Biblical prophet must be distinguished from the *prohetes* of Greeks. The latter really acted as an interpreter for the muses and the oracles. The prophets, however, were not interpreters. They uttered the actual words which God had given to them, without any modification or interpretation upon their part. The Bible itself gives an accurate description of the function of the true prophet, ". . . and will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:18b). The words are placed in the prophet's mouth by God, i.e., they are revealed to the prophet, and then the prophet speaks unto the nation precisely what God has commanded him.¹¹

. . . From the Prophet

The prophet received the message from God; he delivered this same message to the people.

1. The basic medium used was that of words, those verbal symbols of spirit meanings. Thus, the prophet was very concerned about delivering the exact word(s) of the Lord. (Remember Young's emphasis upon the frequency of the "thus saith the Lord" in the prophets.) Rowley had a thought-provoking comment when he wrote, "We should

THE MEDIUM

- not forget that every prophetic word was believed to have a vitality within itself to work for its own fulfillment." (Cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:10f) "The prophet's word was not merely a forecast of the future. It was a living force which helped to mould the future."¹² (Remember the early chapter of Genesis when God spoke and the worlds were created.)
2. But the prophet also spoke by symbolic action. Isaiah would walk naked and barefooted (Isa. 20:3) as an object lesson to Israel; Jeremiah would bind a wooden yoke to his neck (Jer. 27:2) so that he could preach forecoming bondage for these hard-hearted people without saying a word; Hosea took a wife of whoredom to illustrate the love of God. Of course, the action in itself would not proclaim the message—it amplified the verbal one which preceded or attended it.
 3. Some of the prophets put these messages into written form (Cf. Jeremiah and King Zedekiah); thus, they are able to speak to us today through these written forms.
 4. We might even say that God spoke through the personality of the prophet himself (Hosea is a good example as he personifies the love of God as he lives his love for Gomer.)

Oftentimes the personality of the prophet even recedes completely into the background, and the speaker appears to be God Himself. Almost naturally, for example, one reads words such as "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 44:32). The usage of the personal pronoun in the first person clearly refers to God Himself. Nor is such a phenomenon unusual. It appears throughout the prophecy, and is interwoven naturally with the utterances which the prophet speaks forth as having been given to him by God.¹³

The godly patience of Jeremiah incarnates the patience of God as did no other until Jesus came. Noble men and great preachers who lived their message—these were the prophets. Hebrews 11 well describes their faith, courage, and devotion concluding with this poignant statement, "of

ISAIAH

whom the world was not worthy." A nobler group of men have not appeared—but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of all these. Praise God for a Christ Who can make the most insignificant Christian of greater import than the greatest of these great men. Greater than Jeremiah—by what grace has He wrought it?

FOOTNOTES

1. Much of the foregoing was taken from Class Notes given by George M. Elliott at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Cincinnati, O.
2. Clovis Chappell, *And the Prophets*, pp. 10-15. Abingdon Press, N.Y. 1946.
3. Kyle M. Yates, *Preaching From the Prophets*, pp. 3, 4. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1942.
4. Brant Lee Doty, *Standard Bible Teacher and Leader*, July, 1958. Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio.
5. David Freedman and James Smart, *God Has Spoken*, pp. 151, 152. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 1949.
6. Quoted by Jerry Phillips, "Elements of the Prophetic Call," *Christian Standard*, August 10, 1968.
7. Andrew W. Blackwood, *Preaching From Prophetic Books*, pp. 16, 17. Abingdon-Cokesbury, N.Y. 1951.
8. Phillips, *Ibid.*
9. Homer Halley, *The Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 251. Homer Halley, Chicago, Illinois, 1951.
10. H. H. Rowley, *Prophecy and Religion In Ancient China and Israel*, Chapter 1. Harper & Brothers, N.Y., 1956.
11. Merrill Tenney, ed., *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, "Prophet."
12. Rowley, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.
13. Edward Young, *My Servants the Prophets*, p. 175. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965.

EXAMINATION

EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH SIX

ASSOCIATION

(Associate the persons or events of column one with the correct person or event of column two. Some of column two are incorrect.)

1	2
Amoz	brother
Zion	Lebanon
plowshares	eyes
pruning hooks	coal
daughters of Zion	Hezekiah
ox	mountain of the Lord
ass	unclean
hands	owner
cedars	Sheol
song	died
Uzziah	haughty
altar	father
lips	spears
	full of blood
	crib
	vineyard
	Holy One of Israel
	swords

MEMORIZATION

Come now, and let us _____ together, saith Jehovah: though your _____ be as _____, they shall be as _____ as _____, though they be red like _____, they shall be as _____. If ye be _____ and _____, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and _____, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of _____ hath spoken it. Isaiah 1:18-20.

Then flew one of the _____ unto me, having a live _____ in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the _____:

ISAIAH

and he touched my _____ with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy _____; and thine _____ is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, _____ shall I _____, and who will _____ for us? Then I said, _____ _____; _____ _____. Isaiah 6:6-8

EXPLANATION

1. Explain the meaning of God asking man to reason together with Him. 1:18-20
2. Explain how the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains. 2:1-4
3. Explain how Israel was like a vineyard planted on a hill. 5:1-7

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. How may God's refusal to accept Israel's sacrifices and refusal to hear their prayers be applied to God's people today? 1:10-17
2. How may the idea of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks be applied in the New Testament church? 2:1-4
3. How may the Christian apply Isaiah's vision of the Lord in the temple? 6:1-13

II. CRISIS AND THE CHRIST (IMMANUEL)

CHAPTERS 7 - 12

CHAPTER SEVEN

A. PROMISE OF IMMANUEL

1. THE CRISIS 7:1-9

TEXT: 7:1-9

- 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 to Jerusalem to war against it; but could not prevail against it.
- 2 And it was told the house of David saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind.
- 3 Then said Jehovah 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;
- 4 and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.
- 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee saying,
- 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel;
- 7 thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.
- 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 in pieces, so that it shall not be a people:
- 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.

QUERIES

- a. Why was Isaiah told to take his son to meet Ahaz?
- b. Who is Tabeel?
- c. Who is warned "to believe"?

PARAPHRASE

During the reign of Ahaz (the son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah), Jerusalem was attacked by King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel (the son of Remaliah). But it was not taken; the city stood. However, when the news came to the royal court, Syria is allied with Israel against us! the hearts of the king and his people trembled with fear as the trees of a forest shake in a storm. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, Go out to meet King Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub, your son. You will find him at the end of the aqueduct which leads from Gihon Spring to the upper reservoir, near the road that leads down to the bleaching field. Tell him to quit worrying, the Lord said. Tell him he needn't be frightened by the fierce anger of those two has-beens, Rezin and Pekah. Yes, the kings of Syria and Israel are coming against you. They say, We will invade Judah and throw her people into panic, then we'll fight our way into Jerusalem and install the son of Tabeel as their King. But the Lord God says, This plan will not succeed, for Damascus will remain the capital of Syria alone, and King Rezin's kingdom will not increase its boundaries. And within sixty-five years Ephraim, too, will be crushed and broken. Samaria is the capital of Ephraim alone and King Pekah's power will not increase. You don't believe Me? If you want me to protect you, you must learn to believe what I say!

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **THE CONFEDERACY:** Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel (Ephraim) in Samaria, had formed a coalition

against Assyria. It is probable that they tried to get the Judean ruler to join with them against Assyria. Rezin and Pekah first attacked Judah when Jotham was still on the throne (2 Kings 15:37) probably to coerce the Judean ruler to join their alliance against Assyria. In II Chronicles 28:5ff we learn that Ahaz was delivered into the hands of the Syrians who smote him and 120,000 men of Judah were slain. But Ahaz and his forces were suddenly released at Jericho and returned to Jerusalem. Then in II Kings 16:5 we learn of a third attack of Rezin and Pekah upon Jerusalem. At this time Ahaz was prepared to become a satellite-state to Assyria in return for Assyria's protection against the northern coalition (Cf. II Kings 16:7-9). It was, no doubt, just prior to Ahaz's overture to the Assyrians that Isaiah met with Ahaz to deliver the Lord's promise that the coalition of Rezin and Pekah would not be able to stand against Judah. Ahaz was beginning to be overcome with fear toward Syria and Israel. The coalition was determined to get rid of Ahaz and place a man on Judah's throne who would do their bidding.

v. 3-9 THE COMFORT: Isaiah and his son, Shearjashub ("A remnant shall return") were sent to meet Ahaz at a precise point—the point where the water from the upper pool emptied into the conduit. The boy was to serve as a symbolic sign of hope. Ahaz was told to be quiet and calm. Rezin and Pekah were "lots of smoke but no fire" according to the Lord. They are burned-out, smoldering stumps. God knows their threatenings and He knows that in 65 years they will both have disappeared utterly. The coalition wishes to set up the son of Tabeal (the original form of the name suggests he was a Syrian) on the throne of Judah in the place of Ahaz. But God promises, "It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass." Israel and Syria have only human heads (v. 8) while the head of Judah is the Lord God. In 721-722 B.C. Sargon took Samaria (II Kings 17:16-24) and in 669 B.C. Esar-Haddon of Babylon sent colonists to occupy Samaria and entirely destroyed the nationality of Israel. This was 65 years from the time of Isaiah's prediction here (733 or 734 B.C.). All Ahaz had to do was to accept this promise and believe God and he would be established on the throne of Judah. But

Ahaz would not believe it (Cf. II Kings 16:7-18; II Chron. 28:16-20).

QUIZ

1. What was the purpose of the confederacy of Syria and Israel?
2. Why had they attacked Judah?
3. What was the attitude of Ahaz toward the confederacy?
4. Why was Isaiah sent to speak with Ahaz?
5. What was God's promise to king Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah?

2. THE CHRIST 7:10-16

TEXT: 7:10-16

- 10 And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
- 11 Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.
- 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah.
- 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also?
- 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.
- 15 Butter and honey shall he eat when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.
- 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.

QUERIES

- a. Was Ahaz right in refusing to tempt Jehovah?
- b. Who is the virgin?
- c. Why mention that the child would eat butter and honey?

PARAPHRASE

Not long after this, the Lord sent this further message to King Ahaz: Ask Me for a sign, Ahaz, to prove that I will indeed crush your enemies as I have said. Ask anything you like, in heaven or on earth. But the king refused. No, he said, I'll not bother the Lord with anything like that. Then Isaiah said, O House of David, you aren't satisfied to exhaust my patience; you exhaust the Lord's as well! All right then, the Lord Himself will choose the sign—a child shall be born to a virgin! And she shall call Him Immanuel (meaning, "God is with us."). By the time it would take for the child to be weaned and come to know right from wrong, the two kings you fear so much—the kings of Israel and Syria—will be dead.

COMMENTS

v. 10-13 THE SIGN OFFERED AND REFUSED: Ahaz made no move to show that he believed God's promise concerning the continuity of the kingdom of Judah. He was silent. God, to stir up his faith, offers a sign to guarantee fulfillment of His promise. Ahaz haughtily refuses the sign in language he intended should sound pious and loyal, but Ahaz had already decided to do his own will. He knew as well as anyone that when God commands a man to ask for a sign it is not putting God to the test to obey Him. Ahaz, like many others before and after him, wanted to work things out in his own way! His way seemed to be so much better. To be an ally of this great and feared monarch of Assyria was so much better than being an ally of an invisible God. Isaiah

rebukes the king (v. 13) by pointing out that the king may try the patience of men (God's prophets) and not suffer dire consequences, but it is no small matter to try the patience of Jehovah by hypocrisy and rebelliousness.

v. 14-16 **THE SIGN COMPELLED:** Ahaz tried to fool the prophet with his feigned piety. But God was not fooled and spoke through Isaiah that He would give Ahaz a sign whether the king wanted one or not. This sign would not be wasted, as we shall see, for it would establish the faithfulness and veracity of God to keep His covenant. And if Ahaz refused to appropriate it, others of the "house of David" would!

To consider the "sign" here to be given, one must first consider the Hebrew word *almah*, translated in the ASV "virgin" and in the RSV "young woman" and in some other versions "maiden." The Hebrew and English Lexicon of The Old Testament by Brown, Driver and Briggs says of *almah*, "young woman (ripe sexually; maid or newly married)." Gesenius' Hebrew lexicon, the accepted authority among practically all Hebrew lexicographers says, "a girl of marriageable age . . . the notion of unspotted virginity is not that which this word conveys, for which the proper word is *bethulah*." Keil and Delitzsch say in their commentary here, ". . . whilst *bethulah* signifies a maiden living in seclusion in her parents' house and still a long way from matrimony, *almah* is applied to one fully mature, and approaching the time of her marriage . . . It is also admitted that the idea of spotless virginity was not necessarily connected with *almah*, since there are passages (e.g. Song of Sol. 6:8 where it can hardly be distinguished from the Arabic *surrije*); and a person who had a very young-looking wife might be said to have an *almah* for his wife . . . the expression itself warrants the assumption that by *almah* the prophet meant one of the young maidens of the king's (Ahaz') harem . . ." We conclude then, that a child was to be born to one who might be a young woman who was a virgin, or a young woman of marriageable age not necessarily a virgin, or a married woman who was very young looking, or perhaps a young woman who was a member of a king's harem whatever her state of virginity.

Perhaps the more immediate question is, Who is "Immanuel"? The literal meaning of the word is, of course, "God with us." It should be apparent that Immanuel of 7:14, 8:8, and the "child" of 9:6 and the "branch" of 11:1ff is one and the same mighty divine personage. This can be none other than Christ, the Messiah. But, if the passage here under discussion (7:10-16) constitutes a real prophecy of Christ, how are we to explain the plain reference in 7:16 to events belonging to the days of Ahaz and Isaiah? How can the coming of Christ to years of discretion, *some seven centuries after Ahaz*, be made to fix the time for the forsaking of the land of Israel and Syria? And how could a child's coming to age of understanding some seven centuries after Ahaz be a "sign" to Ahaz? Surely some more immediate birth of a child must be in view here.

The late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, famous defender of the inspiration of the scriptures and world-renowned scholar, wrote in his classical work, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, "In reply, either one of two things may be said. In the first place, it may be held that the prophet has before him in vision the birth of the child Immanuel, and that irrespective of the ultimate fulfillment the vision itself is present. 'I see a wonderful child,' the prophet on this interpretation would say, 'a wonderful child whose birth shall bring salvation to his people; and before such a period of time shall elapse as would lie between the conception of the child in his mother's womb and his coming to years of discretion, the land of Israel and Syria shall be forsaken.'

"In the second place, one may hold that in the passage some immediate birth of a child is in view, but that that event is to be taken as the foreshadowing of the greater event that was to come . . . So in our passage, the prophet, when he placed before the rebellious Ahaz that strange picture of the mother and the child, was not only promising deliverance to Judah in the period before a child then born should know how to refuse evil and choose the good, but also, moved by the Spirit of God, was looking forward, as in a dim and mysterious vision, to the day when the true Immanuel, the mighty God and Prince of Peace, should lie as a little babe in a virgin's arms."

According to Machen's second explanation, then, a young woman (*almah*) contemporary with Ahaz and Isaiah would conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel. Before this child should reach the age to be able to choose the good and refuse evil, Israel and Syria would no longer be a threat to Judah. This contemporary *almah* and her child was a *type* of the virgin Mary and her child, the Christ! In view of the many prophecies of the Old Testament which have two fulfillments and are typical of the Messiah or the messianic age (Hosea 11:1 etc.), and in view of the plain necessity for a contemporary sign to Ahaz, we have no problem in accepting Machen's second explanation.

But who is the *almah* whose child-bearing in Ahaz' day constitutes the "sign" that Jehovah gives? Two unsatisfactory answers have been given in the past: (a) Isaiah's wife. She named her son Maher-shalal-hash-baz and the *almah's* son was to be named Immanuel. Besides, Isaiah's wife would hardly be a young-looking woman since Isaiah was about 60 years old at this time; (b) Ahaz' wife, Abi (Abijah), mother of Hezekiah. But Hezekiah was born before Ahaz came to the throne (as pointed out by Jerome) so his birth could not have been referred to within the reign of Ahaz as lying still in the future! Who she was we do not know. We do know that she and the birth of her child and the divine deliverance of Judah connected to that birth became a type of the virgin who would conceive when the Holy Spirit came upon her and give birth to the Messiah who would bring the divine deliverance from sin and death finally and completely (Matt. 1:23), and would sit upon the throne of Judah forever. This is the concept Ahaz refused to believe, that God's throne, God's people, God's covenant could be perpetuated without some recourse to human power. So Ahaz thought to protect the throne of Judah and perpetuate it by making alliance with pagan Assyria. Ahaz assured himself that Assyria was his only source of help against Israel and Syria.

But God told Ahaz that he would be given a sign of the divine power to protect and perpetuate the throne of Judah whether Ahaz wanted such divine help or not! The immediate sign to Ahaz (and all in his day) of the divine protection of the covenant

would be the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction that within a very short time the lands of Pekah and Rezin would be made desolate. The "very short time" is indicated by the prediction that before the child born to the *almah* could come to the age to make the moral choice of good and evil, these lands would be desolate. This "time" element is the real focus of the sign for Ahaz. Some have said that within two or three years from birth most children are able to choose good and reject evil. Isaiah delivered God's sign to Ahaz approximately 734 B.C. and in 732 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser captured Damascus (capitol of Syria) and invaded Israel. This immediate demonstration of God's foreknowledge and power in the perpetuation of His covenant of redemption should establish and confirm His faithfulness to complete His work of redemption in the dim and distant future in the "child" and the "branch" who would be Immanuel. This is the aim of Isaiah 7:14, and this is the application the inspired gospel writer, Matthew, made of the prophecy. The conception of the virgin Mary was the signal to all the world that God had at last arrived at the time for consummation of all His promises of establishing the throne of Judah forever. And the sign given to Ahaz was a type of this divine entry into history given seven centuries in advance.

The child born to the *almah* contemporary with Ahaz will eat butter and honey up to the day it shall be able to choose good and evil. In other words, the danger to Judah, then being caused by the war upon it by Pekah and Rezin would be only temporary—two or three years at the most. Butter and honey are not the ordinary food of an agricultural population. Rather such a diet indicates shortage of staple foods. Judah, under attack by the northern coalition, was suffering food shortages, but God would deliver them from this in a short time. However, because of Ahaz' unbelief and his enslavement of the whole country to Assyria, they would soon be back on their starvation diets (Cf. 7:22).

QUIZ

1. What may the Hebrew word *almah* mean?
2. Who is the Immanuel of 7:14?
3. What are two possible interpretations of the "sign" to be given to Ahaz?
4. Why could the *almah* of Ahaz' day not be Isaiah's wife?
5. What is the overall idea God is attempting to deliver to Ahaz?
6. What is the application of this prophecy to the conception of the virgin Mary, Matthew 1:23?

3. CALAMITY

TEXT: 7:17-25

- 17 Jehovah will 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.
- 18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will 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.
- 19 And they shall come and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the clefts of the rocks, and upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures.
- 20 In that day will the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.
- 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall keep alive a young cow, and two sheep;
- 22 and it shall come to pass, that because of the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land.
- 23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns.

- 24 With arrows and with bow shall one come thither, because all the land shall be briers and thorns.
- 25 And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep.

QUERIES

- a. Why is Jehovah to bring judgment upon Judah?
- b. What part do flies and bees play in this judgment?
- c. Who is the "hired razor"?

PARAPHRASE

But later on the Lord will bring a terrible curse on you and on your nation and your family. There will be terror, such as has not been known since the division of Solomon's empire into Israel and Judah . . . the mighty king of Assyria will come with his great army! At that time the Lord will whistle for the army of Upper Egypt, and of Assyria too, to swarm down upon you like flies and destroy you, like bees to sting and to kill. They will come in vast hordes, spreading across the whole land, even into the desolate valleys and caves and thorny parts, as well as to all your fertile acres. In that day the Lord will take this "razor" . . . these Assyrians you have hired to save you . . . and use it on you to shave off everything you have: your land, your crops, your people. When they finally stop plundering, the whole nation will be a pastureland; whole flocks and herds will be destroyed, and a farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and two sheep left. But the abundant pastureland will yield plenty of milk, and everyone left will live on curds and wild honey. At that time the lush vineyards will become patches of briers. All the land will be one vast thornfield, a hunting ground overrun by wildlife. No one will go to the fertile hillsides where once the gardens grew, for thorns will cover them; cattle, sheep and goats will graze there.

COMMENTS

v. 17-20 **GOD'S TOOL FOR JUDGMENT:** Ahaz did not believe God's promise and he did not heed God's prophet. Ahaz turned to the Assyrian emperor for help. He so thoroughly submitted himself to the Assyrian he became a vassal of that pagan empire (Cf. II Kings 16:7-8). He also adopted much of Assyria's pagan idolatry (Cf. II Kings 16:10-16). So the prophet Isaiah goes from promises to threats. Days are coming upon Judah unequaled since the shame and humiliation of the revolt of the ten tribes. This judgment will be executed when Jehovah God calls, "psst" (hisses) for the hordes of Assyrian soldiers to swarm into Palestine, overrun Israel and invade Judah. They will come in swarms like flies and bees. During the same time the Egyptians will swarm over the land of Palestine as these two great empires, Assyria and Egypt, struggle for domination of that territory. The "hired razor" will be the king of Assyria, God's instrument of shame and humiliation upon Judah. To shave the head and the beard completely off was a sign of deep humiliation and shame. Just how the Lord arranged for the king of Assyria to do His bidding we do not know. We know that the Lord "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to return the Hebrews to their land (II Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1) and that He sent a messenger among the nations to stir them up against Edom (Obadiah 1:1) and that in the book of Daniel the Lord deposed and enthroned pagan kings at His discretion.

v. 21-25 **GOD'S WAY OF JUDGMENT:** The swarming armies of Assyria and Egypt tramping through the land and encamping upon it would completely devastate the land's agricultural potentialities. The massive armies of antiquity fed and supplied themselves almost entirely from foraging upon the countryside where they camped. To feed, clothe and supply other necessities for armies in the hundreds of thousands took incredible amounts of agricultural and building commodities. The devastation would be so thorough that the only thing left to eat for the local residents would be milk, butter and honey (v. 22); the vineyards would be all stripped and weeds would grow in their place (v. 23);

only the hunter hunting the wild things of the thicket will be there, and tillable land will be so full of thorns and briers that tear clothes and flesh, no one will ever go there except animals to graze.

Precisely what Ahaz hoped to avert by becoming a vassal of the king of Assyria was what happened to the land because he refused to trust God and trusted in man.

QUIZ

1. How thoroughly did Ahaz subjugate himself to Assyria?
2. To what extent will the foreign armies come into Palestine because of the sin of Ahaz?
3. How does God "hiss" for these foreign armies to do His bidding?
4. Why was the devastation of the land of Palestine so great?
5. How did the plan of Ahaz to use the king of Assyria for protection turn out?

CHAPTER EIGHT

B. PREVISION OF IMMANUEL

1. THE PROPHECY 8:1-8

TEXT: 8:1-8

- 1 And Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, For Maher-shalal-hash-baz;
- 2 and I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah, the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
- 3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said Jehovah unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
- 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 carried away before the king of Assyria.

- 5 And Jehovah spake unto me yet again, saying,
 6 Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;
 7 now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and it shall come up over all its channels, and go over all its banks;
 8 and it shall sweep onward into Judah; it shall flow and pass through; it shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

QUERIES

- a. Why tell Isaiah to name his son thus (v. 3)?
- b. What are the waters of Shiloah?
- c. Who is the Immanuel of v. 8?

PARAPHRASE

Again the Lord sent me a message: Make a large signboard and write on it the birth announcement of the son I am going to give you. Use capital letters! His name will be Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means, Your enemies will soon be destroyed! I asked Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, both known as honest men, to watch me as I wrote so they could testify that I had written it (before the child was even on the way). Then I had sexual intercourse with my wife and she conceived, and bore me a son, and the Lord said, Call him Maher-shalal-hash-baz. This name prophesies that within a couple of years, before this child is even old enough to say Daddy or Mommy, the king of Assyria will invade both Damascus and Samaria and carry away their riches. Then the Lord spoke to me again and said: Since the people of Jerusalem are planning to refuse My gentle care and are enthusiastic about asking King Rezin and King Pekah to come and aid them, therefore I will overwhelm

My people with Euphrates' mighty flood; the king of Assyria and all his mighty armies will rage against them. This flood will overflow all its channels and sweep into your land of Judah, O Immanuel, submerging it from end to end.

COMMENTS

V. 1-4 PLEDGE OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE: It appears as if Isaiah turns away from his ministry to the general public and concentrates his teaching upon an inner circle of loyal believers in the kingdom. He lets the nation with its stubborn rulers and fat-hearted people go their way. They have rejected his message. It seems that what immediately follows is for the understanding and edification of the "remnant" that will remain faithful. It begins with a pledge of God's faithfulness to be symbolized in Isaiah's children. The sign of Immanuel was abstruse and hidden. In its more spiritual sense it appealed to faith in an event far distant. Even in its contemporary fulfillment it would not do much to cheer and encourage more than a few since neither the *almah* nor her child was pointed out with any distinctness. A fresh sign therefore was given by God's goodness to reassure those of the people who would accept the sign—the sign of the son of Isaiah himself. This son was to be born immediately. His name signified the rapid approach of the spoiler. Maher-shalal-hash-baz means literally, "Plunder speeds, Spoil hastens." Men could verify the prophecy concerning Isaiah's son; they could check the fulfillment against the written statement. The tablet was probably a large wooden or ivory slab (customary signboards of that day). Besides the written statement the fact of the prediction was verified by two men who were evidently chosen for their acceptability to the people.

The promise was that before this son of Isaiah could utter the first words that a child is supposed to be able to speak, Damascus and Samaria would be despoiled. The scripture does not record fulfillment of this prophecy, but archaeology does. Inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser state that he "sent population, goods of the

people of Beth-Omri and their furniture to the land of Assyria." That he "appointed Husih (Hoshea) to the dominion over them" and fixed their annual tribute at two talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver. (Cf. *Records of The Past*, Vol. 5, pg. 52). King Sargon also wrote, "Samaria I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people from its midst I carried captive. Tributes and taxes I imposed upon them after the Assyrian manner."

v. 5-8 PREDICTION OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: "Waters of Shiloah" referred in a general sense to the streams, springs, reservoirs (pools) and conduits which supplied the temple service and worship in Jerusalem. This then would be the same as refusing the temple service and worship which is exactly what Israel had done from the time of Jereboam. The gentle and soft persuasion of God through His priests and prophets the people had rejected. They set up their own priesthood and hired their own false prophets in Israel. God was going to send upon them the raging flood of the "River"—the king of Assyria and his massive horde of soldiers. That mass of Assyrian humanity would completely inundate the northern kingdom of Israel and sweep it away like a great flood. The "flood" would overflow even into Judah, the southern kingdom, "up to its neck." Assyria did sweep into the land of Judah and occupy all that territory except the city of Jerusalem and its immediate environs in the days of Hezekiah (son of Ahaz). God preserved Jerusalem and slew 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night and sent the Assyrians back to their land (Cf. Isaiah ch. 36-39; II Kings ch. 18-20).

The "Immanuel" of v. 8 is, we believe, the land or nation which is a type of the Messiah. Centuries later the Messiah is attacked by the god of this world and almost overwhelmed, but the Messiah is delivered by the omnipotent and miraculous act of God when He raised Him from the dead. Here the land or nation is almost overwhelmed but delivered by the omnipotent miraculous act of God—all in type. Later, in the book of Isaiah the nation of Israel is made to be a type of the Servant-Messiah (Cf. Isa. 44:1ff).

QUIZ

1. Why does it appear Isaiah is turning to a ministry to the "remnant"?
2. What is the significance of making Isaiah's son a sign?
3. Where is the record of the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Isaiah's son?
4. What are the "waters of Shiloah" and what do they symbolize?
5. When did Assyria come into Judah up "to its neck"?
6. Who is the "Immanuel" of v. 8 and what of its symbolic or typical relationship?

2. THE PROMISE 8:9-15

TEXT: 8:9-15

- 9 Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces.
- 10 Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.
- 11 For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,
- 12 Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof.
- 13 Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.
- 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.
- 15 And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

QUERIES

- a. Why does God direct the peoples to make an uproar?
- b. To whom did God speak "with a strong hand"?
- c. How would Jehovah become a "stone of stumbling"?

PARAPHRASE

Do your worst, O Syria and Israel, our enemies, but you will not succeed . . . you will be shattered. Listen to me, all you enemies of ours: Prepare for war against us . . . and perish! Yes! Perish! Call your councils of war, develop your strategies, prepare your plans of attacking us, and perish! For God is with us. The Lord has said in strongest terms: Do not under any circumstances, go along with the plans of Judah to make an alliance with Assyria. Don't let people call you a traitor for staying true to God. Don't panic as so many of your neighbors are doing when they think of Syria and Israel attacking you. Don't fear anything except the Lord of the armies of heaven! If you fear Him, you need fear nothing else. He will be your safety; but Israel and Judah have refused His care and thereby stumbled against the Rock of their salvation and lie fallen and crushed beneath it: God's presence among them has endangered them!

COMMENTS

v. 9-10 **ENEMIES DEFEATED:** Although God warned (8:1-8) that the people would suffer the ravages of Assyrian invasion, here Jehovah promises that the forces of the world will not be able to defeat His purposes nor harm His faithful believers. Jehovah, in effect, challenges the pagan nations to assemble themselves, arm themselves and do their very best against His chosen remnant ("Immanuel"). Jehovah assures His remnant their enemies will come to nought for He is with His remnant. This is a common expression of Jehovah through the prophets

(Cf. Joel 3:9ff; Isa. 10:5ff, etc.). Actually, Jehovah takes the evil machinations of worldly powers and uses them to serve His own purposes. In this instance Jehovah used the evil devices of Assyria to punish His rebellious land and strengthen His remnant.

v. 11-15 FAITHFUL PROTECTED: The Lord spoke to Isaiah in some dramatic and emphatic manner warning him not to go along with the plans of Judah to become an ally of Assyria. The people were crying against Isaiah that he was a "conspirator" against the policies of the king. But who were the real "conspirators"? Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets advocated a policy of dependence upon the Lord and not upon foreign powers. And for this they were accused of treason! Ahaz, the son of David, of all men, should have understood the pleas of the prophets. The nation was so low, spiritually, however, that when the prophets advocated that the theocracy act like the theocracy, they were accused of conspiracy. Those forces attempting to "enter the kingdom by violence" in the days of Jesus accused Him of treason because He called the people of God back to their divine mission.

Man seems bent on fearing and respecting and reverencing the wrong power. The tendency of man is always to fear and respect the power he can see and feel—worldly power. Surely Jehovah has manifested His power in the world sufficiently to direct man's fear toward Himself. Yet man in his pride refuses to trust and turns to his own devices for his salvation. Jesus reminded men, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

God is sanctified by man when man sets God apart in His rightful place—as sovereign of man's mind and motives and actions. When man thus sanctifies the Lord, the Lord becomes a "sanctuary" to man—a refuge, a place of safety. When man refuses to sanctify the Lord as sovereign of his life, the Lord becomes a means of man's destruction. Man is created a moral being whose life is dependent upon truth, innocence, good, beauty, righteousness and justice. God is the author and perfect source of all of man's need. When man rejects this only source and rebels against it, man's death is inevitable! This has been

demonstrated historically again and again. It was being demonstrated before the very eyes of the people of Israel and Judah in Isaiah's day. This text (esp. v. 14-15) is quoted as a typical prophecy of the evil forces arrayed against God's purposes in the Messiah when they sought to kill him (Cf. Matt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18).

QUIZ

1. What is Jehovah's challenge to the pagan nations in v. 9-10?
2. What does God do with the evil actions of His enemies?
3. Why were the people calling Isaiah a "conspirator"?
4. How does God become a "stumbling block" to those who reject Him?

3. THE PEDAGOGY 8:16-22

TEXT: 8:16-22

- 16 Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.
- 18 Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.
- 19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?
- 20 To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.
- 21 And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward:
- 22 and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and

darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

QUERIES

- a. Who were Isaiah's or the Lord's "disciples"?
- b. How were the children of Isaiah "signs" in Israel?
- c. Why were the people seeking "familiar spirits"?

PARAPHRASE

Complete the written testimony which I have given you, authenticate and corroborate it among My faithful remnant, said the Lord to me. But, I will trust the Lord, who is presently withdrawing from this rebellious nation, but my hope is in Him because He has promised to be with us again. Behold, I and the children God has given me are signs that He keeps His word and fulfills His promises. Now when the unbelieving people shall advise you to try to find out the future by consulting mediums and witches, do not listen to their superstitions and jargon. Should not the people seek the truth from the God of all truth? How can they ever expect to find out about living from the dead? Seek for truth in the law and testimony of God! Check these so-called revelations of the witches and mediums and if they are different than God's testimony then you know they do not speak for Him; there is not even the slightest dawning of light in them. My people are going to be led away captive, stumbling, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, those who do not trust Me will rave and shake their fists at heaven and curse their king and their God. Wherever they look there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. And they will be thrust out into the darkness of captivity.

COMMENT

v. 16-20 TRUE AND FALSE TEACHING: The real crisis in the nation was in its choice of its source for truth and light. Isaiah was commanded by the Lord to "bind up" (complete) the "testimony" (revelation from God) and "seal" (authenticate, prove, corroborate) it among God's "disciples" (followers, the faithful remnant). The "testimony" was all that God had revealed through Isaiah concerning the condition of Israel and Judah and how they might turn to God and be saved. The prophet and his children had even been named to symbolize God's promises. *Isaiah* means "Jehovah will save (His people);" *Shear-jashub* means "A remnant shall return;" *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* means "Your enemies will soon be preyed upon and spoiled."

Isaiah and his sons, displaying the image of God in their lives, in the midst of an unbelieving society, were given for testimony of God's presence and protection for those who trust Him. Their testimony is where the nation is to seek for Jehovah, not in the obscure and ambiguous and false teachings of witches and mediums. It is nothing short of shocking that even Christians are sometimes seduced into seeking the answers to life in witchcraft and spiritism. Seeking to learn from such false and demonic sources is absolutely condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. Verse 18 is quoted in Hebrews 2:13 as messianic. Christ, the Great Prophet, the Divine Being coming into the world in the form of flesh, and His disciples, partaking of the divine nature through faith, both displaying the image of God in the midst of an unbelieving society, are given for a testimony of God's power, presence and protection. Thus Isaiah and his children are types of the Messiah-Prophet and His children.

"To the law and to the testimony!" There is no alternative if man wants light and truth. Every claim to light and truth must be measured by God's law and testimony—God's revelation. If any teaching does not "speak" according to God's word there is no light in that teaching. It is darkness, falsehood and condemnation. Whatever it is or wherever it is found, if it is true it will agree in fact, principle and practice with God's revelation.

Witchcraft and necromancy does not agree with God's word. Therefore, there is not even the dawning of light in it.

v. 21-22 CONSEQUENCES OF CONSULTING FALSE TEACHING: When men choose ignorance falsehood and sin, deliberately, they lose the power to reason to relate and to understand. Nothing makes sense. Man suffers a dehumanizing, deranging, despairing experience. When calamity strikes, as it surely will do those who disobey God's moral principles of human social existence, chaos reigns. Distresses of many kinds are the consequences of casting away Divine truth—both physical and psychological. Such conditions are described in these verses—distress, famine, anxiety, cursing one's fellowman, cursing God, searching, darkness, gloom, anguish, being driven away. Such is a description of the chosen people at the time of their captivities.

QUIZ

1. Where was the real crisis in the nations of Israel and Judah?
2. What was the "testimony" that Isaiah was to bind up and seal?
3. What does the word "seal" mean here?
4. How did the prophet and his children become a testimony for Jehovah?
5. How does verse 18 apply to the New Testament?
6. What are the consequences of false teaching?

CHAPTER NINE

C. PEACE BY IMMANUEL

1. HIS PERSONALITY

TEXT: 9:1-7

- 1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made

it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

- 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
- 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
- 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.
- 5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire.
- 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, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

QUERIES

- a. When is "Galilee" to be made glorious?
- b. Who is the "oppressor" that is broken?
- c. Who is the "child" that is born?

PARAPHRASE

But that time of darkness and despair will not be forever upon God's covenant people. In fact, while the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali is being held in contempt by God because of the paganism of its people, in the day the Messiah comes He will make that territory glorious by His work there—that is the

territory that will then be Gentile territory, Galilee and beyond the Jordan. These who walk in the darkness of ignorance and sin will see a Great Light. This Light will illuminate the way for those who live in the realms of deep darkness. You, Jehovah, will multiply your covenant people, you will increase their joy; your multiplying people will be filled with joy like that of reapers when the harvest time has come, and like that of men dividing up the treasures they have captured. When The Light comes God will break the bondage of oppression upon His people by a great miraculous Divine act of victory over their enemy. At that time God shall utterly destroy the weapons of those who oppress His people and give His people complete peace. For unto God's people a child will be born; God will give His people a Son. And the government of God will be administered by this Son. These will be the royal titles indicating His nature and character: Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. His government will be one of continued growth and peace and it will never end. He will occupy the throne of His progenitor David and will rule in perfect justice and righteousness His kingdom forever. God's zeal to vindicate His faithfulness and His zeal for His people will accomplish all this.

