



“The righteous . . . shall grow
like a cedar in Lebanon”

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion
to the Book of
Isaiah

*“So they read in the book in the law of God . . .
and caused them to understand the reading”*

Nehemiah 8:8

By
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Preface

The contents of this book were the essence of a course taught in the Bible College at New Germany Baptist Church in 2004. In order to make these materials more easily useable for ongoing class use I have kept the class divisions used in the course, as listed on the Contents page.

Because of the size of the book we're covering in working through Isaiah, and this within 20 hours of class (averaging 3½ chapters per class), we were not able to deal with every verse in this study, nor do we handle every section with equal detail. My hope is that enough is provided for you to more easily follow the sense of the Lord's words through His prophet.

A wonderful study it is, expressing darkest warning and brightest hope for all who hear. Israel would not hear, and thus suffered the promised result of their rebellion. But God in His grace will restore that nation to prominence and blessing. It is written! And what will *you* do with the sure promises and warnings of the true God?

Bill Daniels

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As well as; “Through the Beloved Book of Books
 A Survey of the New Testament

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“All we like sheep
have gone astray;
we have turned every one
to his own way;
and the LORD
hath laid on Him
the iniquity of us all”

(Isaiah 53:12)

Class 1 – Introduction

Prophets and Prophecy

The Old Testament (O.T.) prophets of God mostly appeared at times of rebellion and apostasy among the Lord's people. They came on the scene;

- As a hedge or barricade against further wandering of the people from the Lord's way.
- As a whip to drive God's people back to His right path.
- As a hammer to smash stubborn hardness of souls.
- As a plough to break up the hard ground of rebel hearts.

Therefore the message of the prophets is often quite negative and condemning in nature. They came to the people of their day with a protest from God, pointing a finger at wrong and calling men to repentance and return to the Lord. As a result of their purpose as a road-block, most of the O.T. prophets arose near the times of Israel's captivities (see chart of kings and prophets at the end of this class section);

- The majority arose just before the captivity in

Babylon (pre-exilic).

- Two (Ezekiel & Daniel) during the Babylonian captivity (exilic).
- Three (Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi) after the captivity in Babylon (post-exilic).

And of course there were many other prophets besides those the Lord used to help write His Book of books, such as Enoch, Elijah, Elisha, Nathan, Micaiah, & Huldah. The Lord used others to record the lives and words of these. Moses, Samuel, and David were called prophets as well.

Folks often tend to think the only purpose of the prophet was to tell the future. This was an important part of his work but not all of it, perhaps not even the main part. The prophet came to his day as a preacher, bringing a message from God to His wayward people. Thus his work involved the two main aspects of;

- Forth-telling – Warning, persuading, and correcting, or what we would call preaching. He came to call the people of his day to repentance and return to the Lord. He was the moral conscience of his society.
- Fore-telling – Speaking of what would come in

the future.

God's prophets were men to whom the Lord communicated directly through visions (Isa. 6), dreams (Dan. 2 & 7), angels (Dan. 9), "*mouth to mouth*" (Num. 12:6-8), "*still small voice*" (I Ki. 19:12), etc. They were "*holy men of God*" who wrote and spoke "*as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" (II Peter 1:21).

The Lord was careful to guide His people concerning which prophets to whom they should listen, for in every age there have been false voices. A true prophet of God;

- Turned hearts only to the true God (Deut. 13:1-5).
- Did not practice divinations, sorcery, or other dark arts (Deut. 18:9-12; Isa. 8:19).
- Could be recognized by his morally pure life (Micah 3:11; Isa. 28:7).
- Could point to a distinct call to ministry (Ex. 3; Jer. 1; Isa. 6; I Ki. 19:19-21).
- Often had God's stamp of signs and wonders upon his ministry (Ex. 4-12; I Sam. 12:16-18; I Ki. 18).

- Brought a message agreeing with all previous revelation (Deut. 13:1-3; Isa. 8:20).
- Spoke prophecies which proved to be entirely true (Deut. 18:20-22).

Taken together these tests assured God's people of the genuineness of God's prophets.

The prophets were usually rather unpopular people. Their messages were often considered to be against the best interests of the nation. For example Jeremiah advised the godless people of Jerusalem to turn themselves over to the king of Babylon when he came against them. Such advice was thought to be traitorous. And Micaiah stood against King Ahab's plan, calling his fake holy men a pack of liars. Such men resisted what seemed to be in the best interests of king and nation. And therefore they often suffered severe persecution, as Jeremiah and Micaiah did.

The focus of the prophets' foretelling varied widely, but it tended to centre upon two main future events – the 1st and 2nd comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter relates how God's prophets often struggled in sorting between these two very different comings (I Pet. 1:10-11).

What other book on earth can affirm its authority

through its unfailingly accurate foretelling of the future? None can! Other books claiming to be the words of God can only base their claim to authority on some seemingly consistent argument (or by attempting to pick holes in the consistency of all other sacred books). But the Bible's supreme measure of authority is that it simply states what will come to pass, and behold, all comes to pass as spoken. Fore-telling makes up a large part of God's revelation. Something like 25-30% of the Bible is predictive in nature! Perhaps the Lord's great emphasis here largely because of the power of fulfilled prophecy to affirm the Bible's authority. This makes the study of the prophets and their prophecies essential.

As we know, there were scores of O.T. prophecies fulfilled quite literally in Christ's first coming. About a quarter of those related to the greatest focus of the gospel accounts on Christ's betrayal, trial, death, burial, and resurrection. One writer stated that of the 845 O.T. quotations in the New Testament (N.T.), 333 refer to Jesus Christ. Certainly that coming One was the object of Isaiah's greatest focus.

Contrasts

There were three main offices in the O.T. economy; the prophet, the priest, and the king. A prophet was

a man of God who spoke to people in behalf of God. He represented God to the people. He was the *mouthpiece* of the Lord. A priest was a man of God who spoke to God in behalf of the people. He represented the people to God. He was the *mediator* between man and God. A priest was born to his office, but a prophet was called or appointed directly by the Lord. Some men were both priest and prophet, such as Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:3), and perhaps Zechariah (compare Zech. 1:1 with Nehemiah 12:4, descendent of Iddo the priest). Samuel was a prophet, priest, and judge. David was a prophet and king. Only in Jesus Christ are all three major O.T. offices of prophet (Acts 3:22), priest (Heb. 7:21), and king (Rev. 17:14) combined.

Background

A brief reminder of the background of the days of the prophets is important, and particularly of Isaiah's day.

In the O.T. era there were four main empires which were important in the history of God's people; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia. Greece and Rome would feature later during the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments and into the N.T. era. There were other nations playing smaller roles as well, such as Philistia, Moab, Syria, Edom,

etc. It is the rise and fall of these nations around the land of Israel that the Lord used to shape His people during the O.T. days.

After the death of King Solomon the united nation of Israel was split between the 10 tribes of “Israel” in the north and the two tribes of “Judah” in the south. The nation of Syria rose to the peak of her power in the earlier years of Israel’s divided kingdom. Then in the closing days of the northern kingdom of Israel the nation of Assyria came into her strength. Her capitol city was Nineveh. She became famous (infamous) for her gloating records of victories in battle and her barbarous tortures of captives. It was Shalmaneser of Assyria who carried the northern kingdom of Israel away into captivity in 722 B.C. The nation of Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar, then rose to world power over Assyria. As Babylon pressed westward Egypt fell before her in the famous battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates in the early 600’s B.C. And then the walls of Jerusalem came down, and the southern nation of Judah was carried away to Babylon for the 70-year captivity there, as prophesied by Jeremiah. While God’s people were still held captive in Babylon, the Medes and Persian combined forces to crush Babylon and take world dominion. Isaiah had in fact named Cyrus, their leader, centuries before he was born (44:28; 45:1).

Cyrus ended the captivity of God's people, sending as many Jews as were willing back to Jerusalem.

Daniel, who had been carried away to Babylon, lived to see the fall of that nation and the rise of Persia to world dominion. But through Daniel God spoke of the future rise and fall of other nations. First Greece and then Rome. These events of course have all now passed from prophecy to history.

Isaiah, the Man

Isaiah lived and ministered during the days of four of Judah's kings; Uzziah (or Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1). King Uzziah was a good man. But toward the end of his reign he was struck with leprosy from the Lord for foolishly taking the priest's role and burning incense in the holy place of the temple (II Chron. 26). It was in the year of King Uzziah's death that Isaiah was called of the Lord to be His prophet (chapter 6).

Isaiah watched the gathering power of Assyria far to the north, and foresaw the part that nation would play in the future of the Lord's rebellious people. Though the focus of Isaiah's ministry was in Judah, his prophecies reached the nation of Israel in her final days as well, but to little effect. As Israel fell to Assyria Isaiah warned Judah of her similar fate if she

refused to turn to the Lord. The prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah all joined Isaiah in the same era, calling the Lord's people to repentance and reform.

Despite the warnings of God's prophets, King Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah, went to Assyria for help against the combined threat of Israel and Syria to the north, who were attempting to force Judah to join them in a confederacy against the rising power of Assyria. Ahaz was a fool to seek help from Assyria rather than from the Lord. His foolish choice was a bit like asking a lion's help against a leopard's attack, only to be eaten by the lion. Isaiah's passionate appeal against such an alliance is found in chapters 7-9. As Isaiah had predicted, Judah received no help from Assyria but was led only into even greater trouble and apostasy. Any union with the world, for whatever reason, is sure to have just that effect. Satan uses all such illicit attachments to lead only to greater compromise with evil.

Amazingly, the son to follow such a foolish king as Ahaz to the throne was godly King Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a man who listened to the Lord's message. And Isaiah became a tower of strength to this king as he sought to bring reforms to the nation of Judah, and again as Assyria later came against Jerusalem. It was because Hezekiah thumbed his

nose at Assyria's dominion and the paying of tribute to her that Sennacherib came knocking at Jerusalem's gate. King Hezekiah had made the decision to forsake his father's compromise with Assyria and trust God instead. It was a hard decision, yet how richly God rewarded the king's faith. Sennacherib's army was crushed outside Jerusalem's gate without so much as the lifting of a sword. And by that means the plug was pulled on the mighty power of the great Assyrian Empire. All because Hezekiah bravely chose to believe God's words through His prophet when facing utterly *impossible* odds. It's always the same in every age. It's always a question of whether you will simply trust God for His word, even when to do so seems so childish and naïve and foolishly inadequate.

It was then faithful Isaiah who was later called to rebuke King Hezekiah, when in his pride he showed the delegates from Babylon all the riches of Judah (II Ki. 20).

Then Hezekiah's son Manasseh followed his father to the throne. And in that man came the most unfortunate combination of the longest reigning and most evil of Judah's kings. Manasseh's birth came during the 15-year extension of King Hezekiah's life (II Ki. 20), an extension of years Hezekiah and Judah

would perhaps have been better off without. That godless heir to the throne trashed all of his father's righteous reforms, plunging the nation of Judah to her ruin. Tradition suggests that Isaiah was put to death by this wicked son (sawn in half? Heb. 11:37).

Though Isaiah's ministry was largely aimed at the people of Judah, how the Lord has extended that prophet's influence far beyond his own nation and time. God does the same with every soul placed without reservation into His hands. He sends the aroma of such a sweet offering far beyond only the immediate sphere of influence, the ripple effect of a godly life carrying into many generations.

Purpose

What was Isaiah's purpose in writing? To call Judah, Jerusalem, and the nations to put away their hypocrisy and return to the Lord. And he wrote to hold out the promise of a Redeemer, and to assure Israel of her promised coming kingdom.

The theme of salvation and descriptions of the Saviour run throughout this book of prophecy. See 1:27; chapter 12 (a millennial hymn of praise from the hymnbook of heaven); 45:15-17; 46:12-13; 52:7-10; 61:10. For this reason the book of Isaiah has sometimes been referred to as "the fifth gospel".

Isaiah warned of the captivities of Israel to Assyria and Judah to Babylon. But as well he brought the good news of God's people restored from captivity, both in that old era and in Christ's return to His coming kingdom (chapter 11).

Outline

Condemnations (1-35)

Concerning Hezekiah (36-39)

Comforts (40-66)

As a result of differences in style and approach between the first major portion of Isaiah (1-35) and the second major portion (40-66), in the mid-1800's a theory was conceived and popularised that there were at least two authors of the book of Isaiah. Part of the "problem" was that in the opinion of such scholars there appeared to be too many details (such as Cyrus named) in Isaiah's writings for it to be prophecy. Such "scholars" were looking to find a later author writing from a historical perspective rather than Isaiah writing prophetically. But if indeed this is revelation from He who knows the end from the beginning then relating details before the event is as easy as relating them after! Isaiah often affirmed that he wrote of things yet future (42:9; 46:10; 48:6).

Without doubt we can certainly see something of a differing flavour between the early and later portions of Isaiah's book. But we must understand a few simple truths, which help to put things into perspective;

- Chapters 1-35 were written before the exile into Babylon, in an effort to *correct* apostasy.
- Chapters 40-66 were written for the days after the exile, in an effort to *comfort*.
- Support for a "deutero-Isaiah" (multiple authors) is found in no other writings before the idea arose 150 years ago.
- The New Testament writers quote from all portions of Isaiah's book, and clearly ascribe all to Isaiah! Compare Matt. 3:3 with Isa. 40:3, Matt 4:14 with Isa. 9:1, Matt. 8:17 with Isa. 53:4, John 12:38 with Isa. 53:1, and John 12:39-41 with Isa. 6:10.

Distinctives

The book of Isaiah is the second most quoted book in the N.T., second only to the book of Psalms.

Isaiah clearly outlined the future for the nation of Israel, and the details of her coming King and kingdom. We're told herein of Christ's birth (7:14;

9:6), family (11:1), anointing with the Spirit (11:2), character (11:3-4), gentleness (42:1-4), suffering and death (chapter 53), redemption (53:11), resurrection (25:8, *“He will swallow up death in victory”*), and reign (chapter 11).

Some have pointed out the interesting feature that the book of Isaiah has the same number of chapters as the Bible has books. And the major divisions are the same as well;

- 39 O.T. books coinciding with the first 39 chapters of Isaiah, which ring with the same thundering condemnation of the law.
- 27 N.T. books coinciding with the last 27 chapters of Isaiah (40-66), which suddenly brighten with the good news of coming blessing.

Wrath Study

5:14, 25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4; 13:9; 30:27-28; 34:1-8; 63:3-4; 66:14-16

Kingdom Study

2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11; 25:6-26:4; 32:15-18; 35; 60; 65:17-25

“My Servant” Study

42:1-7; 49:5-10; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-3

Divided Kingdoms Dia

Class 2 – Isaiah 1-2

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

Chapter 1

1:1-9 – Judah’s Desperate Condition

Vs. 1 – “*Concerning Judah and Jerusalem*” – Isaiah’s message was aimed particularly at the two tribes of the south and the capital city of Jerusalem.

“*In the days of . . .*” – Isaiah likely began his ministry as a young man and served his people for many decades, for there were nearly 50 years between King Uzziah’s death and Hezekiah’s recovery from sickness. The prophet lived through good eras and bad, when his preaching was popular and when it was not. Jotham and Hezekiah were good kings, while Ahaz and Manasseh were not. Yet God’s preacher was called to carry on preaching “*in season, and out of season*” (II Tim. 4:1). The nature or attitude of the day must never be allowed to hinder our call to “*preach the word*”.

1:2 *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*
1:3 *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

Vs. 2 – “*Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth*” – The Lord begins by addressing the heavens and earth concerning His people. This perhaps because His own people would not listen to Him? Eli the priest wouldn’t listen to the Lord, and so He spoke to young Samuel instead (I Sam. 3). Maybe something of the same here? The Lord describes His people as ungrateful, rebellious children. He was shamed before the nations, for a rebellious child is a great embarrassment to any parent. As if He feels the need to explain.

Vs. 3 – “*The ox knoweth his owner . . .*” – Even beasts know their master, the hand that feeds them and the place of feeding. Yet these were duller than beasts, and relatively thick beasts (ox and donkey). They neither knew nor would they stop and consider their duty to the Almighty and their need of Him. They were like people all around us today, who take no time to know or consider how the Lord’s words apply to them personally, or how He has nourished them. We owe our *everything* to God’s tender care and amazing longsuffering, and must ever be watchful of

1:4 *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*
1:5 *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*

the same criminal rebellion and ingratitude creeping into our own hearts.

Vs. 4 – “*Ah sinful nation . . .*” – Such strong terms God uses to describe them here;

- Rebelled (vs. 2).
- Without knowledge or consideration (vs. 3).
- Sinful (vs. 4).
- Laden with iniquity. They were burdened down with their sin like a vine heavy with ripened grapes, describing the greatness of their sin and ripeness for judgment.
- A seed of evildoers, speaking of the line of rebels from which they had come.
- Corrupters. Not only themselves sick, but *contagious*, actively infecting others with their corruption.
- Those forsaking and provoking the Lord.
- Backed away. Alienated and separated from

1:6 *From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*
1:7 *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.*

the One who nourished and brought them up.

Vs. 5-6 – “*Why should ye be stricken any more?*” – Why bother with further beatings?! Compare II Chronicles 28:22, “*And in the time of his [King Ahaz’s] distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord*”. For some, correction only hardens them (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). Oh there is such fearful warning when God ceases to discipline those so seared of conscience. The Lord compares them to a horribly diseased body, wholly sick of head and heart, both the seat of discernment and of affection badly infected. They were senseless in their ways and coldly uncaring, the effect spreading to the whole of their national existence (from heel to head). And no attempt was being made to do anything constructive about it, with nothing closed, bound up, or medicated. No repentance for sins. The rotting, gangrenous flesh of pride was not cut away. Nothing was done to encourage healing. They simply did not care about the health of their souls or of relation to their God.

1:8 *And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.*
1:9 *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

Vs. 7-8 – “*Desolate . . . burned . . . overthrown*” – The Lord points their noses to the obvious, that their land was wasted and overrun by strangers. This is likely a reference to the invasions of Syria, Israel, Edom, and the Philistines during the reign of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:5, 17-19), who was forced to buy off Assyria as well (II Chron. 28:20-21). Instead of allowing his misfortunes and weakness to turn him to the Lord, Ahaz turned to the gods of stronger Syria, since their gods seemed to be helping them. This he did to his ruin (II Chron. 28:22-23).

The temple of God was left deserted “*as a cottage in the vineyard*”. Outside of wine season such a house would be forsaken and neglected. Compare II Chronicles 28:24.

Vs. 9 – “*A very small remnant*” – The preserving effect of the faithful remnant is what had saved the nation from ruin thus far. Paul quoted this in Romans 9:27, referring to the few of Israel in his day who believed in Jesus. As with Noah and family on the pre-flood earth, and as Lot in Sodom, God’s judgment was held off until the righteous were first removed. Only their

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

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

presence held back God's hand. Even so the church in this age, with the indwelling Spirit, is all that keeps the people of earth from running themselves straight into ruin, until at last the church shall be "*taken out of the way*" in the Rapture (II Thess. 2:7). How frustrated is Satan, who through "*the mystery of iniquity*" seeks to corrupt all. Yet always the remnant of the godly, that planting of the Lord, stands in the way as a preserver against total corruption. And how the corrupted world hates God's few, not knowing that to the righteous remnant they owe their very continued existence and opportunity to find life.

1:10-15 – Their Empty Ritual

Vs. 10 – "*Hear the word of the LORD . . .*" – God called them by such infamous names perhaps because there could scarcely be found 10 righteous ones in their midst (Gen. 18). As if their condition were comparable to those ruined cities whose people were "*wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly*"

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

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

(Gen. 13:13).

Vs. 11-15 – “*Vain oblations*” – God found no delight in their “*vain oblations*”. All were empty, meaningless labours, serving no valuable purpose whatsoever. Outward oblation without inward devotion is *worthless*. They were really enemies to true religion while continuing the form of it. Though their service was to the Lord’s altar and not to that of false gods, yet the Lord caustically referred to their hollow efforts as *trampling His courts* (vs. 12). Apparently their “worship” was with some zeal, for all aspects were there;

- Not just sacrifices, but an *abundance* of them (vs. 11).
- Incense, and special days, gatherings, and feasts (vs. 13-14).
- Yet it was all abomination and grief to their God (vs. 13), for “*the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*” (Prov. 15:8, 9, 26). His soul hates it (vs. 14). It is a trouble and

1:14 *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*
1:15 *And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.*

weariness.

- And not just prayers, but “*many prayers*” (vs. 15). Spreading forth their hands as if in earnest. Yet the Lord proclaimed that He would hide rather than hear (Prov. 1:24-32).

All was of a proper form, time, and place, and perhaps now with even greater care with their land so laid waste (vs. 7). As if they thought to buy God’s aid as they would the Assyrians? Men still try to make one-way deals with the Lord. “*Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee*” (26:16). Yet see what accompanied their devotions;

- Hands defiled with the blood of murder (vs. 15). Picture those outwardly devout murderers of Jesus Christ.
- Idolatry (2:8).
- A wrong heart. The marginal note at vs. 12 is, “*to be seen before Me*”. Their concerns went no further than appearances.

1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Such hollow devotions are so far from acceptable to the Lord that they actually are an abomination to Him. Compare in Luke 18:9-14 the detestable prayer of the Pharisee in contrast to the true repentance of the publican.

1:16-17 – The Lord’s Demands

Vs. 16 – The negative side – Wash, put away, cease from evil. As James’ command in 4:8 to “*cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded*”. One cannot “*draw nigh to God*” and expect that He will “*draw nigh to you*” without cleansing first. Both confessing (wash) and forsaking (cease) of sin are necessary if a man would find mercy (Prov. 28:13). Compare Paul’s command to mortify (put to death) the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:13).

Vs. 17 – The positive side.

- Learn to do good. Here is the principle of replacement, to “*put off*” and “*put on*” (Eph. 4).

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

- Seek judgment. Seek out (study) what is according to justice that you might do it.
- Relieve the oppressed.
- Judge the fatherless.
- Plead for the widow. Again the insistence of James that pure, undefiled religion will “*visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*” (James 1:27)
- The last three reflect care for the cause of the weak. A right heart toward *man* is as much a part of true religion as a right heart toward God.

Vs. 18 – “*Come now, and let us reason together . . .*” – Though the Lord left little doubt of His rejection of their outward religion, yet He did not reject *them*. Still His gracious invitation. And no sin so “*red*” that it couldn’t be made “*as white as snow*” with true repentance. See how God emphasizes by repetition both the deepness of the stain and the completeness of His cleansing. He is more than reasonable! For

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

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

the truly fair response would be what He brought upon man in Noah's day, and to the cities of the plain in Abraham's day, and threatened again in Exodus 32:10. It was as the prophet Hosea illustrated, in actually pleading for the return of his whoring wife, actually *wanting* her back after her run-away harlotry. This beckons us to a far, far greater patience toward others than society is willing to tolerate.

1:19-20 – Options

Vs. 19 – *“If ye be willing and obedient”* – See how very little the Lord really requires of us. Penitence, not penance (punishments) is what He seeks. And not merely outward obedience, but an inward will for His will. And see how very much He offers in return, that a man might be washed entirely clean of sin (vs. 16). The Lord really is so incredibly good!

Vs. 20 – *“But if ye refuse and rebel”* – Here are both promise and threat – eat (vs. 19) or be eaten (vs. 20).