COMMENTS

V. 1-3 THE LIGHT DISPELLING DARKNESS: We must preface all comments on this section (9:1-7) by confirming that the entire section is messianic. It is plainly declared to be so by Jesus Christ Himself (Cf. Matt. 4:13-17). The ultimate fulfillment of this section, then, is in the first advent of the Messiah. To those who by faith accept the sign of the *almah's* son and the sign of Isaiah's sons, gloom and despair will be dispelled. The Great Light will come at some future time and turn God's contempt into God's glory upon God's people. This future glory of God will have its beginnings in Galilee, the region so abhorred by most of the people of Palestine. Of course, those people to whom Isaiah addresses these remarks, people of Isaiah's own day, would not

themselves live to see the reality of this prediction. However, by faith they might appropriate it to themselves at that moment—even as we may appropriate now some of the blessings of the future predicted in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ, The Light of the World, began His public ministry in Galilee. He was reared there in the village of Nazareth. He called most of His apostles from that territory. And, He gained His greatest acceptance and following from Galilee. This northern frontier of the Promised Land was the first to abdicate to paganizing inroads in the days of the Divided Kingdom—it was the first to be overrun by the invading forces of Assyria and Babylon—but it was the area God chose to bless and glorify with the presence of His Beloved Son! The method of Divine grace is amazing.

The coming of the Messiah-Light brought atonement for Divine contempt. His coming also brought fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that from his seed would all the nations of the earth be blessed. His coming brought about the multiplication of the covenant nation through the institution of the kingdom and the calling of the Gentiles into covenant kingdomship. The two figures of speech in verse 3 are favorite prophetic vehicles to express the way in which this future, new, kingdom of God will extend itself among the Gentiles. The preaching of the gospel and conversion of the Gentiles is spoken of, prophetically, as a harvest and as a conquest wherein the Gentiles become the booty of God's war against His enemies (Cf. Obad. 17-21; Isa. ch. 60-66, etc.).

V. 4-5 THE LORD DELIVERING FROM OPPRESSION: These verses offer another favorite prophetic figure of speech. Oppression, whether physical or spiritual, is usually illustrated in the Old Testament by physical figures. Here we believe the oppression in its ultimate sense is the spiritual oppression of sin, its guilt and its estranging consequences. Of course, the immediate consequences of the sin of Israel and Judah were their captivities by foreign powers. However, even these captivities symbolized the greater oppression, the bondage to sin and Satan, to which God's people had surrendered. Now God delivered His people

from both the oppression of Babylonian captivity and from the oppression of sin. The deliverance from captivity became a type and prophecy of the mighty and miraculous deliverance from Satan and sin. Just as it was apparent that it was God delivering the people from the Midianites in the days of Gideon, so it would be apparent that it was God delivering from captivity and God delivering from Satan and sin. And when God delivers, the oppressor may as well burn his weapons for they will be of no use against God's people any more.

V. 6-7 THE LAD-DIVINE DISPENSING PEACE: The word "child" occurs first in the sentence in Hebrew, indicating all the emphasis is put there. The Son of David, Son of God Most High, actually coming to us as a child. The humanity of the Messiah is pointed out here. Young believes there are only four names for the Child, the first of which should be translated, Wonderful Counsellor. Actually the Hebrew word is "wonder" not "wonderful." The Child will not be merely wonderful, but He Himself will be a Wonder. To sit upon the throne of David as the Messianic King requires wisdom such as no mere man possesses. In this King there will be hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). He will be the Word of God, the Logos (Jn. 1:14, 18). He will be the Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24). (Cf. also Isa. 11:2). This King will have no need of being surrounded with human counsellors and advisors. He is *pele yoetz*, a Wonder of a Counsellor.

This Child is also called *el gibbor*, Mighty God. Literally God-Hero. One who overcomes, a victor, would be appropriate synonyms.

The third appellation is *abi ad*, Father-Eternal. The word Father pictorializes a quality of the Messiah toward His people. Eternal modifies Father, thus, Eternally—a Father to His people!

The fourth name is *sar shalom*, Prince of Peace. Since the peace to be established is eternal, it is clear that this peace is something more than a temporary cessation of hostilities (which millennialists claim will be enforced during the so-called "thousand year literal reign of Christ in Jerusalem.") among nations. The cessation of warfare in itself does not bring about a desired

condition of existence. There must also be removed the cause of war, namely, human sin. When this cause of war is removed, then there can be true peace. For human sin to be removed, however, there must be a state of peace between God and man. Not only must man be at peace with God, but what is more important, God must be at peace with man. The enmity which had existed between God and man must be removed. It was human sin which had kept God at enmity with man. When that sin has been removed, then there can be everlasting peace (Cf. Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:11-22). The Prince of Peace was foreshadowed by Melchizedek, "King of Salem (peace)" and in Solomon, "peaceful one." See also our comments on Isaiah 2:4.

The nature of the reign of this Child will be in justice and righteousness. The two indispensable ingredients making for peace are justice and righteousness. There are two qualities so blatantly abused in the days of the prophets by the rulers and the people of Israel and Judah. Christ came and satisfied the justice of God teaching men to be just and imputed to men the righteousness of God teaching men to be righteous. And His kingdom has continued to reach out to all men everywhere, increasing in quantity and quality. Spiritual growth and development into the image of God is the very essence of the kingdom of God.

What will ever accomplish all this? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do it. But "zeal" for what? There is one recurring phrase of great interest in the prophetic literature, God says, "For my own sake," or "For the sake of my name, I will do it." What could bring more blessedness or victory or safety or abundance to God's people than the vindication of the wisdom, power and faithfulness of God Himself? If God is zealous for His own honor, then His people will surely find honor in that!

QUIZ

1. What is the ultimate fulfillment of this section of prophecy?
2. What is significant about the territory of Galilee in this prophecy?

3. What is the darkness referred to in verse 2?
4. How was the "nation multiplied"?
5. What figures of speech are used to depict deliverance from oppression?
6. Give the meaning of the four names for the Child-Son.
7. What is the peace to be brought by this Child-ruler? Where is it fulfilled in the N.T.?

2. ISRAEL'S PRESUMPTION

TEXT: 9:8-17

- 8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.
- 9 And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in pride and in stoutness of heart,
- 10 The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.
- 11 Therefore Jehovah will set up on high against him the adversaries of Rezin, and will stir up his enemies,
- 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.
- 13 Yet the people have not turned unto him that smote them, neither have they sought Jehovah of hosts.
- 14 Therefore Jehovah will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-branch and rush, in one day.
- 15 The elder and the honorable man, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.
- 16 For they that lead this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the Lord will not rejoice over their young men, neither will he have compassion on their fatherless and widows; for every one is profane and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned

away, but his hand is stretched out still.

QUERIES

- a. How did the Lord send "a word into Jacob"?
- b. Why was God's anger not turned away?
- c. What significance is there in the prophet teaching lies?

PARAPHRASE

The Lord has penetrated into Jacob with His word of warning—His word found its mark through the prophets. Soon all the people of Israel will experience what He has promised, because in the pride and haughtiness of their hearts they have said, Let the judgment come; if the bricks of our houses and walls fall, we will just build houses and walls of hewn stone; if the sycamore trees are cut down, we will put cedars in their place. The Lord's reply to your bragging is to bring Rezin's enemies against you—the Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west. With bared fangs they will devour Israel. But even then the Lord's righteous anger against you will not be satisfied—His hand will still be poised to smash you. For after all this chastening you will not repent and turn to seek Jehovah of hosts. Therefore the Lord, in one day, will cut off from Israel the high and the low; the elder and the honorable man is the high, and the prophet that teaches lies is the low. These false leaders and teachers have led the people in error, and the people have been willing to be led in error—both shall be destroyed. That is why the Lord has no joy in their young men, and no mercy upon even the widows and orphans; for they are all filthy-mouthed, wicked liars, foolish speakers. But even then the Lord's righteous anger against you will not be satisfied—His hand will still be poised to smash you.

COMMENTS

v. 8-12 **HAUGHTY HEARTS:** The Lord has not overlooked their rebellion. He has sent His word directly into their midst through the prophets. He has "hewn them by the prophets and slain them by the words of his mouth" (Hos. 6:5). They were without excuse, for God had warned them again and again. He pleaded with them through Joel, Jonah, Amos and Hosea, to no avail. They became prouder and prouder. There was no humility and no repentance for sin. In their haughty hearts they said, in effect, "Let the Lord's judgment come, we are fully capable of controlling every situation by our own hands. If God destroys our brick houses and city walls we will rebuild them with hewn stones which cannot be destroyed. If God takes away our sycamore trees we will replace them with cedars!" They refused to acknowledge that things were in God's hands. So God will let them know (by experience) that His word is omnipotent. Rezin's enemies, the Syrians on the east (probably those Syrians who had been subjugated by the Assyrians and made to fight with the Assyrians against Damascus), and the Philistines on the west, would form a military-vise, a pincer movement, and crush Israel and Judah between them. Yet, in spite of all this woe and chastening, there is no repentance in Israel, so the wrath of God will still be directed against them.

v. 13-17 **UNHOLY HARBINGERS:** The people had not turned to Jehovah, in spite of God's chastening and the preaching of God's prophets. The reason for their continued rebellion could be found in the fact that the leaders of the nation (its rulers and religious leaders—prophets) were teaching and leading the people in lies. From the head to the tail—from the king to the lowliest official—they were telling the people lies about Jehovah. There were only a very few of the prophets faithful to the truth of God. The majority were false prophets, preaching and teaching what a sinful people wanted to hear, hirelings, concerned with their own selfish ends, (Cf. Amos 2:12; Micah 2:6-11). Those being led astray into error (the people) would be destroyed also because they were willing to be led astray! God takes no pleasure

in any of these people (v. 17). The young men of the nation, its greatest treasure are an abomination. The nation is so totally corrupt even the widows and orphans are involved in its rebellion and God cannot even show mercy to these. *Everyone* is profane and irreligious. They plot evil deeds (Cf. Hosea 4:1-3; 7:1-16). Every person in the nation is speaking and acting foolishly. It is difficult to comprehend the extent of moral and spiritual decadence rampant in Israel at that time. But the biblical record is substantiated by archaeological data! For this reason God's hand of judgment is poised to fall heavily upon Israel.

QUIZ

1. Why were the people without excuse for their rebellion?
2. What was Israel's presumption?
3. How would the enemies of Rezin deal with Israel?
4. How did the rulers and prophets contribute to the rebellion of Israel?
5. To what extent had the nation fallen into decadence?

3. ISRAEL'S PERVERSITY

TEXT: 9:18-21

- 18 For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briers and thorns; yea it kindleth in the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of Jehovah of hosts is the land burnt up; and the people are as the fuel of fire: no man spareth his brother.
- 20 And one 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:

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.

QUERIES

- a. How does wickedness "burn"?
- b. What is the meaning of "snatching on the right hand"?
- c. Were they literally to eat the "flesh of their own arms"?

PARAPHRASE

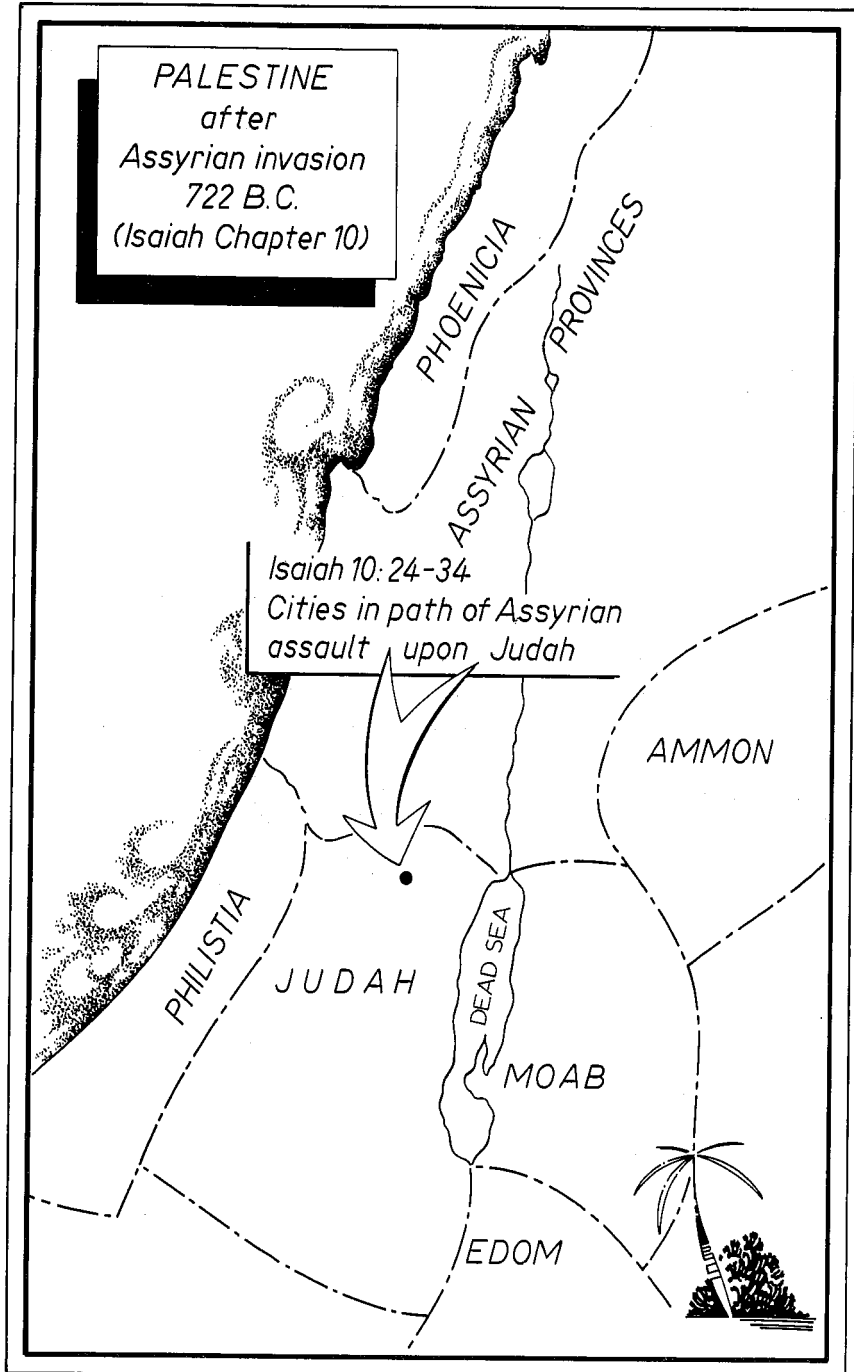
The consequences of your wickedness will consume you like a fire that burns up all vegetation. God's graciousness will be replaced by God's all-consuming wrath. He will devour everything in His anger. The people will be as fuel for the fires of His righteous indignation. They will fight against one another to steal one another's food, but they will never have enough. Finally they will even eat the flesh of their own people. Manassah against Ephraim and Ephraim against Manassah in civil war and then both Manassah and Ephraim in a truce long enough to unite against Judah. Yet even after all of this, God's anger is not yet satisfied. His hand is still heavy upon them, to punish them.

COMMENTS

v. 18-21 CIVIL WAR: The plague of wickedness has infected the whole society and its culture. Rich and poor, powerful and weak, educated and illiterate alike are contaminated with evil. It has spread like fire spreads through dry stubble and forest. The fire which is about to consume the people and their land is the mighty moral rule of God which inevitably must fall upon those who break all moral bounds. The people were about to experience the removal of God's grace. When that happens man

PALESTINE
after
Assyrian invasion
722 B.C.
(Isaiah Chapter 10)

Isaiah 10: 24-34
Cities in path of Assyrian
assault upon Judah





*"The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come:
Israel shall know it" (Hosea 9:7).*

Among the armed units of Tiglath-Pileser III which forced their way into Syria, there was, besides infantry and charioteers, an element which was used for the first time in history on a large scale by the Assyrians, namely cavalry.

This relief shows mounted Assyrians engaged in battle with Syrian rebels. Behind the horsemen flies a vulture which has snatched up a dead man's entrails.

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES
By Werner Keller - Wm. Morrow Co.

is left alone to the consequences of his perversity and when that happens man consumes himself. Some commentators seem to think the statement, "they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm" means figurative cannibalism. However, literal cannibalism is not unknown to ancient history or modern history (Cf. II Kings 6:24-31; Jer. 19:9, etc.). In modern times the people of Russia in the siege of Leningrad (WW II) are reported to have eaten human flesh to survive starvation. Social and moral anarchy resulted in civil war—brother killing and robbing brother. And all these woes were but the beginning of tribulation on this once favored people. The hand of God was stretched out still. The end was not yet. That came with foreign conquest, captivity and slavery.

QUIZ

1. What is the fire that is about to consume the people and land?
2. Does the Bible mention literal cannibalism anywhere? Where?
3. What brought on the civil war?
4. Why was this tribulation not the end of Israel's woes?

CHAPTER TEN

D. PRESERVATION IN IMMANUEL

1. SOCIAL INJUSTICE

TEXT: 10:1-4

- 1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness;
- 2 to turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!
- 3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desola-

tion which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

- 4 They shall only bow down under the prisoners, and shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

QUERIES

- a. How were the writers writing "perverseness"?
- b. What is meant by "leaving your glory"?

PARAPHRASE

Woe to the rulers that decree unjust decrees and woe to those who administrate them unjustly. These have taken away justice from the poor man. They have so perverted the law they are even robbing the fatherless and the widows. Now, what will you do in the day that the Lord of Justice visits you and sends desolation upon you from a distant land? To whom will you turn then for your help? Where will you hide for safekeeping all the things you glory in then? This people will be brought down. The haughty ones will fall among the slain. Even for all this Jehovah's anger is not turned away, but his hand is still stretched forth in judgment.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **ROBBERY:** Through false and illegal decrees made orally by wicked judges and rulers, and through false and illegal documents written by perverse scribes, the poor and powerless people were being robbed. Those who most needed their human rights protected were the very ones being exploited. Those without political power and influence and without wealth were being "skinned alive." The rich and the influential able to pay bribes

were receiving all the civil judgments in their favor. Widows and orphans were at the mercy of the merciless. When a nation's courts and political officials become corrupt, the nation is in its death throes. A righteous and just God cannot allow such social and moral chaos to go uncorrected for long or constant civil upheaval would be the result.

v. 3-4 **RETRIBUTION:** When the day of Divine retribution comes, where will they go for help? When the Holy God visits them in judgment who will protect them? Can they depend upon their idol-gods? Will their foreign allies be able to deliver them? Can they buy their way out of God's judgment with their wealth? All these things Israel has gloried in, but what will become of their glory when God's wrath falls upon them? The answer is, it shall fail them. Israel will be taken prisoner and the unjust rulers and judges will fall along with all the other dead and captured.

QUIZ

1. How were the needy turned aside from justice?
2. What two classes were especially being exploited?
3. Why can God not allow social injustice to exist for any length of time?
4. Where would Israel likely turn to for help when Divine judgment fell?
5. What will happen to the rulers and judges when judgment comes upon Israel?

2. SCOURGE OF GOD

TEXT: 10:5-11

- 5 Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!
- 6 I will send him against a profane 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.

- 7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few.
 8 For he saith, Are not my princes all of them kings?
 9 Is not Calno as Carchemish: is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?
 10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;
 11 shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

QUERIES

- a. Who is the Assyrian of verse 5? How was he to become a rod?
 b. Why is the Assyrian's attitude portrayed as one of resistance?

PARAPHRASE

Assyria is the whip of My anger; his military strength is My weapon to bring My punishment upon this godless nation, says the Lord. He will enslave them and plunder their treasures and trample them like dirt beneath his feet. But the King of Assyria will not have My Divine will as his purpose when he comes against Israel. His purpose will be to attack My people as part of his plan to conquer the world. He is persuaded that all his princes will soon be ruling as kings over the various nations he plans to conquer. He says, I shall destroy Calno just as I did Carchemish and Hamath will go down before us as Arpad did; and we will destroy Israel just as we did Damascus. Indeed, we have finished off many a kingdom whose idols were far greater and more glorious than those in Jerusalem and Samaria. So when we have defeated Samaria and her idols we will destroy Jerusalem with hers.

COMMENTS

v. 5-6 **GOD'S INTENTIONS:** This is one of those unique passages of the Old Testament which reveals the majestic, omnipotent, cosmic, sovereign purposes of God being carried out in conjunction with and in spite of the evil machinations of human power inspired and supported by the forces of hell. It is grand and glorious good news that Jehovah God controls and uses men and nations and events to carry out His purposes of redemption and salvation. God is going to take the evil purposes and intentions of the king of Assyria and use them to serve His long-range plan of preparing the Hebrew people to deliver the Messiah to the world! How breathtaking, how it staggers the mind and exhilarates the emotions to contemplate it! The terrible, blood-thirsty, cruel, inhuman Assyrians are, of their own choice, bent on conquering and plundering the whole world. God says, "Go ahead, have your way for a season—I'll use it to chasten My holy people and then I'll requite your wickedness upon your own heads." God plans to chasten and discipline His people so that those who believe Him and remain faithful to Him in the midst of this chastening may form the remnant through which the Messiah and the messianic kingdom (the church) may come to the world. The evil scheme of the Assyrian empire will serve that Divine purpose. Both Old and New Testaments teach such a philosophy or theology of history (Cf. Jer. 27:1-11; Dan. 2:20-22; Isa. 45:1-7; Jn. 19:11, etc.). For a fuller discussion of this see *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, pub. College Press, 1968, pgs. 39-111, art. entitled, "Theo-Ramic Philosophy of History." God's ways are above us all. Should we ask, Why would God permit such a wicked and ruthless pagan people to plunder His chosen people—and then how can God claim such a perverse nation to be His instrument or servant? God does not forbid our asking. Habakkuk is a prime example of a believer with such a problem. Habakkuk could not understand how and why God would permit the evil and wickedness of the Hebrew people to continue unpunished (Hab. 1:1-4). God told the prophet He was going to punish the wickedness of Judah by

sending the Chaldeans (Babylon) upon them (Hab. 1:5-11). This created the more perplexing problem in Habakkuk's mind of why God would use a pagan nation to punish the Chosen people (Hab. 1:12-17). Habakkuk was confused but he did not despair. He couldn't understand but he had faith and waited for God to answer (Hab. 2:1). God's answer to Habakkuk is still valid today. That answer is, God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Cf. Rom. 8:28). God works all things out in His own good time. We are told simply to wait upon the Lord with faith and endurance (Hab. 2:2-4). Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 to indicate that we cannot understand the working of God's redemptive scheme but we can accept it by faith and thus be justified. God always gives enough experiential, concrete, factual, historical evidence to convince the honest-minded person of His existence and nature. The Hebrew people at this stage of their national experience (Isaiah) had more than abundant evidence of God's active, providential, redemptive control of history so they could easily believe His use of the Assyrian empire, if they wanted to.

v. 7-11 ASSYRIA'S INTENTIONS: The king of Assyria certainly does not admit that he is an instrument of the Hebrew God. It is not his intention to serve any purpose but his own purpose of world-conquest. This is a graphic description of the thinking processes of a carnal-minded dictator. He reasons, Calno was taken by me (738 B.C.), Carchemish on the Euphrates was subdued by my people (717 B.C.), Hamath on the Orontes fell to us in 720 B.C. and Arpad in 740. Samaria was conquered in 721 B.C. and Damascus in 732 B.C. Where were the gods of these great peoples when I overcame them? Surely Judah's God is no greater than the gods of these. They did not stop me and neither will the God of Judah. The attitude of the Assyrian emperor is manifested in the words of Rabshakeh in later years when the armies of Assyria had made invasion of Judah and had Jerusalem surrounded, "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria"? (II Kings 18:33-35). There was a long line of Assyrian kings with

intentions of world-conquest: Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon II and Sennacherib. Sennacherib was probably the king of Assyria predicted by Isaiah here. He is mentioned in Isaiah chapters 36-38. He was planning to overrun Jerusalem and plunder her treasury and temple just as he had already done to most of the ancient world. He would take the people captive into slavery to build his palaces and city walls, etc. But, although the Assyrians captured most of the land of Palestine, they would never conquer Jerusalem.

QUIZ

1. What does Isaiah say is God's purpose for the king of Assyria?
2. What does the rest of the Bible have to say about this grand philosophy of history?
3. What if we cannot understand how God does His work through pagan empires?
4. What is the king of Assyria's intention in history?
5. What is the Assyrian king's attitude toward the God of Judah?
6. Who was probably the king predicted by Isaiah here?

3. SMITING OF THE SCOURGE

TEXT: 10:12-19

- 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.
- 13 For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding: and I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and like a valiant man I have brought down them that sit on thrones:
- 14 and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples;

and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped.

- 15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? shall the saw magnify itself against him that wieldeth it? as if a rod should wield them that lift it up, or as if a staff should lift up him that is not wood.
- 16 Therefore will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire.
- 17 And the light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day.
- 18 And he will consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and it shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.
- 19 And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, so that a child may write them.

QUERIES

- a. Why does the Lord turn and "punish" the king of Assyria?
- b. How does the Lord punish him?

PARAPHRASE

After the Lord has used the King of Assyria to accomplish His purpose of chastening the covenant people, then He will turn upon the Assyrians and punish them too—for they are proud and haughty. They boast, We in our own power and wisdom have won these wars. We are great and wise. By our own strength we broke down the walls and destroyed the people and carried off their treasures. In our greatness we have robbed their nests of riches and gathered up kingdoms as a farmer gathers eggs; and no one moved a finger or opened his mouth to peep against us.

But the Lord says, Shall the axe boast of greater power than the man who uses it? Is the saw greater than the man who saws? Can a rod strike unless a hand is moving it? Can a cane walk by itself? Because of all your evil boasting, O King of Assyria, the Lord of Hosts will send a plague among your proud troops, and strike them down. God, the Light and Holy One of Israel, will be the fire and flame that will destroy them. In a single night He will burn those thorns and briers, the Assyrians who destroyed the land of Israel. Assyria's vast army is like a glorious forest, yet it will be destroyed. The Lord will destroy them, soul and body, as when a sick man wastes away. Only a few from all that mighty army will be left; so few a child could count them!

COMMENTS

v. 12-15 **BRAGGING BULLY:** The King of Assyria, like so many ruling tyrants before and after him, refused to acknowledge Divine Providence in his military success. He would not even avail himself of logic and reason to consider that there might be a Divine Ruler of the cosmos and man's affairs by whose permission he conquered and prevailed against other nations. He magnified himself as a god like so many other rulers have done. Recall rulers like Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:28ff) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1ff).

God rules in the affairs of earthly governments to carry out His divine purposes of redeeming all men who are willing to be redeemed. He permits nations and rulers to govern the earth "as a terror to the evil doer and a rewarder of those who do good" (Cf. Rom. 13:1-7). God permits even evil rulers to exercise their tyranny—but only so far! There is always a point, in the wisdom of God, beyond which He will not permit evil to govern (Cf. Jer. 27:1-15). When evil reaches that point the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe intervenes!

When Sennacherib's army had overpowered most of the northern kingdom, Israel, and had besieged Jerusalem, God spoke through Isaiah the prophet (II Kings 19:20ff), and

promised to defend the city (II Kings 19:34; Isa. 37:35). The angel of the Lord went forth and smote the Assyrian army, leaving one hundred eighty-five thousand "dead corpses" (II Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36). Sennacherib returned to Nineveh without capturing the city of Jerusalem (II Kings 19:36).

To the rationalist and unbeliever, this story of the angel's smiting an army and causing a great king to return to his native land without capturing a city seems beyond the realm of historical possibility. However, confirmation of the fact that Sennacherib did not take Jerusalem was found in an inscription on a prism called the Taylor Cylinder, discovered at Kouyunjik, the site of ancient Nineveh, in 1830 by J. E. Taylor. An almost identical inscription is found on the Oriental Institute Cylinder in the University of Chicago. In the inscription Sennacherib tells that he made other Palestinian cities yield, but when he comes to describe his campaign against Jerusalem he fails to tell of the capture of that city and its king Hezekiah. Rather the text of the inscription tells of King Hezekiah in these words, "As for himself, like a bird in a cage in his royal city Jerusalem, I shut (him) up." Since Sennacherib did not capture Jerusalem (as indicated in the Bible), he made as good a story out of the siege as possible, and reported that he had shut up poor Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage." Actually, Hezekiah was reposing quite safely in his "cage."

v. 16-19 **BROKEN BRAGGART:** There is no evidence in the archaeological records that Sennacherib ever returned to the region of Palestine. The Bible gives us an adequate reason—the loss of his army before the walls of Jerusalem. The slaughter of 185,000 soldiers in one night, even with our modern death-dealing weapons would be considerable defeat to any army!

The Bible tells us that Sennacherib finally met his death at the hands of his own sons (II Kings 19:37; Isa. 37:38). Esarhad-don (681-668 B.C.), Sennacherib's son and successor, tells of this very event in the following inscription: "In the month Nisanu, on a favorable day, complying with their exalted command, I made my joyful entrance into the royal palace, the awesome place, wherein abides the fate of kings. A firm

determination fell upon my brothers. They forsook the gods and turned to their deeds of violence, plotting evil . . . To gain the kingship they slew Sennacherib, their father.”

In 625 B.C. the Assyrians were driven out of the Mesopotamian-Babylonian area by the Chaldean prince Nabopolassar, founder of the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean empire and father of Nebuchadnezzar. He had joined forces with the Medes in 614 B.C. and attacked the city of Ashur. Two years later in 612 B.C. they again joined forces to bring about the destruction of Nineveh, captial city of Assyria. With the fall of Nineveh (see Nahum for a graphic prediction of the fall of Nineveh), the Assyrians were reduced to chaos and retreated westward to set up a government at Haran under Ashur-uballit II (612-609 B.C.). Assyria awaited help from Egypt—her one time enemy— against the new danger from Babylon, but help did not come. Josiah of Judah marched his armies to Megiddo to prevent Necho II of Egypt from passing through the valley of Esdraelon en route to Haran. Josiah was killed at Megiddo (II Kings 23:29-30), but he probably succeeded in delaying Necho long enough to permit Nabopolassar to strike the death blow to the Assyrian Empire. And so about all that was left of Assyria, that “great forest” were a few scattered “trees”—so few “that a child may write them.”

QUIZ

1. Why did the King of Assyria brag so?
2. How could God, on the one hand, use the King of Assyria to punish the covenant people, and on the other hand, turn and punish Assyria?
3. Is there any confirmation that the King of Assyria considered the besieged Hezekiah as one that could not “move the wing, or . . . chirp”?
4. What happened to the army of the King of Assyria?
5. What happened to the King of Assyria?
6. What happened to Assyria?

4. SALVATION OF THE REMNANT

TEXT: 10:20-27

- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
- 21 A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.
- 22 For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.
- 23 For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth.
- 24 Therefore thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.
- 25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation against thee shall be accomplished, and mine anger shall be directed to his destruction.
- 26 And Jehovah of hosts will stir up against him a scourge, as in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it up after the manner of Egypt.
- 27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed by reason of fatness.

QUERIES

- a. When would the remnant return?
- b. Who is this "remnant"?
- c. What was the "yoke" God would remove from Israel's shoulder?

PARAPHRASE

Then at last, those left in Israel and in Judah will trust the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, instead of fearing the Assyrians. A remnant of them will return to the mighty God. But though Israel be now as many as the sands along the shore, yet only a few of them will be left to return at that time; God has rightly decided to destroy His people: Yes, it has already been decided by the Lord God of Hosts to consume them. Therefore the Lord God of Hosts says, O My people in Jerusalem, don't be afraid of the Assyrians when they oppress you just as the Egyptians did long ago. It will not last very long; in a little while My anger against you will end, and then it will rise against them to destroy them. The Lord of Hosts will send His angel to slay them in a mighty slaughter like the time when Gideon triumphed over Midian at the rock of Oreb or the time God drowned the Egyptian armies in the sea. On that day God will end the bondage of His people. He will break the slave-yoke off their necks, and destroy it as decreed.

COMMENTS

v. 20-23 REPENTING REMNANT: A *shear*, "remnant" of Israel would survive the Assyrian captivity. Remnant is a small "left-over." In this case the "left-over" piece of Israel is precious to God for it is the only part of the whole nation which has repented and turned back to Jehovah. The Assyrian captivity served as a sifting experience for those who claimed to be the covenant people. The majority of the ten northern tribes (the nation of Israel) were never to return to Palestine after the Assyrian captivity. They were dispersed all over the world by being sold as slaves, etc. Some who might have returned chose to stay where they had been taken and were the ancestors of that colony of Jews we read of in Esther. That a small "remnant" of the ten northern tribes did return in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra is evident from the listing of tribal names in the book of Ezra. Judah, the southern

kingdom, was taken captive by the Babylonians some 120 years after Israel's captivity. Then in about 536 B.C. the king of Persia, Cyrus, decreed the release of the Jews to return and rebuild their cities and temple. Jews from Israel and Judah returned as one nation. After many long years in forced exile among a vast sea of heathenism there was a sincere attitude of repentance and determination to do God's will permeating the returning Jews. This attitude of penitence did not last long with some of the people, however, and Jewish history became one long story of the struggles of a small "remnant" trying to remain faithful in the face of persecution and efforts to heathenize them.

The statement "A remnant shall return" is in Hebrew literally, "shear-jashub." This was the name of one of Isaiah's sons (Cf. Isa. 7:3) and was a sign or symbol to Ahaz that God would deliver a believing remnant. The idea is that deliverance is predicated upon one's spiritual relationship to God and not on one's national ancestry. This is the meaning of verse 22. God promised Abraham that his progeny would, physically speaking, become as numerous "as the sand of the sea." But God's spiritual promise of forgiveness, redemption and salvation was made to those who were the children of Abraham "by faith" (Cf. Gal. 3:1—4:7). Even in the days of Isaiah God's deliverance was focused *not* on physical relationship but spiritual relationship.

These repenting Jews who believed God as He spoke through His prophets produced a small but steadfast line of faithful descendants down through the centuries. From their heritage of faith came people like the parents of John the Baptist, Mary, mother of Jesus, the apostles and others of Jesus' day. Thus the Messiah, the "seed" of Abraham, was produced through this faithful remnant.

V. 24-27 RESTORED REMNANT: Israel is warned and exhorted not to fear the Assyrians. The prophet bids them remember how mightily God delivered them from Egyptian bondage in the days of Moses. He also reminds them of the deliverance God wrought through the man Gideon after they had suffered years of bondage to their oppressors in the days of the judges. History proves God is able! The deliverance of God upon which man may depend

is not wishful thinking. It is demonstrated time and again in history! Prophetic preaching today must take God's deeds demonstrated in history as its fundamental and ever-recurring basis! If preaching to our age is to accomplish its goal of evangelizing the world with the gospel of Christ it must concentrate on bringing a "remnant" to repentance.

The term "indignation" in 10:25 is a technical term used by the prophets to designate the wrath of God executed in giving the covenant people over to captivity (Cf. Dan. 8:19; 11:36).

The Hebrew word *shomen* in verse 27 translated "fatness" may also be translated "anointing" or "fertility." For this reason some commentators think this passage is messianic and points to an ultimate deliverance when all men shall have opportunity to become seed of Abraham and a part of the "remnant" through Christ. Other commentators hold to the translation of "fatness" insisting it means only that deliverance from the Assyrian will be from within Israel because of her repentance (or "fatness") as well as from God or without.

QUIZ

1. What is a "remnant"?
2. How do we know a "remnant" of Israel returned?
3. Did God mean the whole Jewish nation would be the "remnant"? Why not?
4. What did this "remnant" become?
5. Why did the prophet appeal to past history?
6. What does the term "indignation" mean?
7. How may the word "fatness" be otherwise translated?

5. SHAME OF ASSYRIA

TEXT: 10:28-34

- 28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage;
- 29 they are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled.
- 30 Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! hearken, O Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth!
- 31 Madmenah is a fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety.
- 32 This very day shall he halt at Nob: he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.
- 33 Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with terror: and the high of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low.
- 34 And he will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

QUERIES

- a. Where are all these cities mentioned?
- b. Why are they mentioned?

PARAPHRASE

Look, the mighty armies of Assyria are coming! Now they are at Aiath, now at Migron; they are storing some of their equipment at Michmash and crossing over the pass; they are staying overnight at Geba; fear strikes the city of Ramah; all the people of Gibeah—the city of Saul—are running for their lives. Well may you scream in terror, O people of Gallim. Shout a warning to Laish, for the mighty army comes. O poor Anathoth, what a fate is yours! There go the people of Madmenah, all fleeing, and the citizens of Gebim are preparing to run. But the enemy stops at Nob for the remainder of that day. He shakes his fist

at Jerusalem on Mount Zion. Then, look, look! The Lord, the Lord of the armies of heaven, is chopping down the mighty tree! He is destroying all of that vast army, great and small alike, both officers and men. He, the Mighty One, will cut down the enemy as a woodsman's axe cuts down the forest trees in Lebanon.