1:21-23 – Reflections

*1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment;
righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.
1:22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:
1:23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth
gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither
doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*

Vs. 21 – *“How is the faithful city become an harlot”* – Faithfulness turned to unfaithfulness. Not only unfaithful as in a once-off event, but full-blown harlotry, as Hosea’s wife (a prophet and prophecy of the same era).

Vs. 22 – *“Thy silver is become dross”* – What once shined in her had lost its lustre, and what was once sweet had gone diluted and flat.

Vs. 23 – *“Thy princes are rebellious”* – Leaders were allied to thieves and taking bribes. They were consenting to the enticements of sinners and casting in their lot with them (Prov. 1). All were given to following after rewards, regardless of rights or wrongs or who was trampled. They were selfishly motivated by personal gain rather than by a passion for justice, love, or duty to protect the weak. The cause of widows and fatherless was last on their interest list because such folks had no resources with which to pay a bribe.

1:24 *Therefore saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel,
Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:*
1:25 *And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross,
and take away all thy tin:*
1:26 *And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the
beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the
faithful city.*
1:27 *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with
righteousness.*

1:24-31 – Resolutions

Vs. 24 – “*Thus saith the Lord . . .*” – The opinion of the *Mightiest One* (don’t miss the emphasis here), though ignored by some, really *does* matter, and will be made to matter. He would (and did) put a stop to their unjust practices. Sin and selfishness blind men to the all-importance of *God’s* opinion, and actually make a man the enemy of the Almighty.

Vs. 25 – “*I will . . . purge away thy dross*” – He would serve as a refiner to purge His people through the fire of His judgment.

Vs. 26-27 – “*I will restore*” – See how God’s gracious purpose is not merely to judge wrong, but to put it right, both individually (vs. 18-19) and now nationally. Our God is so unlike us in our selfish purposes, often reduced only to a vengeance born of hate. How easily we lose track of a proper purpose

1:28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
1:29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
1:30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
1:31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

to *restore*.

Vs. 29 – They would be made ashamed of the oak groves, where they mingled the worship of their false gods with the true.

Vs. 30 – They would be made like the groves of their idols, withered, and faded, and fruitless. Compare Ps. 115:8. Compare the fig tree cursed by Jesus (Mk. 11).

Chapter 2

2:1-4 – Sure Restoration

Vs. 2-3 – “*The mountain of the LORD’s house*” – Not a reference to the return of Ezra’s day, but to the Millennial Kingdom of Christ “*in the last days*”. Compare Revelation 21 (end) & Zechariah 8:20-23; 14. The Lord in Jerusalem will be the centre of the

2:1 *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*
2:2 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*
2:3 *And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

earth during that Kingdom, and beyond into eternity.

Vs. 3 – Notice the nature of hearts in that day. Not, “You go ahead, and have a good time at the house of the Lord”, nor, “We’re going to the Lord’s house, and you do as you please”, but as it should be; “Come ye, and let us go up to the house of God”. “We’re on our way to church, why don’t you come too?” And not only will “*many people*” go to the Lord’s house to be taught “*of His ways*” in those days, but they’ll go with a mind to apply what they learn, to “*walk in His paths*”. Both aspects are important if we would find true blessing.

Vs. 4 – Not only peace (no need of swords and spears), but fruitfulness (great need of plowshares and pruninghooks). The curse will be lifted from the ground, with the ploughman overtaking the reaper (Amos 9:13).

2:5 – Call to Restoration

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

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

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

“O house of Jacob, come ye” – Here is the Lord’s plea to His people to walk in the light in view of that coming day. And here is one practical effect of prophecy. That distant prospect is meant to move us to present holiness. How little does proud, wayward man deserve such a place in the light or God’s pleading invitation to enter!

2:6-9 – Need of Restoration

Vs. 6 – *“Replenished from the east”* – They filled their land with foreigners who did not follow their God or customs. These were not believers, as Ruth, but the undoing of Joshua’s work, for they came still clinging to their false religion.

“Soothsayers like the Philistines” – Having rejected God’s counsel in His Word, His people were drawn instead to the occult practices of their Philistine neighbours. Something false was needed to fill the void in their hearts when the power of the true God

2:7 *Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:*
2:8 *Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:*
2:9 *And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.*

was rejected.

“Please themselves in the children of strangers” – They came to appreciate and conform to the fashions of those foreign to God’s ways among them. Just as the modern church. How quickly we learn the ways of the company we appreciate, when we refuse to appreciate God’s pure ways.

Vs. 7-8 – *“Their land is also full of . . .”* – Rather than resting their confidence in God, they foolishly ran to the things in which the world around them placed their trust. As King Ahaz running to the gods of Syria (II Chron. 28:23). They sought security in riches, horses, and chariots (yet *“knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”*, Rev. 3:17).

Vs. 8-9 – Here is that which God often mocks, the insanity of man’s homage to idols of his own making (Ps. 115:4-8). They refused trust in the Lord alone to

2:10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.
2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
2:12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

flourish them above their neighbours, running instead to drink from the same tainted troughs from which the world drinks. It is such utter *confusion!* For considering themselves above the worship of the true God men instead “*fall down to the stock of a tree*” (Isa. 44:13-19).

2:10, 19, 21 – “*For fear of the LORD*”

Compare Revelation 6. In the last days lofty man will flee before the Lord into the hiding places of the rocks. Having refused to flee in fear *to* Him, they will flee in fear *from* Him at the last. And how foolish for man to think he could find refuge in rocks from He who “*ariseth to shake terribly the earth*”. But then where is true refuge to be found if not in the only true and living God? For in every place under the sun man might think to hide, “*Thou art there*” (Ps. 139:7-12).

2:11-17 – Haughty Man Humbled

2:13 *And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,*
2:14 *And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,*
2:15 *And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,*
2:16 *And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.*
2:17 *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*
2:18 *And the idols he shall utterly abolish.*

Vs. 11 – *“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled”* – Compare vs. 17. Terms of human pride are found 12 times in this section, and 5 times terms of human humbling. The continual reminder of divine wisdom is that pride will meet its fall; either through repentance or recompense; either through *self-abasing* or *God’s abasing*.

Vs. 12 – *“The day of the Lord”* is that future time when the Lord of the day will show Himself in bringing down every form of human pride.

Vs. 13-16 – Several images of tall, stately, seemingly immovable things, and things made for security upon which men place their confidence are given here. Every such lofty image of strength or security *“shall be bowed down”* in that day when *“the LORD alone shall be exalted”*.

2:18-22 – Idolatry Abolished

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

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

2:21 *To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*

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

Vs. 20 – Man will cast away his idols with his confidence in them. Like terrified soldiers throwing aside the weapons upon which they had been trusting, in order to run like the wind. Like a thief throwing aside knife and loot, evidences of his crime, for fear of being caught with them.

Vs. 22 – “*Cease ye from man*” – Here is God’s call to man to recognize the foolishness of ever putting his trust in weak man and his creations, arms, and securities. As King Ahaz running to alliance with Assyria instead of to the Lord.

“*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses*”. And some trust in man, with “*breath in his nostrils*”, and some in the stock of a tree. “*But we will remember the name of the Lord our God*” (Ps. 20:7).

Class 3 – Isaiah 3-6

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

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

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

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

In chapter 1 the Lord began with description of the desperate moral condition and empty, superficial religion of His people. Yet in the midst of His just charges against them His gracious offer of cleansing still stood (1:16-19).

Chapter 2 began with a glowing, distant promise of millennial blessing, followed by an underscored assurance that all that is lifted up with pride will be levelled. The Lord seeks both to *drive* and *draw* the hearts of people with a dose of both threat and promise.

Chapter 3

3:1-8 – Stay and Staff Removed

- 3:5 *And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.*
- 3:6 *When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:*
- 3:7 *In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.*
- 3:8 *For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.*
-

Vs. 1-5 – God now describes how He would remove all things upon which His people were resting their confidence, their “*stay*” (supporting strings) and their “*staff*” upon which they leaned. Guy ropes and tent poles suggest the flimsy nature of man’s tent-like existence. Neither material abundance (vs. 1), nor military might, nor capable leaders (vs. 2-3) would suffice. Children, or perhaps childish and foolish men, would be put in power. Solomon pronounced woe upon such a child-ruled nation (Eccl. 10:16).

Vs. 6-8 – “*Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen*” – The prosperity tap would be turned off. There would come such an absence of basic necessities that the rare possession of adequate clothing would become qualification enough for leadership (vs. 6). The Lord Himself is lined up against those who provoke Him.

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

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

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

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

3:9-11 – To Each His Own

Vs. 9 – *“The show of their countenance doth witness against them”* – Insolence was evident in their faces (Prov. 6:17). They were openly practicing their evil (*“hide it not”*). All appropriate shame was thrown to the wind, as at Sodom and Gomorrah. Theirs was a *“whore’s forehead”*, refusing even to blush (Jer. 3:3; 6:15).

Vs. 10-11 – *“To the righteous . . . unto the wicked”* – The Lord made it clear that the righteous need not fear being punished with the wicked, while the wicked must not expect deliverance with the righteous. The rod of God swings true, hitting only those truly deserving. Compare the Lord’s reasoning effort with Cain (Gen. 4).

3:12-15 – Reign of Error

- 3:13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.*
3:14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
3:15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
3:16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:
3:17 Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.
3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,
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Pictured here is a nation suffering under poor leadership in a day of error and destruction. God would bring judgment on the elders and princes for their abuse of power, taking advantage of the weak, whom they were appointed to protect. Therefore the Lord would put them under those they abused, women and children.

3:16-24 – Haughty Daughters

The Lord then turned His gaze to the proud, parading women, for none escape His notice. And His attention took in even the very practical question of their dress. In fact, particularly their dress. They were full of themselves (haughty) and sought to attract the attention of the boys (wanton). Compare Proverbs 7:10-17. It was brazen rebellion against

3:19 *The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,*
 3:20 *The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,*
 3:21 *The rings, and nose jewels,*
 3:22 *The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,*
 3:23 *The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.*
 3:24 *And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.*

“modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” (I Tim. 2:9), and against the behaviour *“as becometh holiness”* of Titus 2:3, or as *“becometh women professing godliness”* of I Timothy 2:10. Isn’t God clearly indicating here that inward disposition is in fact displayed in outward demeanour? They were *“making a tinkling with their feet”* (vs. 16 & 18), speaking of *“anklets . . . tinkling with them, a mark of women desirous of attracting attention . . . as an ornament of women loving display”* (Gesenius).

Vs. 24 – Behold how all the things proud women set their desire upon to feed their pride and impress others (body, finery, smell, clothing, hair, etc.) the Lord would strip away, leaving them exposed, humiliated, stinking, and sitting in the dust.

This matter of outward appearance must be liberally

3:25 *Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.*
3:26 *And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.*
4:1 *And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*

seasoned with modesty and humility. Such surface considerations must never be allowed to become a means of prideful attention-seeking or comfort.

Vs. 25 – “*Thy men shall fall by the sword*” – See how the ones the women so sought to impress, “*thy men*” rather than *thy God*, would soon be gone. The Lord is quite serious about the foolishness of human pride.

Chapter 4

4:1-6 – Two Changed Days

Vs. 1 – “*In that day seven women shall take hold of one man*” – A continuation of the judgment scene of the previous verses, relating the aftermath. Few men would be left after the great slaughter described in 3:25. And note the indications of desperation;

- Women shamelessly courting men.

4:2 *In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.*
4:3 *And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:*

- Women bold to “*take hold*” of a man.
- An abnormal willingness for sharing arrangements.
- The offer to pay their own way in the relationship.

Still no shame! Having been stripped of the trinkets and tokens of pride they would become willing for the most basic of honours. But still there is no indication of repentance here, or turning to the Lord.

Vs. 2-6 – “*In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful*” – Now the prophetic eye lifts and looks beyond to a changed day much farther into the future. As in 2:1-4 it’s another stirring vision of God’s grace in Christ’s Millennial Kingdom following His devastating day of judgment. A heartening ray of sunshine penetrating the dark clouds. Compare the good news of the gospel of pardon and peace in Christ following on the heels of the bad news of man’s sure judgment for his sin.

4:4 *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.*
4:5 *And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.*
4:6 *And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.*

Vs. 2 – The Lord’s beautiful, glorious “*branch*” is a prophetic name of Christ (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). Aaron’s rod (branch) that formed buds in the test of Numbers 17 is a picture of Jesus as well. For He was cut off as a branch in His rejection and death, yet He has sprung up again to life and will yet sprout in His return to reign, miraculously budding out of death and obscurity.

Note the other things that will feature in that day of Christ’s earthly reign;

- The earth’s excellent and comely fruit (vs. 2).
- The holy remnant (vs. 3), with all filth purged (vs. 4).
- The close personal presence of the Lord for guidance (vs. 5).
- A tabernacle for shade and shelter (vs. 6).

5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:
5:2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.
5:3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

Only those “*written among the living*” will be there (vs. 3). And you? Will you be there?

“*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3).

Chapter 5

5:1-7 – Parable of Vineyard Owner

Vs. 1-2 – “*My Wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill*” – The Lord’s vineyard is walled, cleared, planted, a tower and press built, and this on very fertile land. There were great preparations and expectations and every potential for fruit. Yet amazingly it didn’t produce as expected. And not that it was *no* or *low* produce, but *bad* growth, *sour* fruit, “*grapes of gall and clusters of bitterness*” (Deut. 32:32). Fruit formed from the old, bitter root stock rather than from the new grafted in cultivar. It speaks of the great lengths to which God has gone

5:4 *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?*
5:5 *And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:*
5:6 *And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*

for the good and growth of Israel, and for all mankind. He provides everything necessary for protection and guidance, and every encouragement toward growth and fruitfulness. Such opportunity breeds responsibility. God expects fruit from those so privileged, and yet has been so greatly disappointed by His people. Jesus used this as the basis of one of His parables (Matt. 21:33ff), but He made the keepers the problem rather than the vines, as here.

Vs. 3-4 – *“What could have been done more to My vineyard?”* – The Lord’s lamentation over the outcome. He was asking the obvious questions.

Vs. 5-6 – *“I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard”* – Here is now the Lord’s resolve to bring judgment. Protections would be removed. Maintenance would cease. Compare Christ’s parable of the fig tree in the vineyard with determination to *“cut it down; why*

5:7 *For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.*
5:8 *Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!*
5:9 *In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.*

cumbereth it the ground?” (Lk. 13:6-10).

Vs. 7 – Parable applied. “*My Wellbeloved*” speaks of “*the LORD of hosts*”, and the Lord’s plantings refers to Israel and Judah. Where He looked for fruits of righteousness He received only evil. Where He listened for justice He heard only the cry, “*Crucify Him!*”

5:8-30 – Six Woes & Four Therefore

That threatening little word “*woe*” is found 21 times in the book of Isaiah, a third of the whole of O.T. occurrences. It is the key word of warning for the unsaved of earth. *Woe* unto all who are outside of rest in Jesus Christ!

Vs. 8-9 – “*Woe*” upon those with an unreasonably excessive desire for great wealth, monopolizing all commodities, and swallowing up all in their way. As King Ahab with Naboth’s vineyard. Solomon had

- 5:10 *Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.*
- 5:11 *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!*
- 5:12 *And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.*
- 5:13 *Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.*
-

much to say about the folly of such an excessive attitude toward possessions in Ecclesiastes (chap. 2; 4:7-8; 5:8-17).

Vs. 10 – See how the fields so inappropriately desired and acquired would prove so disappointing. Ten acres of vineyard producing only a bath (about 30 litres). A mere 3 litres per acre! A homer (bushel) of planted seed producing an ephah (a *tenth* of a homer, Ezek. 45:11). A 90% loss on the investment! *The way of the sinner is hard!* Compare the Lord's message through the little book of Haggai.

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Principle

Pursue inappropriate *gains*, and you'll surely be disappointed by how quickly your resources run out.

Pursue appropriate *losses* (giving firstfruits to the

5:14 *Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.*
 5:15 *And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:*
 5:16 *But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.*
 5:17 *Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.*

Lord, denying dishonest gains, etc.), and you'll be amazed by how far your resources go.

Compare Proverbs 11:24-25

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Vs. 11-12 – “Woe” upon thoughtless, drunken party animals, for whom drinking appeared to be their only business (*“rise up early . . . continue all night”*). And this in broad daylight, hiding nothing, without shame. They were servants to none but their own carnal appetites. They refused to consider (1:3) what the Lord was doing. And note that music was an important part of their intoxication. There’s a type of music characteristic of a drunken revel, and there’s a kind of music appropriate for the pure worship of God. And never the twain should meet!

Vs. 13-17 – “*Therefore*” judgments would come, both earthly and eternal. And therefore the righteous,

5:18 *Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:*
5:19 *That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!*
5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

though oppressed before, would finally enjoy rest.

Vs. 18-19 – “*Woe*” upon those arrogantly daring God to bring on His judgments. The expression in vs. 18 speaks of pulling the penalty for iniquity onto oneself, as one who pulls to himself a raging lion out of the mist on the end of a rope. As one who scoffs at the black eye of a loaded shotgun muzzle. This is a similar attitude to the scoffers of II Peter 3, demanding “*where is the promise of His coming?!*” Belittling God’s words and preachers and dismissing His warnings as mere scare tactics designed to frighten those silly enough to listen.

Vs. 20 – “*Woe*” upon those who pervert justice, who define their own right, who run down what is right and push what is perverse. Such folks as these give deeds of darkness brighter names. “Oh no, it’s not rebellion, but individualism. It’s not arrogance, but assertiveness. It’s not immorality, but convenience.

5:21 *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*
5:22 *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:*
5:23 *Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!*
5:24 *Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*

It's not drunken debauchery, but camaraderie. It's not theft, but thrift".

Vs. 21 – “*Woe*” upon those proudly thinking they have arrived at wisdom’s door. So full of evident folly they are, yet with such lofty opinions of their own discernment. “*In their own eyes . . . sight*” implies that it’s not so in the eyes of others looking on.

Vs. 22-23 – “*Woe*” upon the besotted judges who succumb to improper influences, such as drink and bribes. “*Mighty to drink*” speaks perhaps of those who boast in their ability to consume great quantities of strong drink and still keep their head. As if this were some admirable accomplishment rather than a glorying in their shame. Woe to any society where money rules rather than justice.

Vs. 24-30 – “*Therefore*” judgments. It’s a gruesome

- 5:25 *Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*
- 5:26 *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:*
- 5:27 *None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:*
-

scene in vs. 25, fulfilled in Babylon's invasion and fulfilled again in Rome's invasion in 70 A.D. God would call in the nations as if whistling for a dog (vs. 26). How quietly He calls (with merely a "hiss", or *pssst!*) and from so great a distance, yet how easily and speedily the nations are mustered to serve His purposes. An obvious contrast is made with the stubborn density of His own people, who would not hear though His call be trumpeted directly into their ear!

Vs. 27-28 – "*None shall be weary nor stumble among them*" – The Lord would call *able enemies*; none tired, clumsy, or ill equipped. The Lord Himself steps in to aid the other side, removing every hindrance to those in-coming enemies, that they might come with all speed (in answer to the scoffing taunt of the arrogant in 5:19). And they would be enemies with effective equipment; sharp shafts, bent bows, hard hooves,

5:28 *Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:*
5:29 *Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.*
5:30 *And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.*

and whirlwind wheels.

Vs. 29-30 – *“In that day they shall roar against them”* – God’s instruments of judgment would come with such a sound! Like an approaching freight train or tornado (5 times the mention of their roaring). Don’t miss the implication here. Even those who block their ears to the wisdom of God’s words through His preachers wouldn’t miss the roaring! Like a lion roaring in attack (vs. 29). Like the thunder of an engulfing sea wave (vs. 30). And the darkness descends at last as the curtain of death. *“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”* (Prov. 29:1).

Chapter 5 – The Cause.

Chapter 6 – The Call.

6:1 *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*
6:2 *Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.*
6:3 *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Chapter 6

6:1-4 – Heavenly Throne Scene

Vs. 1 – *“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne”* – Compare Ezekiel 1 & 10; Daniel 7; Exodus 24:10; Revelation 4. This is the true eternal King of Israel, behind, above, and in contrast to the quite temporary earthly king, who displayed his mortality by dying that year.

Vs. 2 – *“Above it stood the seraphims”* – Here is the only mention of “*seraphim*” in the Bible. The name means “burning ones”. Apparently these are shining angelic beings, somewhat human in form (face, feet, voice), who minister to the Lord. Compare similar beings described in Ezekiel 1 & Revelation 4.

Vs. 3 – *“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts”* – The triple repetition of the seraphims’ cry communicates greatest emphasis. God’s supreme holiness is the

6:4 *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*
6:5 *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

characteristic He emphasizes. “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*” (I Jn. 1:5).

Vs. 4 – “*The posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried*” – The thundering voice of the angels shook the great stone threshold and doorposts with the power of their proclamation, suggesting the awesome presence and power of the Almighty.

6:5 – Isaiah’s Confession.

“*Then said I, Woe is me!*” – Standing in the presence of the Holy One, Isaiah was stunned and shaken with God’s majesty and supreme purity. And in the same instant he was equally stunned with his own sinfulness before God. To be “*undone*” or “cut off” is to be as a dead man! Here was a man seeing as in a mirror the reflection of his own wickedness in that moment of clear vision of the Lord’s holiness. As with Job, God needed only to show Himself to Isaiah, for the contrast was obvious. Isaiah responded with an utterly bowed heart, pronouncing woe upon himself as one worthy of God’s just condemnation. Even as

6:6 *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:*
6:7 *And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*

the pleading attitude of that penitent publican, “*God be merciful to me, a sinner!*” (Lk.18). And not only did the prophet recognize in himself the uncleanness of his actions, but his “*unclean lips*”, speaking of his words and the thoughts of his heart. Proper theology breeds proper anthropology. Compare the similar response of Moses (Ex. 3:6), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:28), Peter (Lk. 5:8), and John (Rev. 1:17).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (I Jn. 1:8).

6:6-7 – Isaiah’s Cleansing

Compare this event with God’s promise in I John 1:9 that “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*”. His promise wasn’t long in coming, as one of the seraphim immediately came and touched Isaiah’s unclean lips with a hot coal from the heavenly altar. The essential element for a life usable by God is not glowing talents, resources, eloquence, or wit, but *purity*. See how the “*woe*” of the prophet’s *confession* (vs. 5), now brought the “*lo*”

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

of the prophet's *cleansing* ("lo . . . thy sin is purged"), leading on to the "go" of the prophet's *commission* (vs. 9). Compare Ezekiel's call (Ezek. 2). Before a calling to service there must be a bowed heart before a clear vision of God's majesty and holiness.

6:8 – Isaiah's Call

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" – Notice how the Lord didn't speak to Isaiah directly, but let him become aware of the need for a man to stand in the gap. It was *the **Great Search*** – "who will go?" God does not force the door of man's heart, He simply knocks, He simply lays out the opportunity. The Lord was passing opportunity by the man to see what he would do with it, whether Isaiah would respond with self-service or self-sacrifice. Compare the opportunity of Christ's presence and power passed before blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10). Compare the opportunity for service and sacrifice given to Esther (Esth. 4). N.B. how this shielded offer only came after Isaiah was cleansed. Cleansed, *then* called. And called to *the **Great Side*** – "for us".