COMMENTS

v. 28-34 **ASSYRIA CUT DOWN:** These verses are an imaginative description of the approach of the Assyrian army. It is what is called in prophecy, "predictive present." The prophet predicts what is to come as if it were presently occurring. Entering the borders of Judah at Ai and leaving his heavy baggage train behind because it would be in the way when contact was made with their enemies, Assyria attacks the land of the Jews. As they advance the inhabitants flee from their towns and cities, trembling and crying for help. At last the Assyrian stands at Nob (the priestly city destroyed by Saul, I Sam. 22:19) which must have been in sight of Jerusalem. From this vantage point the Assyrian makes threatening gestures at Jerusalem (Cf. comments on 10:12-19) recorded in Isaiah 37:22-23.

But God's judgment catches up with Assyria. Again using the figure of trees with their boughs, the prophet describes how Assyria will be "cut down." The Assyrian King is a great tree in Lebanon and the boughs are lopped off. This is a favorite figure of Old Testament prophecy (Cf. Daniel 4). When the angel of death slew 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army there was much terror among the Assyrians. That powerful, cruel, proud, arrogant and boastful nation was soon reduced to a fleeing horde of refugees chased by the Babylonians and eventually Assyria was reduced to oblivion as a nation. God keeps His word!

QUIZ

1. What particular form of prophetic address has the prophet used here?
2. With what detail has the prophet described the Assyrian

assault upon Judah?

3. Why does the prophet describe the Assyrian king as a "tree" cut down?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

E. PROGRAM OF IMMANUEL

1. DIVINE DIRECTION

TEXT: 11:1-9

- 1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit:
- 2 and the Spirit of Jehovah 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 Jehovah;
- 3 and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears;
- 4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide 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.
- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.
- 6 And the wolf 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.
- 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.
- 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
- 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "shoot" of the stock of Jesse?
- b. When will this harmony between children and wild beasts be?
- c. How shall the earth "be full of the knowledge of the Lord"?

PARAPHRASE

Although the "tree" of David will be cut down with the captivity, from the stump of the house of Jesse will grow a Shoot—yes, a new Branch from the roots of that stump. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be obedience to the Lord. He will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them. For He will be clothed with fairness and with truth. In that day the wolf and the lamb will lie down together, and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among bears; cubs and calves will lie down together, and lions will eat grass like the cows. Babies will play safely among the snakes, and a little child who puts his hand in a nest of deadly adders will pull it out unharmed. Nothing will hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain; for as the waters fill the sea, so shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

COMMENTS

v. 1-5 CHARACTER OF THE BRANCH: The Assyrian king will be felled like a mighty tree being cut down. His whole forest (nation) will be felled and will not grow back. Israel is soon to be felled in the captivity. However, from the stump ("remnant") that is left of Israel, a Shoot or Branch will sprout. This Branch will be a supernatural person. He will have a full measure of the Spirit of the Lord. There can be little doubt that the Branch is

the Messiah (Cf. Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The main emphasis focuses on His character. He will be in complete contrast to Israel's human rulers. He will rule righteously, justly, fairly. He will judge according to facts because He will be filled with divine wisdom, divine counsel and divine power. Israel's human kings, for the most part, delighted in doing their own will. The Branch will delight in doing God's will (Cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). The absolute righteousness and faithfulness of the Branch will bring a change in the character of those who commit themselves to Him. They will be able to trust Him to take care of all judgment. Thus they will be at peace and harmony with one another and with their surroundings. This leads into the next section.

v. 6-9 CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER: The condition of the believer is directly dependent upon the character of the Branch. Without the Branch the believer falls into the sinful and decadent condition which Israel finds itself. Social injustice, political anarchy, human enmity and personal fragmentation are the consequences of impotent human leadership. Sinful, rebellious man is out of harmony with the will of God and out of harmony with God's whole creation. He trusts nothing and no one. He hopes in nothing. Filled with despair and meaninglessness he cares for nothing. He is at war with himself, with other human beings and with all that surrounds him. He perverts and exploits nature.

But when man finds he has a Divine Ruler who will judge with righteousness and faithfulness, and commits himself in faith and obedience to that Ruler, life begins to make sense. Man finds wholeness in himself, with his fellow man and harmony with his circumstances and surroundings. Nature becomes a help to him, and even those circumstances which seemed before to be contradictory and meaningless now become aids in the perfecting of his character.

We believe Isaiah is here speaking figuratively of a condition that will be accomplished in the believer at the first coming of the Messiah. When the Messiah has completed His messianic work, peace will be made possible in the hearts of those who believe.

When men believe and obey Him they will be regenerated. They will begin the process of perfecting that will fit them for the time when the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah." Some day even creation itself shall be redeemed (Cf. Rom. 8:18-25) and God will create a new heaven and a new earth. But new circumstances do not a heaven make! C. S. Lewis once said that heaven will not be so much the glory that surrounds us as the glory that is in us! Even when God makes a new heaven and new earth with docile animals and a stormless natural order, it will not be heaven without regenerated people. Man had perfect natural conditions to start with in the Garden of Eden! When man listened to a liar (the Devil), he got out of harmony with God and himself and sinful men have been perverting and exploiting everything he can get his hands on since then.

Isaiah is talking here about man's conversion. *Potentially*, man's dominion over creation, which he once enjoyed in Eden but lost, has been restored through the work of God-Man, Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:5-18). Man can now enter into that *potential* dominion by faith in Christ, for Christ has destroyed the power the Devil formerly had over man through man's fear of death. Thus entering this potential dominion, man begins to prepare himself for the realization or consummation of the dominion which will come at the consummation of the ages—the Second Advent of the Messiah!

The condition described in these verses cannot apply to a supposed millennium. Advocates of a millennial theory maintain that even during the millennium there is sin, for after the millennium the nations will again gather for a battle. The picture before us, however, is one in which there is no sin, but in which the fullest manifestation of peace is to be seen. And right now, within the kingdom of the Messiah, there is peace. Of course, the kingdom is still *in* the world—not *of* the world. And so the world makes war on the kingdom of God. But within the kingdom itself there is peace! And some day, even the world, nature and all its inhabitants will be at complete harmony.

QUIZ

1. What connection does the idea of a "Branch" out of Jesse have with the foregoing idea that Assyria will be completely "cut down"?
2. What is emphasized concerning the "Branch"?
3. How does the character of the Branch tie in with the condition of the believer?
4. Why must men be made "fit" to dwell in a new heaven and new earth?
5. How has Christ restored man potentially to his former dominion?
6. Why is this section probably not referring to a "millennium"?

2. DRAMATIC DELIVERANCE

TEXT: 11:10-16

- 10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.
- 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, 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.
- 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.
- 13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
- 14 And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west; together shall they despoil the children of the east; they shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

- 15 And Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind will he wave his hand over the River, and will smite it into seven streams, and cause men to march over dryshod.
- 16 And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

QUERIES

- a. Who are the "peoples" to whom the root of Jesse shall be an "ensign"?
- b. Why mention the disappearance of envy between Ephraim and Judah?
- c. What is the "highway" for the remnant?

PARAPHRASE

In that day He who fulfilled the royal dynasty of David will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to Him, for His dwelling place will be glory! In that day the Lord will again deliver a remnant of His people remaining in Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will raise a standard among the nations for them to rally to and He will gather the covenant people from all over the earth. The enmity between all peoples will disappear; especially the jealousy between Israel and Judah will end. All together God's people will assault the enemies of God, conquer them and bring them under God's rule. God will destroy every obstacle that stands in the way to deliverance. He will provide a Divine Way upon which they may travel to deliverance from their bondage.

COMMENTS

v. 10-13 RALLYING POLESTAR: This first section speaks of the dramatic way in which the Branch, the Messiah, will be a rallying polestar. He will bring together those that were separated through strife and schism. The glory of the Lord manifested in the Messiah will be the polestar. A literal translation of the word "glorious" in vs. 10 would be "glory." It is the Hebrew noun *kovod* and not the adjective. "The word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." (Jn. 1:14) God's resting-place is where He has settled down to rule. As the Tabernacle and Temple of the O.T. had the glory of God dwelling in them, so the glory of God now rules and dwells in the Church through Christ (Cf. Isa. 6:19; 44:5; 55:5; Zech. 2:4-5).

Around this *glory*, which would be a Person, men of all nations would gather in unity. Barriers of hatred and separation would be broken down (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22, etc.). Gentile and Jew would be at peace (Cf. Zech. 9:9-10).

The great scandal in the history of God's covenant people was the division caused by envy and jealousy. It happened first in the original family with Cain and Abel. It was repeated over and over and occurred even in the theocracy between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. In fact, Jeroboam is known as "the man who caused Israel to sin." Involved in this schism in Israel was an apostasy, a complete rejection on the part of the northern tribes of the promises which had been made to the house of David. God sent prophets throughout the subsequent history of the apostate nation, to call it to repentance and to point it to the Messiah who alone could heal the breach. The prophets delight to picture as one of the blessings of the Messianic age the healing of the breach between the northern and southern kingdoms (Cf. Ezek. 37:15-28). In Christ all national, sectional and regional distinctions will be abolished. The Messiah is the true Polestar of unity.

v. 14-16 RANSOMED POSSESSION: This true unity does not hide itself in cringing self-defense, expecting attack. It takes the offensive; the enemies of the Messiah must be conquered. In the

strength of unity which the Polestar (Messiah) gives, the ransomed (both Gentile and Jew in one body) "fly upon" the enemy (here represented by the Philistines, Edom, Moab and Ammon) and conquer them. What Isaiah is describing here cannot be understood in a literal sense. It is a picture of the evangelizing of the world by missionaries and Christians all over the world. The glorious hope here held out for God's unified people does not consist in a literal despoilation of nomad Arabs of the desert. It rather consists in the glorious task of making the saving power of God known even to those who are enemies of God in expectation of rescuing them from the kingdom of Satan and delivering them to the kingdom of His dear Son. Elton Trueblood has said that a people trying to be a "remnant," keeping itself pure and undefiled in the midst of a wicked world, may reveal a certain nobility of character, but it is radically different from the pattern taught by Christ. The wonder of heaven is that it is effective, not by keeping itself separate from the world, but rather by *penetrating* the world. God's Messianic people (the Church) must conquer or be conquered!

As remarkable as the unity of God's "remnant" is, the secret of their victory is that the Lord fights for them. Two great obstacles of the ancient world, the tongue of the Red Sea and the Euphrates River, vividly blocked the ancient covenant people from their homeland. In figurative expression Isaiah depicts the supernatural power of God removing obstacles that stand in the way of the "remnant's" conquests. The greatest of all obstacles to the ransomed ones possessing the nations for God are *spiritual* obstacles such as lack of love, lack of motive, division, etc. Jesus promised the disciples that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed they could say to any mountainous obstacle, "be removed" and it would be removed into the deepest sea. Jesus was speaking, of course, of spiritual obstacles.

Not only will God remove the obstacles, He will provide The Way for dramatic, supernatural deliverance. Isaiah is not speaking primarily of the return from Babylonian exile, although that may be the type of the ultimate deliverance. Rather he is thinking of a deliverance so great that it can only be performed by

God and it is for *all nations*. God will provide The Way to bring mankind up out of the house of spiritual bondage and prison of sin. That Way is the Messiah (Jn. 14:6). (Cf. also Isa. 42:16; 43:19; 48:21; 49:11; 35:1-10). For further comments on the "remnant" possessing its enemies see our comments on Obadiah 20 and Amos 9:11-12 in *Minor Prophets*, by Butler, College Press.

QUIZ

1. What is meant by the "resting-place shall be glorious"?
2. Who is the "ensign" to the nations?
3. What was to be accomplished by setting up this "ensign"?
4. What is to be the effort of the "ransomed" remnant?
5. How does God help in the effort of the remnant?

CHAPTER TWELVE

F. PRAISE FOR IMMANUEL

TEXT: 12:1-6

- 1 And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.
- 2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation.
- 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.
- 4 And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted.
- 5 Sing unto Jehovah; for he hath done excellent things; let this be known in all the earth.

6 Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.

QUERIES

- a. What is the "day" spoken of in verses 1 and 4?
- b. How would they "draw water out of the wells of salvation"?
- c. Who is the "inhabitant of Zion"?

PARAPHRASE

On that day you of the remnant will say, Thanks be unto You, O Jehovah, for You were angry with me but now Your anger is turned away and You comfort me. See, you will say, God is my salvation and no one else. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord is my strength and of Him I sing. He is my salvation! With unbounded joy you, O remnant, will draw and drink from the Water of Life. In that day you will proclaim, Give thanks to Jehovah and call upon Him! Tell the whole world about His mighty works and glorify His name among all peoples. Sing in thanksgiving and praise of Jehovah's name for His works excel everything and sing His praises unto all the world. Cry aloud, you who are the true inhabitants of Zion, for the Great and Mighty and Holy One of Israel lives among you.

COMMENTS

v. 1-6 PRAISE IMMANUEL: This is one of the most beautiful peans of praise in all the Bible! In the day that Immanuel shall make His advent into the world of man and shall conquer man's enemies and shall set up His kingdom, the Church, God's remnant (those who believe and are redeemed) will be able to give thanks and praise Jehovah's name for His grace. It will be by His grace that God will satisfy His wrath upon His Son and

turn His wrath away from man. In the substitutionary death of the Messiah men will find comfort and strength and salvation. It will be a work of salvation totally initiated by God and not by man. Man's response will be to trust and enter into covenant relationship through the covenant terms revealed by God.

Water is a beautiful figure of salvation, especially for a people of a dry and arid land. (Cf. Isa. 41:17-18; Jn. 4:14). There is an interesting practice attendant to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jesus day in connection with Isaiah 12:3. Each day of the feast the people would come with palm branches and limbs of willows to the temple. They held these branches over the great altar of burnt offering until they formed a sort of roof and the people marched around the altar. While the people were thus marching, one of the priests went, according to the ceremony, to the pool of Siloam and filled a golden pitcher with about two pints of water. As he returned through the Water Gate, the people chanted Isaiah 12:3 . . . "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The figure of water for Messianic salvation permeates the Old Testament (Cf. Isa. 35:7; 49:10; 55:1; Psa. 42:1; 36:9; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:1-12; Zech 13:1; 14:8; Jn. 4:7-26; 7:37-38).

When men enjoy the blessings of salvation they must make known the glories of their discovery. In John 7:37-38 Jesus says, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Perhaps Jesus meant that those who drink from the wells of salvation will also become, as it were, "springs" of salvation to others. When men proclaim the Living Water and direct men's hearts to Him they have, by their preaching, become secondary sources of the Water of Life.

Notice carefully that the content of true praise and preaching of God is to praise and preach His doings. The church does not exist to give the opinions of men, or to teach that all religions are equally good, or to beg men to unite with her, or to "psych" them into joining her by emotionally-charged entertainments and mass-hypnotic salesmanship methods. Her one supreme task is to cause men to praise the name of God through the direction of their minds to the record of His doings! A part of

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that proclamation may be done through singing His praises.

The inhabitant of Zion is the member of the new covenant people. Zion is the church of Christ (Cf. Heb. 12:22). The Holy One of Israel dwells in His church which is His temple (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22). Isaiah will have a great deal more to say about the glory of Zion (chapters 60 through 66 especially), which is all future to Isaiah's day and cannot refer to anything but the Church.

QUIZ

1. What are the "wells of salvation"?
2. What is to be declared among the peoples?
3. Where is Zion?

SPECIAL STUDY

THE CHRIST IN ISAIAH

By Jeff Robertson

I. The History of the Christ in Isaiah

A. His Birth

1. Prophecy - Isa. 7:14
 - a. Sign to Ahaz - a virgin, or young woman, to conceive and bear a son
 - b. His name to be called Immanuel
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 1:18, 22, 23
 - a. Jesus born of virgin Mary
 - b. The true Immanuel - "God with us"

B. His Family

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:1, 10 - "a shoot from the stump of Jesse," the father of David - Messiah to be of David's line (Cf. Isa. 9:7)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 1:1, 6 - Christ descended from David (Cf. Rev. 5:5 - "the root of David"; Lk. 1:32 - "The throne of his father David")
David (Cf. Rev. 5:5 - "the root of David"; Lk. 1:32 -

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“the throne of his father David”)

C. His Anointing

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:2 - the Messiah to be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord (Cf. Isa. 42:1; 61:1)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 3:16 - the Spirit's descent upon Jesus at the time of His baptism (Cf. Jn. 1:32)

D. His Death

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:9, 12
 - a. Put to death along with criminals
 - b. Buried in rich man's tomb
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 22:37; 23:32; Matt. 27:57-60
 - a. Crucified with two criminals
 - b. Buried in Joseph's tomb

II. The Characteristics of the Christ in Isaiah

A. Wisdom

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:2 - “the spirit of wisdom and understanding”
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 2:40, 52 - “filled with wisdom . . . increased in wisdom”

B. Spiritual Discernment

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:3 - “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear . . .”
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 2:25 - “he knew all men . . . he himself knew what was in man” (Cf. Jn. 7:24)

C. Justice

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:4 - “with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth” (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 42:1, 3, 4)
2. Fulfillment - II Thess. 2:8 - Jesus to destroy the lawless one (Cf. Matt. 12:18, 20)

D. Righteousness

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:5 - “righteousness . . . the girdle of his loins” (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 32:1)
2. Fulfillment - Eph. 6:14 - “the breastplate of righteousness”

E. Silence

I S A I A H

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:2 - "He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street" (Cf. Isa. 53:7)
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:19 - "He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will any one hear his voice in the streets" (Cf. Matt. 26:63)
- F. Gentleness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:3 - "a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench"
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:20 - "he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick"
- G. Perseverance
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:4 - "He will not fail or be discouraged"
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:20, 21 - "till he brings justice to victory; and in his name will the Gentiles hope."
- H. Radiance
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:6 - "a light to the nations" (Cf. Isa. 9:2; 49:6)
 2. Fulfillment - Lk. 2:32 - "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel"
- I. Compassion
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:4 - "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Cf. Isa. 50:4)
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 8:16, 17 - Jesus healed many - "to fulfill what was spoken . . . 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases' "
- J. Meekness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:7 - "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (Cf. Isa. 50:6)
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 26:62, 63, 67; Mk. 14:61; Lk. 22:63 (Cf. Acts 8:32)
- K. Vicarious Suffering
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:10 - "when he makes himself an offering for sin" (Cf. Isa. 52:14; 53:12)
 2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:28 - "so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many . . ."
- L. Rejection

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1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:3 - "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ."
 2. Fulfillment - Jn. 1:10, 11 - "He was in the world . . . yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not."
- M. Sinlessness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:9 - "although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth"
 2. Fulfillment - I Pet. 2:22 - "He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (Cf. Lk. 23:14, 15, 41; Jn. 8:46)
- N. Greatness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:12 - "Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Cf. Isa. 52:13)
 2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:6 - Christ greater than the temple
- O. Saving Power
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:11 - "he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one . . . make many to be accounted righteous . . ."
 2. Fulfillment - Jn. 10:14-18; Rom. 5:18, 19 - "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous"
- P. Exaltation
1. Prophecy - Isa. 52:13 - "Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high."
 2. Fulfillment - Phil. 2:9 - "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name . . ."
- Q. Eternal Kingdom
1. Prophecy - Isa. 9:6, 7 - "Of the increase of his government . . . there will be no end, upon the throne of

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David . . . to establish it, and to uphold it . . . from this time forth and for evermore.”

2. Fulfillment - Lk. 1:32, 33 - “and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

III. The Titles of the Christ in Isaiah

- A. Immanuel
 1. Isa. 7:14
 2. Matt. 1:23
- B. Mighty God
 1. Isa. 9:6
 2. Jn. 20:28; (Cf. Jn. 1:1-3, 14; 8:58; Matt. 28:18; Rev. 19:16)
- C. Everlasting Father
 1. Isa. 9:6
 2. Rev. 5:13; Lk. 1:33
- D. Prince of Peace
 1. Isa. 9:6
 2. Eph. 2:14; Jn. 14:27
- E. Righteous King
 1. Isa. 32:1 (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 11:5)
 2. Lk. 1:32, 33; Rev. 19:16
- F. Good Shepherd
 1. Isa. 40:11
 2. Jn. 10:11
- G. Divine Servant
 1. Isa. 42:1
 2. Matt. 12:17, 18
- H. Arm of the Lord
 1. Isa. 53:1
 2. Jn. 12:37, 38
- I. Anointed Preacher
 1. Isa. 61:1
 2. Lk. 4:18

THE CHRIST IN ISAIAH

IV. The Mission of the Christ in Isaiah

A. Illuminator

1. Prophecy - Isa. 9:2 - "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light . . ." (Cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 4:15, 16 - ". . . the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light . . ." (Cf. Lk. 2:32)

B. Judge

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:3,4 - "He shall not judge by what his eyes see . . . but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth"
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 2:25 - see under II, B, 2

C. Reprover

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:4 - ". . . he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked."
2. Fulfillment - II Thess. 2:8 - see under II, C, 2

D. Law-giver

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:4 - ". . . the coastlands wait for his law."
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:18 - ". . . he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles."

E. Liberator

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:7 - ". . . to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 4:18 - "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed"

F. Burden-bearer

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:4 - see under II, I, 1
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 8:17 - see under II, I, 2

G. Sin-bearer

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:6 - ". . . the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

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2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:28 - see under II, K, 2
- H. Intercessor
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:12 - "yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
 2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:24 - "For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."
- I. Only Saviour
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:5 - "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."
 2. Fulfillment - Rom. 4:25 - "[Jesus] who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS SEVEN THROUGH TWELVE

ASSOCIATION

(Associate the persons or events of column one with the correct person or event of column two. Some of column two are incorrect.)

1	2
Ahaz	millenium
Rezin	Persia
Remaliah	Babylon
Ephraim	king of Israel
Shearjashub	lamb
Damascus	Armenia
Immanuel	king of Judah
Maher-shalal-hash-baz	sucking child
virgin	king of Syria

EXAMINATION

Samaria
Naphtali
Assyria
Holy One of Israel
Jesse
wolf
asp
Elam

Israel
Egypt
Messiah
branch
Galilee
Syria
rod of anger
almah
a remnant shall return
capital of Israel
spoil speeds, prey hastes
the Lord

MEMORIZATION

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a _____; behold a _____ shall conceive, and _____ a son, and shall call his name _____. 7:14

For unto us a _____ is born, unto us a _____ is given; and the _____ shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ of _____. Of the increase of his _____ and of _____ there shall be no end, upon the throne of _____, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with _____ and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The _____ of Jehovah of hosts will perform this. 9:6-7

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how a virgin's conception and giving birth could be a sign to Ahaz. Isa. 7:1-16
2. Explain why Isaiah named his children as he did. Isa. 7:3; 8:3
3. Explain when the time came when the wolf lay down with the lamb, etc. Isa. 11:1-11

APPLICATION

1. How may Isaiah's statement "to teaching and to the testimony" be applied by Christians today? Isa. 8:20
2. What application for today's world may be made of God's use of Assyria as "the rod of my anger, etc." Isa. 10:5-19
3. How may Isaiah, chapter 12, apply to the New Testament church?

III. PEOPLE AND PAGANS - CHAPTERS 13 - 23

A. IMPLACABLE EMPIRE CH. 13-14

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. BABYLON

a. PREDICTION OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:1-8

- 1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.
- 2 Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain, lift up the voice unto them, wave the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.
- 3 I have commanded my consecrated ones, yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger, even my proudly exulting ones.
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as of a great people! the noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together! Jehovah of hosts is mustering the host for the battle.
- 5 They come from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven, even Jehovah, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.
- 6 Wail ye; for the day of Jehovah is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

- 7 Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt;
8 and they shall be dismayed; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman in travail: they shall look in amazement one at another; their faces shall be faces of flame.

QUERIES

- a. How does Isaiah know of an empire 100 years from his time?
- b. Who is from the "uttermost part of heaven"?
- c. How was it "the day of Jehovah"?

PARAPHRASE

This is the vision God showed Isaiah (son of Amoz) concerning Babylon's doom. See the flags waving as their enemy attacks. Shout to them, O Israel, and wave them on as they march against Babylon to destroy the palaces of the rich and mighty. I, the Lord, have set apart these armies for this task; I have called those rejoicing in their strength to do this work, to satisfy my anger. Hear the tumult on the mountains! Listen as the armies march! It is the tumult and the shout of many nations: the Lord of Hosts has brought them here, From countries far away. They are His weapons against you, O Babylon. They carry his anger with them and will destroy your whole land. Scream in terror, for the Lord's time has come, the time for the Almighty to crush you. Your arms lie paralyzed with fear; the strongest hearts melt, and are afraid. Fear grips you with terrible pangs, like those of a woman in labor. You look at one another, helpless, as the flames of the burning city reflect upon your pallid faces.

COMMENTS

V. 1-5 REQUIEM FOR BABYLON: This is the beginning of the third part of Isaiah's prophecy to the Remnant and consists of the judgments upon the pagan nations. In this section Isaiah interprets to his readers, those faithful who will heed him, the activity of the Divine government as God deals with the heathen empires and their sin. He especially is led to write of pagan destinies in relation to God's faithful kingdom-people. These prophecies were not for the benefit of the Babylonians but for the people of God. From them they would learn that the hostile power of the world in its most powerful manifestation would finally be brought to ignominious defeat and ruin. No power that sets itself against God, be it as haughty and pretentious as was Babylonia, can prevail. Israel would learn that God does not permit to go unpunished the wickedness of those who have set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed, and who oppose His people.

To see the opponents of God's purposes punished would bring consolation and encouragement to the Jews, for it would teach them how precious their salvation was in God's sight. God is in control of all things. A topsy-turvy world is not really topsy-turvy. Even the darkest moments are in God's providential control and rule.

Isaiah probably wrote this section around 730 B.C. Babylon did not come to world domination until about 606 B.C., some 124 years later, and Babylon was not conquered until 536 B.C., nearly 200 years after Isaiah predicted it. How could Isaiah know it? Plainly, it was by super-natural revelation directly from God. Isaiah states that it was an oracle he "saw" (i.e. in a vision).

The three means of summoning the invaders of Babylon, raising an ensign—lifting up the voice—motioning with the hand, indicate the highest degree of urgency! Israel is bidden to cheer the conquerors of Babylon on.

The supreme note is the authority and government of God. He is directing the campaign against Babylon. The mighty hosts here assembled are not named but they are described as "my

consecrated ones," "my mighty ones" and "my proudly exulting ones," showing they were chosen of God and led by God. The Medes and Persians were a mountain people and Isaiah hears the noise of a mighty host of people armed for war and gathering together for conflict. They came from a far country—"the uttermost parts of heaven." Both Media and Persia were, as far as the Hebrews were concerned, "at the end of heaven" or where heaven and earth meet at the horizon. God is so absolutely the author of this that it is represented as the actual "day of Jehovah." Jehovah is at the head of the attacking army.

v. 6-8 REACTION OF BABYLON: Babylon will not brag and boast on this day of Jehovah as did Nebuchadnezzar upon his housetop (Dan. 4:27). Babylon will scream with terror and howl and mourn, (Cf. Jer. chs. 50-51).

The people of Babylon are pictured as paralyzed with astonishment and fright. This harmonizes with both Jeremiah 50:43; 51:30; and Daniel 5:6. After having caused Cyrus' withdrawal from the walls of Babylon, Belshazzar was surprised by the Persians stealing into the city on a dry river bed whose waters had been physically diverted around the city by the Persian army (see our comments in *Daniel*, College Press, chapter 5). Convulsing agitation and desperate perplexity came upon the Babylonians. Theirs is the deepest anguish for the day of Jehovah has broken upon them.

This is the ultimate destiny of all earthly kingdoms. This will be the reaction of all men and women who have put their trust in this world and its doomed systems.

QUIZ

1. What is the main thrust of this section of Isaiah's prophecy?
2. For whose benefit were these prophecies against the nations?
3. How would the doom of the pagan empires be a source of encouragement?
4. How much is God involved in the downfall of Babylon?
5. What was Babylonia's reaction to be to God's judgment?

b. PURPOSE OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:9-16

- 9 Behold the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
- 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine.
- 12 I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir.
- 13 Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.
- 14 And it shall come to pass, that as the chased roe, and as sheep that no man gathereth, they shall turn every man to his own people, and shall flee every man to his own land.
- 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through: and every one that is taken shall fall by the sword.
- 16 Their infants also shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be rifled, and their wives ravished.

QUERIES

- a. How would the lights of the heavens cease to shine?
- b. How would the heavens and the earth be "shaken"?
- c. Why all the slaughter of human beings?

PARAPHRASE

Behold! The judgment day of Jehovah upon Babylon is coming. It will be a day of terrifying cruelty when God's wrath and anger is poured out. The land of the Babylonians will be made wasteland and its sinful people will be destroyed. The

suddenness and completeness of the downfall of this world-encompassing empire will be as if the whole universe of planets were destroyed and obliterated. The slaughter of men will be so great there would not be enough rare gold anywhere to buy a man. The downfall of Babylon will be so great it will shake the very foundations of society all over the earth. Long established structures will crumble and fall. The chaotic and helpless condition of the Babylonians will be as pathetic as the hunted deer and scattered sheep without a shepherd. People will flee Babylon like rats leaving a sinking ship. When their enemies pounce upon them they will slaughter every Babylonian they can find. Their enemies will perform atrocities upon their babies, dashing them to death before their eyes, ransacking their homes and raping their wives.

COMMENTS

v. 9-14 **ABOLITION OF BABYLON:** Jehovah, using the secondary means of the Medo-Persian conquest, is going to lay waste the massive and powerful Babylonian empire. Their societal structures, their culture, their name, their very existence is to be obliterated. It will be such an upheaval of the whole structure of society then known it would be as if God had turned off all the light in the world. When a government and culture like that of Babylon, which had such influence all over the world (Cf. Dan. 4:1-27), comes to such a sudden and chaotic end, it would seem as if the whole universe had caved in. The figure of the stars and the sun and the moon being darkened is a favorite figure of prophetic literature (Cf. Joel 2:10; 2:31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Mīcah 3:6; Matt. 24:29). It is a figure that depicts downfalls of anti-God human structures to such an extent that men turning everywhere and anywhere for light and hope find only darkness and despair. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was such a downfall of Judaism that those who had rejected the Messiah and Christianity were victims of the wrath of God and it appeared to them as if the sun had darkened and the moon turned to

blood, etc. (Cf. our comments in *Minor Prophets* on Joel 2:30-32).

Babylon's destruction will be so complete that a man cannot be found. So many Babylonian men will be killed that one man will be as rare as the finest gold in the world. The trembling of the heavens and the "shaking" of the earth out of its place is another figurative way of describing the complete downfall of this world-encompassing empire. It is our opinion that this is the figure the writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament (Heb. 12:25-29) is applying to the imminent downfall of Judaism in 70 A.D. God was going to "shake" down once and for all the old system of Judaism and the Hebrew Christians should be grateful for receiving a kingdom (the Church) that could not be shaken. Here, God is going to "shake" down the empire of Babylon, and it will be such a cataclysmic event it will be as if the whole earth were being shaken out of its place. All of this, of course, typical of the final judgment day of God when He will judge "Babylon" (Cf. Revelation) and shake down the old heavens and earth and create new ones. The condition of the people of Babylon, once so arrogant, haughty, wicked and complacent, is described as pathetic. They will run helter-skelter in wild-eyed fashion like a deer being hunted or like sheep being scattered.

v. 15-16 ATROCITIES UPON BABYLON: Historians tell us there was great bloodshed, carnage and atrocities of every kind perpetrated when the Medo-Persian coalition assaulted the city of Babylon. People of other nations (Babylon was a very cosmopolitan city) who were visiting fled in every direction to their own country. Those caught were destroyed. In the night of capture, there was a horrible massacre. A party of Persian soldiers burst into the palace and slew Belshazzar in the midst of great confusion and carnage. Young and old alike were impaled upon swords and spears. The city was fired and when morning came Cyrus was undisputed master of Babylon! (Cf. our comments in *Daniel*, ch. 5, College Press).

QUIZ

1. Who did God use to carry out His wrath on Babylon?
2. How thorough was their downfall?
3. What does "shake the heavens and the earth" mean?
4. What kinds of atrocities were committed upon the Babylonians?

c. PROLONGATION OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:17-22

- 17 Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
- 18 And their bows shall dash the young men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.
- 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 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 shepherds make their flocks to lie down there.
- 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there.
- 22 And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

QUERIES

- a. Who are the Medes?
- b. Why would the Arabian not pitch his tent there?

PARAPHRASE

For I will stir up the Medes against Babylon, and no amount of silver or gold will buy them off. The attacking armies will have no mercy on the young people of Babylon or the babies or the children. And so Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms, the flower of Chaldean culture, will be as utterly destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah were when God sent fire from heaven; Babylon will never rise again. Generation after generation will come and go, but the land will never again be lived in. The nomads will not even camp there. The shepherds won't let their sheep stay overnight. The wild animals of the desert will make it their home. The houses will be haunted by howling creatures. Ostriches will live there, and the demons will come there to dance. Hyenas and jackals will den within the palaces. Babylon's days are numbered; her time of doom will soon be here.

COMMENTS

v. 17-22 ABOMINATION UPON BABYLON: The Medes are first mentioned as Japhethites in Gen. 10:2. They are Aryans and first called themselves *Arioi* in Greek language. At first they were a people divided into small village communities each governed by its own chiefs. About 720 B.C. they were united into a kingdom under Deiokes (or Dayaukku). Their capital was Ecbatana. They first formed a coalition with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians against Assyria (Nineveh). But now they are forming an alliance with the Persians led by Cyrus the Great against Babylon! The Medes populated the area generally known today as Iran and Iraq. The Median empire gradually merged into that of Persia (see our comments in *Daniel*, chs. 5, 7 and 8, College Press).

Babylon was conquered in 538 B.C., having been one of the greatest, if not the greatest, cities of all times. At one time there were more than fifty temples in Babylon. Many of these had walls overlaid with gold with altars overlaid with gold, and golden

statuettes. It was also home of the famous hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar married a woman whose homeland was mountainous. She occasionally got homesick for her homeland so the king of Babylon built her some "mountains" (the hanging gardens) right in the city. The city occupied 200 square miles of land, protected by a double brick wall with moat in between the walls. Its walls were 90 feet thick and 300 feet high, with towers rising much higher all along the walls. The Euphrates River flowed through the center of the city guaranteeing its water supply. There was enough land within its walls to supply the city with food. It had no fear of siege.

The area of ancient Babylon has never been inhabited since its fall. Actually, it was destroyed in increments. Cyrus the Great left the walls and the city of Babylon itself still standing. Later, in 518 B.C. the walls were destroyed. Then Xerxes ruined the temple of Belus. As Seleucia rose, so Babylon declined, and in Strabo's time (63 B.C.—24 A.D.) Babylon was a desert of which he says, "a great desert is the great city." Though the Arabs will pitch their tents at nearly any spot, they are superstitious about Babylon, and though you hire one as a guide, he will not stay there at night. Modern-day travelers and tourists to this area attest to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy! The ruined city is uninhabited by humans; jackals and many kinds of wild beasts live in the ruins. There are no sheepfolds about the ruins of ancient Babylon!

QUIZ

1. Where did the Medes live?
2. Who was the leader of the Medes and Persians against Babylon?
3. Describe ancient Babylon?
4. Has the prediction of Babylon's demise come to pass?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

2. BABYLON (Continued)

a. DESPISED

TEXT: 14:1-11

- 1 For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the sojourner shall join himself with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.
- 2 And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.
- 3 And it shall come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy trouble, and from the hard service wherein thou wast made to serve,
- 4 that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!
- 5 Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers;
- 6 that smote the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruled the nations in anger, with a persecution that none restrained.
- 7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.
- 8 Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid low, no hewer is come up against us.
- 9 Sheol 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.

- 10 All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?
 11 Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee.

QUERIES

- a. How would the house of Israel "possess" their former captors?
 b. Why was the whole earth at rest at Babylon's downfall?

PARAPHRASE

And Jehovah will have mercy upon His covenant people; He will yet fulfill all His covenant promises to them. Their blessings will one day be so glorious that those now outside the covenant of Israel will be joined to God's covenant people and become a part of them. God will cause those who once took His covenant people captive to return them to their land and eventually His people will make some of these heathen a possession of God's kingdom and servants of the Most High God. Yes, even people from those nations which once took the covenant people captive will one day be taken "captive" by them. Those who once ruled over God's people will one day come under the rule of God. When that day comes to pass God will have delivered His covenant people from sorrow, trouble and servitude, and His people will proclaim concerning their great enemy, At last our enemy has been defeated and his kingdom destroyed. God has broken the power of the enemy that ruled over us so long in unrestrained terribleness. The whole earth and all of nature rejoices at the rest it receives from the defeat of God's enemy. All the citizens of Hades crowd to meet him as he enters the same place where they dwell. World leaders and earth's mightiest rulers, long dead, are there to greet him. With one voice they all cry out, Are you as weak as we are? Have you become like us here? All this enemy's grandeur and power has been stripped from him and all his reveling is over. His covering now is not silk and satin, but worms and maggots.

COMMENTS

V. 1-6 DELIVERANCE AND DOMINION: Here is an instance of the prophet's use of shortened perspective. It is a favorite vehicle of prophetic literature. The prophet first speaks of the return of the covenant people from the Babylonian captivity when the Persian emperor Cyrus (Cf. Isa. 44:28; 45:1ff) "took the Jews and brought them to their place" by his edict and financial aid to rebuild Jerusalem. But then, skipping over some five centuries between the Persian release of the Jews to the time when their former captors will become their captives, the prophet shortens his perspective. There can be only one meaning to the prophet's indication that "sojourners would join themselves" to the Jews and "cleave to the house of Jacob." We believe there is only one way to interpret the statement that "the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and for handmaids; and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors," and that interpretation is one that finds the fulfillment in the Messianic kingdom, the church. This is the only possible interpretation considering the fact that such widespread Jewish domination never literally occurred. This interpretation is also substantiated by parallel passages (Cf. Isa. 2:3; 49:22-26; Zech. 8:20-23). All of these hyperbolic figures of speech find their fulfillment in Ephesians 2:11-14. God delivers the Jews after their period of chastening in captivity. Out of that delivered people comes a faithful remnant which will through five centuries produce a faithful progeny through which the Messiah will be born in the flesh. He will establish God's kingdom, the church, upon the earth. The Gentiles, former enemies and captors of God's covenant people, will become members of God's covenant people. What the prophet leaves out here is all the history of the Jewish people between the restoration from captivity and the establishment of the church. All this history is not important to Isaiah's purpose. The deliverance from Babylonian captivity actually becomes a *type* of the ultimate deliverance from the bondage of Satan and sin, man's greatest enemies. See our comments in

Minor Prophets on Obadiah 7-21 and Amos 9:11-12.

v. 7-11 DELIGHT AT DEGRADATION: Whenever God delivers His people and destroys His enemies the whole world is benefited. Most of the world does not realize it as a benefit because the world sees through eyes of flesh not faith. God's people rejoice when His enemies are defeated for they see through eyes of faith their deliverance. Even nature itself benefits when those in rebellion against God are defeated for rebels against God's sovereign rule usually deface and pervert God's natural creation. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had built a road in the Wady Brissa in Lebanon in order to plunder the territory of its magnificent cedars and take them back to Babylon to build pagan temples and palaces.

Sheol is the Old Testament place of the dead. The Old Testament speaks of life hereafter, of judgment and of resurrection. But the whole experience of the hereafter is in the shadows. Nothing really clearly outlined. Here the king of Babylon is said to be welcomed into the region of the dead with a great stirring of those who have gone on before. Especially great world rulers and leaders long ago dead now greet the king of Babylon with the taunt, "So you also are as weak as we were? You died too! All your former pomp and glory has passed away like curs!" Death is inevitable to all, great and small, rich and poor, powerful and weak. Every human body has a cover of worms in its destiny. We wonder which king of Babylon this is. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have acknowledged Jehovah as God in Daniel 4:34-37 (see our comments in *Daniel*, College Press). Perhaps Isaiah is referring to Belshazzar who would not learn from his father's experience (Cf. Daniel 5:17-23). Whoever it may be, the lesson is inescapable—earthly kings and kingdoms dare not lay their hand on "the apple of His eye" (His covenant people) for God will bring all His enemies down to Sheol.

QUIZ

1. What is shortened perspective as the prophets use it?
2. Why is it improbable that this text is to be taken as figurative hyperbole?
3. What is the Babylonian captivity and deliverance typical of?
4. Why does the world rejoice when God's enemies are defeated?
5. Why mention the fact that the king of Babylon was taunted in Sheol?

b. DEPOSED

TEXT: 14:12-20

- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!
- 13 And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into the heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north;
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.
- 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit.
- 16 They that see thee shall gaze at thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;
- 17 that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?
- 18 All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house.
- 19 But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a dead body trodden under foot.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people; the seed of evil-doers shall not be named for ever.

QUERIES

- a. What is a "day-star"? Who is the "day-star"?
- b. Why would he not be "joined with them in burial"?

PARAPHRASE

O how you have fallen from the highest place, you brilliant Star! how you are cut down to the ground, you who overpowered nations! However, you said: I will climb as high as the heavens; above the stars of God I will place my throne. I will enthrone myself at the top of the mountain of the gods which is far away in the north. You said: I will climb above the clouds and make myself equal to the Most High. In truth, however, you will be thrust down to the abode of the dead, Sheol, the uttermost abyss. Everyone there will stare at you and ask, Can this be the Star who shook the earth and the kingdoms of the world? Can this be the one who devastated the earth and made it into a desolation and demolished its greatest cities and had no mercy on his enemies? All the kings of the nations like in stately glory in their graves, but your body is thrown out like a broken stick; it lies in an open grave, covered with the dead bodies of those slain in war; it lies as a carcass in the road, trampled and mangled by horses' hoofs. You will not be entombed with the other kings in stately glory for you have destroyed your nation and slain your people. Your offspring will be known as evil because of you.

COMMENTS

v. 12-14 KING'S BOAST: The Babylonian king, a brilliant star on the stage of human political history, had boasted (Cf. Dan. 4:28ff). This is an occupational hazard of kings and other rulers! (Cf. Dan. 8:10). They are sorely tempted to exalt themselves into various forms of god and savior and ruler of mankind instead of servant. Herod allowed himself this luxury (Acts 12:20-23) and died an excruciating death for it. Many of the Roman Caesars arrogated to themselves the title, god. Here Isaiah is predicting the king of Babylon's exaggerated estimate of himself. Daniel writes down the actual historical fulfillment of the king's boasting some 150 years after Isaiah predicts it. Day-star in Hebrew is *helel ben shachar*, means literally "son of morning dawn." From the highest of political heights, high as the heaven, where he had shone in glory and splendor, he has tumbled to disgrace to the lowest of the low. He boasted he would make himself equal with the highest of the gods and he would enthrone himself at the top of the "mount of congregation" (which is the Semitic counterpart to Mount Olympus of the Greeks and lay in the remote, mythological regions of the north).

Early church fathers and some modern expositors have referred this to the fall of Satan (Cf. Lk. 10:18), but the context indicates it is to be applied primarily to the king of Babylon. There may be here a symbolical or typical allusion to the history of Satan the "god of this world" since ancient world rulers were sometimes considered personifications of the "prince of the power of the air" (Cf. our comments on *Daniel*, ch. 10, College Press). The word *Lucifer* is not in the original text. It is a Latin interpolation. Certainly the Babylonian king's pride reaches satanic proportions. And here is represented the fall of all Satan's earthly helpers who dare to resist God, and presume to sit in places of heavenly authority (Cf. II Thess. 2:2-12).

v. 15-20 KING'S BANISHMENT: The estimate of the king of Babylonia by his long-since-dead predecessors is quite different than that of the king's own self-estimate! When Almighty God deposes the king of Babylon and gives the Babylonian empire

over to another people (Cf. Jer. 27:5ff) and the king of Babylon dies and goes to Sheol, the residents of Sheol scrutinize and stare at him in amazement. They reflect, "So this is what the world's great braggart comes to—so this is the man that made the earth to tremble and shook kingdoms"? The downfall is to be to the uttermost. The one who was so glorified, so powerful, who even attempted to deify himself, has been thrust down so low. It seems almost incredible. Only Almighty God could do it! He is not only deposed, he is despised and humiliated. His carcass will lie like a vile corpse on the earth. He will be cast out upon the ground like a dead and useless branch.

Other kings may have done evil, but not like this one. In his greed and egotism he wasted his nation, both the people in wars and the resources in selfishness. He will not be buried. His body will be trampled by men and horses. For him there is to be no grave, no monument which will cause his name to be remembered. His demise will be so complete that all remembrance of the seed of evildoers will be forgotten forever.

The utter downfall and degradation of the king of Babylon reminds one of tyrants (Hitler, Mussolini, et.al.) whose opposition to God and truth and justice brought about their death and shame. Their bodies were burned and hanged in humiliating defeat.

QUIZ

1. What is an "occupational hazard" of kings and rulers?
2. Why is the king of Babylon called "day-star"?
3. To whom does this text refer—Satan?
4. Why is *Lucifer* not a good translation?
5. Have other despots been shamed and degraded like this?

c. DESTROYED

TEXT: 14:21-27

- 21 Prepare ye slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers, that they rise not up, and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities.
- 22 And I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts, and cut off from Babylon name and remnant, and son and son's son, saith Jehovah.
- 23 I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools, of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts.
- 24 Jehovah 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:
- 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 shoulder.
- 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.
- 27 For Jehovah of hosts hath purposed, and who shall annul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

QUERIES

- Why such total eradication of Babylon?
- What is a "besom"?
- Why mention Assyria in the same context as Babylon?

PARAPHRASE

Let all the world prepare for the slaughter of the descendants of this wicked king and his empire. Let them be destroyed lest they rise up in rebellion against God's intentions for man's

redemption and try to possess the earth and man for the kingdom of darkness. I, Jehovah, will rise against Babylon and destroy his posterity and prevent them from ever taking over the whole human race. I will make the land of the Babylonians to be taken over and possessed by wild animals and I will make it become a territory of swamps and marshes. I will sweep the nation from the face of the earth with my broom of destruction. Jehovah has taken an oath to do all this! It is His immutable purpose to do it! When He purposes to do it, it is as good as done. He says, I will break the Assyrian army when it is in My land and I will crush them utterly; I will take the Assyrian's yoke of servitude off My people. This is My plan for mankind—to break the yoke of paganism and conquer the worldly powers so that man will no longer be a slave of darkness. The Lord God of hosts has declared this as His plan and who can thwart His plan? He has begun to extend His hand to accomplish His purpose and who will stop it?

COMMENTS

v. 21-23 **BABYLON DECIMATION:** These verses are God's statement of the complete eradication of some of the most implacable enemies of His covenant people. Babylon was noted for its materialism, paganism and sheer wealth. It was dedicated to exploitation of weaker peoples for its own pleasure and wealth. Many weaker nations prostituted their own national sovereignty to Babylon for survival's sake as well as for indulgence's sake. Israel and Judah were two such nations. Weaker nations adopted the ways of the Babylonians, signed military and trade treaties with her and finally ended up paying extortion in the form of tribute. Babylon was used some 800 years later by the apostle John in Revelation as a symbol of Rome's materialism and spiritual harlotry. Babylon characterized all the most subtle and tempting dangers to the faithfulness of God's people. She posed such a threat that God vowed to make a "clean sweep" of the whole nation. He would so thoroughly "mop up" on Babylon (the word

besom means "broom") no Babylonians would be left to rule the world ever again! When God finished with Babylon (see Daniel, chapters 4 and 5) there was none left to claim the throne. During the reign of Darius Hystaspis (a Persian emperor) pretenders rose claiming descent from Belshazzar's grandfather Nabonidus. The pretenders were proven false and executed.

v. 24-27 ASSYRIA'S DEMISE: Assyria and Babylon were world-engulfing empires. They were representatives of mankind in rebellion against God's rule of the earth and man. Man, in sin and rebellion, is carrying out a war against God's sovereignty. Man, by force or by persuasive falsehood, attempts to rule this terrestrial planet and its occupants. God has vowed that He will not permit this to happen. Man may rule in subservience to and in harmony with God's sovereignty but man must conform to the revealed will of God and enter into covenant relationship with Him to receive this honor of ruling *with* God. God's program for providing man with co-rulership would be to establish His kingdom here upon the earth (the church). When men willingly become members of His kingdom He assures them they have entered a kingdom that will be victorious over all rebellious kingdoms of man and will rule with Him. God demonstrated time after time that He has the power to deal with His enemies and did deal with them. So God defeating Babylon and Assyria (and numerous other pagan nations) literally and historically is a typical and symbolic message as well as a literal account. The typical message is that God will keep His word to defeat all His enemies and give rule to His kingdom. Actually, as Revelation portrays, the old dragon, Satan, is the leader of all of mankind's rebellion. Satan's war against God is joined and executed on the earth by godless political forces, godless materialism and sensuality and by godless religion. Through the centuries God proves again and again He and His saints will be the ultimate victors. What His saints must do is believe Him! When has history ever proven God to fail?!

QUIZ

1. For what was Babylon noted?
2. Why did weak nations prostitute themselves to the "harlot" Babylon?
3. How does the apostle John use Babylon?
4. To what extent did God eliminate Babylon?
5. What did Assyria and Babylon represent in relationship to God's rule?
6. How does their demise symbolize God's purpose for the world?

d. DOMINATED

TEXT: 14:28-32

- 28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.
- 29 Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpent's root shall come forth an adder, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.
- 30 And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety; and I will kill thy root with famine, and thy remnant shall be slain.
- 31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee; for there cometh a smoke out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks.
- 32 What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge.

QUERIES

- a. What does the "serpent," the "adder" and the "flying serpent" represent?
- b. What "Zion" is here meant?

PARAPHRASE

At the time of the death of king Ahaz this message concerning Philistia was revealed to me to be proclaimed. Don't begin rejoicing, Philistines, that the oppression upon your nation has been temporarily broken and lifted. This momentary relief does not mean you are going to prosper. In fact, a successive worsening of oppression and destruction is going to overcome your nation. It will be like a succession of snakes getting worse with each; from the snake will come the adder and from the adder a fiery flying serpent will come to destroy you. I will protect and provide for My people Israel; even the lowliest of the low shall not lack food in Israel, and the poor shall enjoy safety. But as for you, O Philistia, I will wipe you out with famine and what is not killed by famine I will kill with war. Weep and wail, O cities of Philistia, because you are destined to go up in the smoke of an invader's destruction. An army from the north will invade your land and will destroy you with methodical diligence. What shall be told all who inquire about these events? They shall be told that Jehovah of hosts has established Zion, His covenant people, on a sure and safe foundation and all those afflicted by Jehovah's enemies will find refuge in Zion.

COMMENTS

v. 28-32 PHILISTIA PUNISHED: Isaiah clearly remembered the date of his oracle against Philistia. It was 728 B.C., the year that king Ahaz died. It appears the Philistines, for some reason or another, had been relieved of some degree of former oppression or subjugation and were now rejoicing that their future looked bright. They evidently were assuming that now (perhaps that the Assyrian domination was checked by Hezekiah) they could have free reign in the land of Palestine to wrest its control from the Jews. The message of God's prophet, however, is that several military or political situations shall arise successively (likened to first a serpent, then an adder, then fiery flying

serpent), one always worse than the other, which would eventually wipe out the Philistine nation clear down to its roots. The utter destruction and obliteration of Philistia is contrasted with the utter salvation and protection of God's small, weak remnant, Judah. The lowliest of the low, the godly poor will feed and dwell secure in God's remnant. Philistia will wail and cry for a destructive force from the north will come upon her. The "smoke" may refer to the campfires of the army coming or to the Philistine cities being burned. The force from the "north" probably refers to the successive and progressively worsening attacks upon Philistia by the Assyrians after the days of Hezekiah. Sargon, Assyrian emperor (722-705 B.C.) captured the Philistine cities, deported some of the inhabitants and set over them an Assyrian governor. Later struggles between Egypt and Assyria were the cause of great suffering to the Philistine cities, and practically close their history as strictly Philistinian. The Assyrians were very cruel and methodical in their bloody warfare upon the world. There were no "stragglers" in their armies. They went about their work of destruction with diligence.

v. 32 ZION PROTECTED: What should one answer messengers of the nation of Judah when they saw all around the destruction of the neighboring peoples by the bloodthirsty Assyrians? Will Zion (Judah) fall too? The prophet's answer is brief but emphatic. The message is simply, "Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." Jehovah so powerfully and consistently demonstrated His purpose and ability to save and protect His people from all enemies all the messengers needed to know was, Jehovah hath founded Zion! The same message applies today. God has demonstrated in history His power to save, even from death. He has demonstrated His power and purpose to preserve His church. All we need to know is He has founded the Church. We take refuge in Him.

In contrast to the obliteration of Philistia as a kingdom, God protected Judah. Even when Babylon came and took Judah captive, God preserved them and delivered them and out of them He formed His eternal kingdom, the Church, reigned over by King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

QUIZ

1. Approximately what year did Isaiah pronounce the doom of Philistia?
2. Why should Philistia not rejoice?
3. When did Philistia probably disappear from history as a nation?
4. What is the "smoke out of the north"?
5. Why such a brief answer to the "messengers" v. 32?

B. IMPUDENT EASTERNERS - CHAPTERS 15-17

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. MOAB

a. INVASION

TEXT: 15:1-9

- 1 The burden of Moab. For in a night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to nought; for in a night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to nought.
- 2 They are gone up by Bayith, and to Dibon, to the high places, to weep: Moab wailleth over Nebo, and over Medeba; on all their heads is baldness, every beard is cut off.
- 3 In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth; on their housetops, and in their broad places, every one wailleth, weeping abundantly.
- 4 And Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh; their voice is heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud; his soul trembleth within him.
- 5 My heart crieth out for Moab; her nobles flee unto Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah: for by the ascent of Luhith with weeping they go up; for in the way of Horonaim they raise up a cry of destruction.

- 6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate; for the grass is withered away, the tender grass faileth, there is no green thing.
- 7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away over the brook of the willows.
- 8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the wailing thereof unto Eglaim, and the wailing thereof unto Beer-elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon are full of blood; for I will bring yet more upon Dimon, a lion upon them of Moab that escape, and upon the remnant of the land.

QUERIES

- a. Why "baldness" on every head and "beards cut off"?
- b. Whose "heart crieth out for Moab"?

PARAPHRASE

God's message to Moab: In a night your cities of Ar and Kir will be destroyed. Your people go mourning to Bayith and Dibon, their pagan temples and altars, to weep for the fate of Nebo and Medeba; they shave their heads and cut off their beards in public display of their grief. They wear sackcloth through the streets, and from every home comes the sound of weeping. The weeping and wailing from the cities of Heshbon and Elealeh are heard very far away, even in Jahaz. The bravest warriors of Moab cry in utter terror. There are no heroes in Moab now! My heart weeps for Moab! His people flee as refugees to Zoar and Eglath. Weeping, they climb the upward road to Luhith, and their moaning will be heard all along the road to Horonaim. Nimrim River is desolate! The grassy banks are dried up and the tender plants are gone. The desperate refugees take all their possessions they can carry, and flee across the Brook of Willows. The whole land

of Moab is a land of weeping, from one end to the other. The waters of Dimon will run red with blood. But I am not through with Dimon yet! For the refugees of Moab I have appointed a lion to hunt them down.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 **DESOLATION:** Moab the arrogant, the insolent, will be overtaken by a destroyer in such suddenness it will transpire in only a night, as it were. Moab was a grandson of Lot by incest with his elder daughter (Gen. 19:30-38). Israel, on its march to the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses, was seduced when Balaam a prophet of God advised Balak, king of Moab, how best to resist Israel. Moab dominated and exploited Israel for 18 years during the reign of Eglon, king of Moab, but was delivered by the Israelite judge, Ehud (Judg. 3:30).

God, through His prophets, pronounced Moab's doom for her pagan sins and atrocities (human sacrifice, etc.). Isaiah's prediction of complete desolation was fulfilled by Shalmanezzer of Assyria and his successors (Cf. also Ezek. 25:8-11; Jer. 48:1ff; Zeph. 2:8-11). A vivid picture of Semitic or Oriental demonstrativeness is portrayed. When peoples of these races mourn they do so in a highly emotional state and make a public display of it by shaving their heads and beards, by tearing their clothes, by wearing sackcloth, and by weeping and wailing so abundantly they literally exhaust themselves emotionally over it all and "collapse in tears." The bloody destruction of the Assyrian hordes in this territory was awful to behold.

v. 5-9 **DESPERATION:** The speaker in this verse is no doubt Isaiah himself. He is a man of God, tender in his regard for human beings. He is not oblivious to the great suffering of this neighbor nation, (Cf. 16:9, 11). There were racial and social ties between Israel and Moab, as well as hostilities. In the days of the judges Elimelech of Bethlehem took his family to Moab to sojourn during a famine; there his two sons married and died, and Ruth, the Moabiteess returned with Naomi, married Boaz

and became an ancestress of David. David, when in difficulty with King Saul, took his father and mother to the king of Moab for his protection (I Sam. 22:3-4).

So Isaiah's heart is touched with this prediction of the desperation of the Moabites. Isaiah paints a picture of thousands of weeping refugees fleeing their homes and cities, carrying what possessions they could hastily snatch up in a moment's desperation. They flee southward for asylum in Edom. The slaughter by the Assyrian armies rampages until the waters of Dimon are stained red with human blood! Those that remain in Moab, and even those that flee, have still more slaughter and destruction to come upon them. God will send "a lion" (probably the Babylonians and Persians to come) to hunt them down. Such is the destiny of proud and inhuman Moab!

QUIZ

1. What is Moab's origin?
2. What dealings did Moab have with Israel in Israel's early history?
3. How do Semitics demonstrate their grief?
4. What ties were there between Moab and Israel?
5. Where did the Moabites flee for refuge at the Assyrian invasion?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. MOAB (Continued)

b. INVITATION

TEXT: 16:1-5

- 1 Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be that, as wandering birds, as a scattered nest,

- so shall the daughters of Moab be at the fords of the Arnon.
- 3 Give counsel, execute justice; make thy shade as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; betray not the fugitive.
- 4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; as for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the destroyer. For the extortioner is brought to nought, destruction ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.
- 5 And a throne shall be established in lovingkindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness.

QUERIES

- a. Why send lambs unto the mount of Zion?
- b. Who is to sit upon the throne in the tent of David?

PARAPHRASE

I counsel you Moab to send to Judah, the daughter of Zion, for help. Send a token of submission, a tribute of lambs, to the ruler of Judah. Unless you get help from Judah your panic and confusion will increase until you are absolutely helpless. You must say to Judah, Give counsel; grant that justice shall be done for us; give us such protection that it will be like a night-shade in the midst of the noonday; hide our outcasts and do not betray our fugitives. You must say, Let my neglected ones sojourn among you. Be a hidingplace for them from before the face of the destroyer. The oppressor and extortioner of Judah has been vanquished out of Judah's land and there is peace there now. And a throne will be established in steadfast love; and a man shall sit on it in truth and faithfulness from the family of David, ruling and judging in justice and eager to do righteousness.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 PREDICAMENT: Moab's predicament is such that she is in a state of panic (Cf. Isa. 15:4). Confusion reigns. Isaiah's compassion for suffering humanity moves him to counsel Moab to plead with Judah for help. When Moab was formerly under the rule of Judah (II Kings 3:4ff) Moab paid tribute to Judah in the form of sheep and lambs. Judah protected Moab as long as this arrangement continued. But Moab revolted from the rule of Judah. Now Moab has suffered invasion and enemies are despoiling its people. Isaiah's advice is for Moab to turn in a submissive attitude, sending a tribute of lambs, to Judah and plead for Judah's help and protection. If Moab does not, her panic and confusion will increase until she is homeless like a bird whose nest is scattered!

v. 3-4 PLEA: Isaiah's advice continues. The prophet suggests even the words Moab is to use in its plea to Judah. Moab should ask Judah to do a risky thing. Moab is to plead with Judah to give asylum to the displaced refugees; hide them; protect them. Moab is to plead with Judah to act toward them as they never acted toward Judah. Moab is to ask for mercy, justice, compassion and sacrificial goodness.

In the middle of verse 4, Isaiah appears to redirect his dialogue from advising Moab to relating a new historical situation that prevails in Judah's case. Something had apparently occurred to relieve Judah (temporarily) of the oppression of the forces of Assyria so that Judah would be well able to give aid to the refugees of Moab. What caused this present availability of Judah is not recorded but the prophet assures Moab it is present.

v. 5 PROMISE: This is a very intriguing verse. It has been considered as a Messianic passage as far back as the time of the *Targum* (Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew texts which date in oral form back to the Persian captivities). Isaiah indicates it was taken for granted that the Moabites had some knowledge of the divine purpose in the nation of Judah. The account of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz confirms this. The Moabites were idolaters but they knew the nature of David's

throne. When a disaster faces men they are able to recall a much more complete knowledge of God's truth than at any other time. Isaiah seems to say, If you come to seek refuge under the wings of Judah we will give you a share even of the best that our heritage has to offer—our Messianic hope. Here is one of the many passages in the prophets where the truth concerning the Christ of the Jews is offered to those of other nations. Israel has a throne with a future, not like the unstable thrones of the most powerful nations round about. This one will be established by virtue of the steadfast love of Jehovah. The throne involves the "tabernacle" (house) of David (Cf. Amos 9:11)—the lineage of David. It involves the rule of One who will judge justly and righteously to a degree never displayed in any earthly ruler (Cf. Isa. 9:6ff; 11:1-10; Micah 5:2ff). The very fact that this Messianic hope was offered to Moab (a nation outside the Hebrew covenant) proves once and for all that the Messianic expectations as expressed by the O.T. prophets were not tenuous and vague—they were specific and clear!

QUIZ

1. Why does Isaiah intercede and direct Moab to seek help from Judah?
2. What are Isaiah's directions to Moab?
3. How is it possible for Judah, at this time, to give help to Moab?
4. What is so intriguing about verse 5?
5. Were the Moabites expected to understand the divine destiny of Israel?
6. How could Isaiah offer Messianic hope to Moab?

c. INSOLENCE

TEXT: 16:6-12

- 6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his wrath; his boastings are nought.
- 7 Therefore shall Moab wail for Moab, every one shall wail: for the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn, utterly stricken.
- 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have broken down the choice branches thereof, which reached even unto Jazer, which wandered into the wilderness; its shoots were spread abroad, they passed over the sea.
- 9 Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest the battle shout is fallen.
- 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the fruitful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither joyful noise; no treader shall tread out wine in the presses; I have made the vintage shout to cease.
- 11 Wherefore my heart soundeth like a harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-heres.
- 12 And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself, when he wearieth himself upon the high place, and shall come to his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Moab display such arrogance and pride?
b. Who is weeping in verse 9?

PARAPHRASE

The pride of Moab is well known. Moab is very proud, even to the point of arrogance and cruelty. Moab's boastful talk is not right. Moab will wail and mourn his own calamity—the whole nation shall wail bitterly because of this arrogance. Moab will be so utterly stricken down from its self-exaltation its famous raisin-cakes and vineyards will be disregarded by everyone. As a matter of fact, the armies of its enemies will tear down and march over those huge, famous vineyards and completely devastate the land. So I will wail and weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah. My tears flow for Heshbon and Elealeh, for destruction has come upon their summer fruits and harvests with the battle shout. Gone will be the gladness, gone the joy of harvest. The happy singing in the vineyards will be heard no more; the treading out of the grapes in the wine presses will cease forever and the customary shout of *heydad* at the reaping of the vintage will be caused to cease. Mourning for Moab and its people sweeps over my soul like the funeral music that mournfully sweeps across a harp. No last minute appeal to Moab's gods will avert the inevitable judgment of Jehovah upon his arrogance. Even though the whole nation presents itself and cries with much repetition he shall not prevail.

COMMENTS

v. 6-8 ARROGANCE: The haughty pride of Moab was well known. See Isaiah 15:1-9. Moab's pride led to arrogance, ungodly boasting (even to the point of "magnifying himself against the Lord (Cf. Jer. 48:42), and to cruel wrath. Moab evidently paid no attention to the invitation of God's prophet (Isaiah) to call for help from Judah in a submissive penitent attitude. And, in spite of the terrible warnings of complete destruction, Moab refused Judah's help. Moab was also famous for its large and luxurious vineyards. It was famous for a delicacy known as "raisin-cakes" which it exported throughout the world. The

prophet predicts that these things in which Moab gloried and upon which he depended so much, would soon be completely trampled under the feet of enemy nations marching in conquest of their land.

v. 9-12 AGONY: There is in all of us a sentiment akin to agony and horror when we realize there is no hope for the impenitent and rebellious. This was true of Isaiah. Not all Jews hated their enemies! Agony and sorrow swept across the heart-strings of Isaiah with such mournfulness as one hears sweeping across the strings of a lyre played at funerals. Genuine tears of compassion would flow from the eyes of this sensitive man of God for a people about to be debased because of their arrogance. By faith, the prophet could understand God's revelation of the deep pain and suffering that was about to come upon the Moabites. Isaiah knew that all their flippant, boastful rejoicing in prosperity and abundance would be turned into wailing and lamenting. There would be a cessation of the exuberance shown at every harvest of the vintage. In Israel and Moab the *heydad* was the peculiar shout raised by those that trod out the grapes in the wine-press. As each foot stamped into the wine-press, this word gave the accompanying shout, which was quite naturally a joyful and enthusiastic one. In place of the joyful harvest shout will be heard the "battle shout." In their hour of complete devastation the Moabites will go to their pagan sanctuaries and cry out in repetitious prayer to their pagan gods until they are "wearied" with praying, but to no avail. Their wails will be those of those who have no real god, no hope and help.

QUIZ

1. How far had Moab carried its pride and arrogance?
2. What did it have to be so arrogant about?
3. Why was Isaiah agonizing about Moab's fate so?
4. What contrast did Isaiah make about the cessation of joy in Moab?

d. INEXORABLE

TEXT: 16:13-14

13 This is the word that Jehovah spake concerning Moab in time past.

14 But now Jehovah hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account.

QUERIES

- a. What word had Jehovah spoken in time past?
- b. What are the "years of a hireling"?

PARAPHRASE

Jehovah has spoken many times and long in the past the doom of Moab. And now it is about to be fulfilled. Precisely within three years (as precisely as the hired laborer keeps track of his contract) the glory of Moab will be turned into contempt. The once proud Moabites will be a spectacle of defeat and shame. Only a very small and insignificant remnant will be spared.

COMMENTS

v. 13-14 **ABASEMENT:** Isaiah declares that the abasement of Moab spoken so agonizingly in verses 6-12 had been predicted by Jehovah many times in the past. Moab's demise is predicted as far back as the Pentateuch. Now the time limit is precisely ascribed. Three years hence! We do not know exactly when Isaiah made this prophecy. The defeat he refers to was administered at the hands of Shalmaneser IV (727 B.C.) or his successor,

Sargon II (722 B.C.), potentates of Assyria. Moab, after the Assyrian conquests, became a wasteland, inhabited by nomadic tribes of desert-people. It remains so to this day. A very small remnant of Moabite people mixed with other nomadic peoples of that area and became the progenitors of those nomadic tribes inhabiting that deserted area today. God keeps His word!

QUIZ

1. How far back in the past had Jehovah declared Moab's doom?
2. Approximately when did Isaiah write this precise prediction?
3. What happened, eventually, to the Moabites?

- CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

2. DAMASCUS

a. COALITION

TEXT: 17:1-6

- 1 The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.
- 2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.
- 3 And the fortress 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 Jehovah of hosts.
- 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
- 5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the standing grain, and his arm reapeth the ears; yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears in the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet there shall be left therein gleanings, as the shaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost

bough, four or five in the outmost branches of a fruitful tree, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Isaiah pronounce judgment on Ephraim (Israel) along with Damascus?
- b. What relationship did Damascus have to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's pronouncement concerning Damascus, capital of Syria: Behold, Damascus is no longer to be a city. It is destined to become a heap of ruins! Even the cities of Aroer, lying between Israel and Syria, are destined for desolation. They will be so completely deserted that sheep will pasture in their ruins lying quiet and unafraid with no people to chase them away. The combined power of the Israel-Damascus coalition will end. The supposed glory of this godless coalition will fade like that of Israel when she rejected Jehovah. Israel's one-time glory will be a thing of the past, even as a wasting disease may cut down the fatness of a healthy man until he has withered away to skin and bones. Nothing will be left of these two nations. They will be so thoroughly consumed by God's judgment they will be like a wheat field where the reaper is followed by the gleaners picking up every scrap left behind. They will be like the olive tree that is shaken and has its branches beaten with sticks to gather every berry.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 ALLIANCE ANNULED: Damascus was founded some 2,200 years before Christ by Uz, a grandson of Shem (Josh. 1:6; 4:1ff). It is the capital of Syria. Its 2,000 ft. elevation gives it

a delightful climate. Caravan routes from the east, west and south crossed in the city, carrying treasures of silks, perfumes, carpets, and foods. It has always been strategic both militarily and economically. In Isaiah's day, Damascus (Syria) and Israel (the northern kingdom of the Jews) had formed an alliance to go to war against Judah. Ahaz, king of Judah, made an alliance with Assyria (see our comments on Isaiah 7). Isaiah had earlier (ch. 7) predicted the downfall of the Syria-Israel coalition. Now the prophet repeats God's judgment upon it. After the Assyrian conquest of Syria and Israel, Damascus was of little importance until 635 A.D. when it became the seat of the Mohammedan world. It really has never regained the prominence or power it had in the days of Isaiah. The "cities of Aroer" were cities in the far northern reaches of the territory of Israel. They formed a sort of "buffer zone" between Israel and Syria. This is Isaiah's announcement that Israel would be invaded by the same forces about to occupy Damascus. The entire territory of these two nations allied against God's remnant (Judah) was to be made so desolate that sheep would pasture in the ruins of their cities and fortresses. There would be no people in these lands to scare the sheep away.

V. 4-6 AFTERMATH OF THE ATTACK: After the destructive forces of God's judgment have done their work, the glory of these two nations, especially Israel, will be only a shadow and skeleton of its former self. It will vanish as the fatness of a man leaves him when he is wasting away with an incurable disease. All that will be left of the two will be one or two scattered, left-over, insignificant survivors. These two nations will be "picked clean" and left barren like a field gleaned, etc.

QUIZ

1. How old was the city of Damascus?
2. What was the alliance between Damascus and Israel for in Isaiah's time?
3. To what extent was Damascus doomed?

b. CRISIS

TEXT: 17:7-8

7 In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

8 And they shall not look to the altars, the work of their hands; neither shall they have respect to that which their fingers have made, either the Asherim, or the sun-images.

QUERIES

- a. What prompted this contrition by men?
- b. What were the "sun-images"?

PARAPHRASE

When God's judgment begins to fall, men will turn and look for their Maker, and they will suddenly learn to fear the Holy One of Israel. They will no longer seek help from their idols and pagan altars which they made with their own hands. They will renounce their Asherim and sun-images.

COMMENTS

v. 7-8 REFORMATION: Man is prone to disregard God and turn to the gods of his own making when he is prosperous and relatively secure from his enemies. But when calamity or crisis comes man cries out for Supernatural aid. Someone has said, "There are no atheists in foxholes." When men have to face something about to overwhelm them and beyond their own powers to resolve they usually seek their Maker. This is not always repentance in the true sense of the word. Sometimes it is only reformation. This is what occurred in the case of most of the

Jews. They simply reformed some of their behavioral patterns. They reformed by ceasing to do obeisance to statues. But they did not experience real repentance. There is a difference between reformation and repentance. Repentance involves a change of mind, a change of values, as well as changed conduct. Most of the Jews did not really repent—they simply reformed. When they returned from their captivities they made idols of their superholiness. Their new idols were those of Jewish ancestry and Pharisaic self-righteousness. It is true, however, that the Jews were absolutely and thoroughly cured of image-worship. They had fallen into the depths of image-worship at this point in their history (Cf. II Kings 16:10ff). "Asherim" were sacred pillars (much like totem poles) of the pagan "groves" (garden places where pagans gathered to worship idols and engage in lewd, sexual rites of worship). Sun-images were statues of the Phoenician goddess. Her worship was as lewd as that of Baal, with whom she was associated by the pagans.

QUIZ

1. Why were men moved to look unto their Maker?
2. What is the difference between reformation and repentance?
3. How do we know the Jews did not (for the most part) repent?
4. What were the Asherim and sun-images they were worshipping?

c. COLLAPSE

TEXT: 17:9-11

- 9 In that day shall their strong cities be as the forsaken places in the wood and on the mountain top, which were forsaken from before the children of Israel; and it shall be a desolation
- 10 For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength; therefore thou plantest pleasant plants, and settest it with strange slips:

11 in the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in, and in the morning thou makest thy seed to blossom; but the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

QUERIES

- a. What were the "forsaken places in the wood," etc.?
- b. How does the harvest "flee away" in the day of grief?

PARAPHRASE

In that day the well fortified cities where they might think to find refuge from disaster will be useless ruins. Their cities will be like the old, ruined fortresses left behind by the Canaanites when Israel occupied the land. The reason for the collapse of your security is that you have forsaken the true God of your salvation and have not given attention to the Rock upon whom alone it is safe to stand. Although you plant your gardens to your pagan images and tender them the most meticulous care and protection, and although they produce blossoms of loveliness, they will not bring you deliverance. What little satisfaction you may have will disappear suddenly and absolutely in the desperate days of judgment to come.

COMMENTS

v. 9-10a FORTRESSES: "In that day—" when the Damascus-Israel coalition collapses, Israel's defenses and great fortified cities will be as useless as those ruins of the old Canaanite cities still visible in the "woods" and on "mountain tops" in Isaiah's day. When will men learn they can never build any fortress (physical, philosophical or psychological) that God cannot overwhelm and reduce to ruins? Men try to fortify themselves with things or ideas against God's invasion of their selfish goals and

aims. Unless a man surrenders to God's conquest of his heart, man's citadels are inevitably reduced to ruin and the man himself incarcerated in a prison-hell of his own choosing.

v. 10b-11 FLOWERS: The reference to planting "pleasant plants," and setting "strange slips," probably refers to what some ancient writers called little "Adonis gardens." They were little gardens of flower pots or baskets with pleasant plants and slips growing in them in adoration of the Greek Adonis cult. The women of Damascus and Israel were giving these pagan gardens of idolatry their most careful and tender attention. It is suggested they may have been doing this to bring about some magical, mystical resurrection of the dead Baal (who during the dry season had "died"). They even used hothouse-plant methods to promote quick growth and sprouting. They may also have been appeasing the gods of fertility in order to magically insure a good crop at harvest time. Whatever their reasons, Jehovah, through His prophet, predicts that they will not reap what they expect. What they expect to harvest will never materialize. Instead they shall reap days of grief and desperate sorrow.