6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*
6:10 *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
6:11 *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,*

Isaiah's response? He jumped at the hope of being so used of the Lord, quickly grasping at the opportunity! "*Here am I; send me*"! Literally "Behold me! Send me!" It was *the Great Surrender*. Though the Lord had given Isaiah the option of allowing His question to go unanswered, it just wasn't in this man to pass up the chance.

6:9-13 – Isaiah's Commission

Vs. 9 – "*And He said, Go, and tell this people*" – Yet before Isaiah could form any false illusions about what ministry for the Lord would be, the Lord explained that there would only be a small remnant to show for his largely fruitless life of labours. Ah but it was *the Great Service!!* For it was this prophet who first exclaimed, "*How beautiful the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*" (52:7).

Jesus quoted from vs. 9-10 when giving the reason

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

6:13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

for parables in Matt. 13. This is the result of pride and a danger of which we too must ever beware.

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Contrasts

- Unholy nation – holy God.
- Rebellious nation – repentant prophet.
 - o Isaiah's greatness was not in his personal perfection, but in his penitence.
- Those overlooking their sin, refusing to consider (1:3) – one appalled by his sin.
- Crushed nation – commissioned man.

“Behold, a virgin
shall conceive,
and bear a son,
and shall call his name
Immanuel”

(Isaiah 7:14)

Class 4 – Isaiah 7-9

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

Chapter 7

7:1 – Summary Statement

The northern nation of Israel joined with Syria to the north of them against the southern two tribes of Judah. II Chronicles 28 relates how this confederacy gained the victory over Judah at the first, killing 120,000 soldiers and taking hundreds of thousands of people captive. But though their combined forces were much greater than Judah's they "*could not prevail*". The prophet Obed was sent to Israel with warning of God's "*fierce wrath*" upon them if they would not return what they had taken from Judah (II Chron. 28:9-11). It was the Lord standing in their way, though it was the Lord who had begun to raise up those two northern nations against Judah (II Ki. 15:37). Judah's King Ahaz was evil and idolatrous (II Chron. 28:1-4), and the Lord had a lesson He would teach through trouble.

7:2 *And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*
7:3 *Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;*
7:4 *And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.*
7:5 *Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,*

7:2 – Judah’s Reaction of Fear

“His heart was moved, and the heart of his people” – With news of the confederacy coming against them, king and commoner were afraid. It’s the natural result of threat in the heart of those with guilty conscience, who have not the Lord as their refuge. *“The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion”* (Prov. 28:1). Compare the Lord’s warning in Leviticus 26:36-37.

7:3-9 – Promise of Deliverance

This was all of grace, for David’s sake, and not in the least for the sake of this godless king.

Vs. 3 – Note how Isaiah was to take along his young son, Shearjashub (shē’ār jāsh’ub), whose name meant, “the remnant shall return”. The name of this

7:6 *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:*
7:7 *Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.*
7:8 *For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.*
7:9 *And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.*

son was an announcement (as Gomer's children in Hosea 1). Before the trouble even came the Lord was communicating that many would be taken, and yet they would be returned.

Vs. 8 – *“Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken”* – The coming captivity of the northern tribes of Israel (Ephraim) was announced. Those who would take their brothers captive would themselves be taken away by Assyria.

Vs. 8-9 – *“The head of . . .”* – The Lord seems to be saying here that He was going to keep Syria and Israel confined to their own boundaries.

Vs. 9 – *“If you will not believe, surely ye shall not be established”* – What the Lord had spoken through His prophet must be accepted by faith for it to be of any benefit to the hearer. Though what you hear be very good news, it will not be good news to you personally

7:10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
7:11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.
7:12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

unless you *personally* receive it by faith. Even so it is with the good news of the gospel. As well, there is no comfort to those who refuse to believe the Lord's promise of deliverance, for nothing *looked* like deliverance on the surface at the time.

7:10-16 – Sign to Ahaz

Vs. 10-12 – “Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God” – The Lord graciously offered the king a sign to confirm His promise of safety. But Ahaz refused, as if he were too pious for such, as if out of honour to the Lord and respect for His word, which the record shows was not in the man. The king didn't seem concerned about preserving God's honour when he later robbed the temple in order to buy the aid of Assyria (II Chron. 28:21). He cared little about trying the Lord's patience or expressing a lack of confidence in the Lord when later appealing to the gods of the Syrians (II Chron. 28:22-25). And does one ever “tempt the Lord” by just doing as the Lord Himself says? Men tempt the Lord by *NOT* doing what He says. The truth was this king of Judah was resolved to run to Assyria for his help

7:13 *And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?*
7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

and would not trust the Lord at all. It was already in him to rob what was God's to invest in Assyria's aid. He needed no proofs from God, for he had already refused in his heart to turn to the Most High for his protection. He wanted nothing to confirm his faith, for he was already confirmed in unbelief. And behold how he would perfume his perversion with such pious airs! As so many among men are so quick to imply devotion to the Lord, yet their lives don't bear up their claims.

Vs. 13-14 – “*Behold a virgin shall conceive . . . Immanuel*”. So the Lord left King Ahaz to his false piety, and turned to the whole “*house of David*”, giving that famous sign of the virgin-born son (Matt. 1:22-23). Immanuel means “God with us” (8:10), indicating the very message the Lord sought to impress upon the people of Judah. With the true God with them there was no need to fear the seemingly impressive power of Assyria and her false gods. It was a sign completely fulfilled in Christ's birth and earthly life, for *Mary* was that virgin and *Jesus* was that child. Perhaps there was some type

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

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

of immediate, partial fulfilment of that sign in that day, in order for it to have a confirming effect then. Such double fulfilment is so common in Bible prophecy. The immediate fulfilment would not have been a miraculous virgin birth, since only Christ would be born in that manner, but perhaps a Jewish virgin was soon married and gave birth to a child named Immanuel. And before the child was old enough *“to refuse the evil, and choose the good”* (age of accountability), God’s promised judgment fell upon Israel and Syria. Within just a few years time Assyria took Syria and killed King Rezin (II Ki. 16:9), and Hoshea conspired against King Pekah of Israel and took him out as well (II Ki. 15:30). God did what He said!

“Immanuel” is one of the great prophetic names of Jesus Christ, indicating both His deity (“God”) and His humanity (“with us”). And Christ’s virgin birth displayed both God’s power and purity in His entrance into the world. All pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ as One like none other ever born of a woman. Here is a comforting promise of present and

7:17 *The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.*
7:18 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.*
7:19 *And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.*
7:20 *In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.*

future blessing from a God who is not distant, but “with us” in our trouble.

7:17-25 – Assyria’s Devastation of Judah

King Ahaz had snubbed God’s help for the promise he saw in Assyria. Therefore the Lord described the ruin the king’s chosen trust would bring upon his nation. That mirage of seeming help would not only prove to be no water, but poison alkali. Not only failing to uphold them, but assailing to undo them! As the record states, the “*king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not*” (II Chron. 28:20). That proverbial staff upon which Judah leaned broke and pierced her hand. Even so the Lord turns all our illegitimate trusts to the same, to our hurt in the end.

Vs. 18 – “*The LORD shall hiss for the fly*” – As we saw

7:21 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep;*
7:22 *And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.*
7:23 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.*
7:24 *With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.*
7:25 *And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.*

in 5:18, the Lord would “*hiss for*” or call in (*pssst!*) Judah’s enemies from north and south. They would come and fill the land like swarms of flies and bees. Again, see the quick obedience of the nations when called, in contrast to the Lord’s obstinate people.

Vs. 20-25 – Here is a vision of the land made vacant of inhabitants or goods, with the results pictured in shaving the body of hair “*with a razor that is hired*” (vs. 20). Judah would be shaved clean with the razor of Assyria for which she herself had paid the hiring costs. There may perhaps be a reference here to David’s ambassadors shamefully mishandled by Ammon in II Samuel 10. Compare Jonah paying the ship’s fare for a sea flight that would become his undoing.

8:1 Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.
8:2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

Vs. 21 – In that day of greatest poverty a man will be doing well to own even a cow and a couple sheep. It would be all briers and barrenness, yet still the Lord would ensure that there would be enough.

Chapter 8

8:1-4 – Mahershalalhashbaz.

This was sign child number 3. Compare 7:3 & 14. The name “*Mahershalalhashbaz*” means “speed to the spoil, hurry to the prey”. The idea of quick judgment is doubled in the name for emphasis. Before the child would be old enough to put two words together Israel would be taken for a spoil by Assyria.

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Names with a Message

Consider how all of the three child names-with-a-message make reference to Christ and His work,

- *Shearjashub* (7:3) – “The remnant shall

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

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

return”. The people of Israel will return both physically (in great number and to their Promised Land) and spiritually (in heart repentance) through Christ’s work of redemption. Compare Hosea 1:10-11.

- *Immanuel* (7:14) – “God with us”. The revelation of who Jesus Christ is.
- *Mahershalalhashbaz* (8:1) – “speed to the spoil, hurry to the prey”. Though Jesus came as “God with us”, bringing greatest opportunity for man’s salvation, yet He came as well to ensure certain judgment for rejecters. The Lord foresaw even in Isaiah’s day that though Jesus would come as God among His people, yet His own nation would reject Him. And their rejection would bring God’s judgment down upon them *again* through the Roman Empire. In fact, Christ’s 2nd coming will be far more a sign of speedy judgment upon rejecters than was His 1st coming (Rev. 19).

8:5 *The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,*
8:6 *Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly,*
and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;
8:7 *Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the*
river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and
he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

Look well to the fact that God's own people were quickly judged for not receiving that sign child and ignoring His warning, both in Isaiah's day and again in Christ's day. And that Son of the Father came with a clear message, *"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish"*, and, *"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins"* (John 8:24). They missed the sign and quickly fell to ruin. And do you think that *you* will escape the judgment of God for not receiving that promised sign Child, who was born in the very miraculous way the Lord had promised? *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation"*. Yet still the offer of grace stands, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"*.

8:5-8 – Assyria Up to Your Chin

Vs. 6-7 – *"Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the*

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

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

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

waters of the river” – Because the people of Judah refused the quiet “waters” of their own God and preferred rather to be refreshed by Assyria the Lord would turn their hope into a raging torrent whose waters would rise right up to the neck. Compare Jeremiah 2:13 for a similar analogy.

Vs. 8 – *“He shall reach even to the neck”* – Assyria would lay siege even to the city of Jerusalem (the head) but would go no further, for Sennacherib’s army would be crushed at Jerusalem’s gate through the earnest prayer of King Hezekiah (II Kings 19).

8:9-10 – Fearful Confederacy

The Lord returns now to the matter so filling every heart in Judah at that time, the attacking alliance of Israel and Syria. As if with taunting words the defeat of their every effort is assured. “Go ahead! Join yourselves together into an impressive alliance. It will be broken up! Get on with girding yourselves for

8:11 *For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,*
8:12 *Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.*
8:13 *Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*
8:14 *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

action (twice repeated). Make doubly sure all is in place. *‘Ye shall be broken in pieces’* (thrice repeated so none could miss it). Have your counsel meetings, your clever powwows. I’m telling you now, your plans will come to nothing. There is no wisdom, there is no counsel against the Lord. Speak the word! Give the shout! Forward with your troops (as if *your* word settles the matter). *‘It shall not stand!’* For this is Immanuel’s land, and *‘God is with us!’*

8:11-15 – The Prophet’s Comfort

Isaiah explains how the Lord had instructed his own heart concerning right responses.

Vs. 11-13 – *“Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid”* – God’s true child was not to respond with fear as all around him. Instead he was to fear the Lord, who is our only proper refuge.

8:15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.
8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
8:17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

Vs. 14-15 – *“He shall be for a sanctuary”* – The Lord is both sanctuary and stumbling block, both salvation and snare. Isaiah was taught of God to fight against two very natural tendencies in men; the tendency to react with fear when faced with a threat, especially when all seems lost, and the tendency to be swayed by the influences of our society. We’re all much too prone to follow the ways of our world, especially when their fearful reactions seem justified by circumstances. But the Lord says don’t do it, don’t allow it in yourself, shake it off as Paul shook off the poisonous serpent into the fire. Seek to curb that natural bent rather with a mind kept stayed on God, in whom is perfect peace (26:3). How could Isaiah be a teacher of such things if these assurances were not settled in his own heart?

Compare these same words applied to Christians facing trouble in I Peter 3:14-15. When the Lord is indeed sweet to our soul all bitterness and hatred of man is lost on us. When we truly fear the Lord, fear of all else vanishes away. And when we fear man’s

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

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

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

reproach we've forgotten the Lord's praise.

8:16-20 – Contrasts

Vs. 16-18 – Disciples who seek and find the Lord and His law are contrasted with those from whom the truth is sealed and hidden.

Vs. 19-20 – Those who turn to mediums for a muttering word from the dead concerning the living are contrasted with those who turn to the enlightening law of the living Lord. Compare King Saul running to the witch at Endor (I Sam. 28). The Lord expressly speaks against such occult practices (Lev. 19:31; 20:27; Deut. 18). They are fools who place importance upon the power and counsel of the dead when the One with power over death and life has spoken.

8:21-22 – The Bitter End

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

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

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

Vs. 21 – *“They shall fret themselves”* – It’s a picture of failed, empty trusts when pressed from every side and powerless against hunger and fear. Compare King Saul at the end without earthly or heavenly guide (I Sam. 29). Compare Jonah’s fellow sailors at their wits end in the storm.

Vs. 22 – *“And they shall look unto the earth”* – Looking only to earthly help man sees only trouble, darkness, and dimness. It’s a pitiful picture of the unsaved soul, without satisfaction or help, looking only under the sun and finding nothing but dark hopelessness.

Chapter 9

9:1-7 – The Light is Come

Vs. 1-2 – *“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light”* – This section presents another glittering distant star in the backdrop of darkness. A

9:2 *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*
9:3 *Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.*
9:4 *For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.*

shining sun will rise within the gloomy scene of human darkness in sin. It's the great promise of the grace of the gospel through Christ's coming. Those without the light of Christ dwell in greatest darkness and danger.

The area where the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali were located later became the province of Galilee. The Lord confirmed through Matthew that Christ's Galilean ministry was the fulfilment of this prophecy (Matt. 4:13-16), for Galilee was that province where the lion's share of Christ's ministry and miracles took place.

Vs. 3-5 – *"They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest"* – Joy in the deliverance Messiah brings will be comparable to the joy in harvest time or when gathering spoil, when the labour of the struggle finally pays off. It will be joy comparable to when Gideon and his small band delivered Israel from their oppressive bondage to Midian (Judges 6-7).

9:5 *For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.*
9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*
9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Vs. 6-7 – “*For unto us a child is born . . . a son is given*” – Here is now description of the One who will bring such light and deliverance to Israel and the world. Consider the many terms, titles, and themes spoken of Messiah here;

- “*A child is born*” – Describing Christ’s humanity as the Son of *Man*, born of Mary as weak and dependent as a newborn baby.
- “*A Son is given*” – Describing Christ’s pre-existence, as the Son of *God*. Omnipotence veiled in impotence.
- “*The government . . . upon His shoulder*” – The yoke of bondage would be forever removed from His people. The account moves directly into Christ’s glory and ministry, not lingering long upon His cradle, even as the gospel accounts.

- *“His name shall be called Wonderful”* – Meaning exceptional or supernatural. Everything about Him was miraculous, from womb to tomb and beyond.
- *“Counsellor”* – He is the one able to advise aright. A greater than Solomon in wisdom, seeing clearly the soul of man as through a window, “to which there are no shutters” (Spurgeon).
- *“The Mighty God”*. No significant Bible translation messes with this name of Christ. Only spurious translations do, which *must* mess with it in order to support spurious doctrines (such as the New World Translation). That Jesus Christ is *“the Mighty God”* cannot be honestly questioned.
- *“The Everlasting Father”* – Literally “Father of Eternity”, describing Christ’s relation to time rather than to the Trinity. He is the One eternally caring as a Father for His own.
- *“The Prince of Peace”* – The two prominent characteristics of Christ’s coming kingdom will be *peace* and *righteousness* (2:4; 11:4-9). Even so for every soul there is no peace outside of salvation in Jesus Christ, for *“there is no peace sayeth my God to the wicked”*.

9:8 *The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.*
9:9 *And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,*
9:10 *The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.*
9:11 *Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;*
9:12 *The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

- *“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end”* – Though the kingdoms of men diminish and will one day be brought entirely to an end, Christ’s dominion will only ascend. Every aspect of His kingdom will be well-ordered and sure. And that the Lord has promised to perform this with zeal assures the outcome. It is written!

Though the kingdoms of men diminish,
And will come at the last to their end,
Christ’s dominion will only flourish,
And on earth will finally ascend!

9:8-21 – Threatened Judgments upon Israel

Vs. 9 – They were proud and stubborn of heart.

Vs. 10 – *“But we will . . .”* – It’s not about what their

9:13 *For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.*
9:14 *Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.*
9:15 *The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.*
9:16 *For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.*
9:17 *Therefore the LORD shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

God would do. With impudence they claimed themselves the equal of the Lord. Would He break what they had built? They would build again, and stronger! Compare Malachi

1:4.

Vs. 13 – *“For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them”* – The Lord’s chastening only served to harden them (1:5). Compare Revelation 16:9-11, 21.

Vs. 18-19 – *“For wickedness burneth as the fire”* – Israel’s fall would come like a great run-away fire.

Vs. 20 – In their waywardness they could expect only war and famine, as men grab at all that can be found and yet still would not have enough.

Vs. 12b, 17b, 21b – *“For all this His anger is not*

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

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

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

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

turned away” – There was no response in them which might turn the Lord’s anger, nor were they concerned about His concerns. Where was appropriate repentance, humility, confession, and forsaking of sin? How can men live in denial of the Lord’s pleasure and expect to be blessed?

Class 5 – Isaiah 10-13

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

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

The little nation of Judah had chosen to compromise with evil through a faithless alliance with Assyria rather than simply to trust God for her protection. The result was bondage under the dominion of evil. They had considered such a compromise to be only wise. But to their surprise it was only to their demise. The glaring lesson is here for us. Though the world conspires against us, though nation join hand with nation, yet “*Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread*” (8:13).

Chapter 10

10:1-4 – God’s People Condemned

Vs. 1 – “*Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees*” – Leaders were writing laws to support their godless ways.

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

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

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

Vs. 2 – “*To turn aside the needy from judgment*” – The helpless were being put off and even stripped by the nation’s rulers. So far from shepherding the sheep, Israel’s leaders thought only of fleecing the flock.

Compare Ezekiel 34. Compare Christ’s condemnation of the religious leaders of His day (Matt. 23).

Vs. 3-4 – “*What will ye do in the day of visitation?*” – The Lord queries what such mighty bullies of the weak will do when facing the Almighty. There comes a day of visitation, when all who exalt themselves to abuse others shall answer to He who is too big to handle (compare Psalm 37:12-13). Such merciless abusers would be first to fall (“*under . . . under*”). Whether through captivity or death they would be found at the bottom in the end.

10:5-6 – Assyria’s Divine Commission

“*O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger*” – In light of those

10:6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
10:7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.
10:8 For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?

who were treading upon others it was the Lord who sent Assyria to trample His *“hypocritical nation”*. Though they were a people called by His name they had become *“the people of My wrath”*. Please understand the truth of my words when I say there is no safety under the name “Christian”, or even in doing great things in the name of the Lord (Matt. 7:21-23). There is refuge only *“in Christ”*.

The Lord presents Assyria as merely a tool (*“rod”*) in His hand. Every strength a man owns, even that employed in evil and against God, is ultimately from the hand of God. Compare Christ’s assurance to Pilate in John 19:11 that even his power to treacherously hand Messiah over to death was *“given him from above”*. Compare Revelation 13:14-15, where the repeated phrase *“he had power”* is literally *“it was given to him”*.

10:7-14 – Assyria’s Proud Attitude

Vs. 7-8 – *“For he saith, Are not my princes altogether*

10:9 *Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?*
10:10 *As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;*
10:11 *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?*

kings?” – In his pride Assyria thought himself master of his own destiny. It just never occurred to him that what he had and had become might have been given to him from Israel’s God. He thought he moved freely about the earth according to his own will, not that he was subject to the will of One bigger. How continually this attitude repeats itself throughout history in “big” men blinded by their pride. Men who are all now just as dead and forgotten as proud Assyria. *“Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall”.*

Vs. 9-10 – It’s the fearful sound of the tread of Assyria’s army now, and his boastful tale of cities taken. “Aren’t they all equal in their weakness before me? Just look at them all strewn out behind me there, trampled in my wake!”

Vs. 11 – *“Shall I not . . . so do at Jerusalem and her idols?”* – Assyria’s king boasts as he approaches Jerusalem to lay siege there, that Judah’s capital would come down as Samaria. This was the essence

10:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
10:13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:
10:14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

of Rabshakeh's message from Sennacherib at Jerusalem's gate (II Ki. 18:33-35). With a "*stout heart*" (vs. 12) he blasphemously and ignorantly refers to Jerusalem's God as "*her idols*", lowering the Lord of glory to the level of the false gods of the nations. Such ignorance in the arrogant, who think more of being known than of knowing. Perhaps we see indication here as well of the failure of God's people to clearly communicate the one true God not worshipped through idols.

Vs. 12 – Compare that punishable "*fruit of the stout heart*", with Christ's word about words in Matthew 12:34-37.

Vs. 13-14 – Note the 1st person field day here. Assyria's proud king attributes all to *his* strength, wisdom, and cleverness. Victory over the nations was as easy for this lofty lord as removing eggs from

10:15 *Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.*
10:16 *Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.*
10:17 *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;*
10:18 *And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.*

a nest.

10:15-19 – The Lord’s Response

The Lord now steps in with a few salient comments of His own.

Vs. 15 – “*Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?*” – He begins with an ironic reminder that Assyria was only a tool in the hand of the true Mighty One. How ridiculous the thought of axe or staff resisting the workman or claiming praise for the work.

Vs. 16-19 – “*The light of Israel shall be for a fire*” – The Lord would trim Assyria down to size, as if with a consuming fire burning through the forest of her army. To the Lord, a great army is as a forest of dry kindling, only to be touched with a match.

10:19 *And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.*
10:20 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.*
10:21 *The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.*
10:22 *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

Vs. 18 – Even her crack troops (*“the glory of his forest”*) would lose heart and be consumed with ease. *“Both soul and body”* – A reminder that though Assyria came with the terror of *“them which kill the body”*, only God can *“destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt. 10:28).

Vs. 19 – So few would be left that a child could count them. As the leaders of Israel had abused their power (vs. 1-2), bringing destruction upon themselves through a stronger foe (vs. 3-4), so the pattern repeats itself. The small fry taken by “bigger” fish, who are taken by “bigger” fish, who are taken by “bigger” . . . Small man just doesn’t learn!

10:20-23 – *“The remnant shall return”*

Though the people of Israel be a very great number (vs. 22) and though the majority rightly be consumed

10:23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.
10:24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.
10:25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.
10:26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

(vs. 23), yet the hopeful answer of the Lord concerning His people is “*the remnant shall return*” (vs. 21). The phrase in the original Hebrew beginning vs. 21 is the same as the name of Isaiah’s sign child in 7:3 (*Shearjashub*). This return refers both to the remnant returning from captivity in Assyria and Babylon, and returning “*the second time*” (11:11) from all nations at Christ’s return.

Only a remnant from among those called the people of God are truly saved in every age. And in every age the remnant show their colours by keeping themselves pure from the common apostasy. The Apostle Paul quoted this portion in Romans 9:27, indicating there that one is not a true child of God just because he’s a child of Abraham as the Jews believed. It was no new thing and no breach of God’s ancient promise to Abraham that a great many sons of Abraham choose to perish in unbelief, and yet still

10:27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

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

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

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

God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled in the believing remnant.

10:24-34 – Words of Assurance

Having mentioned that faithful remnant, the Lord now speaks comfort to them.

Vs. 24 – *“Be not afraid of the Assyrian”* – Assyria would do no more than shake a stick at them in threat. Even as Egypt threatened to satisfy her lust through Israel's destruction (Ex. 15:9), a threat which the Lord quite emptied as well. None need fear the windy impotent when standing with the Omnipotent!! *“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?”* (Ps. 118:6).

Vs. 26 – *“And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him”* – This stirred up “scourge” proved to be *“the angel of the LORD”*, who left 185,000 Assyrian

10:31 Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.
10:32 As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.
10:33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.
10:34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

corpses scattered around Jerusalem's walls (II Ki. 19:35)! The Lord through the prophet then turns His readers to thoughts of comfort in the stirring history of His deliverances. It will be as when the yoke of Midian was thrown off through Gideon (Judges 6-8). Sennacherib of Assyria would be as that prince of the Midianites killed at the rock Oreb (Judges 7:25). It will be as when Moses lifted up his rod over the Red Sea (Ex. 14:15ff), and the sea became both *deliverance* to Israel and *death* to the Egyptians.

Vs. 28-34 – “*The haughty shall be humbled*” – Though the report of Sennacherib's approach to Jerusalem would be terrifying (vs. 28-31), and though he would progress as far south as Nob, a town just north of Jerusalem (vs. 32), and though he would be in sight of Judah's capital city there and would shake his fist at her, yet the Lord would “*lop the bough*” (vs. 32), putting a very sudden end to the reach of that Assyrian tree. Like a branch of your neighbour's tree

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

quickly extending to overgrow all of your property, suddenly lopped off and thrown back over the wall. Yet, not satisfied with a temporary job on that intruding branch, the Lord “*shall cut down the thickets of the forest*” as well. Assyria never recovered after their crushing defeat through Hezekiah’s prayer.

Chapter 11

We return now to a bright vision of comfort rising beyond immediate deliverance from the threat of Assyria. For here is another one of those glorious glimpses of Messiah’s coming kingdom.

11:1-5 – The Messiah King

First a description of the King, followed by a look into the nature of His kingdom.

Vs. 1 – “*A rod out the stem of Jesse*” – Again Jesus is described as a “*Branch*” (4:2) growing out of the roots of Jesse. Though the dynasty of David has been cut off as a tree chopped down, yet the root is by no

11:2 *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*
11:3 *And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:*
11:4 *But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*

means dead, for Jesus Christ shall yet return to occupy David's vacant throne. The Hebrew word for "Branch" is *netzer*, which may be the basis of the fulfilled prophecy that Christ would be a "Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). The word indicates a tender sprout (53:2) more than a strong bough, pointing to Christ's apparent initial weakness, in contrast to the boughs and trees and forests of man's seeming power (10:19 & 33). Man thinks himself strong, while Jesus came in seeming weakness but shall be shown strongest of all by far.

Vs. 2-3 – "*The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him*" – Here are Messiah's qualifications. The Spirit of God would be upon Him, just as the Spirit's presence upon Jesus in His ministry was underscored (Matt. 3:16; Lk. 4:18; Jn. 3:34). Sharpest wisdom would be His, to understand His business and to know with the most penetrating discernment what people are about. The fame of Christ's unsurpassed wisdom in

11:5 *And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*
11:6 *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*
11:7 *And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

the conduct of His earthly ministry and astute responses is known to all. And He would be moved as well out of a pure worship of God *“in the fear of the Lord”*. Christ’s meat, His very satisfaction, was to do His father’s will, regardless of how that affected men.

Vs. 4-5 – *“But with righteousness shall He judge”* – Here is Messiah’s way. He will judge according to right, not according to personal advantage. This in contrast to Israel’s leaders (10:1-2). With such ease Messiah would handle the wicked (*“rod of His mouth . . . breath of His lips”*), with but a spoken word. Compare Revelation 19:15; John 18:6. He judges not only according to sight and word, but as One fully aware of *“the secrets of men”* (Rom 2:16).

11:6-16 – The Messiah’s Kingdom

Vs. 6-9 – *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb”* – Peace and safety will prevail in the coming days of

11:8 *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*
11:9 *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*
11:10 *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*
11:11 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

His earthly kingdom. This is to be expected when it is a government shouldered by “*the Prince of Peace*” (9:6). Beyond just the negative of “*not hurt nor destroy*” (vs. 9), see the positive picture of ancient antagonists dwelling, resting, and playing together. There will be deliverance not only from evil but from all fear. True salvation brings the beginning of this new nature upon a soul, even in this age.

Vs. 7 – “*The lion shall eat straw like the ox*” – Carnivores turned herbivores, as before the fall of man.

Vs. 9 – The knowledge of the Lord among men shall be as broad and deep as the sea in that day (Hab. 2:14).

Vs. 10-12 – “*The Lord shall set His hand . . . to recover*

- 11:12 *And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*
- 11:13 *The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*
- 11:14 *But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.*
- 11:15 *And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.*
- 11:16 *And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.*
-

the remnant of His people” – Israel shall be regathered. Paul quoted from vs. 10 in Romans 15:12, to show the inclusion of Gentiles in that promised kingdom of a regathered Israel.

Vs. 13 – Israel reunited (Hos. 2:10-11).

Vs. 14 – Israel’s enemies put down.

Vs. 15-16 – *“There shall be an highway for the remnant of His people”* – The way prepared for Israel’s return to her land, as the way might be prepared for a coming king.

Chapter 12

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

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

Here is now a millennial hymn from the hymnbook of heaven. There are two stanzas, both beginning with “*And in that day you shall say . . .*” (vs. 1, 4). It’s a hymn of praise and proclamation for “*that day*” when all will at last be put right in the kingdom of Christ.

12:1-2 – Received from Him

“*Though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away*” – Here is praise to the God of pardons (Neh. 9:17). Every soul who sees his sin as God sees it knows that the Holy One has every right to wrath. Praise God that He will not compromise His pure, spotless holiness. And yet, in His grace, and at His greatest expense, He has made provision for our pardon. It will be the theme of our song throughout the ages of the ages. Note the focus in these verses on the 1st person (I, me, my), with attention upon what I have received from the Lord.

The phrase “*God is my salvation*” (vs. 2) is given as if

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

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

a name (*El Yishuati*), expressing more who God is than what He gives.

12:3 – Rejoicing in Him

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” – A picture of greatest joy in the Lord’s abundant provision. “Wells” is plural, indicating endless supply. How very expressive an image in a hot, arid country. Compare 55:1-3; Zechariah 13:1. How unbelievably good of the Lord, that He should long and labour for our joy, making this His ultimate aim.

12:4-6 – Respond for Him

“Praise the LORD . . . declare His doings among the people” – Now attention turns to our surpassing privilege, not only to claim His promises, but to proclaim His praises. Note how 1st person gives way to 3rd person. “*Me*”, “*my*”, & “*I*” are out, and “*He*” & “*His*” are ***all***. Note the 7 commands of proclamation here. A deep drink of all that the Lord is and does

12:5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.
12:6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

turns a heart all to Him and making Him known. A heart full of the Lord and of joy in Him will be “*as wine which hath no vent . . . ready to burst like new bottles*” (Job 32) in our desire to proclaim the Lord’s glory to others. Compare Acts 1:8.

Chapter 13

With chapter 13 Isaiah begins a lengthy pronouncement of judgment upon the nations, beginning with Babylon. Though Babylon had yet to even become a threat in those days of Assyria’s dominance, it is fitting that notice of the Lord’s wrath should first fall upon that land between the rivers. Babel or Babylon was the fountainhead of all false religion (Genesis 11). She is “*THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*”, as the angel titled her in Revelation 17:5. Thus there seems to be a sense in which God sees Babylon as the seat of Satan’s earthly kingdom. And the Lord’s judgments pronounced upon Babylon seem to shimmer beyond the earthly kingdom alone, to the domain of the evil one behind it, as in this chapter.

13:1 *The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.*
13:2 *Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.*
13:3 *I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.*
13:4 *The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.*
13:5 *They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.*

Even so the Lord's exuberant description of the final fall of Babylon in Revelation 18 seems to take in more than just the earthly city, but reaching beyond to the earth-based kingdom and power of Satan himself. And as well, the Lord's judgments upon the "*king of Babylon*" (14:4) seem to rise beyond the earthly monarch, to the great evil one behind him, as in chapter 14. An awareness of this bigger, darker target beyond the earthly will help in your understanding of Isaiah's visions here.

13:1-5 – Calling All Nations

"The burden of Babylon" – The Lord calls in the nations as His instruments of judgment, setting up a banner upon a high mountain as a marker, calling loudly, bidding with a vigorous waving of the hand (vs. 2). There then follows the sound of a great approaching army (vs. 4). The far-reaching imagery

13:6 *Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*
 13:7 *Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:*
 13:8 *And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.*
 13:9 *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*
 13:10 *For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

seems to look beyond to “*the kingdoms of nations*” (vs. 4) gathered to Armageddon, and met there by the armies of heaven (vs. 5).

13:6-22 – Babylon’s End

Vs. 6 – “*Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand*” – Again, the imagery seems to look beyond Babylon’s fall to Medo-Persia, to her *final* fall (Rev. 18) in “*the day of the Lord*” (vs. 6, 9).

Vs. 8 – Note the wonder at an unexpected end through “*flames*”. Compare Zechariah 14:12.

Vs. 10 – Heavenly bodies will be darkened. Compare Matthew 24:29 & Revelation 6:12, concerning the days just before the Lord’s return.

13:11 *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*
13:12 *I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*
13:13 *Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*
13:14 *And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.*
13:15 *Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.*

Vs. 11 – The judgment described expands to include *“the world”*.

Vs. 12 – A high death toll leaving a scarcity of men. Remember 4:1.

Vs. 13 – *“I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place”* – It’s the great shaking promised by *“our God”* who *“is a consuming fire”* in Hebrews 12:26-29. This again takes in the more immediate situation, but looks beyond to the coming Great Tribulation, when the Lord *“will shake all nations”* before *“the desire of all nations shall come”* (Haggai 2:6-7).

Vs. 15-18 – Babylon would be handled by Medo-Persia as mercilessly as she had dealt with Judah

13:16 *Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.*
13:17 *Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.*
13:18 *Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children.*
13:19 *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*
13:20 *It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.*

(Lam. 5:11-13; Ps. 137:8-9). Consider the truth that God is not unrighteous to allow such bitter justice and vengeance to be done. It is the shocking picture of degenerate man, running amok in an utterly lawless environment and so completely without compassion. Even those too young to do acts of sin are yet sinners by nature, and worthy of the judgment of death.

Vs. 19-22 – *“Babylon, the glory of kingdoms”* – The *“glory”* and *“beauty”* and *“excellency”* of Babylon, that *“head of gold”* of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 2:38), comes finally to a desolate wasteland, like Sodom and Gomorrah. Compare Jeremiah 51.

Vs. 21 – *“And satyrs shall dance there”* – A reference either to goats or to demons in some way resembling hairy goats.

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

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

It all serves as a not-so-subtle reminder of the grave danger of pride. For “*the lofty looks of man shall be humbled*” when “*the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day*” (2:11).

“I will ascend above
the heights of the clouds;
I will be like the Most High.

Yet thou shalt be
brought down to hell,
to the sides of the pit”

(Isaiah 14:14-15)

Class 6 – Isaiah 14-17

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

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

In chapter 13 the Lord began to take up the “*burden of Babylon*” (vs. 1). Now in chapter 14 the pronouncement of an end upon Babylon continues, with a particular focus upon the king of the Chaldeans.

Chapter 14

14:1-3 – “*Mercy on Jacob*”

Another brief glimpse of a distant light in the darkness. The Lord’s resolve to reserve mercy for His people is the cause of Babylon’s fall.

Vs. 1 – Even after all the horror of what Babylon would bring against Israel, the Lord would still “*set them in their own land*”, and others (“*strangers*”) would join them in that return. The reality of Israel’s

14:3 *And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,*
14:4 *That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!*
14:5 *The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.*
14:6 *He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.*

powerful, holy God, evident in His faithful dealing with them, would bring many “Ruths” to “*come to trust*” under the wings of the LORD God of Israel (Ruth 2:12). The ultimate fulfilment of this will be during the Great Tribulation leading into Christ’s Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 7). Compare Isaiah 2:2-3; 60:5. This winning of onlookers is the positive side of trials and even of the Lord’s stinging chastisement. As Naomi with Ruth and the sailors with Jonah.

Vs. 3 – The Lord’s gracious assurance that their (our) days of grief and bondage on earth will end in rest.

14:4-23 – “*Proverb against the king of Babylon*”

Vs. 4-8 – What Babylon’s king left behind in death.

Vs. 4 – Her oppression ceased with her “*golden city*”. The New Jerusalem shall be the only true “*golden city*” that shall never cease (Rev. 21).

14:7 *The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.*
14:8 *Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.*
14:9 *Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.*
14:10 *All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?*

Vs. 5 – Her dominion (“*sceptre*”) ended.

Vs. 6 – Her violent, angry dominance. Remember in Daniel 2 & 3 how King Nebuchadnezzar was so characterized by explosive, murderous rage.

Vs. 7 – An earth at rest, quiet, and singing, with the end of Babylon’s oppressive influence.

Vs. 8 – As if even creation itself is without fear at last. Again the image seems to shimmer beyond the human despot to “*the god of this age*” who brought the curse of sin upon earth through the temptation in the garden. When Satan’s influence is at last removed in Christ’s kingdom there will be true rest and rejoicing (Rev. 20:1-2).

Vs. 9-11 – “*Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming*” – What Babylon’s king faced in death. The chief among the dead rise to mock.

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

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

For that one so invincibly strong in life would become just as “*weak*” as they in death (vs. 10). And that one with such “*pomp*” in life would be “*brought down*” as low as they in death (vs. 11).

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On the Side

Consider the obvious indication here that there is an unseen place of consciousness after death, where souls exist without the body, where there is intelligent awareness, communication, and recognition of others, and where men face those they have sent there or deceived through false teaching. We see no indication here of soul sleep or annihilation. Compare in Luke 16 the rich man in the “*torments*” of hell, communicating with Abraham and recognizing Lazarus and pleading in behalf of his yet living brothers.

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Vs. 11 – “*Thy pomp is brought down to the grave*” –
There are some things here that would perhaps do

14:13 *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*
14:14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

us a world of good to remember. For one, these bodies, the focus of our most careful attention, will soon become the eager interest only of worms (Job 19:26). And secondly, as you groom yourself and paint your face, picture the coroner one day doing you that final service. Nothing is more sure in life than the certainty of death. Nothing could be wiser in life than being properly prepared for death.

Vs. 12-14 – *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning”* – The evil spirit behind the evil man now comes into clear focus. Both Kings Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1-4) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5) were notable for the pride here described in Satan. They, like the evil one behind them, purposed to ascend to the level of God’s glory. King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3), like Antichrist to come (Rev. 13), sought to force the world to worship him through an image. We see in Revelation 12 as well the sinister source behind the evil earthly tyrant to come. Satan through Antichrist will yet briefly *“exalt his throne”* to *“sit also upon the mount of the congregation”* when he shall sit in the holy place of

14:15 *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*
14:16 *They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;*
14:17 *That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?*
14:18 *All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.*

the temple in the final years of the Tribulation period. He will set himself up “as God . . . showing himself that he is God” (II Thess. 2:4). This rebellious creature determination to “be like the Most High” in glory;

- Was Satan’s lying promise to mankind at the beginning (“*you shall be as gods*”, Gen. 3:5).
- Was the effort at Babel’s first construction project (Gen. 11:4).
- Is the promise of New Age doctrine.
- Is the *lie* (II Thess. 2:11; Rom. 1:25).

Vs. 15 – The only true God promises the one who would so “*ascend . . . exalt . . . ascend*” that he shall “*be brought down*”! And not to “*the sides of the north*” (Ps. 48:2), but “*down to hell, to the sides of the pit*”!

Vs. 16-17 – “*Is this the man that made the earth to*

14:19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.
14:20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.
14:21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.
14:22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

tremble?” – Again the dead take up the taunting proverb, exclaiming over the one who considered himself among the immortal, now having followed the way of all mortal men. Perhaps there’s a note of actual surprise in their words? The tendency of men is to assume that earthly splendour will somehow keep them from such depths. Perhaps there is in this a reference to Satan’s fall as well, that even one such as he would go the way of weak men.

Vs. 18-20 – Babylon’s king would not even enjoy an honourable death as other kings of the earth.

Vs. 21-22 – The royal family would be completely wiped out, perhaps dashed against the stones as Babylon did with Judah (Ps. 137:8-9).

Vs. 23 – The Lord would sweep the land clean as with

14:23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.
14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:
14:25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.
14:26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

a broom or besom, making it a refuge only for wild creatures. Compare Revelation 18:2.

14:24-28 – A Word for Assyria

Babylon's predicted fall was some 200 years distant at the time of Isaiah's writing. Assyria was the threat at that point. And so the Lord now returns for a moment to a word of more immediate benefit for His fearful people. Yet understand that when His words for the immediate were fulfilled this would serve as a great comfort to the faithful when His words for a later time were coming due. So it is with us. The value of past prophecies fulfilled is present comfort and boldness through prophecies of the future. The Lord solemnly affirmed His words with a vow (vs. 24), that Assyria would fall in His land, and that He would be the Feller (vs. 25). This as we know was accomplished directly through the destroying angel

14:27 *For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*
14:28 *In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.*
14:29 *Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.*

(II Ki. 19:35). Now compare how the Lord has even more assuredly vowed concerning the bowing of every knee and confessing of every tongue to the lordship of Jesus Christ (45:23; Phil. 2:9-11). Since such will certainly come to pass, be wise to *bow now!!*

Vs. 26-27 – “*The LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?*” – A challenge to any who could turn God’s purpose. Let man think what he may. As God has purposed, so it shall come to pass.

Vs. 28 – “*The year that [godless] King Ahaz died*” was the year that godly King Hezekiah came to the throne. When a good leader replaced the bad the Lord came with this encouraging message of reassurance.

14:29-32 – A Word for Philistia

Vs. 29 – “*Rejoice not thou whole Palestina*” – The word “*Palestina*” or “*Palestine*” technically refers to “*Philistia*” or the land of the Philistines, though the

14:30 *And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.*
14:31 *Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.*
14:32 *What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.*

title later came to refer to the whole land between the Jordan and the sea. The Philistines were warned by the Lord not to rejoice in the death of king Uzziah, that “*serpent*” who had so bitten and “*smote*” them (II Chron. 26:6). For “*out of the serpent’s root*” the Lord would raise up “*a cockatrice*” (poison serpent) in King Hezekiah. Though the Philistines were able to win much back from Judah between the days of those two godly kings, while King Ahaz reigned (II Chron. 28:18), yet they were hammered again through the “*fiery flying serpent*” to follow (II Kings 18:8).

Vs. 30 – The “*root*” and “*remnant*” of the Philistines would be completely dissolved, which has since come to pass.

Vs. 32 – What is to be the answer to “*the messengers of the nation*” when asking concerning the amazing victories of King Hezekiah’s reign? Should their attention be directed to the glories of human

magnificence, as King Hezekiah in a moment of weakness foolishly did, and for which Isaiah was called upon to rebuke him (II Ki. 20:12-18)? No! The only true answer is quite simply “*that the LORD hath founded Zion*”. And nobody messes with the objects of His care except as He allows. When it’s God’s construction it “*cannot be removed, but abideth for ever*” (see Ps. 125:1-2). When it’s founded upon Christ, the solid Rock, then it is properly grounded and as eternal as He! It is ever a question of whether God is behind the work. It is never a matter of the might or majesty of man or the work of his hands.

Chapter 15

In the next two chapters the Lord turns His attention to the little country of Moab to the east of the Dead Sea. Moab was a fruitful land, known for her vineyards. It was a country that bordered on Reuben’s lot in the early days of Israel’s occupation of the Promised Land. But it seems Moab must have later expanded north, absorbing most of what was once Reuben’s land, for Numbers 22 mentions many of the Moabite cities named in this chapter as part of the land of the Amorites taken from Sihon by Joshua, Heshbon being their principal city. But the Lord’s words of warning to Moab were all loss to them, for within the space of three years “*the glory of Moab*

15:1 *The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;*
15:2 *He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.*

would be condemned” (16:14). They too would fall victim to the marauding bands of Assyria and would ultimately be brought to complete ruin by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 48). And their soon fall, according to the Lord’s word, would again serve to confirm all that He had spoken concerning His own people. Each following age adds to the growing stack of events God said would happen, and happened just as He had said. And never has there been a day like our own, when *so much* of God’s prophetic record has been perfectly fulfilled. Yet how very ignorant or unmindful the Lord’s people of that impressive record and its import. Where is the nation of Moab today? Every one of these warnings carried out to the letter are meant to contribute to our resolve to trust our life to the promises of God.

15:1-9 – “*Moab shall howl*”

Vs. 1 – “*The burden of Moab*” – In one night Moab’s chief cities of Ar and Kir would be left silent wastelands. Consider again how suddenly and

15:3 *In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.*
15:4 *And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.*
15:5 *My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.*

finally such great and devastating changes can be brought by God upon people and nations. None are exempt.

Vs. 2-3 – *“Every one shall howl, weeping abundantly”* – They would run to the high places of their false gods to make their plea (vs. 2). Customary outward tokens of great mourning would be in evidence. This chapter is all weeping and howling. The cities of Moab named were scattered throughout the country (vs. 8).

Vs. 5 – *“My heart shall cry out for Moab”* – Isaiah expressed his own grief at the foresight of his neighbours so ravaged (16:9, 11). Fugitives would flee to Zoar, a city south of the Dead Sea, as did their forefather Lot (Gen. 19:22-23), bawling as a 3 year old heifer deprived of her calf. The name Zoar means “little” (Gen. 19:20-22), perhaps symbolically

15:6 *For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.*
15:7 *Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.*
15:8 *For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim.*
15:9 *For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.*

describing a people so suddenly forced to leave their “*abundance*” behind for others to “*carry away*” (vs. 7), fleeing rather to the city of “little”. In the same way Lot, through his rebellion, lost everything that so drew him to that exceedingly sinful land (Gen. 13:13) when he too was forced to leave his earthly abundance to the flames and flee to the city of “little”.

Vs. 9 – Troubles upon Troubles. The Lord would compound their calamities. Those escaping one threat would run right into another. Compare 24:18 & Amos 5:18-20.

Chapter 16

16:1-5 – Offer of Grace to Moab

Vs. 1 – “*Send ye the Lamb*” – The Lord encouraged the right response of sacrifice to Him, He who is the true “*ruler of the land*”. And this sacrifice must be

16:1 *Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.*
16:2 *For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.*
16:3 *Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.*
16:4 *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.*

made in “*the mount of the daughter of Zion*”, the temple mount in Jerusalem. He looked for a repentance that would take

in the whole country of Moab, from Sela in the southwest to the wilderness of the extreme east, even as the whole of Nineveh repented through the preaching of Jonah.