QUIZ

1. What "day" is referred to in verse 9?
2. What is the comparison used to illustrate the desolation of Israel's cities?
3. Are there other "fortresses" man builds to isolate himself from God besides of stone and wood? What are they?
4. What are the references to "plantings" and "slips"?
5. What is to be the consequence of Israel's idolatry?

d. CHAOS

TEXT: 17:12-14

12 Ah, the uproar of many peoples, that roar like the roaring of the seas; and the rushing of nations, that rush like the rushing of mighty waters!

13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but he shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the whirling dust before the storm.

14 At eventide behold, terror; and before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that despoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Isaiah break into his train of thought with this "ah"?
- b. Who are the "nations" roaring like rushing waters?

PARAPHRASE

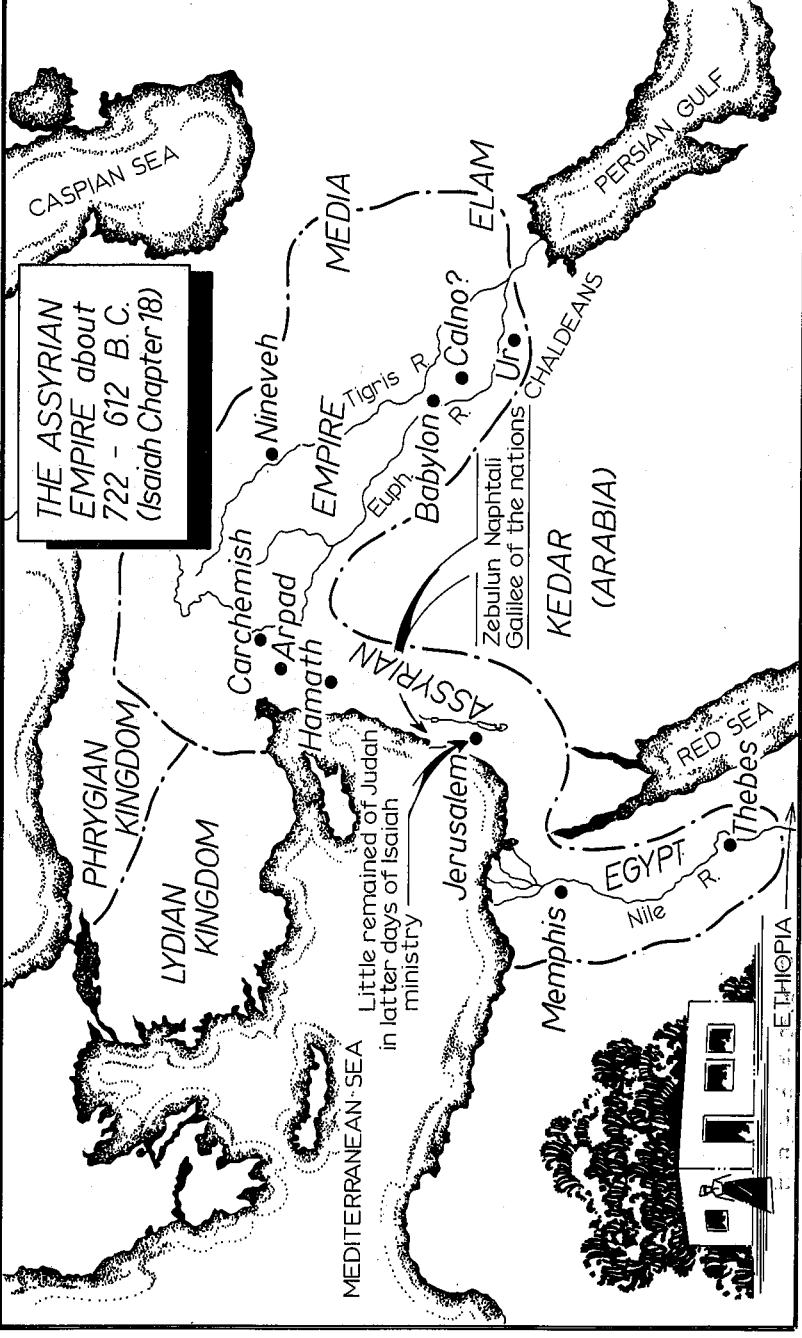
Ah, permit me to pause and tell you of the defeat of the enemies of God's elect. I see multitudes and multitudes of peoples rushing upon God's elect to consume them. They roar with a deafening ferocity, like the roar of the pounding sea. But God will rebuke them and silence their roaring. He will defeat them and they will flee, scattered like chaff by the wind, like whirling dust is blown by a storm. The fear of God's elect as they stand before their enemies will be over in a very short time. Almost overnight they will know deliverance, and their enemies defeated. This is the destiny of those who plunder and destroy the people of God.

COMMENTS

v. 12-13a THE BATTLE: This is rather like a soliloquy by Isaiah. He is talking as if to himself. It is a predictive pause. Its initial fulfillment probably occurred at the onrushing tide of Assyrians as they invaded first Syria, then Israel, then Judah, in the days of Isaiah, Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Jerusalem was surrounded and besieged. Jehovah's angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night and the Assyrians left in defeat. However, it is our judgment that the soliloquy finds its ultimate fulfillment in the victory God wrought at the death and resurrection of Christ. No greater battle was or ever will be fought than the battle between heaven and hell when Christ came to earth to conquer sin in the flesh. That night in Gethsemane the destiny of righteousness, justice and mercy hung in the balance. That struggle of Jesus with Himself and with the devil's temptations was the ultimate struggle between the forces of God and the forces of the devil. When sinful men (agents of Satan) crucified the Son of God, they calculated they had defeated God's attempt to regain His rule over men. What more could Satan do in his warfare against God! We believe the historical event at Calvary and the Empty Tomb is what the prophets (Joel, Ezekiel, Zechariah) are predicting with their highly figurative (and literally impossible) great battles between God and the nations (valley of Jehoshaphat; Gog and Magog, etc.). One, great, complete, decisive victory of God over His enemies and the enemies of His people is predicted.

v. 13b-14 THE VICTORY: Psalms 2:1-6 depicts the "nations" raging against God. But God defeats them through His Son. Daniel's interpretation of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar has the "stone" (God's kingdom) crushing the four great empires of man into dust and the wind blowing them away! Colossians 2:15 tells us that the atoning death of Christ was the moment when God "*disarmed* the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, *triumphing* over them in him." Hebrews 2:14-18 tells us that Jesus' substitutionary death "destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and

THE ASSYRIAN
EMPIRE about
722 - 612 B.C.
(Isaiah Chapter 18)



Little remained of Judah
in latter days of Isaiah
ministry

ETHIOPIA



"In the days of Pekah king of Israel, came Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria ..." (II Kings 15:29).

An Assyrian artist has given us on a relief this portrait of the fierce and inexorable Tiglath-Pileser III. It comes from his ancient capital at Nimrud. When this terrifying monarch, the real founder of the Assyrian Empire, ascended the throne in 745 B. C. it was the beginning of the end for the northern kingdom of Israel.

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES
By Werner Keller - Wm. Morrow Co.

delivered all those who through *fear* of death were subject to lifelong bondage” etc. So you see, God has rebuked His enemies, He has defeated them and scattered them and, like whirling dust before a storm, they are no longer to be feared. What God has actually accomplished (victory) and what we appropriate by faith and obedience, awaits only the consummation at the end of time.

QUIZ

1. What is probably the initial fulfillment of these verses?
2. What is their ultimate fulfillment?

C. INCESSANT EGYPTIANS - CHAPTERS 18-20

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. ETHIOPIA

TEXT: 18:1-7

- 1 Ah, the land of the rustling of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;
- 2 that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people terrible from their beginning onward, a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide!
- 3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers on the earth; when an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye; and when the trumpet is blown, hear ye.
- 4 For thus hath Jehovah said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling-place, like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
- 5 For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the

flower becometh a ripening grape, he will cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and the spreading branches will he take away and cut down.

6 They shall be left together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the ravenous birds shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

7 In that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts from a people tall and smooth, even from a people terrible from their beginning onward, a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount Zion.

QUERIES

- a. Why were the ambassadors told to "go"?
- b. Why is Jehovah going to "be still"?
- c. Who is going to bring a "present" to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

Ah, yes, O distant and enchanting land of Ethiopia, land beyond the upper reaches of the Nile where winged sailboats glide, which sends its ambassadors in fast boats! Go, you swift messengers from Ethiopia. Return to your homeland, a land of supple, bronze-skinned warriors, feared far and wide, a conquering, destroying nation whose land the upper Nile divides. Go with this message: Jehovah-God has said, Let all the world look and listen when God begins to raise up the sign of His mighty work in the earth. Jehovah has decreed, Let my enemies now advance against my land. I will watch quietly and serenely from my place, as unperturbed as one does on a pleasant summer day or a lovely autumn morning watching the grain field mature unto harvest. I have everything under control, says Jehovah. My enemies are like a field ripening unto harvest. But before they

have begun the attack, and while their plans are ripening like grapes, I will cut them off as though with pruning shears. I will snip the spreading tendrils. Their armies will be left dead on the field for the mountain birds and wild animals to eat; the vultures will tear bodies all summer, and the wild animals will gnaw bones all winter. But the time will come when that strong and mighty nation, a terror to all both far and near, that conquering, destroying nation whose land the rivers divide, will bring gifts to the Lord of Hosts in Zion, where He has placed His name.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **TERROR:** Ethiopia was noted far and wide for the abundance of insects populating its territories. "Beyond" means the land extending far to the south which is bordered by the great rivers of Egypt (the White Nile, the Blue Nile and the Atbara) which is Ethiopia. Ethiopia had apparently sent envoys (ambassadors) to Judah. They had come in boats constructed of papyrus, a famous reed which grew in abundance along the Nile. This reed was light and would be very bouyant as well as pliable. The craft would probably be made watertight with pitch. The word "saying" in the text is italicized indicating that it is a word supplied but not a part of the original text. It was not the Ethiopians who said to the ambassadors, "Go," but Isaiah the prophet who was saying, in effect, "Go back home!" The Ethiopians were little known to most of the world in Isaiah's day. There was an aura of mystery about them which tended to make them feared. Their bronze, sleek physique and their efficiency (swift messengers) all contributed to the stories told about their fearsomeness. But why would Isaiah tell them to "Go back home"?

v. 3-6 **TRIUMPH:** Apparently Ethiopia had sent ambassadors to Judah to offer treaties of alliance with Judah against her immediate foes, the Syria-Israel coalition, or perhaps, Assyria. Such treaties of alliance would involve some form of compromise by Judah to Ethiopia's demands. It would probably involve Judah in pagan practices. An alternative suggestion is that the

ambassadors were sent with threats to Judah from Ethiopia herself. Whatever the case, the prophet of God, as much for the benefit of the people of God as for the Ethiopians, bids them "Go home" and watch and listen for a signal announcing that Jehovah God, the God of Judah, was entering into battle with His enemies. The warning is to the whole world that Jehovah will, in due time, take the situation in hand. There were those of God's people who probably were getting impatient with Jehovah's postponement of disaster upon their enemies. Twice before the prophet Isaiah had predicted Jehovah's judgment upon Assyria (10:5-34; 14:24-27). The Lord was apparently doing nothing about all those massive empires threatening Judah on all sides except predict their overthrow. Isaiah portrays Jehovah dwelling quietly, serenely, observing unperturbed as His enemies prepare for the attack. What else befits the Sovereign God of Creation! He has all things completely under His control. He is simply allowing all circumstances to ripen unto His harvest. He is allowing these circumstances and purposes of men to come to fruition in order better to serve His own omniscient purposes. As men prepare their schemes to carry out their own evil purposes, God waits. He wants to give men time to repent. But when they deliberately exchange the truth of God for a lie and deliberately refuse to have God in their knowledge, He gives them up to their own self destruction. What else can He do. They are "cut off." They become carrion. They reap what they sow. Almighty God triumphs over them just as He warned He would.

v. 7 TREASURE: This verse is futuristic. As usual the future is not defined whether it be the immediate future or the remote. More than likely both are thought of as involved. We have here another of the manifold instances of "shortened perspective" where the prophet sees the mountain peaks of God's redemptive activity but he does not see the valleys in between the peaks. Those "valleys" unexplored (centuries of time elapsing between great events) by the prophet's eye must also remain unexplored by the reader's mind. Isaiah may have reference initially to the more immediate future when some in Ethiopia watched developments as they took place round about Jerusalem, and when the

disastrous defeat of the Assyrians occurred, this news penetrated to Ethiopia and induced some to acknowledge Jehovah (Cf. II Chron. 32:23). However, one has only to remember the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) to realize this prediction also has a distant future fulfillment and focuses on messianic times. In a context definitely messianic (Zeph. 3:10) Ethiopia is depicted bringing offerings to the Lord. Zion is symbolic to designate the dwelling place of God and the church of Christ is His ultimate dwelling place (Cf. Heb. 12:18-24; Eph. 2:11-22). This verse parallels the many predictions of Isaiah and other prophets that in messianic times (the church) God and/or God's people will possess peoples (as treasure) from every nation of the world. Isaiah portrays the future glorious Zion (kingdom of God) to be a universal kingdom. All the nations will flow to it (Isa. 2, etc.). This is another expression of the universality of the messianic kingdom (the church). The treasure is the people themselves, converted to Jehovah.

QUIZ

1. What is the reference to the "rustling of wings"?
2. Who is saying "Go" to the ambassadors?
3. What are they to wait to see and hear?
4. Why is God not dealing with His enemies immediately?
5. What N.T. incident may be referred to in verse 7?
6. What are the "presents" brought from Ethiopia?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

2. EGYPT

TEXT: 19:1-15

- 1 The burden of Egypt. Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall

- tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.
- 2 And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.
 - 3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.
 - 4 And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.
 - 5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and become dry.
 - 6 And the rivers shall become foul; the streams of Egypt shall be diminished and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither away.
 - 7 The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile, and all the sown fields of the Nile, shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more.
 - 8 And the fishers shall lament and all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.
 - 9 Moreover they that work in combed flax, and they that weave white cloth, shall be confounded.
 - 10 And the pillars of Egypt shall be broken in pieces; all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul.
 - 11 The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the counsel of the wisest counselors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?
 - 12 Where then are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now; and let them know what Jehovah of hosts hath purposed concerning Egypt.
 - 13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Memphis are deceived; they have caused Egypt to go astray, that are the

cornerstone of her tribes.

- 14 Jehovah hath mingled a spirit of perverseness in the midst of her; and they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.
- 15 Neither shall there be for Egypt any work, which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do.

QUERIES

- a. When did the Egyptians fight against one another?
- b. What caused Egypt's economic downfall?
- c. Why did Egypt's wise men cause her to go astray?

PARAPHRASE

This is the destiny of Egypt. Behold, the Omnipotent God descends from heaven surely and swiftly upon Egypt. Egypt's gods and her religion will be impotent to help her. Her whole populace will be gripped with paralyzing fear and confusion. I, God, will cause them to fight against each other—brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city and province against province. The national spirit of Egypt will be broken. I will cause all her plans to be frustrated. They will run in utter helplessness and confusion to their stone and wooden gods, to their magicians and sooth-sayers and to their sorcerers. But it will be useless for I will give them over to be ruled by a cruel despot. A fierce king will rule them. Furthermore, the waters of the Nile shall fail to inundate the fields and will practically waste away. The irrigation channels will become foul and useless; they will dry up and the reeds and rushes will wither away. The pasture-land along the Nile and all the grain fields will dry up and their soil will be blown away and they will not be cultivated any more. Fishermen will weep for lack of fish to catch. Those who fish with hooks and those who fish with nets will all be unemployed. Weavers of cloth will find their industry in a state of

collapse for the crops of flax and cotton will disappear. The rich and influential and the wage earners will be frustrated and dismayed. What fools the princes of Zoan will be shown to be when this happens. The wisest counselors of Pharaoh will be shown to be as dumb as animals. Will all those wise men then dare to tell Pharaoh about the long line of wise men they have come from? Where are the wise men of Egypt? If they are so wise, let them predict what is going to be the destiny of Egypt. The leadership of the country in Zoan are acting foolishly. The leaders in Memphis are deceiving themselves. Those men who are the cornerstones of the nation have duped the whole country and given it stupid counsel. The Lord has caused a spirit of arrogant perverseness and warped judgment to pervade the land of Egypt. This has brought confusion and failure in every attempt of Egypt to perpetuate her world supremacy. She staggers stupidly and mindlessly as a drunken man staggers in his own vomit. No plan or program Egypt can devise will save her. No person, neither high nor low will be able to save her.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 CIVIL DISORDER: Egypt was a constant and powerful enemy of the Hebrew people. In Isaiah's day, however, there were Jews advising the kings of Israel to form political alliances with Egypt and thus gain protection against Israel's enemies on the other side of her in Mesopotamia (Assyria, Babylon, etc.). So, whether the threat of Egypt toward Israel be invasion or alliance, Isaiah was warning his people that they should trust God. God is going to execute His justice and judgment upon an idolatrous nation. God's first step in judgment will be civil strife within Egypt herself. Governments founded on falsehood in any form, have the seeds of instability and self-destruction sown within them. Where there is falsehood there will be injustice. Where there is injustice there will be civil strife. These are divine moral laws which govern in the affairs of men. Only when a nation is governed by the principles of truth, honesty, justice

and human dignity can there be national unity. This prophecy was fulfilled many times over in Egypt. Herodotus states that there were civil wars in the days of Psammetichus (cir. 655 B.C.). Daniel predicts periods of civil strife, brother against brother and brother against sister, in the days of the Ptolemies (cir. 300-200 B.C.) (Cf. our comments on Daniel 11). There is still much civil strife in Egypt.

The "giving over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king" may parallel Ezekiel 30:13 where the prediction is that there shall no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt. Ezekiel's predictions of Egypt's downfall are found in Ezekiel chapters 29-31. There it is said Egypt would be ruled by strangers. Since the days of Assyrian domination (722 B.C. following) Egypt has been ruled (or at least dominated) by a succession of foreign powers or persons. It has been subjugated by Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, English and Arabs. Even today the political ruler of Egypt is an Arab.

Now when a nation's leadership is engaged in civil war and when its counselors turn to wizards and magicians for advice, that nation's spirit is broken. False religion and false philosophy makes all standards of human conduct relative. There can be no absolutes built on a basis of falsehood. When relativism reigns, social structures disintegrate.

V. 5-10 COMMERCIAL DEPRESSION: God has both spectacular and non-spectacular ways of bringing about the demise of civilizations. When He would obliterate the Edomites He simply had to re-route the great caravan route from east to west around Edom. Edom soon disappeared. God, in a non-spectacular way, gradually reduced Egypt to an insignificant and lowly people by drying up her great "sea" (the River Nile). The Arabs today still call the Nile the "sea" (probably because of the way it used to inundate so much of the valley). In the great days of Egypt's glory (3,000-1,000 B.C.), she was the "Breadbasket of the world." It was a highly developed civilization in the sciences of medicine, architecture, art and commerce. It was a powerful, world-controlling empire. They made linen so fine that there

were 540 threads to the inch. They knew secrets of manufacturing glass still unknown today. They practiced dentistry, treatment of the eyes, brain surgery and other medical skills. Their astronomers and mathematicians were familiar with principles which would do credit to mathematicians of today. Their mechanical skills are unparalleled even today!

Once again the reader should refer to Ezekiel's parallel passage on Egypt (Ezek. 29-31). There it is predicted that Egypt would become desolate in the midst of desolations. The River Nile is far from being completely dried up. However, for many centuries now it has not produced the massive flooding of the Nile valley which was so necessary in ancient times to prepare the lowlands for pasture and crop. Windblown sand dunes and stony, sandy plains comprise 90% of Egypt's land. The government fights a constant battle with the slowly creeping, encroaching Sahara desert. Tiny plots of vegetation are worked today with tools differing little from those of Pharaoh's time. Today the foliage of reeds and rushes have, compared with ancient time, almost disappeared. This was one of Egypt's largest industries in ancient times. Another of the chief industries of Egypt was its fisheries. Down to the time of the Roman invasion they had lost none of their productiveness. Today the fisheries have ceased to be important, and the fish in the river are few. Before the Russians supplied Egypt with some weapons of war, they were so powerless that a small, Israeli army could defeat them totally in a six-day-war!

The irrigation system, in spite of all the modern attempts to restore it to its former glory and efficiency, carries water to only a small fraction of the former territory served by the ancient canals. Many of those canals of ancient Egypt are today only soggy, foul-smelling bogs, unusable. Egyptians today attempt to irrigate using hand-made, wooden, water-screws—a method out of the ancient past. Over-population and superstition and absence of mechanization intensifies and increases Egypt's desolation generation after generation. The "pillars" of Egypt, the men of influence and wealth, as well as the common wage earner, will grieve in their soul over Egypt's humiliation to a

lowly, grovelling, emaciated people from such a powerful and glorious past.

But God said it—and it is so!

v. 11-15 COUNSELING DISASTERS: Zoan was an ancient city, near the mouth of the Tanis branch of the Nile River (probably synonymous with Tanis), built seven years after Hebron (Num. 13:22). It was the capital of the 21st and 23rd dynasties of Egyptian history. Israelites who sought alliances with Egypt would probably have entered into negotiations with these princes. But the point is they gave Pharaoh "stupid" "brutish" counsel. They were as dumb as animals. How could they be expected to know any wisdom from Jehovah? Evidently God's divine power and deity are clearly enough seen "in the things that have been made" (Cf. Rom. 1:18-23) that all men may have enough knowledge of Him to conduct the affairs of human and social relations wisely. But when men do not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, they become futile in their thinking and their senseless minds are darkened. Although they claim to be wise with human philosophies, they are fools. Their stupidity is seen in their exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Isaiah represents the stupidity of men who will take a tree and cut it in half, use half of it to build a fire and cook their meal and take the other half, carve a face on it and set it up as a god and worship it (Isa. 44:9-20). The remaining verses of Romans 1 show what happens when they exchange the truth of God for a lie (Cf. Rom. 1:24-32). The word *perverseness* in the English translation would better be rendered from the Hebrew as *dizziness*. When men deliberately and persistently believe and practice falsehood there is an inevitable stupor which settles into all human and social structures. God gives them up and they "receive in their own persons the due penalty for their error," (Cf. Rom. 1:27). Men who cannot govern their own lives cannot govern a nation. Men who do not wish to practice truth and justice for themselves cannot legislate it for others. The princes of Zoan were drunk with the wine of rebellion against truth and morals. Sooner or later, however, the wine of rebellion and falsehood is vomited up and those

who have drunk it are forced to stagger in the regurgitation of the filth they have swallowed. There is nothing that either "head" or "tail" of the nation can do. Social and national structures will cease to function properly. One is reminded of the disintegration of Germany after World War II. Totally helpless to function after defeat by the allies, she was saved only by the "Marshall Plan." God's moral principles remain true in every age.

QUIZ

1. Why does idolatry inevitably result in civil and social disorder?
2. How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in the case of Egypt's civil disorders?
3. How "developed" was Egypt's civilization in Isaiah's day and earlier?
4. Describe the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of Egypt's economic disasters.
5. What causes national leaders to give foolish leadership?

3. EGYPT

TEXT: 19:16-25

- 16 In that day shall the Egyptians be like unto women; and they shall tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts, which he shaketh over them.
- 17 And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto Egypt; every one to whom mention is made thereof shall be afraid, because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts, which he purposeth against it.
- 18 In that day there shall be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan, and swear to Jehovah of hosts; one shall be called The city of destruction.
- 19 In that day shall there be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah.

- 20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they shall cry unto Jehovah because of oppressors, and he will send them a savior, and a defender, and he will deliver them.
- 21 And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto Jehovah, and shall perform it.
- 22 And Jehovah will smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto Jehovah, and he will be entreated of them, and will heal them.
- 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 worship with the Assyrians.
- 24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth;
- 25 for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

QUERIES

- a. What is the language of Canaan and why would the Egyptians speak it?
- b. In what way would the Egyptians "worship" Jehovah?
- c. Why does Isaiah predict that Assyria and Egypt and Israel will someday be united?

PARAPHRASE

When Jehovah culminates His judgment upon Egypt she will be humbled. Her great and powerful men will be as timid as women and be afraid at the evident hand of the Lord in her judgment. Just the mention of the name Judah will remind Egypt

of Judah's God and cause Egypt to remember that Judah's God keeps His word. In the day that Egypt is brought to such a humble relationship to the God of Judah great portions of the people of Egypt will speak the language of faith and allegiance to Jehovah. Some portions of the people, however, will remain in rebellion against Jehovah and thus destined for destruction. In that day Jehovah shall be worshiped in Egypt's midst and a sign of His presence there will be manifested. He will make a witness to His presence there as He defends and delivers those oppressed Egyptians which have become His through a savior He will send them. God will make Himself known to the Egyptians and they shall know Him in that day. Indeed, they will worship Jehovah in truth and they will do so willingly and freely. They will make commitments to Jehovah and keep them. Jehovah will alternately chasten these Egyptian worshipers of His and heal them. In that day also there will be a peaceful unity accomplished between peoples formerly at enmity with one another. Believers from Egypt and Assyria shall worship together as one people. And even believers in Israel, a major bone of contention between Egypt and Assyria, will be joined with believers of Egypt and Assyria and this united people will be a blessing in the midst of the earth, because Jehovah has united them as one people—His people.

COMMENTS

v. 16-17 **PERSUADED:** These verses are transitional. They form the bridge between the former predictions of Egypt's judgment and the following predictions of Egypt's turning to Jehovah. In other words, when the day comes that some of the Egyptians realize that Judah's God is the only true God, as a result of "receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error," they will begin to seek Jehovah's purpose in their lives. The time will come, says Isaiah, when the mere mention of Judah will remind Egypt of Judah's God and cause some of her people to remember that Judah's God keeps His word. They will fear Him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Egypt's wisdom had evaporated. But it will come back when they fear Jehovah. At last, some Egyptians will be persuaded of the sovereignty of Judah's God.

v. 18-22 PENITENT: Persuaded of Jehovah's sovereignty, many Egyptians will some day ("In that day") repent, change their minds and actions, and worship Him. *In that day* can only, as we shall develop, refer to the Messianic age, the church. "Five cities" is probably a figure of speech meaning a considerable number of people. Amos uses the phrase, "For three transgressions, yea for four," and does not intend to say Israel had committed only four transgressions. Isaiah does not mean to say only five cities. While there are five cities speaking the language of Canaan, a sixth city shall be called "destruction." In other words, there will still be some in Egypt who will not repent just as the "rest of mankind did not repent" after the judgments portrayed in Revelation 8:20ff. Speaking "the language of Canaan, and swearing to Jehovah of hosts" is to speak the language in which the God of the Israelites is worshiped. That, of course, does not mean the Egyptians would speak Hebrew any more than it means they would speak Greek (the language of the New Testament). It means they would speak truth as opposed to falsehood. It means they would give allegiance to Jehovah—they would come into covenant relationship with Him. They would become citizens of Jehovah's kingdom (the church). It is doubtful that it could mean great numbers of the Egyptians would become Jewish proselytes.

We take the "altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt" to be prophetic of the worship of the one true God being established when the gospel was preached there and people became Christians in the first century A.D. The statement that sacrifices (v. 22) will be offered does not limit the meaning of this passage to Old Testament practices for there are certain sacrifices to be offered in the New Testament church (Cf. Heb. 13:15-16). The "pillar" is in Hebrew *matztzevah* which is a stone pillar resembling an obelisk. Such a "pillar" was erected by Jacob (Gen. 28:16-22) to memorialize the presence of God. The

“pillar” in Egypt is figurative of saying that when one approaches the border of Egypt he comes to a land that is also the Lord’s for the presence of Jehovah is here (in the church). This is an especially vivid figure for Isaiah’s Jewish audience. It is being predicted to them that one day Palestine will not be the only land where the presence of Jehovah dwells. The universal kingdom of Jehovah (the church) will extend into Egypt as well as Palestine!

The Jews who wrote the Septuagint (cir. 300 B.C.) thought this prophecy of Isaiah (and Ezekiel and Jeremiah) against Egypt was fulfilled in the days of Onias, a Jew of great distinction and a high priest. In 160 B.C. Onias IV, was compelled to flee Palestine. He fled to Egypt and sought and received permission from the Egyptian monarch, to build a temple like that in Jerusalem and even pointed the king Ptolemy to this passage in Isaiah for authority to build it. Josephus, the Jewish historian records this for us. Titus Vespasian destroyed this temple in Egypt in 70 A.D. when he destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. We believe this passage has a much larger and grander fulfillment than that, as subsequent verses will show.

Whatever the language of Canaan, the altar, the pillar, they were to “be a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt.” These things were to signify and testify that these Egyptians were God’s people and He was their God. For now, as God’s people, they who were formerly oppressors would become the oppressed. As Jesus said, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (Jn. 15:19). But now these Egyptians are in covenant relationship to Jehovah and they may “have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19ff) and cry unto God and He will strengthen them, save them and deliver them.

Jehovah shall be known to Egypt and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah, “in that day.” Their relationship shall be experiential as well as mental. They will enter into a life-style of belief. It will be done willingly. The offering of vows is done not by way of obligation or legislation but by willingness (Num. 30:1ff). Furthermore, since these Egyptians are true children of God,

they will be treated like His children. "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens, etc. . . ." (Heb. 12:3-17). If God does not chasten, they are "illegitimate" children. Jehovah will smite and heal in order to turn them constantly to Him.

v. 23-25 PEACEFUL: Now we have portrayed in figurative language the consequences of God's redemptive work in Egypt. Egypt and Assyria were inveterate enemies for many centuries. But when the universal kingdom of God is established (the church) men out of every tribe and tongue will join together in peace and unified worship of Jehovah. The reference is not to any literal highway or literal Egypt and Assyria. These two nations stood at opposite poles geographically and opposed each other politically. They represent or symbolize the conversion of all the heathen and the formation of those converted into a kingdom of peace. What God will accomplish in His redemptive work, in establishing His kingdom of peace, will be a divine reversal of what occurred at Babel. At the tower of Babel the world was dispersed, and a division of mankind occurred. Languages were confused. Ideologies grew and competed and opposed one another and wars ensued. This divided mankind fought to maintain individuality and rebellion against God, each nation characterized by this in common, that it did not know nor worship Jehovah. Many nations fought one another proposing that their ideology was what would be best for the whole world and so empires rose and fell in attempting to unify the world under one human ideology. Jehovah called out a people (the Jews) and began His work of redeeming and unifying all who would in a kingdom of men once again be ruled over by God and Truth. But even this "called out people" (for the most part) rejected God's Messiah and His Messianic kingdom. But God's new kingdom of unity and peace was intended to be universal from the very start. And so the prophets, especially Isaiah, predicted it. We believe Ephesians 2:11-22 are the precise fulfillment of this passage as well as that of Isaiah 2:1-4 (see our comments there) and many other "universalized" passages of the O.T. Prophets.

If this be the proper application of this passage, then the "Israel" joined as a "third" party with Egypt and Assyria in

verse 24 is "the Israel of God" of Galatians 6:16 which is none other than the New Testament church. It would take a Jew who is one "inwardly" (Cf. Rom. 2:28-29) to ever agree to a unity such as is described in verses 24-25.

The ultimate fulfillment of this passage is, therefore, Messianic. It has to do with Christ and the Church. This has come to pass and they who were strangers and foreigners in Egypt and Assyria, and yes, even in Israel, will be found in that building, "fitly framed together, which groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:11-22).

It is interesting that these three areas, Egypt, Israel and Assyria are the three areas where we find some of the earliest of the missionary endeavors of the infant church. At the beginning of the 4th century (300-400 A.D.) parts of the Scriptures had been translated into more than one of the Egyptian vernaculars and the foundations had been laid of a native Egyptian church known as "Coptic." By the end of the 5th century the Christian faith had become rooted among native Egyptian stock and in time was the dominant religion of the land. The Coptic church, numbering 22,000 members at the turn of the 20th century, still flourishes in parts of Egypt and Ethiopia.

At Dura-Europos, on the river Euphrates (where ancient Assyria was located) on the great road between Antioch and Ctesiphon, 20th century excavation has revealed a building which was used as a Christian church as far back as the year 232 A.D. There are still many Christians in Armenia (Assyria).

There were people from Egypt and parts of Libya and Mesopotamia in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-13) and some of them were converted. Here the seeds were sown in the hearts of men who returned to their homelands with the gospel of peace and thus the prophecy of Isaiah came to pass (see also the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:26-40).

QUIZ

1. In what way do verses 16-17 form a transition from one section of this chapter to the other?
2. Why does Isaiah say "five cities" will "speak the language of Canaan"?
3. What is the "altar" and "pillar" that is to be found in Egypt?
4. How will Jehovah "smite" and "heal" the Egyptians?
5. How will the Egyptians and Assyrians worship Jehovah together?
6. In what way is Israel included with Egypt and Assyria in blessing the earth?
7. Why is it apparent that this section of Isaiah is Messianic?
8. What are Coptic and Armenian Christians and where may we trace their beginnings in the New Testament?

CHAPTER TWENTY

4. EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

TEXT: 20:1-6

- 1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it;
- 2 at that time Jehovah spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.
- 3 And Jehovah said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia;
- 4 so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.
- 5 And they shall be dismayed and confounded, because of

Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

- 6 And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape?

QUERIES

- a. Did Isaiah go completely naked for three years?
- b. What does "buttocks uncovered" mean?
- c. Who are the inhabitants of "this coastland"?

PARAPHRASE

In the year when Sargon, king of Assyria, sent his commander-in-chief of the army against the city of Ashdod and captured it, the Lord told Isaiah, son of Amoz, to take off his outer clothing, including his shoes, and to walk around barefoot clad only in his under-tunic. And Isaiah did so. And the Lord said, My servant Isaiah has walked barefoot and stripped shamefully to his underclothing for three years symbolizing the awesome troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia. Just so, the king of Assyria will take away the Egyptians and Ethiopians, young and old, as prisoners, defeated, stripped of their possessions and shamed in their wretched condition. And the inhabitants of this Palestinian "coastland" will be depressed and confused because they had expected to get help from Egypt and Ethiopia. So the people of Palestine will say in that day, Look! If this is what the king of Assyria does to Egypt and Ethiopia, what hope do we have to escape from him?

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 SIGN: The year Sargon II subdued Ashdod was 711 B.C. *Tartan* is not the name of a person but a title of office. It is probably from the Akkadian word *turtanu* which was the title of one of three great officers of state in Assyria. He was the king's viceroy, probably commander-in-chief of the army. Isaiah is probably writing this after the event but employing it, as directed by Jehovah, as a prophetic sign of events to come. In addition to the defeat of Ashdod (a city on the Philistine plain), Isaiah employs a personal exhibition as a symbol of Egypt's imminent humiliation. The Lord told Isaiah to take his *saq* (a hairy mantle sometimes worn by prophets to give proof of the fact that they were not men to pamper their bodies, Cf. Zech. 13:4; Mark 1:6) off and his sandals off and go about stripped. This disrobing would still leave Isaiah clad in the typical undergarment, a kind of linen tunic. Out of doors and in public men were not accustomed to go about dressed so unconventionally. To go clad thus did not offend all moral decency but did bring offense against customary modesty. It symbolized shame and said, "After mourning (sackcloth) comes disgrace (underclothing)."

Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) was an Assyrian king who is mentioned by name in the Bible only in Isaiah 20:1. Up to a century ago, no evidence of the existence of such a king had been found in any other available historical records. Destructive critics of the Bible stoutly maintained the Bible was in error in Isaiah 20:1. Some even insisted that there had been deliberate falsification of the biblical text here in order to give the Bible "historical flavor." In 1843, Botta discovered the ruins of Sargon's palace, in Khorsabad, on the north edge of Nineveh, with treasures and inscriptions showing him to have been one of Assyria's greatest kings. In recent years the ruins of Sargon's palace have been excavated by the Oriental Institute. From inscriptions it is learned that Shalmaneser died while besieging Samaria, and that he was succeeded by Sargon, who completed the capture. Furthermore, an inscription of Sargon, verifying the statement in Isaiah 20:1, was found: "Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to

pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual bodyguard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab." The spade of the archaeologist has authenticated the veracity of the Bible and stopped the mouths of the critics! Sargon was murdered in 705 B.C. and succeeded by his son Sennacherib against whom Hezekiah revolted.

v. 3-6 SIGNIFICATION: The defeat of Ashdod and Isaiah's humiliating appearance were to signify to the inhabitants of Palestine (the Jews) that Assyria was about to defeat Egypt and Ethiopia and that only mourning and shame would come to the Jews should they continue to hope in their alliances with them. Evidently the people of Judah had been solidifying political and economic alliances with Egypt against Assyria for years (II Kings 18:21). But they had also been making alliances with Assyria against Syria and Israel (Cf. II Kings 16:8ff). They tried to play both ends against the middle. Egypt and Ethiopia, in whom the people of Judah had built such high hopes will be openly reduced to impotency, disgrace and shame. Egyptians and Ethiopians, whose glory and power had continued for centuries, would be taken captive and exiled, and all of them will be stripped of their outer garment and be barefoot, as was proverbially the case with captives and exiles. Those too young and too old for military service will be taken as well. Some will be stripped even of their undergarment (leaving perhaps some kind of loin cloth) so that they went with "buttocks uncovered"—involving the highest measure of disgrace for this once proud and arrogant people. This took several decades to see its fulfillment, but it did come to pass.

All this is to make the people of Judah dramatically aware of the folly of placing any trust in Egypt and Ethiopia as a protection from Assyria. "The Egyptians are men, and not God"; (Cf. Isaiah 31:3). But what success did Isaiah have? Whatever it was it was only temporary for we find a very strong and pervasive movement in Judah for Egyptian alliance in Jeremiah's day (Cf. Jer. 44:24-30). The people of Judah put so much reliance on

Egypt and Ethiopia on account of their armies and horses and chariots. Judah took no account of the fact that it is righteousness, truth and justice that makes a nation strong. These are the inner strengths of societal structure that protect nations against their worst enemies—their selves.

QUIZ

1. Who is "Tartan"?
2. What was Isaiah told to remove? What clothing did he have on?
3. What was Isaiah's condition to symbolize?
4. Who was Sargon? How has his existence been verified?
5. Whom had the people of Judah allied themselves with?
6. What was to happen to Egypt and Ethiopia?
7. What lesson should nations and peoples learn from this?

D. IRREVERENT ENEMIES - CHAPTERS 21-23

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. BABYLON, EDOM AND ARABIA

a. BABYLON

TEXT: 21:1-10

- 1 The burden of the wilderness of the sea. As whirlwinds in the South sweep through, it cometh from the wilderness, from a terrible land.
- 2 A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous man dealeth treacherously, and the destroyer destroyeth. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.
- 3 Therefore are my loins filled with anguish; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman in travail: I am pained so that I cannot hear; I am dismayed so that I can-

not see.

- 4 My heart fluttereth, horror hath affrighted me; the twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me.
- 5 They prepare the table, they set the watch, they eat, they drink: rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield.
- 6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; Let him declare what he seeth:
- 7 and when he seeth a troop, horsemen in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he shall harken diligently with much heed.
- 8 And he cried as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time and am set in my ward whole nights;
- 9 and, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs. And he answered and said, Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.
- 10 O thou my threshing, and the grain of my floor! that which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "wilderness of the sea"?
- b. Who is preparing the table and eating and drinking?
- c. Who is the "watchman"?

PARAPHRASE

This is the message of Jehovah concerning Babylon, that city sitting in a wilderness of waters. A storm of devastation is roaring down upon her from the territory of terror, like the cyclone sweeps out of the southern deserts of the Negev. I see a vision that makes me grieve. Babylon has deceived and exploited many peoples. So I command the Elamites and Medes to besiege her and bring her oppressions to an end. This will give peace and

healing to those she has oppressed. When I see what God has planned for Babylon I am overcome with horror and feeling for them. My stomach cramps and churns with sharp pain like that of a woman giving birth to a child. The awesomeness of it consumes all my senses so that I do not hear or see anything else around me. My mind reels; my heart palpitates; I am overwhelmed with the terror of it. The night—once affording me relaxation and rest and pleasure—has now become long hours of restless trembling. Look! They are engrossed in banqueting, watching their enemy approach. They are oblivious to their danger because they are reveling with eating and drinking. Suddenly, their enemy upon them before they know it, they will be crying, Quick, quick, grab your shields and anoint them for battle! We are being attacked! And the Lord told me, Put a watchman there to observe. Let this watchman tell what he sees. When this watchman sees soldiers, cavalymen in pairs, troops of donkeys, troops of camels, tell him to pay diligent attention to everything he sees and hears. So I put the watchman to watch and eventually he cried, O Sovereign Lord, I have been standing continually in my place of watching day after day and night after night, and suddenly troops of soldiers come, including troops of cavalymen. And the watchman reported what he had beheld, Fallen, fallen is Babylon and all her false gods lie broken on the ground. O my oppressed people, that which I, Isaiah, have heard from Jehovah, the God of Israel, I declare to you to comfort you and strengthen your faith.

COMMENTS

v. 1-5 VISION: That this is Babylon is evident from verse 9. Babylon was situated in the Mesopotamian lowlands, in the Euphrates River valley. In fact, the Euphrates River cut through the center of the great city. Hundreds of canals branched off the River into all the areas of the city making it literally a "wilderness of seas." It is not unusual for a river to be called a "sea" (Cf. Isa. 19:5). A cyclonic force of humanity from a "terrible land"

is to swoop down upon Babylon at some future time. If Isaiah made this prediction of Babylon's fall near 706-705 B.C. it would anticipate the actual historical event by approximately 170 years! Babylon did not win domination of the world until about 612 B.C. (at the battle of Carcemish). The Jewish captivity of Babylon began about 606 B.C. The conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians took place about 538 B.C. (See our comments on Daniel, chapter 5, for details on the conquest of Babylon by Medo-Persia). Why Isaiah deals with an empire yet to be born so many years in advance of its birth we shall speak of later. In verse 2 the prophet characterizes his feelings and the personality of the Babylonian empire. The vision grieves the prophet. The Babylonians will be deceitful and devious and a people who will despoil and exploit the whole world. It is nothing short of amazing that Isaiah should know 170 years in advance the very people, by name, who would conquer this unborn Babylonian empire! It can only be explained by supernatural revelation. The Elamites and the Medes (later to become the Medo-Persian amalgamation) were the very ones history records as Babylon's conquerors. This territory now belongs to Iran.

Isaiah was overwhelmed with grief at this vision. He writhed in anguish like a woman giving birth to a child. He could concentrate on nothing else. Its horror consumed him. Its awesomeness made his mind reel and his heart palpitate. He could not sleep at night. Why was he so gripped with its horribleness? Edward J. Young writes, "From this it appears that the prophet experienced deep emotion not merely over his own people, but even over the enemy. He was a man of tender compassion, and the news that stark events were to overcome the world brings upon him painful anguish. Perhaps if we knew today of the future catastrophic and cataclysmic upheavels in national and international structures we would be overwhelmed with grief and anguish. Any man of God grieves over the tribulation and oppression of others any time it occurs. Most Americans who can remember the atomic holocaust over Hiroshima, Japan, and its consequences, even though Japan was at the time America's enemy, remembers his horror and compassion for those Japanese

who suffered in it. Perhaps the stupidity and gross sensuality of the Babylonians visualized by Isaiah even as their enemies marched toward their city, also caused the prophet to be upset. Again, amazingly, Isaiah predicts the exact situation among the Babylonians upon the night of their downfall (Cf. our comments in Daniel, chapter 5). Belshazzar was eating and drinking with his noblemen when the handwriting appeared on the wall and Cyrus and the Medes appeared inside the city. The Medes were upon them so suddenly the Babylonians hardly had time to prepare ("anoint with oil from their pagan altars") their shields for war. This "anointing" was probably some superstition seeking the aid of their gods in battle.

V. 6-10. VERIFICATION: Who is this watchman? It is our opinion that God was instructing Isaiah to appeal to those who believed his prophecy to pass along this prophecy to future generations who would "watch" diligently as historic events fulfilled and verified Isaiah's predictions. These future generations of a "faithful remnant" would then read and remind all who would hear that Isaiah's prophecies were sure and certain. God would chasten His people, but He would also deliver them. Joel bids those who witnessed the locust plague to pass on the information from one generation to another in order to interpret God's actions of chastening in the world. Jeremiah predicted the death of Hananiah. Hananiah's death verified Jeremiah's authenticity as a prophet (Cf. Jer. 28:5-17). The Elamites used asses and the Medes used camels as animals of warfare. When the Judeans of the future should see this great mass of mounted warriors approaching Babylon they should know their deliverance from Babylon's captivity was near. All their songs and sighings of oppression in captivity would cease. The Persians in two short years would begin (536) the restoration of the Jews to their land. The word "lion" is not in the best, most ancient, Hebrew texts. It is not in the Isaiah manuscript of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The cry of those with faith to take Isaiah at his word and "watch" is: Fallen, fallen, is Babylon! Babylon's gods are impotent and they are ground into the dust of destruction.

Fallen Babylon proclaimed the defeat of the great enemy of

God's people and their deliverance. In a certain sense, this is the basic theme of the entire book of Isaiah. It is the prelude to the triumphant messages of conquest and joy found in chapters 40—66. It is the same message John the apostle sees in a vision concerning the Roman empire in Revelation 18, which is symbolic of God's final defeat of His enemies and the deliverance of His people. Babylon was symbolic of all the forces opposed to God and His redemptive work in the earth. Especially did she symbolize the forces of sensuality and worldliness as they oppose God and His kingdom in luring humanity to commit "adultery" with the gods of carnality. That is why Babylon is called a "mistress" and a "whore." The overthrow of Babylon in the book of Revelation is a prelude to the joyous conquest of Revelation 21-22.

Isaiah's heart goes out to God's people, so long threshed by their oppressors. They have been ground into the earth as grain on a threshing floor, but the precious grain is God's. He will separate the wheat from the chaff by the Babylon captivity. And when the Medes have delivered Judah from Babylon, the wheat-seed will produce a harvest in the Messiah. What the aged prophet had heard from Jehovah, he tenderly but forthrightly declared to all who would listen and believe.

QUIZ

1. Why was Isaiah grieved at this vision?
2. How many years before the actual downfall of Babylon is Isaiah probably predicting it?
3. How would Isaiah know it?
4. In what detail does Isaiah predict it?
5. Why would Isaiah be told to set a watchman to tell of these events when they began to be fulfilled?
6. What does Babylon symbolize in the redemptive working of God?
7. Who is his "threshing"?

b. EDOM AND ARABIA

TEXT: 21:11-17

- 11 The burden of Dumah. One calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?
- 12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, come.
- 13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye caravans of Dedanites.
- 14 Unto him that was thirsty they brought water; the inhabitants of the land of Tema did meet the fugitives with their bread.
- 15 For they fled away from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.
- 16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar shall fail;
- 17 and the residue of the number of the archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be few; for Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Why is someone asking the "Watchman" of the night?
- b. What is the "caravan of the Dedanites"?
- c. What are "the years of a hireling"?

PARAPHRASE

The message of God for the land of deathly silence, Edom: Someone from among you keeps calling, calling to me, Prophet-watchman, What part of the night is it? Prophet-watchman, What part of the night is it? Will the morning of relief never come? The Prophet-watchman replies, Yes, there will be a morning of relief to those who take refuge in the Lord, but the night of death and destruction also comes to those who do not

see Him. If you wish to know the meaning of God's message to you, His command to you is turn from your rebellion and come to Him.

The message of God for the land of Arabia. Your land will be occupied by your enemies and be so dangerous that caravans from Dedan will have to hide for their lives. Travelers will have to be secretly given food and water by the people of Tema. The people of the land of Arabia will be fugitives in their own land from the swords and bows of war. An exact time has been fixed for the destruction of Arabia—like employers fix a definite time of hiring laborers. One year and the fame of Kedar shall disappear, and her once mighty fighting men will be reduced to only a handful of nomadic tribesmen. This will surely come to pass because Jehovah, the God of Israel, has said it.

COMMENTS

v. 11-12 DEATH: *Dumah* is probably the Hebrew word *A-dom* (Edom—"red") which the prophet has used as a pun by removing the *a* sound from the beginning of the word and placing it at the end—*dum-A*. *Dumah* means "stillness" like the silence of death. Edom is the subject of some of the severest judgments of the Old Testament, (Cf. Isa. 34:5ff; Jer. 49:7ff; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1-21, for examples). Edom is the only neighbor of the Israelites who was not given any promise of mercy from God. She was a nation descended from Esau, brother of Jacob, and thus the Edomites were brothers of the Jews. Esau was a "profane" person who irreverently sold his birthright for pottage. But Edom was haughty, insolent, irreverent, insensitive and implacable. She not only applauded every tribulation that came upon the Jews, she exploited their misfortunes to her own gain. (see our comments on Obadiah in *Minor Prophets*, College Press). God pronounced Edom's obliteration. They disappeared as a nation in about 70 A.D. So "silence of death" fell upon the region of Mt. Seir, Edom's ancient stronghold.

"Watchman, what part of the night is it?" would be a more

literal translation of that phrase. The idea is like that of an ill person suffering through a long night of affliction, repeatedly asking, "How long until morning?" The question is, "Will the night of judgment you pronounce upon us ever break with the dawning of a morning of relief?" The watchman (Isaiah) answers, "Yes, morning will come—relief comes, but so does the night." In other words, relief comes to those who "turn" and seek the Lord, but night continues to come to those who do not. That this is the answer is apparent from the phrase, "if ye will inquire . . ." That is, "If you are really inquiring, Edom, then make your inquiry in the form of a penitent turning unto the Lord, and the morning will come to you. If you do not, then the night comes."

v. 13-17 **DESTRUCTION:** The Arabians were descendants of Ishmael, half brother of Isaac. Esau married Ishmael's daughter so the Edomites and Arabians were related. Kedar was one of the 12 sons of Ishmael. Arabia was therefore closely related to the Jews. Ishmael began mocking the Jews when he was 16 (Gen. 21:9). Their hatred for the Jews was, like Edom's, born of envy, and nurtured over many centuries. Jeremiah tells us something of their desert, nomadic existence (Jer. 49:28-33). Their territory was (Kedar) in the northern part of the Arabian desert. The prophet Isaiah describes their coming judgment. Their land will be so thoroughly overrun and occupied by enemy troops that caravans will be unable to travel in safety. They will have to hide in the forests. They will be fugitives in their own country. They will be fed and given water secretly. They will be outlaws in their own land. They will be out numbered and "out-gunned." Those mighty archers and horsemen of Arabia, those fierce fighting nomads of the steppes will have to flee from the superior forces of an enemy occupying their lands. Their number will be reduced to "few." It is not difficult to see the fulfillment of this. There has long been a darkness over this land with the false religion of Islam. They have been a weak, nomadic, disunited people warring against one another for centuries. This has been due to their irreverence for the deity and exclusiveness of God's True Prophet, Jesus Christ. "Morning" can never come to these

two brothers of Israel until they "turn" to God's Messiah. The Edomites had the audacity to put forth Herod, the Idumean as "king of the Jews." The Herod family, in its insolence toward Jehovah, contributed to the crucifixion of Christ. The Arabians had the audacity to declare that Mohammed was a Prophet equal to Jesus. Whoever does not "kiss the son" will die (Psa. 2:11). The insolence and irreverence of these two peoples is the cause of their judgment. Haughtiness toward God's covenant people is haughtiness toward God Himself. God's faithful servants are "the apple of His eye." Love God, love His children. Those today who haughtily despise the church of Christ will reap God's judgment.

QUIZ

1. What does "Dumah" mean?
2. What is the watchman's answer about the night?
3. What relationship did Edom and Arabia have to the Jews?
4. What is the main cause of their judgment?
5. How have these prophecies been fulfilled?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

2. JUDAH

a. IRREVERENT ATTITUDES

TEXT: 22:1-14

- 1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?
- 2 O thou that art full of shoutings, a tumultuous city, a joyous town; thy slain are not slain with the sword, neither are they dead in battle.
- 3 All thy rulers fled away together, they were bound by the

- archers; all that were found of thee were bound together; they fled afar off.
- 4 Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people.
- 5 For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity, from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, in the valley of vision; a breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the mountains.
- 6 And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen; and Kir uncovered the shield.
- 7 And it came to pass, that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots and the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.
- 8 And he took away the covering of Judah; and thou didst look in that day to the armor in the house of the forest.
- 9 And ye saw the breaches of the city of David, that they were many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.
- 10 And ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and ye brake down the houses to fortify the wall.
- 11 Ye made also a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye looked not unto him that had done this, neither had ye respect unto him that purposed it long ago.
- 12 And in that day did the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:
- 13 and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.
- 14 And Jehovah of hosts revealed himself in mine ears, Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you till ye die, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

QUERIES

- a. Where is the "valley of vision"?
- b. Who is going to "weep bitterly"?
- c. Why would they say, "let us eat and drink . . . etc."?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's message concerning Jerusalem, the place where God's word goes forth. What is the matter with you? Why are you all running up to the housetops? You are all consumed with the madness of revelry and irresponsibility. There is nothing to celebrate in your dead for they have not died honorably on the field of battle. Your leaders tried to desert you, but they were captured and taken prisoner. Everyone who tried to escape was either slain or captured. Some of you tried to console me, but I said, Do not try to console me, this is not a time for consoling but a time for weeping. I cannot be consoled when I see my people bring upon themselves inevitable destruction. No, these are days of confusion and affliction from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts. In the place where God's word is supposed to reside, an enemy is breaking down Jerusalem's walls and the enemy's cries of success echo among the mountains. The expert warriors of Elam came in wagonloads and warriors from as far away as Kir took up arms against you. Your finest and most strategic lands were filled with wagon-loads of these warriors. The enemy had you completely besieged occupying even the city gates. The enemy exposed your decadence and your foolishness. And where do you look for help? To man-made weapons you run for deliverance. You thought you could deliver yourself. You saw the walls of your city in disrepair. You saw that you would need water for a time of siege. So you calculated what you thought it would take to fix all your defences and tore down houses and repaired your wall; and you made a reservoir between the two walls for an increased water supply; but not once did you ask for help from Him who lets this come upon you. He is the One who planned

it long ago and you do not know it. When this was happening to you it was the Lord calling you to repent. His call to you is to weep, to mourn, to shave your heads in contrition, and to put on the sackcloth of penitence. But instead, you sing and dance and play, and feast and drink. You fatalists! You say, Let us eat and drink—what's the difference, for tomorrow we shall die. The Lord of hosts has revealed to me that this sin will never be forgiven you, not even when you die.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 FRIVOLITY: The events of this chapter apparently are those events surrounding the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib about 701 B.C. According to II Kings 18:14-16 Sennacherib had advanced against Jerusalem and demanded a heavy tribute, which somehow Hezekiah was able to amass and so buy off the attacker. For a while Sennacherib respected the terms of the tribute and withdrew his forces from Jerusalem. This first part of chapter 22 reflects the frivolity permeating the whole city after Sennacherib's withdrawal.

The "valley of vision" refers to Jerusalem and Judah as the repository of God's revealed word which came so often in olden times by vision. The prophet rebukes the people's irreverence and frivolity when they should have been solemnly and faithfully seeking God's direction by asking, "What is the matter with you?" The people were running up to the tops of houses, gawking, shouting gleefully to one another, and all over the city there was a frivolous holiday spirit. In spite of all the warnings of the prophets they could not seem to grasp the impact of what had just happened. They did not understand the Assyrian siege as a warning from God that they should repent. They were shouting and reveling as if their armies had been victorious in battle. But their dead had not died honorably on the field of battle—they had died of starvation and pestilence which always follows a siege. In fact, their rulers had deserted their posts of leadership and tried to escape. They were captured and carried off by the

enemy. Evidently someone had tried to console Isaiah and gain-say his interpretation that the Assyrian siege meant repent. Someone suggested Isaiah join in the shouting and frivolity. Isaiah's reply was, "Do not look toward consoling me. This is the time for weeping bitterly. I cannot take comfort in the impenitent self-destruction of my people."

v. 5-7 **FOREBODING**: The prophet proceeds to retell the foreboding events of the siege. He interprets it as a day of discomfiture, of affliction, of confusion. Its source, he says, is the Lord, Jehovah of hosts. Joel interpreted the locust plague as "a Day of Jehovah." Joel even called the locusts God's army. God works through natural phenomena to call the world to repentance (Rom. 1:18-20; Acts 14:15-18); He warns the world to repent by allowing reprobate sinners to "receive in their own persons the due penalty of their errors" (Rom. 1:26-32); and He calls the world to repentance and salvation through the preaching of the Word (Acts 17:22-31). In Jerusalem's case God was using at least two of these methods of calling. The Assyrians had broken down parts of Jerusalem's walls. Their shouts of encouragement to one another in attacking Jerusalem were reverberating through the hills and valleys surrounding the city. The Assyrians brought with them expert soldiers by the wagon ("chariot") load from as far away as Elam (Persia) and Kir (Armenia). This massive army inundated the peaceful valleys around Jerusalem. Those choice valleys where all their fertile farm lands lay were bivouac areas for teeming masses of men, chariots and horses. The Assyrians had the city so well trapped in a siege they could safely occupy the city gate areas.

v. 8-11 **FOLLY**: Apparently the veil of frivolity was ripped from the faces of the people momentarily as they contemplated what the Assyrians had done. Somehow they began to take a serious look at things. They could see the situation called for help. But where did they go for help? They went to their own devices. They went to the armory of the forest. This armory had been built by Solomon with cedars from Lebanon (I Kings 7:2-6). Among other things it contained the golden shields which Solomon had made (I Kings 10:17), and was one of the objects

later shown by Hezekiah to the envoys of Merodach-baladan (Isa. 39:2). They were proud of their own abilities to prepare for war. They built water reservoirs to store up water for the siege. They calculated how many house-bricks it would take to repair the breaches in the walls and tore down the houses and repaired the wall. Leupold says, "But in their mad haste to get everything done in quick order, no time was left for looking to Him who controls situations like this and alone can extricate those that have become entangled in their complications. The prophet's way of stating the case indicates how strongly he believes in the total control of the Almighty in every human situation, and that faith demands that his help be earnestly sought." Jeremiah would say, ". . . my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

V. 12-14 FATALISM: A second look at their situation caused them some soberness. But the tragedy is it did not lead them to repent—they responded with a foolhardy fatalism. Their reaction was to engage in hedonism. God was calling to repentance. Their reaction was reasonable enough. If one does not believe in One God, The God of Truth and Justice, a sort of epicurean fatalism is all that is left. "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." When men deny the historical realities of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ today the only alternative is epicurean fatalism. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:30-34) that he would not be "playing Christian martyr" if there was no resurrection. To the contrary, the only sensible alternative to life hereafter is hedonism in the here and now! Liberal theologians who deny the authenticity and credibility of the New Testament and who refuse to accept the deity of Jesus Christ and the historicity of His resurrection, are schizophrenic ostriches with their heads in the sand. They are living in a world of make-believe when they "pretend" there is something to Christianity. Those who deny the existence of God, the authority of His Word, and still try to "play at the game of Churchianity" are obscurantists par excellence! The mixture of liberal theology and existential

philosophy has produced a generation of hedonistic fatalists. Their shibboleth is "Meaning is found only in meaninglessness." This brand of fatalism has been preached by Sarte, Camus, Hemingway, Scheslinger and a host of others. It has fathered a generation of "do-your-own-thing" hedonists, since, "tomorrow we die" and "life is never more absurd than at the grave." So, you see, modern existential-fatalism is not new! There is nothing new under the sun! Unbelief will produce the same moral anarchy in one generation after another.

QUIZ

1. What historical events do these verses probably refer to?
2. What was the first attitude of the people of Jerusalem?
3. How did Isaiah interpret these events?
4. Where did the people turn for solutions to their circumstances?
5. Why were the people so fatalistic?

b. INSOLENT AGENT

TEXT: 22:15-25

- 15 Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, and say,
- 16 What doest thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre? hewing him out a sepulchre on high, graving a habitation for himself in the rock!
- 17 Behold, Jehovah, like a strong man, will hurl thee away violently; yea, he will wrap thee up closely.
- 18 He will surely wind thee round and round, and toss thee like a ball into a large country; there shalt thou die, and there shall be the chariots of thy glory, thou shame of thy lord's house.
- 19 And I will thrust thee from thine office; and from thy station

shalt thou be pulled down.

- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:
- 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.
- 22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
- 23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house.
- 24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the cups even to all the flagons.
- 25 In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall the nail that was fastened in a sure place give way; and it shall be hewn down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for Jehovah hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Who is Shebna?
- b. Whose "house" was he over?
- c. Who is Eliakim?

PARAPHRASE

The Lord, Jehovah of Heaven's armies, said to me, Go, find this insolent Shebna, the king's chief administrator, and say to him, Who do you think you are and what do you think you are doing by building this magnificent monument to remembrance? Who told you to perpetuate your memory in such a high-handed fashion as to have a burying place hewn out for yourself up among the kings? Look! Jehovah, the Strong One, will hurl you

away with great force. Indeed, Jehovah will wind you up like threads are wound into a ball and throw you into a country of vast proportions. In this far off place you will die, you who have brought shame to your king, and all the power you gloried in shall become shame. Jehovah says, I will thrust you out of your office and pull you down from your high position. And then I will call My servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah, to replace you. I will give him your robes and I will turn over to him your office. He will humble himself before Me and be a real benefactor to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. I will give him authority in the king's government. Whatever he says will be done. He shall be second to none save the king himself. He will become a strong and steady support upon which much of the responsibility of government shall hang. There will be this danger for him. Many, especially all his family and relatives, will seek patronage, position and power from him. If he uses his office for nepotism or other forms of partiality, his office will crash down upon his head to the ruin of all those that sought to attach themselves to him, as well as to his own ruin. Jehovah has spoken!

COMMENTS

v. 15-19 REJECTION: This "treasurer" or "steward," which is a more literal rendering of the original language, one Shebna by name, was an outstanding example of the irreverence and insolence of many of the people. "Over the house" is an indication that Shebna was probably the king's "chief of staff." He was the chief administrator of the king's governmental policies. Edward J. Young points out that this office was never legislated by God when the kingdom was begun under Saul and David. Solomon seems to have had a "chief steward" (I Kings 4:6). Why Isaiah was commanded to denounce him, publicly, by name, is not clear at first. Some commentators suggest he may have been leading the "look-to-Egypt" party which was such an abomination to Jehovah. Others suggest that he may have been an Aramaean (as the name Shebna hints) usurper who had

worked his way into the government of the covenant people. However, God's main indictment appears to be that Shebna is exploiting his position and office for his own selfish aggrandizement and not to serve and "be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" as Eliakim will (v. 21). Shebna is oblivious to the needs of the people. He thinks his position is to be served rather than to serve. So he is having an expensive and prestigious burial vault hewn out for himself. He is even having it hewn out "on high" which probably means up where the kings are buried. This would be an especial irreverence toward God. The whole tenor of this chapter is to point out the almost complete disregard both the people and the leaders of Judah have for directing the kingdom in Jehovah's paths. Judah is almost totally immersed in its own plans and pleasures. Shebna is concerned only with perpetuating his own name and glorifying himself. These people are very little different from all those pagan nations which have come under the judgment of God in this section of Isaiah (chapters 13-23).

By way of later history we find Shebna appearing again (Isa. 36:3; 37:2). He is still holding office in the government but not nearly so high as "over the house." Leupold points out that it is possible Shebna took this rebuke of Isaiah's to heart, was demoted, but still was found worthy to occupy a lower post of honor at court. Whatever the case, God brought him down.

v. 20-25 REPLACEMENT: We also learn from Isaiah 36:3, 22, etc. that Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, had become "over the household." Eliakim was chosen by God to replace Shebna as "chief of staff" to the king. Eliakim was God's "servant" and a "father" to the people. He evidently fulfilled in a humble manner what the office was intended to fulfill. He was given an authority so graphically described as could be second only to that of the king himself. He was apparently a good administrator and a "peg" upon which much weight and responsibility of government was fastened. He was evidently trustworthy and stable.

Verses 24 and 25 appear to indicate that within a very short time Eliakim, the "peg" was hewn down. It is not necessary, however, to read these verses as having already happened. They

may be read as conditional clauses (a construction that the Hebrew syntax very definitely allows) and then they become warnings for Eliakim concerning a danger that he will soon face in his new office. His relatives and friends shall swarm in upon him seeking special favors and patronage. *If* he yields to nepotism and partiality, his office will crash down upon his head to the ruin of all those that sought to attach themselves to him, as well as to his own ruin.

So, in spite of the fact that most of the people of Jerusalem and Judah were irreverently and insolently plunging headstrong in their own directions and violently using the kingdom of God to serve their own selfish ends, there were a few, like Eliakim, Hezekiah, Isaiah, and others, who hearkened to the call of Jehovah. While the majority demanded to be served, a faithful remnant surrendered to serve. None of them were perfect and sinless (e.g. Hezekiah, Isaiah). They were faithful. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner like Hezekiah and Isaiah who repents, than over ninety-nine who need no repentance.

QUIZ

1. How important a figure was Shebna?
2. Why was Isaiah told to pronounce God's judgment on Shebna?
3. Where do we learn of Shebna other than this passage?
4. Why was Eliakim called to replace Shebna?
5. How great would Eliakim's power and influence be?
6. What is the prophet's warning to Eliakim?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

3. TYRE

a. SPLENDOR

TEXT: 23:1-7

- 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 Kittim it is revealed to them.
- 2 Be still, ye inhabitants of the coast, thou whom the merchants of Sidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.
- 3 And on great waters the seed of the Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue; and she was the mart of nations.
- 4 Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea hath spoken, the stronghold of the sea, saying, I have not travailed, nor brought forth, neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up virgins.
- 5 When the report cometh to Egypt, they shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.
- 6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; wail, ye inhabitants of the coast.
- 7 Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days, whose feet carried her afar off to sojourn?

QUERIES

- a. Why is Jehovah about to bring about Tyre's downfall?
- b. What is the "seed of Shihor"?
- c. Why was Egypt pained at the report of Tyre?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's message to Tyre: Weep, O merchant-ships of Tyre, returning home from distant lands! Weep for your harbor,

for it is gone! The news that you heard in the islands of the Aegean are all true! A shocked silence is everywhere! Stillness reigns where once your bustling port was full of ships from Phoenicia, bringing merchandise from far across the great sea, grain from the fertile Nile delta. You were the market place of the world. So, hang your head in shame, Phoenicia, for formerly Phoenician traders and merchants were children of the great sea and were strewn all over the Mediterranean, but now they are so few, the sea claims she never had any such children. There will be great distress in Egypt, also, when the news of Tyre's downfall reaches there. You may flee as refugees to one of your colonies such as Tarshish, but you will find the whole world of coastal trade wailing Tyre's demise. Is this silent ruin all that is left of your once proud, wealthy and historical city? Think of all the great colonies your merchantmen have founded!

COMMENT

V. 1-3 **WORLD'S MARKET PLACE:** Tyre was a city on the coast of Phoenicia. The oldest part of the city lay on the mainland; but the main seaport part of the city was located on two rocky islands about a mile off the coast of Phoenicia. Herodotus claims that Tyre was founded about 2740 B.C. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets contain an appeal from the ruler of Tyre, dated 1430 B.C. (just after the Exodus), imploring help from Amenhotep IV against the invading Habiri (Hebrews). Joshua assigned Tyre to the tribe of Asher, but in all probability the city was not occupied by the Hebrews (Cf. Josh. 19:29). II Samuel 24:7 shows that the border of the Israelite kingdom extended to Tyre; and David's palace was constructed with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre (II Sam. 5:11; I Chron. 14:1). Hiram also furnished Solomon with cedar and cypress wood in exchange for wheat and oil (I Ki. 5:1; I Chron. 22:4; II Chron. 2:3-18). Later, Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, and priest of Astarte, married Ahab, king of Israel (I Ki. 16:31), and sought to introduce the Baal worship into Israel. Tyre grew in wealth and power through international

trade. It exploited the cedar forests of the Lebanon mountain range. Tyrian purple, the product of the murex shellfish, was also a famous export. The cedar forests provided material for the famous Phoenician galleys, and, accepting the challenge of the sea became her way to wealth and fame. She exported her pagan religion along with trading her commerce. In 876 B.C. Tyre began to pay tribute to the king of Assyria and suffered some plundering in the battle of Qarqar, 853 B.C. But she still was able to assert independence. Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser both laid siege to the city. For five years she was under siege, but in 722 B.C. she made a treaty with the Assyrians. Finally her king was deposed by Sennacherib and she began to lose more of her independence. We shall continue with the history of Tyre's demise at the end of this chapter.

Whether Isaiah's prophecy of Tyre's downfall is intended to be in the distant future or whether it will be some immediate downfall is not easy to determine. Historically speaking her complete downfall did not come until Alexander the Great was able to conquer it in about 332 B.C. Her glory began to fade, however, with the Assyrian invasion of Phoenicia and Syria and northern Palestine in 722 B.C. We assume then that Isaiah is predicting Tyre's demise not intending that it is to happen immediately but gradually.

The message of the prophet is that Tyre's merchantmen and seamen who travel as far away as Tarshish (probably on the eastern coast of Spain) should look forward to a time of mourning over her. The time is coming when her famous ports will not be available for them to enter and sell their cargoes. Tyre's final downfall is going to be international news! Men on her ships will be hearing it, when it happens, as far away as Kittim (islands in the Aegean sea). An old, established, international institution which no one thought would ever disappear, will fail. It will cause consternation throughout the world. There will be a shocked silence. People will be struck dumb momentarily by the news. Her fame was world-wide. She traded in an immense grain supply from the ancient granary of the world, Egypt. The grain "of Shihor" (Shihor literally means "black") came from

the fertile, black-dirt, fields of the Nile delta. Tyre was the "middleman" between the Egyptian grain resources and the nations much in need of grain. Tyre was actually the market place of the world.

V. 4-7 WASTED MEMORY: Sidon is here used metaphorically to represent the whole region of Phoenician coast to be affected by the coming destruction. The Phoenicians were "sons of the sea." They were great seafaring men. The sea is metaphorically their father. But after the future desolation of Phoenicia, the sea will have no more "sons" from that area. The great fleet of ships and navy of mariners which was once Tyre's pride and joy will only be a matter for dejected shame. Tyre's death will affect the whole world! Egypt, who depended on Tyre for trading, will suffer distress at the news. The citizens of Tyre are told that should they even flee to Tarshish they would find much mourning among the coastal cities of the Mediterranean at the downfall of Tyre. The whole Mediterranean and Aegean coast felt the blow. So the question comes—Is this the great wealthy and proud Tyre? Tyre had exerted profound influence on the world. The great city of Carthage, on the coast of north Africa, was one of Tyre's colonies. The feet of her merchantmen traversed the whole known world. Now, what is she to be? Only a wasted memory!

Why was this judgment to come upon Tyre? Isaiah does not give us much light on the reason for judgment here. If we turn to Ezekiel chapters 26, 27, and 28, however, we find statements of the causes for her judgment. Tyre evidently took advantage of some calamity that befell Jerusalem and exploited Jerusalem's affliction for her own advance (Ezek. 26:1-2). She was also proud and self-exalting (Ezek. 27:1-3). Tyre's king uttered blasphemies against Jehovah (Ezek. 28:1-10).

QUIZ

1. About how old was the city of Tyre?
2. What relationships had Tyre with Israel in the past?

3. What was Tyre's great influence on the world of that day?
4. Give three reasons for God's judgment upon Tyre.

b. SHAKEN

TEXT: 23:8-14

- 8 Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth?
- 9 Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.
- 10 Pass through thy land as the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no restraint any more.
- 11 He hath stretched out his hand over the sea, he hath shaken the kingdoms: Jehovah hath given commandment concerning Canaan, to destroy the strongholds thereof.
- 12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon: arise, pass over to Kittim; even there shalt thou have no rest.
- 13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not; the Assyrians founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness; they set up their towers; they overthrew the palaces thereof; they made it a ruin.
- 14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for your stronghold is laid waste.

QUERIES

- a. Why the question about the author of Tyre's judgment?
- b. Who were the people who "were not" (v. 13)?
- c. Where is Kittim?

PARAPHRASE

Who has the power to plan such a thing against Tyre, the founder of so many colonies and crowner of so many kings, whose merchants were equal in influence to princes, and whose traders were honored throughout the world. The Lord God Jehovah has planned it to desecrate the most magnificent pride and show His contempt for all the haughty greatness of proud men everywhere. Now, O people of Tarshish, you may flow over the world and trade as you like for there is no longer a restraining force in Tyre. The Lord God Jehovah stretches out His hand over the seas; He shakes the kingdoms of the earth; He is not a provincial God—He is God of all creation and judge of all men. Therefore, He has spoken out against Phoenicia and her strongholds will be destroyed. Furthermore, He says, You will never again rejoice, O Tyre, you raped virgin, daughter of Sidon. Even if you flee to Cyprus you will find no rest. It will be the Babylonians, not the Assyrians, who will make the territory of Tyre a habitation for wild beasts! They will besiege it, tear down its palaces and make it a heap of ruins. Wail, you ships that take trade to Tarshish, your home port is destroyed!