Vs. 2 – “*As a wandering bird cast out of the nest*” – The Lord hung over them the threat of removal from their nest. Even so the Lord says to every unsaved soul “*send ye the lamb to the ruler*” of all, before threat of eternal removal should fall. And the only lamb suitable to rescue our souls is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God “*who taketh away the sin of the world*”. Upon all who refuse to submit to the gospel shall fall God’s judgment of removal from their earthly nest, suffering the loss of eternal rest (Rev. 14:11).

16:5 *And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.*
16:6 *We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.*
16:7 *Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.*

Vs. 3-5 – “*Let Mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab*” – The Lord demanded Moab’s response of mercy upon His people (“*mine outcasts*”) as they fled from Assyria’s oppression. Such a response would be an outward indication of a changed heart. If Moab would keep their nest they must share it with His people. Proverbs affirms that they who show mercy to the poor are actually lending to the Lord, who will indeed repay such kindness (Prov. 19:17). This is how Rahab showed her faith (Josh. 2; Heb. 11:31). Compare a similar basis of the Lord’s judgment in the last days in Matthew 25:31-46. And consider the “*place prepared*” in the wilderness in the days of Israel’s future flight from Antichrist in Revelation 12:6, 14 (Dan. 11:41).

16:6-14 – Final Warning to Moab

The Lord now affirms His good counsel to Moab with a last word.

16:8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.
16:9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.
16:10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.
16:11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh.

Vs. 6 – *“We have heard of the pride of Moab”* – They were a people full of pride (4 times emphasis) and wrath. There is no help for those who in their pride refuse to listen to the counsel of God, as Cain at the beginning (Gen. 4). How continually Proverbs warns of pride closing the heart of a man to sound counsel and leading on to his fall.

Vs. 7-11 – *“Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab”* – Their fruitful fields and vineyards, with their joy, would be wiped out. How quickly the Lord is able to turn joy to howling sorrow for the proud in their loss of the material things upon which their joy is based. Yet for those who love the Lord, not the world, even the loss of everything cannot rob them of their joy in the God of their salvation (Hab. 3:17-18).

16:12 *And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.*

16:13 *This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.*

16:14 *But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.*

Vs. 12 – When at the last Moab finally became “*weary*” of pleading to their worthless idols, as the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, it would be too late to turn to God (II Thess. 2:10-12). Having turned a deaf ear to God, they will find their last ditch appeal to “*His sanctuary*” ignored in kind (1:15; Prov. 1:23-33).

Vs. 14 – “*Within three years*” – Here is God’s space of grace, as the 40 days of Jonah’s warning to Nineveh. Moab was given ample time to turn, as Judas under Christ’s three years of ministry.

As with Moab, all the glory of proud man soon “*shall be contemned*” or come to disgrace. We are fools to “*love the world*” and “*the things that are in the world*”, and to make these things the basis of our pride and joy. There is “*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” yet to come (II Cor. 4:17). You can trust Him for it!

17:1 *The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.*
17:2 *The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*
17:3 *The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.*
17:4 *And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.*
17:5 *And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.*

Chapter 17

17:1-5 – A Word for Syria

Vs. 1 – “*The burden of Damascus*” – Divine attention now turns to the nation of Syria, described by her capitol city, which would be left “*a ruinous heap*”.

Vs. 2 – “*Aroer*”, a province of Syria, would be deserted.

Vs. 3-5 – “*They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel*” – When Assyria was finished with Syria what remained of her bright glory would be dimmed as low as the northern kingdom of Israel. Each would be left as helpless as the other they had so foolishly counted on for support. Only alliance with the Lord will stand. This would be the lesson echoing in the

17:6 *Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.*
17:7 *At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.*
17:8 *And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.*

sudden silence when Assyria marched away with everything, as a farmer strips the field of the harvest (vs. 5). Their glory would be cut down and cleared as easily as a crop. In a similar way the Lord's judgment of man at Christ's return is pictured as the harvesting of a crop come ripe in Revelation 14:14-20.

17:6-8 – The Believing Remnant

Vs. 6 – “*Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it*” – Again the offer of mercy to those who respond with faith and repentance. The few individuals finding the strait gate and narrow way to life are pictured as the few grapes or olives left for the gleaners after the harvesters passed through. In every age only a relative few perceive and believe and will be reserved to the Lord after He separates out the tares for the fire. Compare Christ's parables in Matthew 13. Compare “*the one . . . taken [in judgment] and the other left*” of Matthew 24:36-41.

17:9 *In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.*

17:10 *Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:*

Vs. 7-8 – “*At that day shall a man look to His Maker*” – That faithful remnant will understand to look only to the Lord for their relief and comfort.

17:9-11 – Warning to Israel

After the same pattern as with Moab (chapter 16), the Lord turns again from mercy to judgment through Assyria, but now with *Israel* in centre beam, the other half of the northern alliance.

Vs. 9 – The Lord was going to leave Israel’s “*strong cities*” stripped bare like the dead branch of a tree. They would desert the land before Assyria’s approach, just as “*they [the Canaanites] left because of the children of Israel*”. Compare the Lord’s warning of this very thing in Leviticus 18:28.

Vs. 10 – “*Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation*” – Their thoughtless forgetfulness of the Lord their Saviour and Rock was the ultimate cause of their trouble. They were running off to

17:11 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

17:12 Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

17:13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

neighbouring lands for the “*strange slips*” of support and idolatrous plantings of their gods (II Chron. 28:23). They were wanting to be like those around them, instead of remaining distinct as the holy planting of the Lord.

Vs. 11 – As with Moab (16:10), the happy time of harvest turned to “*a heap*”.

17:12-14 – Warning to Assyria

The Lord then turned to pronounce doom upon Assyria.

Vs. 12 – Assyria would come with a great sound of rushing as the waters of a flood. It seems we can hear in these words as well the distant “*rushing of nations*” gathering their armies to Armageddon.

Vs. 13 – “*But God shall rebuke them*” – Yet with the

*17:14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not.
This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.*

Lord's rebuke they would be driven right back the other way like tumbleweed before a twister.

Vs. 14 – *“Behold at eventide trouble; and before the morning he is not”* – Referring to the suddenness of trouble upon those who attack God's people. Outside Jerusalem's walls *“before the morning”* 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were dead! The threat was suddenly and completely removed, and only at the point when it had reached it's very highest pitch. So shall it be at Armageddon. What man fearfully considers to be ascending to greatest threat, the Lord considers only to be a gathering or fattening for the slaughter. With Elijah we pray, “Lord open our eyes to see from Your perspective” (II Ki. 6:17).

“...but ye have not looked
unto the Maker thereof,
neither had respect unto Him
that fashioned it long ago”

(Isaiah 22:11)

Class 7 – Isaiah 18-22:14

18:1 Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

Chapter 18

There is no denying the fact that there are difficult portions of the Bible, leaving uncertainties in the mind of the interpreter, even as there are aspects of God that challenge our understanding. We are now centuries distant from the time era to which God's prophecies were spoken, even as we are distant from the countries and cultures to which His words came. As well we are distant from the original language in which God's prophets wrote. Such factors naturally throw up barriers to our understanding of some of the details of the old writings. Yet never should we let this fact worry us. The essential aspects of God's truth found in the Scriptures are vastly clear. The core of the blazing sunshine of revelation is self-evident, even if we battle to decipher a few of the light rays. Even so with Isaiah's prophecies. Learned men may not have concrete answers for every detail, but the essential message is quite clear for all with an ear to hear.

18:2 *That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!*

18:3 *All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.*

18:1-6 – A Word for Africa

Vs. 1 – *“Woe to the land shadowing with wings”* – Where to find this *“land shadowing with wings”*? Isaiah seems to speak of the land south of Egypt. Either Ethiopia (Cush) or some confederation of North-African states.

Vs. 2 – *“That sendeth ambassadors by the sea”* – There would be some approach or appeal from this country to *“a people [once] terrible”*, but now *“scattered and peeled . . . meted out and trodden down”*, apparently referring to the nation of Judah. Are these coming to join in league with Judah against the threat of Assyria? Or does it rather refer to an effort to join in the treading down of Judah, taking advantage of her apparently weakened condition? Is this perhaps a north-African confederation seeking revenge for earlier losses against King Asa (II Chron. 14)?

18:4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

18:5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.

18:6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Vs. 3 – The Lord gives public notice to all “*inhabitants of the world*”, with command to carefully see and hear. Though His people at times throughout history may appear weak, their Protector is by no means ever diminished. His people may be trodden down, but not destroyed (Ps. 37:23-24). They may no longer appear “*a people terrible*”, but their God is!

Vs. 4 – God’s eye is always upon (“*I will consider*”) Jerusalem (“*My dwelling place*”), with thoughts of both her refining (“*heat*”) and refreshing (“*cloud of dew*”).

Vs. 5-6 – “*They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains*” – While Jerusalem’s enemies seem to be coming just now to their prime, with such ease the Lord takes up His pruning knife and deftly cuts them down to animal feed. Picture the Assyrian army, as Antichrist’s at the Battle of Armageddon, cut down in a moment and left for animal food.

18:7 *In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.*

19:1 *The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.*

19:2 *And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.*

Compare the birds and beasts called to “*the supper of the great God*” in Revelation 19:17-18.

18:7 – Millennial Vision

“*In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts*” – Though it be a land and people with a history far from impressive for power, it is “*the place of the name of the LORD of hosts*”. Therefore, though often looked upon with contempt by men, Jerusalem will take centre stage “*in that time*” of Christ’s kingdom, when gifts of homage shall be brought by all.

Chapter 19

19:1-17 – “*The burden of Egypt*”

Vs. 1 – “*Behold, the LORD . . . shall come into Egypt*”

19:3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.
19:4 And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.
19:5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.
19:6 And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

– A day of the Lord’s visitation of judgment upon Egypt. It’s as if Egypt’s gods remember the judgments brought upon them by the Lord in Israel’s exodus (Num 33:4) and now tremble with His return. The Lord made promise to Egypt of;

- Civil war (vs. 2).
- No help from wise or wizards, gurus or gods (vs. 3).
- Bondage to a cruel taskmaster as they had been cruel to Israel (vs. 4).
- Drought and famine (vs. 5-10).
- Wise counsel come to foolishness (vs. 11-14).
- Economic ruin (vs. 15).
- Terror of the Lord and His people (vs. 16-17).

Egypt’s prosperity flowed with her great River Nile,

19:7 *The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.*
19:8 *The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.*
19:9 *Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded.*
19:10 *And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.*

and the Lord would remind them of who keeps it flowing.

Vs. 11 – *“The counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish”* – Egypt boasted of her ancient history and age-old heritage of wisdom in her wise men. But the Lord wrote *“fools”* and *“brutish”* over these who were so *“professing themselves to be wise”* (vs. 11, 13). Such brilliant leaders and counsellors were in fact the cause of Egypt’s deception and fall (vs. 13-14). As a drunken man is oblivious to what he says or where he goes, even so such as these were utterly unfit to lead even themselves.

Vs. 12 – *“Where are they? Where are thy wise men?”* – The Lord simply says, *“Where are these gifted objects of your boast?”* It may be the Lord of life would display them here as not even clever enough to avoid death. Perhaps it was a challenge to them

19:11 Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?
19:12 Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.
19:13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.
19:14 The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

to try to prevent the Lord's purpose of ruin upon their proud nation.

19:18-25 – Another Day for Egypt

“In that day . . .” (5 times). The Lord through the prophet Isaiah spoke then of another day for the land of Egypt, a golden era. A day when the true religion of the Lord shall invade that land. Compare the judgments of the Lord in the first half of this chapter. Compare the same turn in Hosea 2. History does not yet record such an event. Some partial fulfilment of this promised entrance of light into Egypt can perhaps be seen;

- In Alexandria later becoming the capital city of the Jewish Diaspora.
- In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew O.T. taking place there (the first

19:15 *Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.*
 19:16 *In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.*
 19:17 *And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.*
 19:18 *In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.*

translation of the Scriptures into any other language).

- In the entrance of the gospel into Egypt after the days of Christ's earthly ministry. There were devout Jews from Egypt at Pentecost (Acts 2:10), who took their newfound faith in Christ home with them.
- The ultimate fulfilment of this is yet to come in Christ's earthly kingdom.

Vs. 18 – This may be a reference to many Jews living and flourishing in Egypt.

“The city of destruction” – Perhaps the city's old name would be kept to highlight the significance of the change of hearts *“in that day”*. A city once devoted to false worship and destruction, now claimed for Jehovah.

19:19 *In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.*
19:20 *And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.*
19:21 *And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.*
19:22 *And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.*
19:23 *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.*

Vs. 20 – *“They shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors”* – The *“Saviour, and a great One”* sent for their deliverance must surely refer to Jesus Christ. And deliverance perhaps both from oppressors and from the oppressive folly of false worship. Isaiah later prophesied how Messiah comes *“to proclaim liberty to the captives”* (61:1).

Vs. 21 – *“The Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day”* – Not only will the Lord be generally known in Egypt, but Egyptians shall personally know Him, and will display their faith in faithful lives.

Vs. 23-25 – A three-fold cord. Peace will prevail where bitter animosities reigned of old. Compare 11:6-9, 13. Oh happy day when there shall no more

19:24 *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:*
19:25 *Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.*
20:1 *In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;*

exist the danger of creatures that kill!

Chapter 20

20:1-6 – Folly of Alliance with Africa

Vs. 1 – Isaiah dated his prophecy in the year that Assyria’s General Tartan took the Philistine city of Ashdod.

Vs. 2 – *“Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins”* – Isaiah had already been wearing a sign of the mournful times before his people with clothing of sackcloth. But now the Lord told him to remove his sackcloth and go naked and barefoot before his people. By *“naked”* He probably referred to the relative nakedness of undergarments. This was to be an object lesson to Judah of the way Egypt and Ethiopia would certainly be stripped and led into captivity by Assyria, in answer to some who were apparently talking of an alliance with North Africa

20:2 At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

against the rising threat of Assyria to the north.

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On the Side

We can well imagine how very difficult obedience to such a command must have been for Isaiah. Ridicule and embarrassment would have been the immediate result with such a seeming extreme of going “*naked*” before his people. Can you imagine how there might have been many arguments in Isaiah’s mouth for avoiding this? Who will listen to me after this blow to my reputation? Won’t this play right into the hands of all who already hate me? What about the threat to my health? But it was the Lord who told him to do it. Therefore, as Abraham when commanded to offer Isaac (Gen. 22), we see no hesitation in the man in doing the objectionable. What do *you* do with the more objectionable aspects of the Lord’s will? It’s a question of whether we’re willing to just trust the Lord to be the Guardian of our honour, health, safety, etc. Perhaps the Lord gave this assignment to Isaiah in an effort to shame the disobedient people of Judah. The obedient

20:3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;
 20:4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.
 20:5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.
 20:6 And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

always have that effect upon the disobedient.

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Vs. 3 – “*My Servant Isaiah*” – See how the Lord now for the first time calls Isaiah “*My servant*”. It was for such words of esteem from the Lord that this man lived! And it was in the Lord’s hard commands that Isaiah truly showed himself the willing servant of his God. While men perhaps scorned, the Lord rejoiced in His true servant. *What else really matters?*

Vs. 4-5 – Man trusting in man. Those feeling some strength in the presence of Egypt and Ethiopia would be disappointed and exposed when Assyria simply mowed down those protecting hedges. All who so trust in any aspect of creation instead of the Creator for any form of security are sure to be disappointed.

21:1 *The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.*
21:2 *A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.*
21:3 *Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.*

Chapter 21

21:1-10 – Another Word for Babylon

Here is another vision of Babylon's fall, as in chapter 13. Yet some aspects of the presentation here are difficult to grasp.

Vs. 1 – *“The burden of the desert of the sea”* – This *“desert of the sea”* seems to be a reference to the land of the Chaldeans near the Persian Gulf. Jeremiah prophesied that the Lord would dry up Babylon's sea (Jer. 51:36).

Vs. 2 – *“A grievous vision is declared unto me”* – Isaiah saw a hard and troubling vision. Compare Daniel 4:19; 7:28; 8:27. Elam is a reference to Persia. The Lord calls Medo-Persia against Babylon. Through their crushing victory over mighty Babylon the Lord *“made to cease”* the *“sighing”* of His people, for with Babylon's end came the end of their captivity.

21:4 *My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.*
21:5 *Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.*
21:6 *For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.*
21:7 *And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:*

Vs. 3-4 – “*My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me*” – It’s several expressions of greatest fear here, apparently from the perspective of Babylon’s king. Remember defiant Belshazzar reduced to quivering gelatine with the Lord’s hand-written notice of destruction on the very night of Babylon’s fall (Dan. 5). The Lord barged into the riotous revelry of that “*night of my pleasure*” and turned it “*into fear unto me*”. Compare Jeremiah 51:33ff.

Vs. 5 – It’s a picture of Babylon partying (“*prepare the table . . . eat, drink*”) yet prepared for trouble (“*watch in the watchtower . . . anoint the shields*”). Thinking themselves quite secure, they were celebrating what they imagined as untouchable strength through their careful precautions and superior gods.

Vs. 6-9 – The watchman – The chariot with outriders (vs. 7) perhaps that of the captain of the combined invading army. Those drawn separately by donkeys

21:8 *And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:*
21:9 *And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*
21:10 *O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.*
21:11 *The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?*

and camels perhaps representing the two nations of Persia and Media?

Vs. 9 – The answer and end of the vision is Babylon’s certain fall (doubled for emphasis), with all of her offensive idolatry completely crushed.

Vs. 10 – “*O My threshing, and the corn of My floor*” – God speaks of His remnant enduring the threshing of His disciplines. And they are encouraged with the certainty of the vision. God’s threshing of those called by His name is ever meant to separate the chaff from the grain, the true from the false, purging corrupt character and building true integrity.

21:11-12 – “*The burden of Dumah*”

Vs. 11 – “*He calleth to me out of Seir*” – Mount Seir was another name for Edom or Idumaea (Greek), a land to the south of the Dead Sea. One earnestly

21:12 *The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.*
21:13 *The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.*
21:14 *The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.*

called out of Edom to Isaiah, calling to the spiritual watchman and asking concerning the night. In a similar way some among the nations came inquiring of the Lord in Christ's day, when few among His own people were listening (Matt. 2; Jn. 12:20-21).

Vs. 12 – *“The morning cometh, and also the night”* – In answer the watchman promised some measure of light followed by more darkness. The long-range forecast for Edom was not good. Compare the message of Obadiah. Yet the invitation stands for those truly seeking, *“If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come”*. Ask! Seek! *“Return”* or repent! Come! These are all words of encouragement used by Jesus in His ministry as well. As earnest as the inquiry is the response from God. *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matt. 11:28). *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (II Cor. 6:2). *“Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts”* (Heb. 3:15; 4:7).

*21:15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.
21:16 For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:
21:17 And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.*

21:13-17 – “*The burden upon Arabia*”

Arabia was a land to the east and south of Palestine. This apparently was word of destruction through Assyria upon these desert people as well.

Vs. 14-15 – Words of warning similar to those spoken to Moab (16:4-5), insisting that Arabia serve as a refuge to fleeing Jews.

Vs. 16 – “*Within a year*” – By God’s grace these too were given notice, and received yet a little time in which to repent before God. Again as the people of Nineveh were given through Jonah’s preaching. Compare 16:14.

Chapter 22

22:1-14 – Reactions to Trouble

Having visited His words upon the surrounding nations, God’s attention now returns to Judah and

22:1 *The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?*
22:2 *Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.*
22:3 *All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.*
22:4 *Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.*

Jerusalem. There is here the threat of some approaching invasion, perhaps Assyria's, or more likely Babylon's. Elam and Kir (vs. 6) were areas in or near Assyria (II Ki. 16:9). The vision seems to focus on the individual responses of various participants in the trouble.

Vs. 1-2 – *“Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city”* – The usual buzz of the city has turned to all concern upon the gathering threat. The people of Jerusalem think to find refuge on the tops of their flat-roofed houses.

Vs. 3 – *“All thy rulers are fled together”* – The leaders of Judah's cities have fled to the refuge of Jerusalem, either leaving their own cities to fend for themselves or because their cities have already fallen.

Vs. 4-5 – *“I will weep bitterly . . . for it is a day of trouble, and of treading down”* – The prophet's tearful

22:5 *For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.*
22:6 *And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.*
22:7 *And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.*
22:8 *And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.*

response. Isaiah would have shown greater confidence if speaking of Assyria's doomed invasion. But his tears point to Babylon's later complete destruction of Jerusalem.

Vs. 6-7 – The enemy makes preparations for battle, overruns the land, and even knocks at the city gate.

Vs. 8-11 – Though Judah makes great preparations for protection and provision, yet *“ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof”*. See how the Lord was carefully observing their responses as he tightened the pressure of threat upon them. We tempt God by not taking necessary precautions against trouble, as Nehemiah did when providing constructive leadership in Jerusalem (Neh. 4). But how much more greatly we tempt the Lord by not looking to Him as our ultimate Protector, as Nehemiah never failed to do, with brief prayers of dependence sprinkled throughout his book (Neh. 4:4-5, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14).

22:9 *Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many:
and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.*
22:10 *And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have
ye broken down to fortify the wall.*
22:11 *Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool:
but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto
him that fashioned it long ago.*

When we so neglect our God we show;

- That we seek to protect what is ours, not what is His.
- That we don't see all that we have as from Him.
- That we have no moment-by-moment thankfulness for His ongoing supply (*"for the water of the old pool"*, vs. 11).
- That we don't understand that all of His resources are to be used for Him.
- That we think ourselves big enough to handle our troubles.

Vs. 12 – The Lord's design for *"that day"* of trouble was to work humility and repentance in His people.

Vs. 13 – *"Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die"* – What was Jerusalem's response to God's warnings? *A party!* This was either the final fling of a hopeless acceptance of doom, or a party in mockery

22:12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:
22:13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.
22:14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

of the prophet's warnings. Either way, it was nothing like the serious sincerity for which the Lord was looking through their trial!

Vs. 14 – The Lord revealed to Isaiah that the “*iniquity*” of such an unbowed response would “*not be purged from you*”, and must be visited by their death.

Look carefully at the Lord's short response to such human attitudes. Whether men respond with a carnal determination to turn the brevity of life into a continual party or with mockery of His words and warnings concerning the eternal state of man, the Lord is not at all pleased. Such attitudes are the basis for wanton sensual sin, repeatedly bringing nations to ruin throughout history. Such views reflect no faith in the words of God or delight in the God of the Word. Faithless unconcern with His pleasure lights a short fuse to His wrath.

“He shall swallow up
death in victory;
and the Lord GOD
will wipe away tears
from off all faces;
and the rebuke of His people
shall He take away
from off all the earth:
for the LORD hath spoken it”

(Isaiah 25:8)

Class 8 – Isaiah 22:15-25:12

In the first half of chapter 22 we saw the record of reactions in Judah and Jerusalem. Reactions to the threat of some approaching invasion, though we're left unclear as to which invasion. As at many points in the Bible, perhaps the Lord allows those elements that are less important to go foggy with the passing years that we not be distracted from His more central themes. The matter of greatest importance here is that the Lord was observing the response of His people when pressed. In such circumstances the right-hearted are "*moved with fear*" as Noah (Heb. 11:7), with that godly combination of *action* in taking appropriate precautions, mingled with prayerful *dependence*. It was a proper response not in evidence among the fearful people of Jerusalem here (22:8-11). Such times of affliction should move men to serious consideration before the Lord of what He might be communicating, with a will to humbly repent. A response that did not feature here either (vs.12-13). These are appropriate reactions for which the Lord searches in the pressure cooker of afflictions. He looks for faithful dependence and repentance, neither of which showed among the people of Isaiah's day. Therefore the Lord's refusal to forgive (vs. 14).

22:15 *Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,*
22:16 *What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?*
22:17 *Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.*
22:18 *He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.*

22:15-25 – Shebna Replaces Eliakim

Little is known of these men except what we find here and in chapters 36 & 37 (a repetition of II Kings 18 & 19). In this portion Shebna is described as the “*treasurer . . . over the house*” (vs. 15), having some position of significance, perhaps under King Hezekiah’s administration. The Lord announced that He was going to remove Shebna from his office, putting godly Eliakim in his place. In II Kings 18 Shebna is described as the “*scribe*” or secretary of Eliakim under Hezekiah, indicating that he had already begun to fall by the time of Assyria’s invasion of Judah. We’re not really even told here why the Lord dealt so harshly with Shebna. It appears to have had something to do with his construction of a tomb for himself (vs. 16), and perhaps the lofty nature of that tomb (“*on high*”).

Vs. 17-19 – “*Behold, the LORD will carry thee away*”

22:19 *And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.*
22:20 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:*
22:21 *And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.*

– Shebna would be removed to captivity, as if the Lord would turn and throw him like a ball into a neighbouring property. His body would never occupy his carefully prepared tomb. Throughout this sad notice of demotion note the focus on the *Lord* as the doer of it.

Vs. 20-25 – “*I will call My servant Eliakim*” – Here now is Eliakim’s appointment. Obviously the man had proved himself faithful in lesser roles, earning him the Lord’s title “*My servant*” (vs. 20). Now a more notable position before God and man was the result. As Timothy was faithful right where he was, which led him to greater service opportunity later (Acts 16). He who is faithful in little things is the one who will be faithful in much, and therefore the one entrusted by the Lord with greater responsibilities.

Vs. 21 – “*He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*” – Showing a godly man’s weighty impact for good upon others.

22:22 *And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*
22:23 *And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.*
22:24 *And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.*
22:25 *In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

Vs. 22 – *“The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder”* – Christ used these words of Himself in Revelation 3:7, for He as well is the appointed Keeper of His Father’s house. It is this for which He showed Himself zealous in His earthly ministry. Even so those zealous for the Father’s things on earth and faithful in the lesser responsibilities of earthly opportunities shall be entrusted much in kingdom appointments.

Vs. 23 – *“I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place”* – Where one was thrown like a ball, the other was fastened like a nail. Again, the Lord is the Nailer. When it comes to appointments, promotions, and demotions, no place is sure except what is made sure by the Lord. Without God, man is foolish to think any place a sure thing and himself securely pegged. Only as the Lord is the One honoured through our appointments is there security (I Sam. 2:7-8; Lk.

1:52).

Chapter 23

This “*burden of Tyre*” is the last in this series of burdens upon surrounding areas (chapters 13-23).

23:1-14 – Tyre’s Ruin

The city of Tyre is on the Mediterranean coast at the southern end of modern Lebanon. Part of the city was on the mainland and part was on an island a kilometre offshore. In its glory days it was a very important shipping port, funnelling goods from Mesopotamia and other parts of the Middle East out over the sea to areas around the Mediterranean rim. Tyre was famous for the export of purple dye taken from a type of shellfish, and of cedar trees from the forests of Lebanon. Though the city of Tyre was quite resistant to capture because of the strength of its island situation, Assyria later controlled the city, and then Babylon after a 13-year siege. Alexander the Great again sacked the city in 332 B.C. by constructing a causeway out to the island. The Lord’s concern with Tyre was her pride, generated by her wealth, prominence, and strong defences.

Vs. 1 – “*Howl, ye ships of Tarshish*” – Being a port

23:1 *The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.*
23:2 *Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.*
23:3 *And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations.*
23:4 *Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.*
23:5 *As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.*
23:6 *Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.*

city, the wealth of Tyre depended upon her shipping, and this is where the Lord begins.

Vs. 2-3 – “*She is a mart of nations*” – Tyre was a hub of prosperity.

Vs. 5 – “*So shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre*” – As with Babylon in Revelation 18, there would be great concern among merchant nations at the report of Tyre’s fall, both for the loss of commerce and the omen of their own ruin to come. Compare Ezekiel 26-27.

Vs. 6 – “*Pass ye over to Tarshish*” – The Lord advised flight across the sea to Tarshish (probably in Spain).

Vs. 7 – Her proud ancient heritage would make no

23:7 *Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.*

23:8 *Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?*

23:9 *The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.*

23:10 *Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength.*

23:11 *He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof.*

23:12 *And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.*

difference with God when the time came to bring her down. Folks so commonly, foolishly think that because something has “always been” therefore it will always be.

Vs. 8-9 – *“The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory”* – The Lord Himself would be the One staining the pride of man’s vain glories (as if with purple dye?). Tyre’s fall is just another one of the Lord’s many object lessons of the hollow, feeble nature of the most seemingly substantial of human glories. It all comes down eventually. Human glories are no nail fastened to anything fixed! The Lord proves His earlier point, that *“the lofty looks of man shall be humbled”* (2:11).

23:13 *Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin.*
 23:14 *Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.*
 23:15 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.*
 23:16 *Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.*
 23:17 *And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.*
 23:18 *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.*

Vs. 11-12 – *“And He said, Thou shalt no more rejoice”* – When *“the LORD hath given commandment”* to destroy, all rejoicing comes to an end. Compare Revelation 18:22-23.

23:15-18 – Tyre’s Return

Vs. 15-17 – *“Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years”* – Perhaps as an object lesson of Judah’s captivity in Babylon, Tyre would be oppressed for a period of seventy years, either under Assyria’s foot or Babylon’s. But she would arise to return to her immoral ways, as a harlot forgotten and then restored to her old practice. Again, as an object lesson for Judah?

Vs. 18 – It seems there would be some benefit to the Lord’s people through this restored city, or lesson learned through it.

Perhaps the main point to perceive is that the most seemingly lofty and secure of man’s institutions has no security *without* the Lord, and the most seemingly devastated is far from hopeless *with* the Lord. As with Shebna and Eliakim in the previous chapter, when the Lord says fall, it falls, and when He says rise, it rises. As with a man, so with a city or a nation, for one is as easy as another with the Lord. This is much of the essence of Mary’s song of praise in Luke 1 (vs. 52).

Chapter 24

Few Bible portions are so dismal as this vision of judgment upon the whole earth. The scene now widens beyond just the Lord’s concern with surrounding nations to take in the whole of “*the earth*” (15 times in this chapter). The seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments of Revelation give the details of these future divine strokes upon land, sea, heavens, and man during the 7-year Great Tribulation period leading up to Christ’s return.

24:1-23 – Earth Turned Upside Down

24:1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.
 24:2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.
 24:3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.
 24:4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.
 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.
 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Vs. 1 – *“As with the people, so with the priest”* – Status will mean nothing in that day. Every social level of man has practiced evil upon the earth, and therefore all will be touched in God’s fearful day of visitation.

Vs. 3-5 – *“The land shall be utterly emptied”* – There will be worldwide judgment upon an earth *“defiled under the inhabitants thereof”*. Compare *“them which destroy [corrupt] the earth”* in Revelation 11:18.

Vs. 6 – *“Few men left”* – Compare within the Tribulation period;

- Revelation 6:8 – With the 4th seal judgment ¼ of earth’s inhabitants dead through various means.

24:7 *The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.*
 24:8 *The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.*
 24:9 *They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.*
 24:10 *The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.*
 24:11 *There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.*

- Revelation 6:9; 7:14; 13:7; 20:4 – An innumerable multitude put to death for Christ.
- Revelation 8:11 – With the 3rd trumpet judgment *“many men died”* through the poisoned waters from the fallen star *“Wormwood”*.
- Revelation 9:15 & 18 – With the 6th trumpet judgment a third of earth’s inhabitants killed. A third of the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ is another $\frac{1}{4}$, or at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of earth’s original population dead!
- Revelation 11:13 – *“in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand”*.
- Add as well the multiplied millions killed in a moment at Armageddon, and understand *“the land . . . utterly emptied”*.

Vs. 7-11 – *“They shall drink no wine, with a song”* –

24:12 *In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.*
24:13 *When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.*
24:14 *They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.*
24:15 *Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.*
24:16 *From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.*

Compare the greatest mourning and silence with the destruction of Babylon in Revelation 18.

Vs. 14-16 – *“They shall sing for the majesty of the LORD”* – Though Isaiah mourned over the ghastly prospect of it all, yet the righteous remnant shall rejoice in that coming day, for they will know that their redemption draweth nigh. The *“patience of the saints”* is found in this eventual justice and vengeance upon evil doers (Rev. 13:10; Ps. 73). Compare in Revelation 18:20 & 19:1-7 the heavenly handsprings and command for all to join in rejoicing upon Babylon’s final fall.

Vs. 15 – What better place to *“glorify ye the LORD”* than *“in the fires”*, as Daniel’s three friends (Dan. 3).

Vs. 16 – *“The treacherous dealers have dealt very*

24:17 *Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.*

24:18 *And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.*

24:19 *The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.*

24:20 *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.*

treacherously” – Great emphasis here. Treachery will be the nature of Antichrist’s day, the likes of which the world has never seen (Matt. 24:21). Unbelievers will show their colours in that dark day by selling out believers to Antichrist’s regime for fear of suffering a like fate to theirs. It will be no day to even be suspected of the least sympathy for believers in Jesus.

Vs. 18 – There will be no place to hide! When God stands against, there is no refuge, not even among or under the rocks of the mountains. Compare 2:19-21 & Revelation 6:12-17. Compare again Amos 5:18-20.

Vs. 20 – *“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard”* – The 7th bowl judgment will rock the earth with an earthquake like the world has never seen, scattering every island and flattening every mountain (Rev. 16:17-20).

24:21 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.*

24:22 *And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.*

24:23 *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.*

Vs. 21 – *“The LORD shall punish the host of the high ones”* – Compare Revelation 19:15-21.

Vs. 22 – *“They shall be gathered together . . . in the pit”* – Compare in Revelation 20, Satan kept prisoner in *“the bottomless pit”* (vs. 1-3) and the beast and false prophet kept in *“the lake of fire”* (vs. 10) throughout Christ’s Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 23 – *“When the LORD of hosts shall reign . . . gloriously”* – This is the eternal state described as the New Heavens, Earth, and Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22. Note especially the same shamed heavenly light givers in Revelation 21:23-22:5.

Chapter 25

We come now to another millennial hymn of praise. Don’t miss the familiar pattern becoming evident. The Lord took us down to the very depths in the

25:1 *O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*
25:2 *For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.*
25:3 *Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.*
25:4 *For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.*

preceding chapters with His threats of national judgments (chapter 13-23), extending in chapter 24 to encompass the whole earth. Now He lifts us again to the heights with this chorus of praise in Christ's promised kingdom and beyond. Compare chapter 12.

25:1-5 – Isaiah's Praise

Vs. 1 – “*O LORD, Thou art God; I will exalt Thee*” – All that God has spoken in His “*counsels of old*” will fully come together and be shown to be “*faithfulness and truth*” in Christ's kingdom and the eternal state to follow. Will you decide now to trust His every promise?

Vs. 2-3 – “*The city of the terrible nations shall fear Thee*” – The Lord having forever levelled all of the lofty institutions of proud man, all people shall come to live only for His glory in that day.

25:5 *Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.*
25:6 *And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.*
25:7 *And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.*
25:8 *He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

Vs. 4-5 – “*A refuge from the storm*” – Christ’s earthly rule “*with a rod of iron*” (Rev. 12:5) will be a shield for the weak and an end to every oppressor.

25:6-12 – Things to Come “*in this mountain*”

Vs. 6 – “*A feast of fat things*” – “*This mountain*” refers to Jerusalem, the centre of Christ’s coming reign (2:3; 24:23). Life under the direct rule of Jesus Christ on earth will be as a continual banquet. Compare the foreshadow of this in King David’s magnanimity during his reign (II Sam. 6:19). Perhaps the marriage supper of the Lamb is included in this picture (Rev. 19:9).

Vs. 7-8 – “*He will swallow up death in victory*” – This is a reference particularly to the eternal state after Christ’s 1000-year earthly kingdom (Rev. 21:3-4). Quoted in I Corinthians 15:54.

25:9 *And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*
25:10 *For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.*
25:11 *And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.*
25:12 *And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.*

Vs. 9 – *“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him”*
– Faith’s patience will be richly rewarded.

Vs. 10-12 – *“Moab shall be trodden down under him”*
– The pride of Moab (16:6), as that of all nations, shall be trodden down (vs. 10) and swept away (vs. 11).

Vs. 12 – Great focus on lowness here. All of the lofty proud will finally be left trodden under foot, and the lowly finally found feasting on the height of Mount Zion.

Do you believe it? Do you believe it enough to bow your head and heart to Jesus Christ right now and receive Him as your Lord and Saviour?

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)

“Thou wilt keep him
in perfect peace,
whose mind
is stayed on Thee:
because he trusteth
in Thee”

(Isaiah 26:3)

Class 9 – Isaiah 26-28:13

26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Chapter 26

We saw in chapter 25 an expression of praise to God for His goodness and justice, and for wonderful things to come in Christ's Millennial Kingdom upon His return to earth. Continuing on that bright theme there now follows in this chapter a happy song of confidence in the Lord.

26:1 – Song to be Sung

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah” – It's a song for that same era (*“in that day”*) described in chapter 25. And it is to *“be sung in the land of Judah”*. Matthew Henry makes Judah here “a figure of the gospel church”, seeing the promises to Israel fulfilled in the church. But if we make Judah something other than Judah haven't we now thrown the rudder overboard? Haven't we thrown the Bible away as any kind of effective guide? Clearly these are the actual descendants of Jacob singing of

26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

their restoration to their land and Lord in Christ's kingdom. They will sing of the everlasting security of their restored city and souls, and of their supreme confidence in the God who keeps His promises to His people.

26:2 – Invitation to Nations

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation . . . may enter” – The standard for entry will be based solely upon the attitude toward the truth of God. Those who are redeemed display their righteous souls by their love of the truth. And such a loving commitment is sure to have a profound effect upon one's lifestyle. The unsaved will certainly *“perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”* (II Thess. 2:10).

26:3-4 – Promise and Plea

Vs. 3 – *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee”* – When our meditations are firmly kept upon the Lord our soul is kept in perfect peace. It's God's promise to us. Compare

26:4 *Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*
26:5 *For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.*
26:6 *The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.*

Philippians 4 & Psalm 112:7-8. So what can be said for the one not in perfect peace at any given moment?

Vs. 4 – *“In the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength”* – The word *“trust”* is written as a command in the Hebrew. Literally, “In Jah Jehovah is a rock everlasting” (marginal note – Rock of ages). “It is the proper name of God the Redeemer in the most emphatic form” (Keil & Delitzsch). The name Jehovah (doubled for emphasis here) means the Self-Existent One, the One not created or bound by time. Such a One is the only solid and lasting “Rock of ages” upon which to ground your existence. Compare 28:16; Matthew 7:24ff.

26:5-6 – Proud Brought Low

“He bringeth down them that dwell on high” – Again, great emphasis here, and great focus on this theme throughout (25:12). The Lord has so often shown that He *can* and *will* bring low the lofty, and exalt *“the poor, and . . . needy”*.

26:7 *The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.*

26:8 *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.*

26:9 *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

26:7 – Way and Watcher of the Just

The Lord weighs the way of the just, lingering over and levelling their way. Compare the same levelled way of peace in Psalm 119:165.

26:8-9 – Attitude of the Just

Vs. 8 – *“In the way of Thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for Thee”* – Patient waiting is the way of God’s own even in His judgments. Boaz waited patiently in God’s judgment of famine on the land rather than running to Moab, and was blessed for it (Ruth). That day of resolution will prove it all quite worth the wait. Compare Habakkuk 2:3, *“though it tarry, wait for it”*.

Vs. 8-9 – *“The desire of our soul is to Thy name”* – Here is a righteous yearning after the Lord. Compare Psalm 42:1; 63:1. What is our religion, if not a genuine thirst for the true God? Anything else is no true religion!

26:10 *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.*
26:11 *LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.*

Vs. 9 – Those with right hearts learn righteousness through God’s judgments.

26:10-11 – Mercies Abused by the Wicked

Vs. 10 – *“Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness”* – Those with wrong hearts will not learn righteousness through God’s mercies. Note the design of the Lord’s goodness to man (Rom. 2:4). Though man’s very environment be *“the land of uprightness”*, yet he is not moved to honesty.

Vs. 11 – *“LORD, when Thy hand is lifted up, they will not see”* – Though the Lord make Himself ever so evident in grace, the wicked refuse to see and behold. It’s not a matter of their ability but of their will (*“they will not see”*).

“But they shall see” – The wicked will ultimately be forced to clear vision in the shame of his judgment. He will surely be made to acknowledge it a fearful

26:12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.
26:13 O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.
26:14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.
26:15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.

thing to fall into the hands of that One he so wilfully ignored.

“The fire of thine enemies shall devour them” – See how those who make themselves the enemies of God’s people become the enemies of God Himself as well.

26:12-14 – Folly of Other Masters

Vs. 12-13 – *“By Thee only will we make mention of Thy name”* – The lesson had been well-learned. While in their past they had appealed to other gods and bowed to evil lusts, it was the Lord all along and all alone who had truly laboured for their peace. Therefore His name *only* would be found on their lips.

Vs. 14 – Behold in human history the record of false gods tossed aside and forgotten.

26:16 *LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.*

26:17 *Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD.*

26:18 *We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.*

26:15-18 – God’s Teaching Methods

Vs. 15 – The Lord gives His people increase. Men rejoice in God glorified through the increase. He then scatters it “*unto all the ends of the earth*”. And though men are confounded, God’s name is equally glorified through their scattering. It’s God’s glory, not man’s, that is ever the true concern.

Vs. 16 – “*LORD, in trouble have they visited Thee*” – When visited with trouble, those troubled visit the Lord with “*poured out*” prayers. The obvious is that they prayed little or not at all in the good times. Therefore the troubles. Compare Psalm 107. Compare the repeated pattern in the days of the Judges (sin – suffering – supplication – saviour – salvation). See how afflictions are necessary to stir us to pray, and to do so fervently. Compare Hosea 5:15, “*In their affliction they will seek Me early*”.

Vs. 17-18 – The Lord brought them through pain in

26:19 *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs,
and the earth shall cast out the dead.*
26:20 *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors
about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the
indignation be overpast.*

order to bring to birth the blessing of their complete dependence upon Him. They accomplished nothing (“*wind*”) for all their labours without the Lord (vs. 18).

26:19 – Vision of Resurrection

Here is a clear expression of Isaiah’s confidence in a future resurrection. Compare Job 19:25-26.

26:20-21 – Great Tribulation

Vs. 20 – “*Hide thyself . . . until the indignation be overpast*” – The remnant of Israel shall be hidden from Antichrist’s power through the “*little moment*” of the final 3½ years before Jesus returns in glory. Compare Revelation 12 & Matthew 24:15ff. It will be;

- As the Lord shut the door of the ark, protecting Noah and family from His judgment.
- As Rahab and family safely shut in her secure home while the city of Jericho fell all around them.

26:21 *For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

- As the faithful Jews all gathered in their houses, safe under the blood of the slain lamb from the death angel passing through Egypt.

Vs. 21 – It will be that day of woe upon all those dwelling upon earth (Rev. 8:13). That “*the Lord cometh out of His place to punish*” speaks of an extraordinary manifestation of His wrath, far beyond what the world has ever seen.

“*The earth also shall disclose her blood*” – Justice will be done, with the earth disclosing her blood and slain. The evidence of every secret crime buried in the earth will be fully exposed. Every hidden evil will be made public. Countless unfair deaths and deeds never discovered by men will all finally come to fullest exposure.

Chapter 27

This chapter, as the previous, describes that same era of supreme interest, “*that day*” of Christ’s coming kingdom. The phrase “*in that day*” is found four times throughout (vs. 1, 2, 12, 13).

27:1 *In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.*
27:2 *In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.*

27:1 – Leviathan Destroyed

Leviathan, as described by the Lord in Job 41, was the greatest sea dinosaur of God's creation. Though Leviathan was a creature untouchable by man, the Lord brought it to extinction (Ps. 74:13-14) as a display to little man of God's supreme greatness. God's *distinction* through Leviathan's extinction. Note the great emphasis here as well on the power of the Lord's sword, "*sore and great and strong*".

When the Lord ended His description of this fascinating sea creature in Job 41 with, "*he is a king over all the children of pride*" (vs. 34) one senses a representation bigger than just the creature of the sea, but looking beyond to Satan, "*the dragon, that old serpent*" (Rev. 12:9; 21:2). The end of the actual sea creature perhaps foreshadows Satan's ultimate doom (Rev. 20:10). Putting this together with the previous verses at the end of chapter 26, vs. 1 here is perhaps a subtle reference to Satan's coming fall in the context of Christ's return and earthly kingdom. A vision of the chief enemy of God's people

27:3 *I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*
27:4 *Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.*
27:5 *Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.*

destroyed.

27:2-6 – Song of God’s Care

Vs. 2 – “*In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine*” – Comparing 5:1-7 we know that “*the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel*”. What was before a vineyard of “*wild grapes*” (5:2) is now “*a vineyard of red wine*”. Things will be changed “*in that day*”.

Vs. 3 – “*I the LORD do keep it*” – The Lord speaks of His “*every moment . . . night and day*” care.

Vs. 4-5 – Man’s options are presented. He can either resist and be mowed down, or he can “*make peace with Me*”. Every soul has the passing opportunity in life of catching hold of “*My strength*”, as if grasping the Lord’s strong hand as we sink into the waves or into the mouth of the earth. It’s a vision of the Lord’s restoration of His vineyard in His grace, after He had laid it waste in His wrath (5:5-6).

27:6 *He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.*
27:7 *Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?*
27:8 *In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.*
27:9 *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.*
27:10 *Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.*

Vs. 6 – “*Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit*” – A promise of Israel restored to productivity in that coming age, and the whole world blessed through them.

27:7-11 – God’s Vineyard Purged

Vs. 7-8 – The Lord trims the righteous as well, but not to the degree He does their enemies, whom He uses to smite His own.

Vs. 10-11 – A warning that Jerusalem would be left burned and desolate for a time. Compare in John 15:1-6 the similar picture of purging vines for greater fruitfulness, and cutting off withered branches for burning. The latter is fulfilled in unbelieving Jews, or church members.

27:11 *When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.*

27:12 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.*

27:13 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*

27:12-13 – Israel Regathered

“The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come” – This came to pass more immediately with Israel’s return in Daniel’s day, and *“shall come to pass”* ultimately in the last days.