COMMENTS

V. 8-11 **AUTHOR OF JUDGMENT:** How shall the great fall of Tyre be explained? It will be of such magnitude and so far-reaching in its consequences something beyond what the eye can see must be the cause. Tyre, market place of the world, hub of the world's commerce, builder of colonies, destined to be reduced to almost nothing? Impossible as it appears to the human eye! Tyre became a "bestower of crowns," through founding of other city-colonies such as Carthage, etc. She also built up quite an "aristocracy of merchants" known throughout the world as princes-of-all-traders. It would appear nothing human or natural could so completely erase Tyre's hold on the commerce of the world. The answer comes from the prophet who asked the

question. The answer is—"Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it!" The Lord God of Israel is the God of all nations. He is King of all kings. He "purposed" it. Tyre's destiny is controlled not by chance, fortune, accident, coincidence, but by the will of the Omnipotent Creator of all mankind. It is one of the main emphases of the prophets that Almighty God enthrones and dethrones earth's rulers in all ages. Jehovah, in His own good time and according to His eternal wisdom and purposes, permits nations and races to flourish and diminish. He governs the ups and downs of potentates and populations according to certain standards of justice, righteousness, morality and truth. In other words, His governing principles are not capricious or frivolous. Any ruler or people or nation who will make their main concern human dignity, freedom and justice will find God's approval. But of course, human dignity, freedom and justice cannot be built on any foundation other than truth—truth about God, His identity, His nature, His revealed will. Any nation accepting falsehood about God as a national policy will find all other national structures crumbling into ruin upon such a ruinous foundation. This was the cause for the judgment of God upon one pagan ruler and nation after another. This was the cause for the judgment of God upon Israel and Judah. They did not govern themselves according to divine principles because they denied the Divine Author of those principles. Jehovah brought Tyre down for her pride. When the successful grow proud, they grow contemptuous and corrupt. Inevitably the exploitation of human beings by one another follows pride. So God has chosen to govern the world by bringing the proud down—by humiliating those who exalt themselves.

Tyre's colonies (such as Tarshish) would be hampered in their own freedom by the mother city as long as she maintained such a "strangle-hold" on their economy. But when Tyre is defeated, Tarshish will be free of her restraint and will be able to expand its trade. Tarshish will be able to flow through her own territory as the Nile inundates the valley of Egypt. Isaiah emphasizes again in verse 11 that this great, world-shaking upheaval was from the "hand of the Lord." God creates both weal and woe

(Isa. 45:7). Evil does not befall a city unless the Lord does it (Amos 3:6).

v. 12-14 **AGENT OF JUDGE:** Jehovah is the author of Tyre's destiny but He usually employs human agents in carrying out both His deliverances and His judgments. When Tyre's great devastation comes it will be as shocking and traumatic as a virgin ravished (raped). Even if she flees to Cyprus (Kittim) she will find no relief from the pain of her experience. But who shall ravish her? It will be the Chaldeans! The Babylonians are predicted to be Tyre's assailants. When Isaiah first made the prediction of Tyre's downfall the Assyrians would seem to be the most likely agents of God's judgment but the prophet makes it clear the Chaldeans are to execute His punishment. So it was in 585 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, emperor of Babylon, laid siege to Tyre. The siege lasted 13 years and in 572 the city was overrun. From that time her stranglehold on the world's trade was broken. However, her citizens escaped Nebuchadnezzar and fled to the islands a mile or more off shore and formed a new colony. The Babylonians, without much of a navy, could not conquer that stronghold. So Tyre remained at least a fortress protecting any advance of conquering armies down through Phoenicia enroute to Egypt and other points south. Alexander the Great, on his way to conquer the world in 322 B.C., conquered Tyre once and for all. His conquest fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28, and Zechariah 9, in minute detail, as follows:

1. He used the captured fleets of other cities and attacked the new island city by taking the ruins of the old city "Its timbers and stones" and casting them into the sea and building a causeway out to the island.
2. Other neighboring cities were so frightened they opened their gates to Alexander without opposition.
3. The old city site was scraped flat "like the top of a rock" and today you may go there and find fishermen spreading their nets on its ruins.
4. There are great artesian wells there that would supply a city with water (10 million gallons daily) yet the city has never been rebuilt on the old location. Sidon, a city just

a few miles from Tyre, has been destroyed and rebuilt many times over!

There remains a small city of no international significance (not on the original site) on the island. Travelers today may walk over the very causeway Alexander's armies constructed to give them access to the once proud and internationally powerful Tyre. God said it, and it was so! The mills of God's justice may grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine! God oft-times uses human agents to execute His judgments (Cf. Isa. 10:5-19; Isa. 44:23—45:7; Jer. 27:1-11).

The English translation of our text makes it appear almost as if Isaiah were looking back on an event that has already transpired. However, the use of the past tense in the Hebrew language often is what we call the "prophetic perfect"—a past that is the equivalent of a very assured future. Tyre's destiny is certain—so certain it may be looked upon as having already happened. So, though the past tense is used, this whole passage should be regarded as a prophecy which tells of the future overthrow of Tyre.

QUIZ

1. Who is the author of Tyre's destiny?
2. What are God's principles of governing rulers and peoples?
3. What means does God usually employ in executing His principles of human government?
4. Tell some of the subsequent history of Tyre.
5. What do we mean by the "prophetic perfect"?

c. SUBMISSION

TEXT: 23:15-18

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 it shall be unto Tyre as in the song of the harlot.

- 16 Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.
- 17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Jehovah will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.
- 18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

QUERIES

- a. How are the "days of one king" related to Tyre's 70 years?
- b. Why does Tyre return to harlotry after 70 years?
- c. When does Tyre's merchandise become holiness to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

And it will come to pass in the day of Tyre's downfall, she shall lie waste till her devastation has achieved its purpose in the divine disposition of things. This state of affairs will remain constant with her, like the affairs of one king's tenure, for a long period of years symbolized by the number seventy. After this "seventy" years of forgottenness she will resume her former life just like the story told in the lyrics of the Song of The Harlot. So, Tyre, you have been forgotten. Take up the harp and play sweet melodies, sing many songs, perhaps you may bring yourself to the attention of your former customers and be remembered. Yes, after your long time of forgottenness the Lord will allow you to be restored but you will be no different than you were before; you will return again to prostituting yourself with the

nations of the world for money. Yet, the time will come when she shall make contributions to the kingdom of Jehovah. Tyre's greatest treasures will not be hoarded silver and gold but will be the food and clothing of righteousness for those who dwell in the presence of Jehovah.

COMMENTS

v. 15-16 **SUBJECTION:** Alexander the Great took the city killing 8000 and selling 30,000 into slavery. He imported many foreigners into the ruined city to colonize it and left it after spending seven months to subdue it. After Alexander's death, Tyre passed into the hands of Ptolemy Lagi, and when Antigonus, in 314 B.C. took Phoenicia from him, Tyre resisted and he had to blockade it 15 months before it would yield, showing how quickly it had recovered from its previous disaster.

The period "seventy years" might refer to the 70 years of the Babylonian empire when Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Tyre. However, we think the number "seventy" is being used to denote a period of time whose completeness is determined by the divine purposes and known only to the divine Person. Seven is the Divine, Perfect, Complete number of the Bible. Ten signifies also a measure of completion. Seven multiplied by ten then means a period during which God will have achieved His purpose in a given direction. Tyre will be "forgotten" or lie devastated until God is ready for her to be remembered again. It is too difficult to pinpoint an exact 70 years.

"Like the days of one king" probably refers to the idea that while one king reigns there usually is no major changes in policy, things remain static. Tyre's God-destined period of forgottenness will remain static for as long as God wishes it to be so.

The "Song of the Harlot" suggests a song whose lyrics tell the story of how a forgotten, derelict, old harlot might seek to rehabilitate herself in her old occupation. She might take up a harp and start strumming an accompaniment to her little

piece. She might wander up and down the streets advertising her wares. Perhaps she could bring herself to the attention of her former customers.

V. 17-18 SALVATION: Tyre became a part of the Seleucid kingdom when Antiochus III drove the Ptolemies from Syria (198 B.C.), and the Seleucid kings regarded the city of importance and gave it the right of asylum, and it was allowed the status of a free city by the Romans, Antony recognizing the magistrates and council of Tyre as allies. When the Parthians attacked and took Syria, in 40 B.C., Tyre would not submit and was left untouched, being too strong for them. Tyre is mentioned in the New Testament several times; Christ visited its territory (Matt. 15:21; Mk. 7:24), and people from there came to hear Him (Lk. 6:17). Herod Agrippa I had trouble with Tyre, and a deputation came to visit him at Caesarea (Acts 12:20). Paul visited Tyre on his journey from Asia to Jerusalem (Acts 21:3-7). Christianity was accepted by the people of Tyre, so that the 2nd century A.D. saw a bishopric established there, and in the 4th century a council was held there to consider charges against Athanasius, by the party of Arius; he was condemned, a decision which brought the Tyrian church into disrepute. Tyre was already obnoxious to Christians because the anti-Christian philosopher Porphyry was from there. Tyre continued to be a commercial center, and Jerome says that it was the noblest and most beautiful of the Phoenician cities and an emporium of commerce for almost the whole world. It was of considerable importance during the Crusades and continued so until toward the end of the 13th century, when its trade declined, and it is now a small city of approximately 5000.

Verses 17 and 18 seem to indicate a two-fold result of God's permitting Tyre to be restored after a period of forgottenness. First, a part of her will return to her former ways of prostituting herself before the world for commercial purposes. Second, a part of her will become a treasure, not selfishly hoarded, but put to use as holiness (dedicated) to Jehovah. This second has its beginning, no doubt, in Ezra 3:7 when she supplies goods to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple after the captivities.

But we believe the ultimate fulfillment is in those people converted by the gospel and become precious jewels, the wealth, of the kingdom of God. The conversion of Gentiles and their incorporation in the kingdom of Jehovah through the preaching of the gospel is symbolized and prefigured in just this manner in Isa. 60:1-14; 61:1-9; Hag. 2:7-9, etc. In spite of what should happen to Tyre's physical glory or her commercial prowess, her greatest remembrance for all eternity will be those precious saints (like the Syro-Phoenician woman who believed Jesus, Matt. 15; Mk. 7) who are the jewels of the kingdom of God, and who have supplied "food" and "clothing" to many hungry and naked sinners through the ages.

QUIZ

1. What do the 70 years of Tyre's history most likely refer to?
2. What is the Song of the Harlot?
3. What two-fold consequence comes as a result of God's "visiting" Tyre again?
4. How does Tyre's merchandise become "holiness" to Jehovah?
5. How does it "feed" and "clothe" those who dwell before Jehovah?

EXAMINATION

1	2
Medes	Spain
Day Star	Hezekiah
Philistia	Jotham
Nebo	Phoenicia
Damascus	Nathan
Hivites	Elam
Ethiopia	Armenia
Nile	coast of Palestine
Pharaoh	king of Babylon

EXAMINATION

Memphis	mountain of Moab
Negeb	Canaanite
Seir	capital of Syria
Shebna	land of whirling wings
Kir	river
Tyre	mountain of Edom
Tarshish	desert region
	steward over the king's palace
	king of Egypt
	city in Egypt
	sea

MEMORIZATION

How are thou fallen from _____, O day-_____, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the _____, that didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into _____, I will exalt my _____ above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the _____; I will make myself like the _____ _____. Isa. 14:12-15.

In that day shall _____ be the third with _____ and with _____, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them saying, Blessed be _____, my people, and _____ the work of my hands, and _____ mine inheritance. Isa. 19:24-25

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how the Lord would eventually make Himself known among the Egyptians. Isa. 19:19-22
2. Explain how Israel would be able to take up a taunt against Babylon and cry "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star," etc. Isa. 14:1-32
3. Explain why Tyre's downfall was so significant for the world

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of that day. Isa. 23

APPLICATION

1. How may we apply the predicted inter-relationships between Israel, Egypt and Assyria, in Isaiah chapter 19:16-25?
2. What application may be made for the Christian today of the account of Sargon's exploits in Isaiah, chapter 20?
3. What application may be made for Christians of Isaiah's denouncement of Shebna in Isaiah 22:15-25?

SPECIAL STUDY

PROPHECY OF THE GRACE THAT WAS TO BE . . .

A Series of Four Outline-studies on Christ, the Church
and Salvation From the Old Testament Prophets

by Paul T. Butler

O.T. PROPHECY — A PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

I. O.T. PROPHETS — A UNIQUE PART OF GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO MAN

- A. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets . . ." Heb. 1:1
1. Actually, a prophet was anyone who spoke God's message to God's people.
 2. Moses was a prophet.
 3. In the Hebrew way of classifying their Bible, the books

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from Joshua to Kings are called "The Former Prophets." So prophecy is more than prediction . . . it might even be history.

4. But a prophet was primarily a preacher.
- B. The N.T. emphasizes the significance of O.T. prophecy
 1. Jesus said that He came to *fulfill*—not abolish the law and the prophets Matt. 5:17.
 2. He told two on the way to Emmaus that if they did not recognize in Him all the fulfillment of the O.T. prophets they "were foolish men and slow of heart to believe." Lk. 24:25 ;
- C. N.T. writers (apostles) make frequent use of O.T. prophecy in their messages.
 1. Not just direct quotations, either, but just as significant is the way in which the very language (figurative) and thought of the prophets are appropriated and made a part of the Christian message.
 2. Even more significant is the basic premise of the N.T. that there is a *total fulfillment* of the O.T. in the N.T. (the books of Galatians and Hebrews are prime examples).

II. O.T. PROPHETS — PART OF GOD'S REVELATION WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND

- A. "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Rom. 15:4
"Now these things (history of Israel's sins and God's judgments) happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come." I Cor. 10:11
- B. Prophecy is so grossly perverted by false teachers.
 1. All too often prophecy is so perverted as to make it completely misunderstood—the Word of God is actually made void by misuse of O.T. prophecy

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2. There are preachers and students of prophecy who seem to delight in playing on the fears and anxieties of people.
 - a. They like to prophesy war but say little of the things that make for peace.
 - b. They are much concerned to identify men and nations and focus attention on "antichrists" rather than on Christ.
 - c. They are more concerned to prove what prophecy says about Russia or about Israel, than to proclaim what it says about the kingdom of God.
3. SUCH EMPHASIS IS NOT ONLY WRONG, IT IS A PERVERSION BECAUSE ATTENTION IS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON TRANSIENT EVENTS INSTEAD OF ON THE REDEMPTIVE ACTIVITY OF THE LIVING GOD.

III. OUTLINE OF O.T. PROPHETIC COMMUNICATION

- A. Aim
- B. Approach
- C. Application

DISCUSSION

I. AIM (Purpose)

A. Reveal

1. The "prophetic word is a lamp shining in dark place" to which Christians are to give heed (II Pet. 1:19); Christ expected Jews of His day to understand O.T. prophecy as being a revelation of His Person and His Work and to believe it (Lk. 24, etc.) BUT THE WAY IT IS TREATED BY MOST PREACHERS TODAY IT IS USED MORE TO OBSCURE AND HIDE THAN IT IS TO REVEAL.
2. The nature and person of God is revealed in O.T. prophecy.

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- a. His wisdom; His holiness; His love; His justice;
 - b. His power to know men and nations as they are and as they will be
 - c. His power to overcome and use the evil actions of world empires to serve His purposes of bringing about redemption
 - d. His goodness and love to deliver man when men trust Him and live by faith in Him
 - e. His absolute faithfulness and trustworthiness to keep His word; to judge sin and rebellion; to reward faith and good works.
3. The potential of man is revealed
- a. His potential to be what God intended—holy, true, good, helpful, as exemplified by men like Hosea, Daniel, Jeremiah, etc.
 - b. His potential to be what the devil can make him; perverse, insensible, cruel, unjust, inhuman, as exemplified by the nations of Israel, Judah, Babylon, Persia, etc.
4. The plan and program of God for the redemption of man is revealed
- a. The coming of a King-Shepherd to rule in justice, righteousness, victory, wisdom, understanding, one like David (Isa., Jer., Ezek.)
 - b. The establishment of an everlasting kingdom in which everyone will be secure, peace-filled, blessed with abundance of the good things of God; this kingdom will be universal; it will conquer people of all nations (Isa., Dan., Joel.)
 - c. Restored fellowship on a personal basis with God (Hosea, Isa., Ezek., Zech.). A new covenant relation with God.
 - d. A reborn people in this kingdom; with a new name; a new language; a new heart and spirit; a new priesthood; a new temple; (Isa., Jer., Ezek., Zech.)
 - e. During the time of the prophets God is working to "finish the transgression, put an end to sin, atone

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for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal both vision and prophet, and anoint a most holy place." Dan. 9:24—GOD SUMMARIZED HIS WHOLE WORK OF REDEMPTION AS HE WAS GOING TO FINISH IT FROM THE TIME OF DANIEL ON TO CHRIST. . . . THIS IS WHAT ALL THE PROPHETS PREACHED AND WORKED FOR . . . TO REVEAL THIS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THEIR DAY.

B. Relate

1. The aim of God was to bring sinful man and the holy God into a confrontation and so He spoke through the prophets.
2. Language makes the communication of minds possible. By language it is possible for one person to superimpose his will and personality upon another.
3. Man cannot relate to God unless man knows first that God exists and what kind of God He is (Heb. 11:6).
4. God must show man and tell man . . . CONFRONTATION INVOLVES THE MEETING OF MINDS IN TRUTH! LANGUAGE CONVEYS TRUTH (or falsehood).
5. By means of verbal communication, one mind can make contact with the mental world of another mind and thus a relationship.
6. The aim is to get the covenant people to relate to God in a person to Person relationship. This could only be done when the truth concerning God's Person was communicated. As long as they continued to conceive of Him (sin darkened minds) as less than personal (like the heathen gods about them), there could be no personal encounter.
7. Without communication there is an impenetrable boundary to personal encounter. Human language forms the limitation of man's ability to send or receive communication. In fact, language is necessary even for the mind of man to communicate with himself. Man's finite experience is the totality of his experience. He knows not how to communicate except by using words

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to symbolize his own experiences.

8. God spoke to man in man's experiences with man's language.
9. It is our privilege and responsibility to study, assimilate and appropriate the personality of our Creator as He communicates through the prophetic message.

C. Redeem

1. God is not just talking to man to be talking. He is not just talking to man for some selfish, egotistical reasons; or because He is lonesome.
2. He is telling men of His nature and His plans for them in order to change them.
3. He wants to change their minds and actions toward Him and thus to change their minds and actions toward others and toward themselves.
4. He knows that men, created moral beings, inevitably take on the character of that which they love (Hosea 9:10; Psa. 115:3-8).
5. God wants to bring men into a personal relationship to Himself so intimate that only the marriage relationship on earth can provide a meager human representation. . . . God wants to be provider, lover, protector.
6. He wants to deliver man from his enemy who enslaves man with false information and false actions; to deliver man from the tyranny and misery of hate, envy, pride.
7. He wants to make man over into a person of reason, love, truth, selflessness, happiness, peace and faithfulness, FIT TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY OF OTHER SUCH PERSONS.
8. This is the ultimate aim of God's prophetic communication.

II. Approach

A. Educate

1. Sermons
 - a. The primary way in which the prophets communi-

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cated to the people was in preaching.

- b. This often took the form of recounting the history of the nation and the miraculous deeds of God in dealing with the people in matters of judgments and deliverances (sermonizing on the various times their ancestors were punished for sin and various times they were delivered by God's overcoming their enemies).
- c. At other times their sermons expounded the law of Moses, reminding the people of its commandments and interpreting its spiritual meaning.
- d. At other times their sermons were composed of expositions of current events.
- e. Sermons were always intended to communicate by appealing to the minds, the intellect, the reasoning powers of the people.
- f. The prophets expected the people to, first of all, think, **BECAUSE REPENTANCE IS A MATTER OF CHANGING THE MIND BEFORE ANY OTHER EFFECT CAN BE PRODUCED!**

2. Signs

- a. The prophets were great educators. They knew that 80% of the learning process is done through the "eye-gate."
- b. They were convinced that symbolism and object-lessons were needed to communicate to a people whose minds had built-in resistance to any kind of spiritual message.
- c. More often than not their signs were primarily designed to confirm that their message was from God (Jeremiah and Hananiah, Jer. 28).

3. Stunts

- a. Jeremiah (waistcloth rotted; the potter and spoiled vessel; the broken vessel; the yoke; the purchased field)
- b. Ezekiel (scratching a picture upon a brick; lying on his sides 390 days and 40 days; shaving his head;)

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- c. One prophet was told to walk through the streets clad only in his underclothing.
- d. Many prophets put their sermons into song form.
- e. One prophet was forbidden to marry; one was forbidden to mourn when his wife died.
- f. **IT IS EASY TO SEE THAT WHEN WE READ THE PROPHETS, WE ARE NOT READING ORDINARY LITERATURE!**

B. Electrify

1. It takes more than mere relating of facts and ideas to communicate. Especially is this true with people so materialistically oriented as the Jews of the prophet's day.
2. Somehow these facts about who God is and what He does and the ideas of what He is going to do (about the Messianic kingdom) must be made to register on sin-calloused minds—the impression of God's nature must be imprinted there—the expectation of His program for the world must be etched on their souls.
3. They must be made to feel, to know, to think, to participate.
4. The prophets were actually called upon to be creative artists . . . they must use words in such a way as an artist uses paints or a musical genius uses tones and sounds. They must actually deliver their message in such a way as to involve their audiences intellectually, emotionally, willingly, spiritually . . . they must **ELECTRIFY!**
5. They must be poets, orators, dramatists, story-tellers; they must use every type of figure of speech available—vision, type, metaphor, parable, parallelism, hyperbole, personification, fable.
6. **IT WILL BE APPARENT TO ANYONE WHO STUDIES THE PROPHETS VERY LONG THAT MUCH OF WHAT THE PROPHETS SAID MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS SYMBOLIC TYPICAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE!**

C. Eventuate

1. Because God's plan for the redemption of man was to

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be fulfilled many centuries future to the time of the prophets, they had to speak of what God was GOING TO DO (through the Messiah and His kingdom) in terms the people of their day would understand!!

2. Much of the predictive element of the prophets is couched in figurative language; types, symbols, metaphors, etc.
3. Their mission was to call the covenant people back to renewed faith in the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promises God had made with their forefathers (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.).
4. THAT COVENANT WAS TO FIND ITS FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (we know this from the N.T., Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.). BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETS DAY MUST HAVE THESE GLORIOUS EVENTUALITIES COMMUNICATED IN ELECTRIFYING, SYMBOLIC TERMS THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND . . . THIS IS WHAT WE CALL "TIMES-COLORING." IT IS A METHOD WE USE EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES TO COMMUNICATE IN VIVID, ARRESTING WAYS!

III. Application

A. Relevancy

1. The basic issues of life are the same today as they were in the days of the prophets.
 - a. Where did I come from, why am I here, where am I going?
 - b. What is life all about, is life worth living, is Anyone in control of events, where is everything headed?
2. Men still trust in material strength and delight in wealth and luxury while they forget God. There is nothing particularly new about lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery.
3. Oppression and injustice are rampant. Men still tend to heed the politician or leader who presents the pleasant message and assures them that their deeds are satisfactory.

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4. Men prefer to make amends by ritual and lip service rather than self-denial and moral purity.
5. The prophets, properly interpreted, speak to these issues as though they were among us today . . . presenting their thoughts in unforgettable figures of speech.
6. With crime, injustice, immorality, international conflict on every hand . . . with gigantic powers populated by hundreds of millions of pagans threatening to destroy everything that resembles godliness . . . **THE PROPHETS DEFINITELY ARE RELEVANT TO ALL WHO WILL GIVE HEED!**

B. Realism

1. The electrifying, vivid, symbolism and typical figures used by the prophets gives them a **REALISM** that is especially needful in our day when there is so much that is **unreal**.
2. There is a tone and flavor of spirituality and reverence for that which is good and true and pure that is needed in our day.
3. The figures of speech, the associations of truth with the common experiences of man, give a needed realism to the message of God as the prophets proclaimed it.
4. The scope of history dealt with, the working of God in these great spans of history, the reactions of men to God's involvement in men's affairs . . . all give us a perspective that is desperately needed.
5. **THE PROPHETS HAD AN UNCANNY, PERCEPTIVE WAY OF RELATING THE UNEXPERIENCABLE TO THE EXPERIENCABLE . . . AND THIS IS THE VERY SUPREME NEED OF MAN (as witness the current popularity of occultism). The prophets received their information from the Supernatural God . . . this they proved by demonstrations of the miraculous.**

C. Renewal

1. The whole counsel of God for the renewal of man was proclaimed by the prophets.
2. A message and a demonstration of God the Savior;

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about redemption; about God's Messiah and Servant who would accomplish His work; about salvation and redemption originating in the grace of God; about man appropriating that salvation through faith, repentance, obedience to the revealed will of God. This was God's plan of salvation; it is God's plan of salvation. Covenant terms are made surer; covenant requirements for appropriating it are changed; but the plan is basically the same.

3. There has never been more than one Savior, and that is God. In the fullness of time, God manifested Himself in the flesh in Jesus Christ, but He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
4. There has never been more than one way of salvation, the way of faith in the person and promises of God and repentance toward the will of God.

CONCLUSION

I. Good News

- A. The prophets did not have the fullness of the gospel in the sense in which it was actualized in Christ.
- B. They predicted it, promised it and did so graphically.
- C. The prophets had all the particulars, but they just did not know what person it would be or when it would be . . . but God even revealed that to them. (I Pet. 1:10-12)
- D. The good news is this: "What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord . . ." (Acts 3:18-19)
- E. These days of the New Testament dispensation are the days that "all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterward" predicted. (Acts 3:24)

A PREDICTION OF THE CHRIST

II. All things are yours.

- A. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: “. . . All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's” I Cor. 3:21-22.
- B. All the glorious things promised by the prophets in such glorious, exciting, expectant terms, belong to Christians. Everything they said about Zion, the church (Heb. 12); about victory; about peace; about the presence of the Holy God; about security; about abundant prosperity (spiritual prosperity—which, after all, is the only lasting, satisfying prosperity) . . . ALL BELONGS TO THE CHRISTIAN.

III. Conditioned upon your acceptance

- A. How do we accept them?
- B. By believing . . .
- C. By repenting . . .
- D. By obeying the covenant terms . . .

O.T. PROPHECY — A PREDICTION OF THE CHRIST

“Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.” (Jer. 23:5-6)

INTRODUCTION

I. Give us a king.

- A. Thousands of years ago in the days of Samuel, God's

chosen nation cried for a king.

1. Samuel was told by God, "They have not rejected you, they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." (I Sam. 8:7)
2. They wanted a "king like the nations."
3. Ever since the Garden of Eden men have been rejecting the kingship of God in favor of earthly kings.
4. And they have been doing it for the very same reason; THE DEVIL HAS DECEIVED THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT THIS CARNAL WORLD IS ALL THE WORLD THERE IS. The devil has deceived man into thinking that man can be his own sovereign and rule the world.

B. So God gave them a "king like the nations" SAUL (handsome, proud, personable, magnetic, a leader of men).

1. But he was also vain, jealous, headstrong.
2. He refused to submit to the will of God as preached through God's prophet.
3. He made a mess of the kingdom; he tyrannized the people with taxes and other oppressive measures; he led the people into sin; he becomes insane and helpless; the nation is helpless.

II. God is King.

A. God can be rejected, but He cannot be dethroned. They have rejected God from being King, but they never dethroned Him, and He is still ruling.

1. God appoints another king—David. Now, God says, I have chosen ME a king—not from outward appearance, but I have looked upon his heart.
2. Whatever we may think about David—in the matter of Kingship of God, he always recognized it. Whether in victory or defeat, or in sin or repentance, there is not a single sentence or act in which he either ignores or forgets the Kingship of God.
3. God is attempting to call His people back to submission to Divine sovereignty as He rules through David—

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but David is human and cannot rise above his humanity. He fails and falls.

- B. But David serves as a type of The King, who is to come.
 - 1. As shepherd of the people; as deliverer; as just judge; as builder of God's house—David served as a picture of the King God was going to send.
 - 2. And so the prophets predicted that The Ultimate King God would send would be of the lineage and family of David.

III. Man cannot be his own king.

- A. Proven from history and experience
 - 1. Other men are inadequate to lead their fellowmen.
 - 2. Man cannot govern himself as he should (provide, control, secure, etc.).
- B. But man is a creature.
 - 1. And will surrender to some sovereignty or other.
 - 2. Rom. 6 (we will obey whomever we yield ourselves to as servants).

DISCUSSION

VI. Chronology

- A. Jesus expected the Jews of His day to have some knowledge of the *time* the Messiah was to appear.
 - 1. "And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be stormy today for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."
 - 2. As thoroughly as the rabbis and scribes studied the

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- O.T. prophets they should have known almost the very year when the Messiah would appear (anointed one).
- B. Daniel 9:24-27; "Seventy Weeks of Years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy thing or one (place)."
1. These 70 weeks of years are to begin "from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem" 457 B.C. (Artaxerxes' decree for the Jews to rebuild their commonwealth).
 2. 7—7's (or 49 years later) 408 B.C. the Jewish commonwealth was restored officially.
 3. 62—7's (or 434 years later) we come to the year 26 A.D. when Jesus Christ was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.
 4. This is the 70th week. In the midst of this 70th week the anointed one is to be "cut off."
 5. Christ was crucified in the middle of the last prophetic week or 3½ years after the beginning of His public ministry.
 6. For 3½ years after the death of Christ the gospel privileges were confined to the Jews by reason of providence.
 7. The prophecy that 490 years (70 weeks of years) would be allotted to the Jews for completing God's redemptive work with them was finally fulfilled for after that 3½ years Paul took the gospel to the Gentiles.
- C. The Jews should have been watching their prophecies and they should have known almost the very year in which the Anointed One of God was to appear.
1. I believe some of the more spiritual-minded Jews were aware that He was to appear when He did (Joseph of Arimethea, Mk. 15:43).
 2. Simeon the old prophet in Luke 2, "was looking for the consolation of Israel." Of course, the Holy Spirit had

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revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ.

3. When John the Baptist began preaching like he did, it appears that multitudes of people had already been in expectation, and they questioned in their hearts whether perhaps he was the Christ. Lk. 3:15
- D. They knew well what the O.T. prophets said about *where* the Messiah was to be born . . . Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; Cf. Matt. 2:1-6)
- E. These prophecies (and scores of others) can find their fulfillment only in Jesus of Nazareth, born 4 B.C. in the days of Caesar Augustus; Quirinius, governor of Syria; Herod the Great.
 1. These prophecies can find fulfillment only in a Person; never in a nation.
 2. IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON (KING, ANOINTED ONE).
 3. When there was a universal language; when there was political stability; when the Jews had been dispersed over the world GOD PREDICTED IT 600 YEARS EARLIER . . . THEN FULFILLED IT EXACTLY ON TIME.

II. Character

A. Man

1. Promise was made to David that his house and throne would be established forever. (II Sam. 7:16)
2. That promise is repeated over and over again through the Psalms and the Prophets. Amos 9:11-12 speaks of raising again the "tabernacle" (household) of David in the last days (fulfilled in Acts 15).
3. Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . ."
4. Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots . . ."
5. Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear

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- a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
6. On first consideration it may not seem important that God’s Messiah-King should come as a man.
 7. But I think this is why they rejected God as their King in the first place. God was off in heaven, far removed from their experiences and problems (they thought)—**HOW COULD GOD KNOW HOW TO RULE OVER THEM, LIVING OFF THERE IN HEAVEN—WHAT WE NEED, THEY FOOLISHLY REASONED, IS A HUMAN KING, ONE LIKE THE NATIONS, ONE TOUCHED WITH OUR INFIRMITIES.**
 8. Jeremiah 33:14-16: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.”
 9. Zechariah 6:12: “Behold, the *man* whose name is the Branch . . .”
 10. In Daniel 7:13ff Daniel is given a vision of one coming with the clouds of heaven—one like a *son of man*, who came to the Ancient of Days, to whom was given glory and dominion and an everlasting kingdom. . . . **THIS IS SPEAKING OF THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH.**
- B. God
1. If there is one thing emphasized by the prophets it is that in the “last days” when God restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem . . . when the kingdom of God is established on the earth . . . **THEN GOD WILL RULE AS KING IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE.**
 2. Isaiah calls Him, Immanuel (God with us); Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 3. Ezekiel closes his great vision of the glorious future kingdom of God (the church) by saying, “And the

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name of the city henceforth shall be, The Lord is there." Ezek. 48:35

4. Joel writes: "So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain . . . for the Lord dwells in Zion." Joel 3:17, 21
5. Obadiah says, "Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Obad. 21
6. Micah: "And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
7. Zephaniah: "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more. . . . The Lord, your God, is in your midst . . ." Zeph. 3:15, 17
8. Zechariah: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you says the Lord." Zech. 2:10ff (see also 8:1-8; 13:9)
9. Malachi: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming . . ." Mal. 3:1

C. God-Incarnate

1. Since no mortal sits "in a house by the side of the road" and watches all of history pass by, no one, from a human viewpoint can answer the question, "Where is history going? —What is life all about?"
2. What man needs is someone from a suprahuman sphere who knows the historical process in its entirety.
3. Such a supernatural person did invade the human sphere in the Person of Jesus Christ—revealed to men the nature and significance of history and human life and brought men into contact with eternal values.
4. This Person was born in a stable in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago. He was born when God said He would be; He was born where God said He would be born.
5. He was Who God said he would be.
"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth,

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a man attested to you by God with mighty works and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ. . . ." Acts 2:22, 36

6. Mankind constitutes a kingdom which has been invaded by a rebel—a usurper—the devil.
 - a. The devil is called the ruler of this world, Jn. 12:13; 16:11.
 - b. He is called the god of this world, II Cor. 4:4.
 - c. Men are said to be in a great battle against the wiles of the devil . . . against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:12
 - d. Man gets himself into this kingdom of darkness which is ruled by the prince of darkness when man "walks and follows the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. . . ." Eph. 2:2
7. God condescended to man's weakness and man's need to be delivered from the devil's rule.
 - a. So God became man and as Man conquered the devil.
 - b. Now if man willingly surrenders to the victorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords, man may be "delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son." (Col. 1:13)
 - c. Jesus Christ was God-Incarnate, "partaking of the same nature as man, that through death he might destroy him (the devil) who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Heb. 2:14-15

THE GREATEST BATTLE EVER FOUGHT WAS FOUGHT AT CALVARY AND AT THE GARDEN TOMB. THE TWO KINGS OF ETERNITY MET HEAD-ON AND HAD IT OUT IN EVERY ULTIMATE SENSE.

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This is the way the coming of God's Messiah is pictured in the O.T.—He is coming to wage a great and final battle with the enemies of God's people. . . . He will be victorious and God's people will be delivered from their enemies.

Colossians 2:8-15 refers to the fact that God triumphed over the powers of darkness in him (Christ).

EVERY MAN HAS AN OPTION TO EXERCISE. EVERY MAN MAY CHOOSE WHICH KINGDOM HE WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN IN. OF COURSE IT MEANS A MAN MUST SUBMIT TO THE RULE OF THE KING OF HIS CHOICE!

III. Commission

A. Rule

1. "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be *ruler* in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." Micah 5:2
2. Isaiah 9:6-7 ". . . and the government will be upon his shoulder . . . of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
3. How does a King really rule? Only by the consent of the governed! A rule sustained only by sheer force is not a rule in reality . . . but only in appearance. Bodies may be controlled and manipulated by sheer force, but minds, real personality, is ruled by ideas— either by true ideas or false ideas.
4. God's King will rule by persuasion, by truth, by justice, by righteousness.
"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." Jer. 23:5
". . . this is the covenant which I will make with the

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house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:33-34

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch. . . . It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both. . . . And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord." Zech. 6:12-13, 15

5. ". . . and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come and say: Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. . . ." Isa. 2:3

GOD WANTS TO REGAIN HIS RULE OVER MEN BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT ONLY AS HE RULES WILL THAT WHICH IS TRUE, REAL, GOOD AND ABIDING BE ACCEPTED AND ASSIMILATED BY MAN.

GOD WANTS TO RENEW HIS OWN NATURE IN THOSE WHO WILL SUBMIT TO HIS RULE. AND SINCE HE IS THE GOD OF TRUTH, HE SEEKS TO RULE ONLY BY MEANS OF TRUTH. HE WILL RULE WHEN MEN ACCEPT HIS WILL AND WORD TO BE WRITTEN ON THEIR MINDS AND HEARTS.

B. Provide

1. "And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken." Ezek. 34:23
2. The rest of that chapter (Ezek. 34:25-30) speaks in glowing, figurative language of all the blessings God,

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- their King-Shepherd, is going to shower down upon them . . . "showers of blessing." THE PROPHET USES PHYSICAL, CONTEMPORARY TERMINOLOGY, BUT THE N.T. SHOWS THAT THE ESSENTIAL MESSIANIC BLESSINGS WERE SPIRITUAL. (Acts 3:26; Eph. 1:3-10)
3. Amos 9:11-15 "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old . . ."

The remainder of this chapter describes again in PHYSICAL, AGRICULTURAL TERMINOLOGY, the future glorious providence of the Ruler of Israel for His subjects. Again, Acts 15:12-18 is conclusive that Amos' prophecy was fulfilled in the church and the spiritual blessings of redemption and salvation.

4. "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3:5
5. Micah 4:1-8 is one of the loveliest of all the Messianic contexts. Actually the whole 4th and 5th chapters of Micah are Messianic. It is a picture of God ruling in Zion, peace and security and prosperity. ". . . they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . . and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore."
6. So the Messiah is pictured in the O.T. Prophets as the Shepherd-Provider. Isaiah 61:1-7—Cf. with Lk. 4:18-19

JESUS CHRIST CAME AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD . . . HE CAME BRINGING THE BREAD OF LIFE . . . THE LIVING WATER. The food Jesus used to sustain Himself was "to do the will of His Father." (Jn. 4:34) "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6

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THE REAL THINGS THAT SATISFY AND GIVE PLEASURE ARE NOT MATERIAL THINGS . . . THEY ARE AT BEST ONLY TEMPORARY, JUST AS THE PHYSICAL BODY IS. . . . BUT WHAT REALLY SUSTAINS US . . . WHAT REALLY GIVES US LIFE . . . A LIFE WORTH LIVING . . . IS TRUTH, LOVE, PEACE, JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS. . . . IF WE DO NOT HAVE THESE, ALL THE MATERIAL THINGS IN ALL THE WORLD WOULD NOT SATISFY!