Chapter 28

With chapter 28 we dip back into the darkness of Isaiah’s book of woes (chapter 5). Except for chapter 32, chapters 28-33 all begin with the words *“Woe to . . .”*. This fearful little word of threat has always been followed by fulfilment of the warning it carries. The Lord begins His series of woes with one levelled at Ephraim (northern kingdom of Israel) and Judah.

28:1-13 – Woe Upon Ephraim

28:1 *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!*

28:2 *Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.*

28:3 *The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:*

28:4 *And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.*

28:5 *In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,*

Vs. 1 – “*Woe to . . . the drunkards of Ephraim*” – Ephraim was the prominent tribe in the north, representing the whole northern kingdom. The Lord referred to them as “*drunkards*” (vs. 1, 3), so consumed they were with strong drink (vs. 7). The prophets Hosea (4:11) and Amos (6:6) made similar charges. Ephraim was as a flower of “*glorious beauty*”, yet now fading (vs. 1, 4). Drink will do the same to the glory of any man’s strength.

Vs. 2 – “*Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one*” – Assyria was the Lord’s “*mighty and strong one*”, scheduled to bring Israel’s fall.

Vs. 8 – “*For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness*” – See the disgusting depth of their debauchery.

28:6 *And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.*
28:7 *But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*
28:8 *For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.*
28:9 *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*
28:10 *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:*
28:11 *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*

Vs. 9-10 – “*Whom shall he teach knowledge?*” – This was the scornful response of the Jewish leaders to Isaiah’s strong, exposing words.

Vs. 11 – “*With stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people*” – A reminder of the Lord’s ancient warning of captivity for disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:49. Compare Isaiah 33:19; Jeremiah 5:15. Since God’s people refused to take hold of His strength and make peace with Him (27:5), since they refused to hear the admonition His prophet brought, the only option left to the Lord was to bring the judgment of captivity through a people of another tongue. Since “*they would not hear*” His words in a language they could understand, He was forced to speak to them in a language they could *not*

28:12 *To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

understand, though they would get the message (“*but they shall see*”, 26:11). Note the similar pattern in Christ’s ministry. When the Jewish nation refused His plain words the Lord began to speak to them in parables (Matt. 13), words the stubborn could not understand.

For those of you caught up in the foolishness of speaking in tongues, please understand what Paul is suggesting when quoting this in I Corinthians 14:21. The spiritual gift of tongues-speaking was given by the Spirit for Israel (“*them that believe not*”, I Cor. 14:22), as a warning of approaching doom upon the nation. It was given in fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy when the nation was in a similar condition of heart in Isaiah’s day. It was given as a sign of judgment, not of blessing. It was given as a warning to Israel, not as a play thing or prayer language for the church. With the arrival of that foreshadowed judgment in 70 A.D., tongues ceased with the need for the gift, as Paul prophesied (I Cor. 13:8).

Vs. 12 – “*This is the rest . . . this the refreshing: yet they would not hear*” – Christ Himself was and “*is the*

28:13 *But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

rest” and *“refreshing”*, yet these same people so stubbornly refused to hear again in Christ’s day the gospel of the kingdom.

Vs. 13 – *“The word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept”* – The Lord did bring His truth to this people through every possible means, making their judgment all the more just.

“Forasmuch as this people
draw near Me with their mouth,
and with their lips do honour Me,
but have removed
their heart far from Me”

(Isaiah 29:13)

Class 10 – Isaiah 28:14-30:33

28:14 *Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.*

28:15 *Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:*

The Lord had issued warning of “*woe to . . . the drunkards of Ephraim*” in the first half of chapter 28. Now His attention turns to “*the scornful men*” in Jerusalem to the south.

28:14-29 – Woe Upon Judah

Vs. 15 – “*We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we in agreement*” – Some among them had entered into some covenant or agreement “*with death, and with hell*” [Sheol, the place of the dead]. This probably refers to the occult practice of some sort of deal with the devil against their being touched by disaster and death. And by this means they had run to a “*refuge of lies*” as the Lord put it in vs. 17, due to be swept away. What can one expect when dealing with the father of lies? In essence they were trusting something other than the Lord for their safety. How ridiculous for one to convince himself of

28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*
28:17 *Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.*

an agreement with death, while making an enemy of the Author of life! The principle applies to all who are deceived into some phoney spiritual security.

Vs. 16 – “*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone*” – In contrast to every false footer, the Lord pointed to faith in *His* deliverance as the only sure foundation. This is a word of comfort for His people of every age. His promise of what He would “*lay in Zion*” ensured that Jerusalem would remain, come what may. This verse is often quoted in the N.T., showing its fulfilment in Jesus Christ and faith in Him (Rom. 9:33 & 10:11; I Pet. 2:6). Jesus is the only bedrock, and every other trust only sinking sand, providing no strength to hold against the storms and floods of life.

“*He that believes shall not make haste*” – The soul believing in Jesus shall never flee in sudden panic at wit’s end, having discovered his trust misplaced at the last. Compare Romans 5:5, “*and hope maketh not ashamed*”. This hope can never be disappointed. Instead, “*blessed are all they that put their trust in*

28:18 *And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.*
28:19 *From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.*
28:20 *For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.*
28:21 *For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.*

Him” (Ps. 2:12).

Vs. 17 – As every refuge but God’s appointed shelter was overflowed and swept away in Noah’s day, so in every age.

Vs. 18 – *Covenant disannulled*, by the only One with true power over death and hell. Note how upside-down (29:16) they had become through their refusal of God, looking *down* for their security instead of *up*. As King Saul at his end, having no recourse with heaven he too turned to hell’s agent for answers (I Sam. 28).

Vs. 20 – “*For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it*” – An illustration of every earth-based provision coming short.

Vs. 21 – “*That He may do His work, His strange work*”

28:22 *Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.*

28:23 *Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.*

28:24 *Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?*

28:25 *When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?*

– The Lord would break forth upon His own people as He had with her enemies in the past (II Sam. 5:20). It would be a surprising work, as strange as Israel forsaking her God. Compare Deuteronomy 29:24-28; I Kings 9:6-9 Habakkuk 1:5.

Vs. 23-29 – Parable from the Field

Vs. 23 – A solemn call to listen. A farmer does not only prepare the soil and plant (vs. 24-26). If he's going to get the benefit of his crops he must also thresh the grain after harvesting as well (vs. 27-28). Some types of grain require heavier threshing than others. If sufficient that it be "*beaten out with a staff*" then it's not necessary to "*break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen*". The "threshing" of Judah's judgment was ultimately for blessing, that the good might be separated from the bad, grain from chaff, that they might be used for greatest benefit. It was a question of what type of

28:26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

28:27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

28:28 Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

28:29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

threshing they would require. If they would respond to the lighter threshing of the Lord's staff, then the horsemen and chariots of a conquering host would not be necessary. Their choice.

Vs. 29 – *“Wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working”* – The Lord is the Master Farmer who knows exactly how to handle His fields and crops for best results. And He is as willing to thresh as He is to plough and plant for the benefit of the finest harvest.

Chapter 29

Woe upon Jerusalem.

29:1-4 – Ariel's Distress

Vs. 1 – *“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!”* – Ariel means “lion of God” or “lion of strength”. It's clear that this *“city where David dwelt”* is Jerusalem, but unclear why it was called by

29:1 *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.*
 29:2 *Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.*
 29:3 *And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.*
 29:4 *And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.*

this name. Perhaps though the Lord considered Jerusalem chief among the cities of the earth, yet He portrays her as king of beasts because of her prideful rebellion. A man is only fully a man when bowing in submission before God. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's lesson in humility in Daniel 4.

Vs. 2-3 – It would be the Lord who would “*camp against thee round about*”, though coming in the form of Sennacherib.

Vs. 4 – “*The speech shall whisper out of the dust*” – Jerusalem's prideful roar would be reduced to a humble whisper. There is great emphasis here. Compare 25:10-12. Apparently the reference here is to the deceiving practice of spirit mediums (“*one that hath a familiar spirit*”), who used ventriloquism to impersonate the mumbling voice of souls supposedly returned from the dead, as if speaking “*out of the*

29:5 *Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.*

29:6 *Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.*

29:7 *And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.*

29:8 *It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.*

ground”.

29:5-8 – Ariel’s Deliverance

Vs. 5 – *“The multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away”* – Her enemies would be removed *“at an instant suddenly”*.

Vs. 7 – Expanding wider again to include *“the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel”* (vs. 8). Again a vision ultimately fulfilled in Armageddon. Compare 13:4-5.

Vs. 8 – Assyria’s hope of success against Jerusalem shall suddenly vanish, as the disappointment of one awakening from a promising dream. Remember the same lopped off hope pictured at the end of chapter

29:9 *Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.*
29:10 *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*
29:11 *And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:*

10.

Remember Sennacherib's suddenly vanished army. This is a foreshadow of the same on a much wider scale at Armageddon, when Satan's grand dream is finally crushed.

29:9-16 – Israel's Deception

Vs. 9 – “*Stay yourselves, and wonder*” – Isaiah bids the reader to steady himself in the amazing spectacle of a people with every advantage for seeing, but still blind. Their perceptions were clouded, not by alcohol, but by false beliefs. Spiritual drunkenness is older than Toronto's Cursing, and an all-too-common form of deception still.

Vs. 10 – “*For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep*” – Their determined love for sleepy blindness moved the Lord to contribute to their cloudy slumber. Compare 6:9-10. Compare Romans

29:12 *And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.*
29:13 *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

11:8, where Paul quotes this verse to show the Lord's just contribution to Israel's determined blindness in Christ's day as well.

Vs. 11-12 – *“The words of a book that is sealed”* – A closed book. Though they had the Book of God and later heard the very words of Christ, their refusal to hear ultimately led to their *inability* to hear, making response to God's warnings impossible, and drifting them quietly, sleepily on to judgment. With time the Lord turns man's *will-not* to *cannot*. Compare Matthew 13:10-15. Understanding is an easy thing to he who will understand (Ps. 25:12, 14; Jn. 7:17). Remember the blessed contrast in King Josiah (II Kings 22).

Vs. 13 – Superficial worship and insincere prayer. Quoted by Christ in Matthew 15:8-9 & Mark 7:6-7, *“In vain they worship God”*.

“Their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men”
– They were lifting the views of men above the clear

29:14 *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

29:15 *Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?*

29:16 *Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?*

teachings of God, honouring men above the Lord. Compare Christ's fight with the Jewish leaders over their traditions. Compare the unfortunate Catholic heresy of placing church tradition on a par with Scripture. Compare the charismatics' 2nd book of experience and manifestations dangerously elevated to the same level.

Vs. 14 – *“Behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people”* – Compare the Lord's *“strange work”* of 28:21.

Vs. 14-15 – *“Their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us?”* – Thinking themselves quite clever and hidden, the Lord would indeed find them and bring their wisdom to folly. *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”* (Rom. 1:22). They having rebelliously removed their hearts from the Lord, He removed wisdom from their hearts,

29:17 *Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?*
29:18 *And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.*
29:19 *The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

thus blinding them into thinking their “*upside down*” existence a secret. “*He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh*” at those foolish enough to imagine such vain things. How many a human folly is rooted in doubt of God’s omniscience? (Ps. 94:7; Ezek. 8:12; 9:9).

Vs. 16 – He who *made* them *sees* them.

29:17-24 – Israel’s Day of Grace

Another picture now of the blessing of Christ’s coming kingdom.

Vs. 17 – Is it not yet “*a very little while*”? Compare Hebrews 10:37.

Vs. 18 – Deaf and blind shall hear and see.

Vs. 19 – The meek and poor shall rejoice there, “*for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matt. 5:5). Joy shall abound.

29:20 *For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:*
29:21 *That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*
29:22 *Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.*
29:23 *But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.*
29:24 *They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.*

Vs. 20-21 – *“The terrible one is brought to nought”* – Human predators will be removed. For those catching at words and laying snares for reprovers and the ungrounded turning aside of justice, compare the Jewish leaders with Christ. Though we be treated as our Master in this age, as we surely will be if we live as He did, the answer is to *wait* for that coming day. For *“it will surely come, it will not tarry”* (Hab. 2:3).

Vs. 22-24 – In that coming age Israel will no longer be ashamed, will fear the Lord, and will *“come to understanding”*.

In the margin of my Bible I’ve written “charismatic brothers” beside vs. 24. For they too have *“erred in spirit”* and are given to muttering, thinking this to be the biblical gift of tongues-speaking. But by God’s

grace they too shall one day “*come to understanding, and . . . shall learn doctrine*”.

Chapter 30

These next two chapters deal with the rebellion of attempting to establish an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. It was always a natural tendency in the Lord’s people when attacked by a neighbour to run to another neighbour for help.

- When attacked by Israel, Judah ran to Syria for help (II Chron. 16:2-3).
- When attacked by Syria, Judah ran to Assyria (II Ki. 16:7).
- And when attacked by Assyria, some in Judah ran to Egypt (II Ki. 18:21).

In each threatening situation the Lord longed that His people might run to *Him* for help, and place their trust wholly in Him (remember 22:11). For this stubborn disloyalty in them the Lord now pronounced “*woe to the rebellious children*”. For again, it was not a case of “I cannot trust”, but “I will not trust”. They refused His aid, and therefore He had words for them.

30:1-7 – Vain Trust in Egypt

30:1 *Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:*

30:2 *That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!*

30:3 *Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.*

30:4 *For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.*

30:5 *They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.*

Vs. 1-2 – “*Counsel, but not of Me . . . covering, but not of My Spirit . . . and have not asked at My mouth*” – The Lord challenged His people with the folly of trusting in “*the shadow of Egypt*” over the substance of the Eternal One.

Vs. 3 – “*Therefore*” their chosen covering would prove too short (28:20). Not only failure, but “*shame*” and “*confusion*” would be the result (also vs. 5). Contrast how every soul who puts his trust in the Lord will never be put to shame (28:16).

Vs. 4 – Apparently Judah’s representatives were already negotiating in the two Egyptian cities of Zoan and Hanes. The Lord would later threaten Egypt for her treacherous dealings with Judah, for they served only as “*a staff of a reed*” to them, breaking as soon as Judah tried to lean their weight upon them (Ezek. 29:6-7).

30:6 *The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.*

30:7 *For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.*

30:8 *Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:*

Vs. 6 – *“They will carry their riches . . . to a people that shall not profit them”* – The Lord’s invaluable aid was without price, while Egypt’s worthless help was costly. In their trouble they were returning to their ancient land of *“trouble and anguish”*.

Vs. 7 – *“Their strength is to sit still”* – The Lord is a “Rock everlasting” (28:4), while every earthly prop is only a bruised reed, a vain “help”. Judah’s strength was in a quiet trust in the Lord (vs. 15), rather than in casting about anxiously seeking earthly props.

30:8-17 – Woe Pronounced

Vs. 8 – *“Write it before them in a table, and note it in a book”* – Isaiah was told to write an eternal record of the nature of these people;

- That the reproof of the people of that day might stand as a formal indictment.

30:9 *That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:*

30:10 *Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:*

30:11 *Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.*

- That the people of every following age might hear and fear (I Tim. 5:20).
- That all might know throughout the ages that the Lord was fair in dealing so harshly with His people.
- That none could later claim they never heard.

Vs. 9-11 – The record of them.

- Rebellious (vs. 9).
- Liars – untrue to their *own* words (vs. 9).
- They refuse to hear – untrue to the *Lord's* words (vs. 9).
- They refuse to see with God's seers (vs. 10).
- They refuse the right, preferring to be soothed by the smooth (vs. 10). They would have what was easy to hear, even knowing it to be deception. They would have ear-tickling preachers, who attached no wrong or threat to

*30:12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:
30:13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.*

their sin (II Tim. 4:1-4). Such souls deserve to be deceived.

- They demand of God's prophets, who faithfully stood in the way of their evil, "Get out of the way, and take the Holy One of Israel with you!" (vs. 11). Compare King Amaziah's response to the unnamed prophet in II Chronicles 25:14-16.

All who resist such fair preaching and preachers are fairly called "rebels", loving the easy ways of "*deceits*".

Vs. 12-17 – The record of their doom.

Vs. 12 – A word now from that "*Holy One of Israel*" whom they would chase out of their wayward path. Because of their determination to trust in their own measures rather than in the Lord;

- They would be as a cracked, bulging, high wall, on the verge of suddenly breaking and coming down (vs. 13).

30:14 *And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.*

30:15 *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*

- They would be as shattered pottery, with no shard large enough to be of any use (vs. 14).
- They would be put to flight (vs. 17).

See again how Isaiah preached the word, both “*in season and out of season*” (II Tim. 4:2), both to those who wished to hear and to those who did not. He was boldly preaching to them anyway, though they had said “*prophecy not*” (vs. 10-11).

Vs. 15 – “*In returning and rest shall ye be saved*” – Again, their only hope was repentance and quiet confidence in the Lord for deliverance in the face of looming threat (28:12; 30:7), rather than casting about for their own solutions. This same principle carries in the gospel message (Rom. 4:5; Gal. 2:16). As with the brass serpent on the pole in the wilderness, all who seek their own solutions for the poisonous snake-bite of sin shall die in their sins. But all who lift their eyes of faith to believe in Jesus

30:16 *But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.*

30:17 *One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.*

30:18 *And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*

30:19 *For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.*

Christ, all who simply turn and rest their hope upon Him, shall live (Jn. 3:14-17). Those who think themselves wiser than God, thinking to arrange their own deliverance, shall all likewise perish. The Lord has already pronounced woe upon every such rejecter, describing them as wilfully blind and deaf, lying rebels who refuse right in their love for wrong.

30:18-24 – Vision of Millennial Blessing

Again the gaze of the prophet looks beyond foolish man to faithful God in His ultimate determination for good upon His own.

Vs. 18 – *“Therefore will the LORD wait”* – While the Lord waits to be gracious, *“blessed are all they that wait for Him”*.

30:20 *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:*
30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*
30:22 *Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.*
30:23 *Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.*

Vs. 19 – Looking to that day when man shall “*weep no more*” (Rev. 21:3-4).

Vs. 20-21 – In that day they would listen to the Word of the Lord through His faithful spokesmen regardless of their circumstance.

Vs. 21 – “*Thine ear shall hear a word behind thee*” – The operative word here is “*hear*”. Isaiah speaks of a day when they will be hearers and seers, attuned even to the “*still small voice*” of God’s guidance.

Vs. 22 – “*Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images*” – They would not only quit idolatry, but would despise and trash it.

Vs. 23-25 – “*Then shall He give the rain of thy seed*” – A day of return and abundance. Compare 2:4;

30:24 *The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.*

30:25 *And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.*

30:26 *Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.*

29:17.

Vs. 25 – “*The day of the great slaughter*” is perhaps a reference to Armageddon, the ushering in of Christ’s kingdom.

Vs. 26 – “*The light of the sun shall be sevenfold*” – Perhaps referring to Tribulation judgments, leading to Israel’s humbling and healing. Compare Revelation 16:8-9.

30:27-33 – Return to the Present

God’s dealing with Assyria now returns to focus, but with a view to that ultimate day of Jerusalem’s greater threat when surrounded by the combined armies of earth at Armageddon, which Assyria’s coming foreshadowed.

30:27 *Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:*
30:28 *And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.*
30:29 *Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.*
30:30 *And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.*

Vs. 27-28 – “*Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far*” – It’s a very different picture of the Lord here than many in our day would care to allow.

Vs. 28 – As the nation of Assyria had been “*an overflowing stream*” rising “*to the midst of the neck*” of Judah (see at 8:7-8), so the Lord would prove to be the same with Assyria, snuffing out the main body of Sennacherib’s army and leaving only the head to return in shame.

Vs. 29 – “*Ye shall have a song . . . and gladness of heart*” – Judah’s rejoicing at Assyria’s fall.

Vs. 33 – Tophet means “place of burning”, and was another name for the Valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. It was a place where children were

*30:31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down,
which smote with a rod.
30:32 And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the
LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in
battles of shaking will he fight with it.
30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath
made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath
of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*

sacrificed to the Ammonite god, Molech (II Ki. 23:10). After King Josiah's sweeping reforms it became the city dump where refuse was discarded and burned. Perhaps this a reference to the bodies of the 185,000 dead Assyrian soldiers burned there by Hezekiah.

The theme throughout has been the question of proper props. Where do you put your trust when facing fearful threat? In things under the sun, or in He who made the sun?

“And the work of righteousness
shall be peace;
and the effect of righteousness
quietness and assurance forever”

(Isaiah 32:17)

Class 11 – Isaiah 31-34

31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

The Lord began in chapter 30 and continues in this brief chapter to deal with the rebellion of alliance with Egypt against Assyria. The Lord longed that His people might run to *Him* for help, placing their trust wholly in Him. He still longs for the same in us today.

This is the last in a series of four “woe” chapters dealing with the Lord’s own people;

- Chapter 28 – *“The drunkards of Ephraim”*
- Chapter 29 – Ariel, or Jerusalem
- Chapter 30 – *“The rebellious children”*
- Chapter 31 – *“Them that go down to Egypt for help”*

Chapter 31

*31:2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words:
but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of
them that work iniquity.*

31:1-5 – Misplaced Trust

Vs. 1 – *“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help”*
– The case is stated clearly. By running to Egypt they were putting their trust in;

- What they could see, multitudes of horses, chariots, and horsemen and apparent strength, rather than He whom they could not see.
- The false, perverse gods of Egypt, rather than the Holy One of Israel.
- People with no commitment to their best, rather than their own true and living LORD, who had so continually proven His covenant loyalty to them. They were trusting a broken reed growing along the Nile, rather than their proven Rock of ages.

In seeking Egypt they in effect refused to *“seek the LORD”*. Consider how distrust in the Lord’s sufficiency is at the root of every departure from His will.

31:3 *Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.*

31:4 *For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.*

Vs. 2 – “*Yet He . . . will bring evil, and will not call back His words*” – Because they refused the Lord’s wisdom available for their good, they would find His wisdom lined up against them.

Vs. 3 – “*The Egyptians are men, and not God . . . flesh, and not spirit*” – A comparison of forces. God and spirit are greater than man and flesh. Note the ease with which the Lord needed only to “*stretch out His hand*”, and “*fall . . . fall down, and . . . fail*” are the results. Both prop and propped would fall together. The Lord through Isaiah had already made the point in chapter 19-20 that Egypt was on the way out.

Vs. 4-5 – “*He will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase Himself for the noise of them*” – Here is now the Lord’s promised protection of Jerusalem. As a lion protects his kill without fear of noisy threats, so Assyria would be like a band of shouting shepherds with toothless tumult.

31:5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.
31:6 Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.
31:7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

Both in force and in flight the Lord would “*defend*” and “*deliver*” and “*preserve*” Jerusalem. He would pass over the attacking army as the death angel “*passing over*” Egypt. A reminder of He who of old had shown Himself both committed and quite capable in their behalf.

The work of that death angel supernaturally flattening the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem is a type of Christ returning to the same in His 2nd coming.

31:6-7 – Call to Return

Vs. 6 – “*Turn ye unto Him*” – How little Judah deserved the Lord’s deliverance, for they had not only rebelled but had “*deeply revolted*” against Him. Compare the “*profound*” revolters of Hosea 5:2.

Vs. 7 – “*For in that day every man shall cast away his idols*” – Their God looked for the day of turning, when their deliverance would move them to repentance.

31:8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.
31:9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

Compare in that vision of millennial blessing at 30:22, idols defiled, despised, and discarded.