C. Protect

1. "And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth." Micah 5:4. This is the ruler to be born in Bethlehem.
2. Micah chapter 4 also speaks of the security of God's people under the coming Messiah.
3. "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion . . . the Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more." Zeph. 3:14-20 (Read the whole context.)
4. Zechariah 12:7—13:1
5. Malachi 4:1-6
6. There are so many great passages in the Prophets describing the victory and security that will be won by the coming Messiah. We cannot list them here. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHEN THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF GOD'S VICTORY OVER NATIONS CONTEMPORARY WITH THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS THESE VICTORIES WERE TO TYPIFY THE GREAT VICTORY OF HIS MESSIAH OVER THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. Often when the prophets spoke of future victories over all the nations of the world, they were predicting that time when the Messiah would come and win the ULTIMATE victory which would provide security and safety for God's people (the church).
7. Jesus, the Messiah, clearly promises that protection and security. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know

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them, and they follow me; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." Jn. 10:27-28

8. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:35-39
9. "Put on the whole armor of God . . . above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. . . ." Eph. 6:10-18
10. ". . . your life is hid with Christ in God . . ." Col. 3:3
11. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" I Jn. 5:4-5

CONCLUSION

I. Behold Thy King Cometh.

- A. Jesus, entering Jerusalem for the final showdown, rode on a colt. This reminded the gospel writer Matthew to remark that it was a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 9:9).
 1. This was His public announcement to the nation of Israel that He was the promised Messiah.
 2. They had been trying desperately to get Him to announce that He was.
 3. However, they expected Him to substantiate His claim with some stupendous, spectacular economic or military victory over their hated conquerors, the Romans. He came, as He had in the past three years, meek,

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humble, seeking to rule their minds and morals.

- B. Just prior to this triumphal entry into Jerusalem . . . as He drew near the city, he told his disciples a parable about a nobleman who went into a far country to receive kingly power and then return. (Lk. 19:11-27)
1. But the citizens of this country hated the nobleman and sent an embassy after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.
 2. And so it was true of the majority of the Jews even then. . . . **THEY REJECTED HIS KINGSHIP BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE THEIR ANCESTORS WHO WANTED A KING LIKE THE NATIONS.**
 3. They were convinced that this world was all that counted and they wanted a king who would deal with the here and now—**AS THEY WANTED HIM TO DEAL WITH IT . . . THEY WOULD TELL HOW TO RULE!**
 4. Just a few days later they would cry out, “He is not king of the Jews. . . . We have no king but Caesar . . . away with him . . . crucify him . . . his blood be upon us and upon our children.”

II. Behold, Thy King

- A. When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate asked Him, Are you the King of the Jews?
1. Jesus said, My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.
 2. Jesus went on to say to Pilate, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.”
- B. Friend, you will be ruled over by some spiritual power or another.
1. There are two kingdoms into which all moral beings are divided—light and darkness; truth and falsehood;

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righteousness and sin.

2. Paul exhorted the Roman Christians, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions." Rom. 6:12
 3. Paul exhorted the Colossians, "Let the peace of Christ *rule* in your hearts . . ." Col. 3:15
- C. You have a throne-room within you. It is your mind, (heart, the Bible usually calls it.)
1. Here is where Christ must rule in truth and goodness, if you want to reach the high and holy spiritual potential for which God made you.
 2. How does Christ rule?
 3. Paul says just a verse later in Colossians 3:16— "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly. . . ." Earlier in that chapter he wrote, ". . . seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth." Col. 3:1-2
 4. We must surrender our thoughts, ambitions, desires, motives to His revealed will and Word. We must let Him capture our thinking. "For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war. For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and *take every thought captive to obey Christ.*" II Cor. 10:3-5
 5. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST REPENT . . . CHANGE HIS MIND!

"Repent and be immersed, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For unto you is the promise and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

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O.T. PROPHECY — A PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

I. Disciples understood that the Messiah's work was to *restore* kingdom.

A. "So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
Acts 1:6

1. Jesus answered by telling them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:7-8

2. A few weeks later they received this power and the church was established (Acts 2) on the Day of Pentecost.

B. Why would they understand this?

1. Because they were well studied in the O.T. prophecies
2. Because John the Baptist taught some of them concerning this
3. Because Jesus taught this concept constantly by precept and parable

II. The Kingdom of God and The Church are one and the same.

A. This is a necessary fundamental to be understood if we are to understand that O.T. prophecy is a prediction of the church.

1. The prophets were *not* predicting some far off rebuilding of the Jewish political—national—geographical kingdom.

2. If they were then Christ was mistaken, the apostles were fooled and duped, and the church for 2000 years has been a meaningless attempt to do something

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God never intended!

B. Impossible in this sermon to make an in-depth study of the kingdom-church concept but a few scriptures should suffice.

1. Colossians 1:13 "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. . . ."

2. Hebrews 12:28 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. . . ."

3. Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

4. Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. . . ."

5. I Thessalonians 2:12 ". . . we exhorted each one of you . . . to lead a life worthy of God, who *is calling* (pres. act. participle *kalountos*) you into his own kingdom and glory."

6. Matthew 16:18-19 "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ."

III. The promises (most of them) to Israel by the O.T. prophets were to be fulfilled in the Church.

A. Paul's great treatise on this subject is in Romans 9-10-11 . . . these chapters must be read as one context!

B. He definitely says that just being a Jew according to the flesh is no guarantee that one will receive the blessings promised to Abraham's seed!

C. In Galatians 6:16 Paul calls the church, "The Israel of God."

D. In Hebrews 12 Paul tells the church that it has come to Mt. Zion which shows that much of the glorious things

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said of Zion in the prophets was intended for the church of the N.T.

DISCUSSION

I. Chronology

- A. We have already mentioned Daniel 9:24-27 and shown:
 - 1. They refer to the Messiah and His work.
 - 2. The Jews should have been able to determine very precisely and exactly what year this would take place (see our notes in sermon in this series on Christ).
- B. Daniel 2:44
 - 1. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever."
 - 2. There can be no mistaking *which* kings.
 - a. The kings of the fourth world empire—Rome.
 - b. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of the dream about the great image—Nebuchadnezzar was the first part of the image and there were three succeeding empires to follow him—Persian, Grecian, and the one of iron (Rome).
 - 3. This vision of the great image is paralleled by the vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7. The lion is Babylon; the bear is Persia; the leopard is Greece; the terrible and dreadful iron beast is Rome; then the vision of the son of man coming to the Ancient of Days being given dominion and glory and kingdom.
- C. Joel 2:28, 32
 - 1. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. . . . And it shall

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come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. . . .”

2. All the context of Joel 2:28—3:21 should be understood as speaking of the establishment of the church and all that intervenes between the Day of Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ.
 3. In other words, it is a prophecy of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth and its victory.
 4. We can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Peter, the inspired apostle, declared its fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2.
- D. Isaiah 61:1-4 (actually the entire 61st chapter is in the context).
1. Someone is to be anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
 2. At this time the ancient ruins will be rebuilt; the former devastations of many generations would be repaired.
 3. Again, we can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus said in a synagogue in Nazareth, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:20

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching, the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:14-15

“I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos. . . .” Rev. 1:9

THE KINGDOM/CHURCH ARE ONE AND THE SAME. GOD PLANNED THE CHURCH/KINGDOM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. GOD PREDICTED THE KINGDOM’S COMING WITH THE MESSIAH.

THE CHURCH IS NOT AN AFTER-THOUGHT OF GOD. IT IS NOT A PARENTHESIS! IT IS GOD’S FINAL STAGE OF REDEEMING MAN

WHILE TIME CONTINUES. IT IS THE ONLY STAGE LEFT!

II. Character

A. Triumphant

1. If there is one thing emphasized in the O.T. prophets concerning the glorious future of God's rebuilt kingdom under His Messiah-King, it is **TRIUMPH, VICTORY**.
2. Victory over demonic forces of evil
 - a. These forces attempted to thwart the purpose of God to redeem man by use of force, sensuality, false teaching.
 - b. These forces manifested themselves in the form of pagan governments, pagan materialism, pagan religion and false prophets.
 - c. So God's prophets predicted the eventual triumph of God's kingdom over these forces. When they made their predictions they made them in verbal forms the people of their day would understand and related everything they predicted to nations and circumstances of their own day ("times coloring").
 - d. The Book of Revelation, so parallel to O.T. prophetic symbolism, also declares the victory of God's church over force, sensuality and false teaching (beast, harlot and false prophet).
 - e. Some great figurative passages about God's future victory for His kingdom are:
 - (1) Joel 3:1-21—God will judge all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. All that the pagan forces can muster will be defeated by God when He restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (read the whole context).
 - (2) Isaiah 60:1-22
 - (3) Daniel 2:44—in the vision of the great image a stone cut from a mountain by no human hand represents the kingdom of God which is to strike

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the great image (representing world pagan power) knock it down, grind it to dust and the wind comes and blows it away. This stone (God's kingdom) triumphs over the image (pagan evil).

- (4) Micah 7:11-20—the nations shall be humbled and in fear turn to the Lord when God fulfills His covenant to Abraham in forgiving sins (this can only refer to the work accomplished in Christ—the seed of Abraham; Cf. Romans and Galatians).
- (5) Zephaniah 3:8-20
- (6) Zechariah 2:6-12—God will give His people victory over those who formerly plundered them, for in touching His people they touched the “apple of his eye.” He will dwell in their midst and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be His people.
- (7) Zechariah 13:1—14:21—A great battle of the Lord against the nations when He stands on the Mt. of Olives, etc.

3. All these and many others refer very simply to God's great triumph over the absolute worst that the forces of Hell could do in their attempt to thwart God's purpose to redeem man—when these evil forces succeed in crucifying the Lord of Glory—**GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, INSTITUTED HIS CHURCH, AND SENT THE CHURCH MILITANT OUT TO BRING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST!**

When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, the devil was cast out, judged, and his power (the fear of death) was destroyed. (Jn. 12-16; Heb. 2) When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, He led captivity captive. . . . At the cross God “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, *triumphing* over them in him.” Col. 2:15. The preaching of the cross destroys the wisdom of the world (I Cor. 1:18-25). **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH, THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH. . . . WE ARE MORE THAN**

ISAIAH

CONQUERORS. . . . WE AWAIT ONLY THE FINAL VICTORY SUPPER WITH THE LAMB AT THE CONSUMMATION. . . . BUT EVEN NOW VICTORY IS A REALITY . . . THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD . . . EVEN OUR FAITH!

B. Peaceful

1. The picture of God's future kingdom is portrayed by the O.T. prophets as one of peacefulness and tranquility.
 - a. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. . . . He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." Isa. 40:1, 2, 11.
 - b. When the Messiah brings in the new kingdom, men will be at peace with God and He with them.
2. "And a highway shall be there and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:8-10
 - a. The member of God's future kingdom will be at peace with all of God's creation.
 - b. The peace and tranquility and harmony and dominion man enjoyed in the garden of Eden is *potentially* restored to man through Christ's meritorious work (Heb. 2:5-9).
 - c. All of God's creation becomes a storehouse of things able to be used by the Christian to glorify God in this new relationship. EVERYTHING IN GOD'S CREATION IS AVAILABLE FOR GOD TO USE TO WORK FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM (Rom. 8:28).

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- d. Even those things which test us and try us become stepping stones to steadfastness and hope. (Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4)
3. Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-10; Micah 4:1-7
4. "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." Ezek. 34:25-26
 - a. This is in the same context as Ezek. 34:20-24 concerning the "one shepherd, David," who is to come and feed God's flock. I think it applies to none other than the Good Shepherd of John 10.
 - b. Consider along with this Psalm 23.
5. ". . . and he shall command peace to the nations; . . ." Zech. 9:10 Remember this is in the same context as "Lo, your king comes to you. . . etc." Zech. 9:9 fulfilled at Jesus' triumphal entry.

NO STUDENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOULD HAVE TO BE REMINDED THAT PEACE IS THE GREAT RECURRING THEME OF THE CHURCH. (Ephesians 2:11-22) (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 4:7) The peace of God is to rule in our hearts, Col. 3:15; Christians are to follow peace with all men (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:18); Christians are called to peace in marital relationships (I Cor. 7:15).

IN GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM, AS THE PROPHETS PORTRAYED IT, MEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES, MEN OF ALL SOCIAL STRATA, DIFFERING CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, INTELLECTUAL STRATA WOULD BE UNITED IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

Christians are to be so oriented to peace they will not even need to use civil courts when one has a grievance against a brother. . . . They will settle it between themselves, fairly, justly and peaceably. (I Cor. 6:1-11) THE LAW OF GOD, THE VERY NATURE OF GOD, WILL BE WRITTEN ON THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS AND THEY WILL IMITATE HIM!

C. Righteous

1. One of the very definite characteristics of the future kingdom of God predicted by the prophets was **RIGHT-EOUSNESS**. The kingdom of God as it was during the days of the prophets was almost totally unrighteous. There was injustice, unholiness, unfaithfulness, falsehood, exploitation and sin and crime of every description and degree rampant! Immorality, inhumanity and indecency were the common practices. **THOSE VERY FEW FAITHFUL PEOPLE OF GOD CRIED OUT FOR RIGHT-EOUSNESS. THE PROPHETS PROMISED THAT GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM WOULD BE ONE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
2. Justice is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. Isaiah 9:7 "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with *justice* and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
 - b. Isaiah 11:3-4 "He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth."
 - c. In the kingdom the prophets predicted, all dealings of God with men and men with men would be done justly, fairly and without partiality. "Truly, I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" Acts 10:34-35. Paul to Timothy concerning his ministry . . . "I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality." I Tim. 5:21. See also James 2:1-7; 3:17.
3. Holiness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. "Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the *holy* mountain." Zech. 8:3
 - b. "Behold the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the

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earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken." Isa. 62:11-12

- c. Holiness, separation from worldliness, is what God intended for the Hebrew people when He first chose them. But they became so worldly-minded and worldly-acting that they actually became worse than the heathen nations surrounding them.
- d. The prophets predicted that God's new kingdom under the Messiah would be holy—separated from worldliness.

This would involve purging God's people of idolatry and false prophets.

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. And on that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit." Zech. 13:1-2

- 4. Faithfulness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. The main characteristic of the rebellious and stubborn Israelites was unfaithfulness to covenant relationship with God.
 - b. God's new kingdom which the prophets predicted would be characterized by God demonstrating once and for all His absolute faithfulness (Heb. 6:13-20; II Cor. 1:20-21) and man's responding by faithfulness in keeping covenant with God.
 - c. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." Isa. 11:5
 - d. "And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, My husband. . . . And I will betroth you to me for

ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord." Hosea 2:16-20 (In its context, this has to be Messianic.)

- e. Perhaps the most significant prediction of the nature of faithful covenant relationship in the future kingdom of God is that prediction in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (quoted as fulfilled in the N.T. in Hebrews 8:8-12).

The Lord will make a new covenant, not like the one their fathers broke, it will be written on their hearts and minds, God will be their God and they shall be his people.

Also, Jeremiah 32:37-40 "Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, *that they may not turn from me*. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in *faithfulness*, with all my heart and all my soul."

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY RIGHTEOUSNESS. WHEN GOD SHOULD SEND HIS MESSIAH-KING TO RULE, HE WOULD RULE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

OUT OF RESPONSE, MEMBERS OF THIS KINGDOM WOULD CHARACTERIZE THEIR CONDUCT BY JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

In this new kingdom there would be judicial and experiential righteousness. God would judicially cleanse and pronounce men

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righteous through the sufferings of His Servant (Isa. 53). Then those cleansed would respond with righteous living.

RIGHTEOUS IS SOMETHING WE ARE, FIRST OF ALL. GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ATONING, JUSTIFYING, SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF HIS SERVANT, THE MESSIAH. BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ALSO SOMETHING WE DO!

“Little children, let no one deceive you, He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous. . . . By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother.” I John 3:7, 10 So, AS DANIEL PREDICTED, 490 YEARS WERE ALLOTTED FOR THE HEBREW PEOPLE OF OLD “TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, TO PUT AN END TO SIN, AND TO ATONE FOR INIQUITY, TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SEAL BOTH VISION AND PROPHECY, AND TO ANOINT A MOST HOLY PLACE.” Dan. 9:24

III. Commission

1. Militant

- a. Being triumphant, this kingdom will also be militant in that it will “possess” all the nations.
- b. Now it should be readily apparent that this was never intended to be literal and absolute in the sense of some physical, worldwide political kingdom. IT IS REFERRING TO GOD’S SPIRITUAL RULE IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE.
- c. It is true that the kingdom of God through the church has a universal dominion. There are members of every nation under heaven who have been “possessed” by God’s kingdom. Many of these have been some of the greatest “jewels” of the different races and nationalities of men.
- d. The O.T. prophets definitely portrayed the future kingdom of God as a militant, evangelistic, conquering kingdom. It was not one that would just be defensive. . . . IT WOULD GO ON THE OFFENSE,

ISAIAH

DOING BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL, CAPTURING (OR DELIVERING) MEN FROM THE DOMINION OF THE DEVIL WHEREVER THEY WERE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

- e. This definitely is what is meant by Amos 9:12 . . . “that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this.” BECAUSE AMOS 9:12 IS IN THE VERY CONTEXT WITH AMOS 9:11 WHICH THE APOSTLES QUOTED AS FULFILLED IN ACTS 15:15-18 WHEN THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO THE GENTILES AND THEY BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE GOSPEL!
 - f. There are other references, too numerous to list them all, which portray the future kingdom of God, as the prophet saw it, possessing all the nations of the world. (1) Obadiah, verses 17-20 (2) Zechariah 8:20—9:8 (3) Isaiah 55:4-5
2. Prosperous
- a. The prophets spoke of the future kingdom of God as one of glorious abundance and prosperity. THEY SPOKE IN PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL TERMS. BUT THEY MEANT SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY AND ABUNDANCE. WE KNOW THIS FROM WHAT THE N.T. SAYS ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF SOME OF THE PROPHETIC PASSAGES.
 - b. Micah 4:4 . . . “but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . .”
 - c. Isaiah 25:6 . . . “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for *all* people a feast of fat things. . . . etc.”
 - d. Isaiah 55:1-3 “. . . he who has no money, come, buy and eat! . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price . . . eat what is good . . . delight yourselves in fatness . . . I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. . . .” THIS IS SAID TO BE FULFILLED BY THE

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PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE IN ACTS 13:34ff.

- e. Amos 9:13-15 another description in physical terms of the coming spiritual prosperity in the prophetic kingdom of the future.

JESUS LIKENED THE KINGDOM UNTO GREAT FEASTS AND CELEBRATIONS IN HIS PARABLES. IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, PETER EXHORTED THE PEOPLE TO "REPENT . . . AND TURN AGAIN, THAT TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. . . . FOR GOD HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT, SENT HIM TO YOU FIRST, TO BLESS YOU IN TURNING EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR SINS." (Acts 3:17-26)

Paul wrote, "He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3); "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours. . . ." (I Cor. 3:21-22); Christians have "a better possession and an abiding one. . . ." (Heb. 10:34) CHRISTIANS HAVE INHERITED THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS! SO THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF GOD OF THE FUTURE WAS PORTRAYED WITH A COMMISSION OF MILITANCY AND PROSPERITY (BLESSING).

IT WOULD GO INTO ALL THE NATIONS AND RACES OF THE EARTH, DOING BATTLE AGAINST THE WORLD POWERS OF DARKNESS THAT HOLD MEN UNDER THE DOMINION OF SIN. . . .

IT WOULD SHED ITS LIGHT OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DELIVER AND CAPTURE MEN AND WOMEN FOR GOD.

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, MEN WOULD BE FILLED. THEY WOULD BE INVITED TO THE KING'S FESTIVE TABLE OF GOODNESS AND REFRESHMENT WOULD COME TO THEIR VERY LIVES. LOVE, JOY, PEACE, GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, MEEKNESS, SELF-CONTROL, FREEDOM, FRUITFULNESS, SATISFACTION. . . ALL THESE WOULD BE SPREAD OUT BEFORE THEM IN THIS NEW KINGDOM!

CONCLUSION

I. The Kingdom of God has come!

- A. The angel promised to Mary that her virgin-conceived son would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord would give to him the throne of his father, David and he would reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there would be no end. Luke 1:32-33
 - 1. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, announced the same news in predicting the mission of his son John as the forerunner of the Messiah, Luke 1:67-79.
 - 2. Simeon the aged and devout man in the temple when Mary went for purification announced the same news, Luke 2:25-35.
- B. It was predicted even to the exact year; to the exact place; including the exact phenomena that would accompany it.
 - 1. Passage after passage in the N.T. confirms without room for doubt that the founding of the church on the Day of Pentecost was the official establishment of that kingdom.

II. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of men.

- A. the kingdom and the church are synonymous. But that does not mean that mere nominal church membership and citizenship in God's kingdom are synonymous.
 - 1. The kingdom is not provincial. It is not *merely* outward. It is in one sense a visible kingdom (the church), but it is not *just* visible.
 - 2. When the peace of Christ *rules* our hearts, when Christ is *Lord* of our minds and deeds, then the kingdom is in us and we are in the kingdom.
 - 3. Because when Christ is *Lord*, we will obey His commands.
- B. His kingdom is not "of" this world.

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1. It is not worldly—It does not force citizenship. Men and women become citizens by choice.
2. It is not worldly—It does not operate on pride and ambition. Men and women are servants, sheep, brethren, children.
3. It is not worldly—It is not satisfied with mere fleshly indulgences. It seeks the real and lasting values that are the very essence of life such as peace, joy, truth, justice, love, self-control.

III. THERE ARE TWO KINGDOMS THAT WILL LAST ETERNALLY . . . GOD'S AND THE DEVIL'S. GOD'S KINGDOM HAS WON. . . . THE DEVIL'S KINGDOM IS ETERNAL INCARCERATION AND IMPRISONMENT IN FALSEHOOD, UGLINESS, BITTERNESS, REBELLION, EXPLOITATION, GUILT, TORMENT. . . . GOD WILL TRANSFER YOU INTO WHICHEVER KINGDOM YOU DESIRE!

O.T. PROPHECY — A PLEA FOR CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION

- I. Basically, the pleas of the O.T. prophets is for personal conversion.
 - A. This is what the Messiah was to come to Israel for.
 - B. This is what the character of the kingdom of the future would be.
 - C. The prophets were sent by God to call the *people of their day* to repentance in preparation for the messianic age—so that the messianic program could be worked out through their people.
 - D. The prophets told the people of their day what the new messianic kingdom would be like in order to motivate their generation to repent and be the kind of people the Lord could use for redeeming the whole world.

II. The Prophets predicted that the coming Messianic Age would produce converted men.

- A. Man's problem from the sin of Adam in the garden up to the days of the prophets is one long story of rebellion against the knowledge of God and refusal to walk in the way of the Lord.
- B. After God destroyed the world, having saved one man and his family, God began to prepare a people (descendants of Abraham), instilling in them the knowledge of His will (the law) and teaching them by discipline and miracle to walk in His way.
- C. The people had good intentions and made many promises but their own willful desires to indulge themselves added to the attractions of sin plus the power of the devil to deceive led them progressively downward into unbelief and paganism.
- D. Their downward plunge reached the very bottom in the days of the writing prophets, in the days of the divided kingdom.
 - 1. God already knew that the majority of the Jews would never turn back to him without some drastic chastening.
 - 2. God sent the prophets to warn the whole people (both Israel and Judah) of the impending judgment-captivity—and to call a righteous remnant to faith and endurance.
- E. There are thousands of passages in the prophets which graphically describe the hard-heartedness and rebelliousness of the people toward God (Cf. Ezek. 3:1-27; Jer. 1:16-19, etc.). But two special passages portray the attitudes of the people with preciseness:
 - 1. "There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land. . . . My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." Hosea 4:1, 6

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2. "Thus says the Lord: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it. I sat watchmen over you saying, Give heed to the sound of the trumpet! But they said, We will not give heed. . . . Hear, O earth; behold I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it." Jer. 6:16-19

NO MORE PROMISES TO FOLLOW THE LORD. NOW THEY OPENLY REBEL! SO THE PROPHETS ARE SENT TO DECLARE THAT GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES (MADE TO THEIR FOREFATHER ABRAHAM) WILL BE FULFILLED IN A NEW KING, A NEW KINGDOM, AND WILL BE RECEIVED BY CITIZENS WHO ARE CONVERTED, MEN OF FAITH, TRUE SONS OF ABRAHAM, THOSE WHO KNOW GOD AND WALK IN HIS WAYS!

DISCUSSION

I. Know the Lord

A. It was not God's fault that men did not know Him.

1. "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, Here am I, here am I, to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices"; Isa. 65:1-2
2. God delineated His nature in His law; God demonstrated His nature in miraculously sustaining the people. There were great men of faith who did know God (Abraham, Moses, David) but they were few.
3. Even in nature there is enough of the nature of God revealed that all men may know Him if they wish (Cf. Rom. 1:18ff). MEN SIMPLY REFUSE TO HAVE GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE!

ISAIAH

- B. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wish to be God's people would know Him.
1. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:34
 2. "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken." Ezek. 39:7-8 THIS IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREAT BATTLE OF GOD AND THE FORCES OF GOG-MAGOG WHICH I BELIEVE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE BATTLE IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT AND THUS SPEAK OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY. . . . Then will the Lord be known by true Israel and this includes Gentiles.
 3. There are other messianic passages depicting this (Isa. 59:20-21; Habakkuk 2:14; Isa. 52:1-15; 60:16).
- C. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would know Him INTIMATELY—SO THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE LIKE THAT OF A BRIDE TO HER HUSBAND.
1. Isaiah 62:4-5 "You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."
 2. See also the whole context of Hosea 2-3.
 3. It hardly needs to be said that the N.T. refers to the church as the bride of Christ—to Christ as the

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bridegroom. (Eph. 5:21-33, etc.)

4. This is the ONENESS THAT IS TO BE KNOWN BY THE CHRISTIAN . . . LIKE THAT OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE!
 5. That kind of ONENESS can only be built upon knowing and trusting . . . knowing and trusting God to be faithful, just, loving, fair.
- D. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM, DEPEND UPON HIM, AND CALL UPON HIS NAME.
1. The people of the prophet's day had devoted their energies to calling on the names of pagan gods. They had taken to worshipping idols of every description—even to worshipping the sun, moon and stars.
 2. They also were busy making military, political and economic treaties with pagan powers, hoping to call on their pagan "friends" in times of trouble. GOD TAUGHT THEM THAT THEIR WORLDLY FRIENDS COULD NOT SAVE THEM. SO GOD'S PROPHETS PREDICTED THAT IN THE FUTURE MEN'S MINDS AND HEARTS WOULD BE CONVERTED ABOUT THIS ATTITUDE.
 3. In the future time they would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Cf. Joel 2:30-32; Isa. 65:24)
- E. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM AND WALK IN HIS NAME.
1. Isaiah 2:3 ". . . and many peoples shall come, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he teach us his ways and that we may *walk* in his paths."
 2. Ezekiel 36:27 "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to *walk* in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."
 3. Micah 4:5 "For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever."
 4. The promise of the prophets is that men and women will be converted and walk in the way of the Lord. MEN

ISAIAH

WILL KNOW GOD NOT ONLY MENTALLY, BUT EXPERIENTIALLY. THEY WILL HAVE A DAY BY DAY FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AS THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO HIS DIRECTIONS!

5. "He who says, I know him, but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he (Christ) walked." I John 2:4-6

LET NO MAN SAY HE IS CONVERTED IF HE IS NOT WALKING AS CHRIST WALKED. LET NO MAN SAY HE KNOWS CHRIST IF HE IS NOT WALKING AS CHRIST DIRECTS.

II. Be renewed.

A. New Covenant (Jer. 31)

1. God and man will be in a new covenant relationship in the messianic kingdom.
2. God will cleanse men completely of their guilt.
 - a. "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness." Zech. 13:1
 - b. "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old." Micah 7:20
 - c. AND, OF COURSE, THE GLORIOUS ISAIAH 53 PASSAGE IS TO BE INSERTED HERE.
3. The relationship between God and man will be RENEWED. Man will keep God's new covenant.
 - a. ". . . everyone who . . . holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; . . . for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those

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already gathered." Isa. 56:6-8

B. New Heart and New Spirit

1. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. . . . My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes . . . and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant. . . . My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . ." Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:24-28
2. Actually, the whole latter half of Ezekiel, from chapter 34 through 48, is messianic, basically. And it's message is concerning the new nature of the individual citizen of the future messianic kingdom.
3. To the Hebrew, heart meant the whole personality . . . mind, soul, spirit, being. **THE NEW CITIZEN OF GOD'S KINGDOM WOULD HAVE A NEW NATURE!** He would be as "dead, dry bones, raised from the grave."
4. **THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN AS GIVEN IN THE N.T.**
"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15 **IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOW, AND FOREVERMORE, NATIONALITY, RACE, CULTURE ARE IRRELEVANT. . . . IT IS THE NEW NATURE THAT GOD IS INTERESTED IN!**
5. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son to die in our

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place and to be raised from the dead, that by faith in Him and obedience to His will we might be born anew. For only those who are born again are given authority from God to become citizens of the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:3-5)

- a. "Of His own will he begat us (brought us forth) by the word of truth that we should be a king of first fruits of his creatures." Jas. 1:18
- b. "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. . . . That word is the good news which was preached to you." I Pet. 1:22-25

C. New Speech

1. "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:12-13
2. One of the glaring characteristics of wickedness of the people of the days of the prophets was their "unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) Not necessarily foul and obscene (although I'm sure that is involved) but false, unjust, slanderous, deceitful, proud and haughty and vain.
3. Their total and constant devotion to idolatry necessitated that they speak lies and falsehoods, because they were living a lie in their unbelief.
4. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that "evil talk (homilia) corrupts good morals." This he said in the context of discussing their "talk that there couldn't be a resurrection." In other words, false doctrine preached and taught and spoken soon leads to corruption of morals. FRIEND, THIS IS THE CAUSE FOR

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THE BREAK DOWN IN THE MORALS OF AMERICA! FALSE DOCTRINES, THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS, UNBELIEF, LIBERAL THEOLOGY! The most evil speaking ever done is not foul language—but the subtle half-truths and half-lies of unbelieving preachers. When Jesus said, “. . . on the day of judgment men will render account for every idle (careless, vain, void) word they utter . . .” Matt. 12:36, He was not talking about profanity so much as He was the words of unbelief the Pharisees had just uttered about Him.

5. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God’s messianic kingdom would be of “pure” speech. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor . . . let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” Eph. 5:25, 29

CITIZENS OF GOD’S NEW KINGDOM ARE PEOPLE OF TRUTH. TRUTH IN SPEECH, TRUTH IN LIVING, TRUTH IN DOCTRINE—AND TRUE DOCTRINE MUST COME FIRST!

D. New Name

1. “The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give. . . . You shall no more be termed Forsaken . . . but you shall be called My delight is in her and your land Married . . .” Isa. 62:2-4
2. “You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth. . . .” Isa. 65:15-16
3. *Name* is a term used to signify or designate one’s progenitor or institutional association. When a woman marries she takes a new name.
4. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God’s messianic community or family would be such a

completely NEW people, they would have a NEW NAME.

5. This name would be held in honor throughout the world. It would not be a name denoting any physical, fleshly origin or association. IT WOULD BE UNIQUE.

WHY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND THE BIBLE WOULD WANT TO BE KNOWN BY ANY NAME OTHER THAN CHRISTIAN, I DO NOT KNOW. WHY WOULD ONE THINK GOD APPROVES OF ALL THE DIVIDING NAMES MEN HAVE CLUTTERED UP CHRISTIANITY WITH?! THERE JUST ISN'T ANY NEED FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO WANT TO SET THEMSELVES OFF AS SPECIAL KINDS OF "CHRISTIANS."

E. New Strength

1. "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not!" Isa. 35:3-4
2. ". . . but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
3. ". . . and the lame I will make the remnant; and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
4. Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus, ". . . that they might be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Eph. 3:16ff
5. He prayed for the Colossians, "May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. . . ." Col. 1:11
6. THE NEW STRENGTH AVAILABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN IS THE DELIVERANCE CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED WHEN HE DESTROYED FOR MAN THE POWER THE DEVIL HAD OVER MAN THROUGH THE FEAR OF DEATH (Heb. 12:14-15). MAN CAN BE DELIVERED FROM THIS WEAKENING, PARALYZING, SHATTERING BONDAGE—FEAR OF DEATH! This is the very crux of man's

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- problem—the absurdity of life in the face of the hopelessness of the grave! THE UTTER FRUSTRATION AND MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE IF THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAPPING ALL THE MORAL, SPIRITUAL STRENGTH ANY MAN MIGHT HAVE!
7. Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” (II Tim. 1:10)

III. Live rejoicing.

A. Rejoicing through worship.

1. A magnificent picture of God’s covenant people worshipping Him in spirit and in truth is portrayed concerning the messianic times. The passages in the prophets are many.
2. This worship will be done in singing NEW songs of God’s deliverance and God’s grace and God’s glory. (Isa. 25:6—26:6) (Zeph. 3:14-20)
3. This worship will be done in giving of thanks. (Isa. 12:1-6)
4. This worship will be done through ministering. (Isa. 61:6)

B. Rejoicing through serving.

1. The great closing passage of the book of Isaiah is a picture of the messianic kingdom serving the Lord by evangelizing the nations and bringing men from all nations to worship the Lord. (Isa. 66:18-23)
2. There are numerous passages depicting God’s new covenant people “building up” the ruins and walls. “They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” Isa. 61:4 Cf. also Amos 9:11 “A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. . . .” Micah 7:11ff
3. This is exactly what the writer of the N.T. book Hebrews is talking about in Hebrews 13:8-16 . . . that

the N.T. church is the fulfillment of the O.T. law and prophets "For here (in O.T. practices and covenant) we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. Through him (Jesus) then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

C. Rejoicing through suffering.

1. "And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, They are my people; and they will say, The Lord is my God." Zech. 13:9
2. "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming. . . . But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years." Mal. 3:1-4

THE CITIZENS OF GOD'S NEW MESSIANIC KINGDOM WILL BE SO THOROUGHLY CONVERTED THEY WILL NOT MURMUR AND COMPLAIN AND TRY THE LORD WHEN TESTED AND TRIED AS DID THOSE OF OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

CHRISTIANS WILL COUNT THEIR TRIALS AS BLESSINGS. (Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 5:1-5; II Cor. 1:3-11; Heb. 12:1-17)

Christians know, as the writer of Hebrews says, "For you have need of endurance, that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised." Heb. 10:36

CHRISTIANS LIVE REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR WORSHIP A MEANS OF REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR SERVICE A MEANS

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OF REJOICING. THEY EVEN MAKE THEIR SUFFERING A MEANS OF REJOICING.

CONCLUSION

- I. SO GOD'S PLAN FOR ALL MANKIND . . . SINCE ADAM AND EVE REBELLED AGAINST HIM . . . HAS BEEN CONVERSION.
- II. AND THE PROPHETS HAVE GRAPHICALLY PORTRAYED, IN TERMS PEOPLE OF THEIR DAY WOULD UNDERSTAND, WHAT THE CONVERTED MAN WOULD BE LIKE WHEN GOD SHOULD FULFILL OR FINISH HIS WORK OF REDEEMING MAN.
 - A. This converted man would know the Lord.
 1. Know the Lord so intimately it would be a marriage. In fact, the word for *know* in Hebrew is *yadha* and is often used to mean the most intimate relationship of all—sexual intercourse in marriage.
 2. Know the Lord so fully that there is a oneness with the Lord to the extent that His mind becomes our mind—His will becomes our will—His desire and nature become our nature.
 - B. This converted man would be RENEWED.
 1. New relationship or covenant with the Lord
 2. New heart and mind from the Lord
 3. New speech—TRUTH
 4. New name
 5. New strength
 - C. This converted man would live REJOICING.
 1. Through worship
 2. Through service
 3. Through suffering
- III. THIS IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH MOST OF THOSE TO WHOM THE PROPHETS PREACHED.

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- A. They did not know the Lord. They did not want to know the Lord. They mocked God's law; they persecuted God's preachers; they filled their hearts with the knowledge of idolatry and paganism.
- B. In so doing they found abomination and decadence instead of renewal. Men become like the thing they love. (Hosea 9:10)
- C. And instead of rejoicing, they lived in hate, jealousy, envy, greed, chaos.

IV. NOW GOD HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO TURN AGAIN (WHICH IS CONVERSION) TO GOD AS MAN WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING.

- A. God has confronted man face to face on man's own level.
- B. God became man and dwelt among us.
- C. God, in Jesus Christ, came and conquered all that stands in man's way of turning back to God.
- D. Now man can regain his lost destiny, his lost companionship with his Creator, his lost dominion, his lost purpose.
- E. In other words, man turning back to God, finds himself.

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