31:8-9 – Results of Repentance

Vs. 8 – *“Then shall the Assyrian fall”* – The *“then”* here seems to depend on the turning of vs. 6-7. Assyria would fall and flee, not from the sword of man, but from the sword of the Lord.

Vs. 9 – *“His princes shall be afraid of the ensign”* – Assyria having fled in shame to their fortress, even the sight of the Lord’s banner would thereafter strike fear in their hearts.

Chapter 32

32:1-5 – Kingdom Age

We’re given another glimpse now of the nature of Christ’s coming kingdom on earth.

32:1 *Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.*
32:2 *And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*
32:3 *And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.*
32:4 *The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.*
32:5 *The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.*

Vs. 1-2 – *“Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness”*
– It will be a day when all leaders will rule in righteousness and justice, serving as refreshers and protectors of the weak and needy. Jesus is the perfect fulfilment of this, as a *“great rock”* bearing the tempest and heat of God’s wrath upon Himself that we might be refreshed with shelter and shade under His care. Compare the refreshing nature of His coming rule in chapters 9 & 11.

Vs. 3-5 – *“The eyes of them that see shall not be dim”*
– Perceptions will be cleared. The Spirit of God will so work in the people of that day that they will;

- *“See”* and *“hearken”*, truly seeing and listening and aware of God’s will (vs. 3).
- Take the time to understand, that they might clearly express the truth (vs. 4).

32:6 *For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.*

32:7 *The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.*

32:8 *But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.*

- See through every “*vile person*” (vs. 5). Those foolish and fierce will no longer be preferred over those truly wise.

32:6-8 – Vile Contrasted with Noble

Vs. 6-7 – “*For the vile person will speak villainy . . . iniquity . . . hypocrisy*” – In the “*vile person*” tongue and heart work evil, while appearing benevolent on the surface (“*hypocrisy*”). In relation to the needy this one;

- Serves only to “*make empty the soul of the hungry*” rather than to actually supply their lack.
- Seeks only to “*destroy the poor*” through lies, “*when the needy*” are more noble than they, speaking right things.

Vs. 8 – “*But the liberal deviseth liberal things*” – The bountiful, through his noble, openhearted liberality

32:9 *Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.*
 32:10 *Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.*
 32:11 *Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.*
 32:12 *They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.*

would establish himself (*“shall he stand”*). His liberality will accomplish in *himself* what he seeks to accomplish in *others* through his giving. Compare that portrait of a godly man in Psalm 112:5-6. *“His heart is fixed . . . established . . . shall not be moved”*. And this by the same liberality, for *“he is gracious, and full of compassion”*, he *“showeth favour and lendeth”*, and *“he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor”*. Giving freely for the Lord will establish not impoverish the giver.

32:9-14 – Judgments

Vs. 9-12 – *“Hear My voice, ye careless daughters”* – Judgments upon the women. In their plenty they were *“at ease”* (2 times) and *“careless”* (3 times). Through Assyria’s invasion grapes and gatherings from flocks and fields *“shall not come”*. The Lord is fair to turn abused plenty to poverty.

Vs. 11 – *“Tremble . . . be troubled, ye careless ones”* –

32:13 *Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:*
32:14 *Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;*
32:15 *Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.*
32:16 *Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.*

A call to repentance. The best prevention of trouble is trembling humility, avoiding God's searing correction through *self*-correction (as at Nineveh).

Vs. 13-14 – *“Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers”* – Upon all. Perhaps a reference wider in scope and time than just Jerusalem under threat of Assyria.

32:15-20 – Millennial Blessings

Vs. 15 – *“Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high”* – This is *“the promise of My Father”* (Lk. 24:49) of the Holy Spirit poured out, instilling in men new hearts of flesh (Ezek. 36:26), and moving men to the cleared perceptions of vs. 3-5.

Vs. 16-18 – *“And the work of righteousness shall be peace”* – Peace is the natural result of righteousness (chapter 11), by which a soul lives in genuine joy. A

32:17 *And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*
32:18 *And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;*
32:19 *When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.*
32:20 *Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.*

righteous life will lead both to serenity and security. When peace is not found in a soul there cannot be a right heart within. The Apostle Paul as well spoke of “*a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*” (I Tim. 2:2).

Vs. 19 – Perhaps a reference to the blessing of peace in lowliness? Situated in a lowly and thus a protected place?

Vs. 20 – Another peek at the millennial blessing of fruitfulness?

Chapter 33

This chapter is the last of the “woe” chapters, now dealing again with Assyria.

33:1 – Woe upon Assyria

33:1 *Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.*
33:2 *O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.*

“Woe to thee that spoilest . . . thou shalt be spoiled” – The treacherous spoiler would be treacherously spoiled. They would be dealt the same merciless dishonesty they themselves had displayed. Remember how Sennacherib’s sons treacherously assassinated him in the house of their god. The Lord repaid in kind. Compare Habakkuk 2:6-8.

33:2 – Prayer for Deliverance

“O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee” – Those who so humbly, faithfully wait upon the Lord shall find Him utterly unlike treacherous man. Isaiah was not praying that the Lord would strengthen their arm, but that He would be their arm – *His* arm, not theirs. Of faithful Joseph we read, *“The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob”* (Gen. 49:24).

33:3-4 – Prayer Answered

“At the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered”

33:3 *At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.*
33:4 *And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.*
33:5 *The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.*

– Though the nations were scattered before Assyria’s advancing, tumultuous threat (vs. 3), the Lord promised that her collected spoils would be removed from her as caterpillars and locusts strip forest and field (vs. 4). See how the Lord answered “*exceeding abundantly*” above all that they could even have dared imagine. They asked for His gracious deliverance from Assyria, and to their deliverance He added the crushing defeat of Assyria, removing all future threat from them, plus their spoils delivered to the city gate!

33:5-6 – Shouting Praise

“The fear of the LORD is his treasure” – The Lord glorified His name;

- In delivering Jerusalem.
- In doing just what He said He would do to Assyria.
- In humbling the proud, as when He humbled

33:6 *And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.*
33:7 *Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.*

Egypt at the Exodus. Compare a very similar scene and response in Exodus 15:1-2.

The divine scope seems to range beyond Israel's immediate rescue from Assyria to the antitype in Antichrist's day of power, ended with Christ's return and earthly kingdom. It will be a day when the Spirit will be poured out upon Israel (32:15), and thus a day characterised by justice and righteousness (32:16), wisdom and knowledge (32:3-5). A glorious day when "*the fear of the Lord*" will be so clearly understood for the greatest treasure it is.

33:7-12 – Devastation under Antichrist

Vs. 7 – "*The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly*" – Those among the Jews having confirmed a 7-year covenant with Antichrist (Dan. 9:27) shall "*weep bitterly*" at the mid-point of that time crying "*he hath broken the covenant*". They will understand then that they were merely used by "*the beast*" to provide the seat of his blasphemous power in their rebuilt temple (II Thess. 2:4).

33:8 *The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.*

33:9 *The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.*

33:10 *Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.*

33:11 *Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.*

Vs. 8-9 – *“The earth mourneth and languisheth”* – A description of the desolation and destruction brought upon the land in that coming day, when all who are called by the Lord’s name will be forced to flee for their lives while God’s Revelation judgments are being poured out upon earth (Rev. 12; Dan. 7:21).

“He regardeth no man”, for that final Antichrist *“shall magnify himself above all”*. Compare the description of this one in Daniel 11:36-37.

Vs. 10-12 – *“Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted”* – To this scene of desolation the Lord will *“rise”* or return to be exalted in Antichrist’s fall, even as He was in Assyria’s supernatural end (vs. 5). All of Satan’s careful designs against the Lord through his great end-times leader, from beginning (*“conceive”*) to end (*“bring forth”*) will accomplish nothing more than to supply *“stubble”* for the fire. His amassing of the armies of earth to Armageddon

33:12 *And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.*
 33:13 *Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.*
 33:14 *The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*
 33:15 *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;*

will be but a gathering of thorns for a great burning. The Lord has already described the crushing of Assyria's army in this way in 10:16-19. Compare Zechariah 14:12.

33:13-24 – Two Kinds of People, and Their Ends

With an eye still to that future day of ultimates, and with the backdrop of Satan's sure defeat in vs. 11-12, the Lord calls the earth to acknowledge the truth concerning Himself (vs. 13) and concerning themselves (vs. 14-24).

Concerning sinners (a word for the goats);

- Though they dwell in Zion (or in the church), they shall be sifted out and shown for the hypocrites they are (vs. 14). Their *place* offers no protection, but rather only heightens their

33:16 *He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*
33:17 *Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.*
33:18 *Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?*
33:19 *Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.*

guilt for the greater light they've rejected. The penetrating question is asked, "*who among us*" shall end in the "*everlasting burnings*" of hell's destruction at the last? Not only "*who*", but "*who among us*", though they wear the name "Christian". Not in Christianity, but only in *Christ* can refuge be found from the "*everlasting burnings*" of God's wrath.

- Their "*heart shall meditate terror*", when every false teacher and human stay is swept away (vs. 18).

Concerning saints (a word for the sheep);

- They show their inward righteousness outwardly (vs. 15), in their walk, speech, gains, and inputs. They don't just avoid deceitful gains, they *despise* them. In their quest to preserve purity of heart they abhor and shut off the input of evil through eye and ear, and

33:20 *Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.*

33:21 *But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.*

33:22 *For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.*

33:23 *Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.*

33:24 *And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.*

will insist upon the same in those for whom they are responsible. Contrast the opposite in Romans 1:32. Where would Hollywood be without “*hearing of blood*” and “*seeing evil*”?

- Their support and supply is sure (vs. 16).
- Their hope will be realized (vs. 17).
- They shall never know bondage in captivity (vs. 19). Compare 28:11-12.
- Their eyes shall see the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-22), “*a quiet habitation*”, and never to “*be taken down*” or “*removed*” (vs. 20).
- Their heart is all on the Lord (“*LORD . . . LORD . . . LORD*”).
- They will know no sickness there (vs. 24).

34:1 *Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.*

34:2 *For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.*

- They “*shall be forgiven their iniquity*” (vs. 24).

Vs. 23 – God frustrates His enemies’ attack, as a ship unable to get a sail up. The Lord of all makes circumstances to conspire against His opponents. Similar to that frustrating birthing only of stubble in vs. 11. Compare Zechariah 14:13.

Chapter 34

As Isaiah comes to the end of the condemnations half of his book (chapter 1-35), he returns in chapter 34 to another glimpse of coming Tribulation judgments before turning again to a clear vision of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom in chapter 35.

34:1-4 – Judgment upon the World

Vs. 1 – “*Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken ye people*” – This is a summons of all the “*nations . . . earth . . . world*”.

34:3 *Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.*
34:4 *And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.*
34:5 *For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.*

Vs. 2-3 – “*For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations*” – An announcement of the Lord’s wrath, and a graphic picture of the carnage of Armageddon. Let the unsaved of earth, and of all time, understand how serious the Lord’s anger with them. His hatred of and wrath toward sin is far, far beyond man’s light, lenient view. And let us marvel anew at the wonder of God’s grace, when His true opinion of the sin He has so endured finally explodes upon man in such shocking scenes of judgment. That the Lord has always hated sin is evident in His demand from the beginning for satisfaction through blood sacrifice. That He has always loved man is evident in Christ’s own blood sacrifice in man’s behalf. That man has “*deeply revolted*” (31:6) is evident in his refusal of that only place of refuge in Christ from God’s wrath.

Vs. 4 – “*And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved*” – This is that common last-days image of catastrophic changes in the heavens. Compare Matthew 24:29 of Christ’s return, and Hebrews 1:12

34:6 *The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.*

34:7 *And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.*

34:8 *For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.*

34:9 *And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.*

34:10 *It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

of the new heavens and earth. Compare the 6th Seal Judgment of Revelation 6:12-13.

34:5-17 – Judgment upon Idumea

Vs. 6 – *“For the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah”* – The land of Idumea (Edom) seems now to represent all nations conspiring or coming up against Israel. Compare a similar picture in 63:1-6 of Christ coming up from Bozrah, a city in Edom, having tread the winepress of God’s wrath there. Perhaps much of Christ’s final destruction upon Antichrist’s armies will actually take place in that vicinity. Compare the same image of the winepress of God’s wrath in Revelation 14. Compare Christ’s return in *“a vesture dipped in blood”* (Rev. 19:13). He returns to the rejoicing of the saints and the destruction of the lost.

- 34:11 *But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.*
- 34:12 *They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.*
- 34:13 *And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.*
- 34:14 *The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.*
- 34:15 *There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.*
-

Vs. 7 – “Unicorn” here is not the story-book creature, casting a mythological flare upon this account, but a type of ox.

Vs. 8 – For it is “*the day of the LORD’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses*” – Though our God endures long, He will not endure always. For “*vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense [repay] saith the LORD*” (Heb. 10:30; Deut. 32:35).

Vs. 9-17 – Eternal changes to Edom’s geology and occupancy.

Vs. 14 – “Satyr”, as at 13:21, either goats or demons resembling hairy goats.

That ruined land will become a lasting reminder of

*34:16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail,
none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his
spirit it hath gathered them.*
*34:17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto
them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation
shall they dwell therein.*

the Lord's judgment upon those who oppose Him.

Class 12 – Isaiah 35-37

In chapter 34 the Lord's vision had descended to the deep dreadfulness of His wrath and judgment upon earth and man. It is a vision of what God has planned for His *enemies*. We find now the contrast here in chapter 35 as the Lord's vision soars to the heights of what He has planned for His *own*. Worldwide blessing comes only after worldwide judgment. The same pattern we see in the book of Revelation as well. Chapter 34 left land and man all waste and wilderness. Chapter 35 finds all returned to bountiful blessing. Compare;

- *"The people of My curse"* (34:6), with *"the ransomed of the LORD"* (35:10).
- Streams to pitch (34:9), with *"streams in the desert"* (35:6), and *"the parched"* to *"a pool"* (35:7).

Chapter 35

Another vision of blessing in Christ's coming earthly kingdom. The attention in this chapter seems to alternate between good upon land and people.

35:1-2 – Land of Happy Fruitfulness

35:1 *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

35:2 *It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.*

35:3 *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.*

35:4 *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

35:3-4 – Message of Encouragement

Vs. 3 – *“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees”* – God’s prophecies, and certainly those of Christ’s coming kingdom, are meant to be a soul strengthener.

Vs. 4 – *“Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come . . . and save you”* – We are called to confident, patient strength in light of the Lord’s coming vengeance, recompense, and deliverance. We need never fear that God might not avenge wrong done to us or others we love. Christ will not only come, but will come with *“flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”*, for *“it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you”* (II Thess. 1:6-8). The Lord will certainly trouble every troubler of His people.

35:5 *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*
35:6 *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*
35:7 *And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*
35:8 *And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

35:5-7 – People and Land Restored

In Christ's first coming He unmistakably displayed the signs of such abilities in Himself, healing blind and deaf, lame and dumb with a word, showing His power over sickness, sea, and all of creation.

35:8 – None Led Astray

"The way of holiness" – In Christ's kingdom a high and holy way *"shall be there"*, distinct from the worldly way. The way of truth will be so clear, even those weak in their understanding shall not go astray in it.

35:9 – Land of Safety

"No . . . ravenous beast shall go up thereon" – Increased danger of wild beasts indicates the Lord's

35:9 *No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:*
35:10 *And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

displeasure (II Ki. 17:25). Their complete absence is indication of His closest protection and pleasure in that coming day.

35:10 – “*Everlasting Joy*”

Both place and people are characterized by greatest “*joy and gladness*”, for “*in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*” (Ps. 16:11).

Now without turning my thought into the whole meaning, as the Amillennialists might do, consider how well the changes pictured here illustrate the wilderness to waters, sighing to singing, blasting to blossom type transformation of new birth in a thirsty, barren soul. For now in Christ “*He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God*” (Ps. 40:3).

Chapter 36

This chapter begins a brief glimpse into the history so relevant to Isaiah's previous messages. His words so far have had much to do with the Lord's assurances of what He would do in Judah and with Assyria. This now is the actual record of it, a historical account of the fulfilment of God's sure words. This material later found its way into the books of II Kings (18-20) and II Chronicles (32) as well through the Spirit's direction.

We've considered previously how Assyria's surrounding of Jerusalem and supernatural defeat there becomes a type of the armies of the nations surrounding Jerusalem at the end of the age and crushed at Christ's return to Armageddon. With this in mind consider some further parallels;

- Rabshakeh came with the authority of his king, Sennacherib, as his representative in leading that attack. Even so Antichrist will come as the visible representative of Satan in that final battle (Rev. 19:19).
- Rabshakeh spoke the words of his master, even as Antichrist will be but a pawn in Satan's hands, speaking as Satan would speak. Antichrist will be a satanic copy of Christ in His 1st coming, as the very representative and Word of God. And so as we read the words of

36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

Sennacherib, a king as gifted as he was egotistical, we get a sense of Satan's own nature and pride coming through.

36:1 – Sennacherib's Approach

“Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them” – Sennacherib was the son of Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king who some twenty years prior had taken the northern kingdom of Israel away to captivity. History informs us that Sennacherib was a skilled military leader and administrator. He greatly improved Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, building many streets, large city squares, and a royal palace, which he described as “a palace without rival”. After a couple years on the throne he began his largely successful military campaigns, defeating Babylon, Egypt, and nearly 50 walled cities of Judah if his own records can be trusted. Speaking of his records, Sennacherib's gloating submissions to history were unearthed in the mid-1800's. Written at the peak of his power, he boasted of “the awful splendour of my lordship” and of the many kings who

bowed before him, whom he made to kiss his feet. Remember how the Lord quoted the arrogant words of this one in Isaiah 10:13-14.

Now with Sennacherib's approach, consider how King Hezekiah might have thought he had fair cause to complain to the Lord. He was one of the few good and godly kings of Judah, who actively sought to bring spiritual reforms to the nation. Hezekiah had pitched idolatry, cleaned out, repaired, and reopened the temple, reinstituted the temple singers, called the whole nation to the long-forgotten Passover feast, began great national revival, and refused to pay tribute to Assyria as Judah had done for years. These things he began to do in the 4th year of his reign, as a young man of 29. And now ten years later the king of Assyria has come looking for him, and Jerusalem was facing the greatest threat in her history. *For doing right?!* Yet what looked like a tragedy and might have smelled of punishment (when they were finally doing things right) actually proved to be a grand opportunity for God to be glorified, with the nation and king as well. And by walking with the Lord, and walking with Him through this fire, Hezekiah was driven closer to the Lord than ever by this opportunity, and was taught priceless lessons he could never have learned in peacetime. Rather than quickly seeing trouble as a

36:2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.
36:3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.
36:4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

problem or punishment (as Job's friends), examine its *possibilities*.

36:2-22 – Rabshakeh's Demand

Vs. 2 – Rabshakeh came as the spokesman of the king of Assyria. This may have been his actual name, or perhaps is to be understood in its meaning something like “field commander” or “chief officer”. If actually a title then here's another parallel with Satan's final unnamed representative in “Antichrist”. This is not his name, but a title stating his position in relation to Christ. Compare the same with “*the beast*” in Revelation 13.

Vs. 3 – King Hezekiah sent out his trusted representatives to deal with them. See how Eliakim had already replaced Shebna in a position of authority “*over the house*”, according to Isaiah's earlier word in 22:15-25.

36:5 *I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?*

36:6 *Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.*

Vs. 4-20 – Rabshakeh’s Harangue

He sought to conquer through fear and deceit, attempting to flush them out of the covert of their confidence in God.

Vs. 4-10 – “*What confidence is this wherein thou trusteth?*” – What are you trusting that you would dare resist me?

Vs. 5 – You have no strength for war, in and of yourself. To trust in yourself or your own abilities is utterly foolish. Of course Rabshakeh was quite right on this score.

“*That thou rebellest against me*” – “You are the rebel here”, he insists, seeking to add the shame of guilt to the equation. As if Assyria held the right to rule over them.

Vs. 6 – “*Lo, thou trusteth in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt*” – Your only pillar of strength to the

36:7 *But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?*

36:8 *Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.*

36:9 *How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?*

36:10 *And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.*

south has been kicked out, and couldn't be trusted even if still standing. To trust in Egypt is utterly foolish. God Himself had already made this point. Besides, Sennacherib was even then sitting secure at Lachish, between Jerusalem and Egypt.

Vs. 7 – Rabshakeh proclaimed trust in the Lord to be foolish as well, for the Lord surely was not on their side anymore with Hezekiah removing all His high places. Note again the great ignorance here, for those who think themselves big don't need to know the truth of those they consider small. Arrogance breeds ignorance.

Vs.10 – “*Am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it?*” – “The Lord is in fact on my side”, Rabshakeh suggests, “for He Himself told me to destroy this land”. This man used the Lord's name, yet he spoke of an entirely different One than

- 36:11 *Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.*
- 36:12 *But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?*
- 36:13 *Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.*
- 36:14 *Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.*
- 36:15 *Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.*
-

the true Jehovah of the Bible. As if he were actually serving the One he denied, whose Word he ignored, and whose name he merely used for his own ends. In this regard he illustrates many in our modern world and church.

How continually history has repeated such persecutions of the true people of God through those claiming to carry God's commission. Compare Isaiah 66:5. Satan does some of his finest work in the Lord's name, and clothed as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14-15).

Vs. 14-16 – *“Let not Hezekiah deceive you”* – To trust in Hezekiah is foolish. See how he slandered their

36:16 *Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;*

36:17 *Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.*

36:18 *Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, the LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?*

36:19 *Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?*

godly leader, implying him dishonest, and seeking to distort his sound spiritual leadership. He sought to set the people against the one standing for true holiness, even as Satan through slander twisted God's character before Eve in Genesis 3.

Vs. 16-17 – *“And eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree”* – *“Agreement with”* or submission to the enemy was the only option it would appear, with the promise that it would not bring any significant changes. Compare this glowing promise of good and plenty with the fact that though Hezekiah had recently bought off Assyria with a large gift (II Ki. 18:13-15) yet still they had treacherously come looking for more. Though *“he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart”* (Prov. 26:25).

Vs. 18-20 – *“Hath any of the gods of the nations*

36:20 *Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?*

36:21 *But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.*

36:22 *Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.*

delivered his land?” – God was blasphemously placed on a par with false gods, the Creator lifted no higher than the creations of men. It becomes evident that this man did not know the Lord of glory at all (vs. 10). Could he possibly have made a comparison more offensive to God?

In summary;

- You are not adequate!
 - Your leader is not adequate!
 - Your God is not adequate!
 - *You have no choice but to bow to us!*
-

On the Side

Satan still approaches God’s children in the same way today in an effort to force compromise.

- He seeks to create a feeling of inadequacy;
 - *“Where else are you going to get that kind of money?”*
 - *“How do you propose to accomplish it alone?”*
- He intimidates with certain failure;
 - *“It can’t be done!”*
- He offers alliance or agreement or compromise as the only reasonable, honourable solution.
 - *“Only in submission to unity (a perverted version of unity) is there hope to make an impact on this world”*
- He insists that compromise won’t bring any negative changes, but will only improve the prospects.
 - *“Don’t worry! It’ll be basically the same. You won’t have to change a thing.”*
- He promises a pleasure and prosperity which in truth will lead only to the darkest dungeon of captivity

Such is the nature of Satan’s approach through his world system. The world is quite convinced of our rather desperate need of them and their way, and

37:1 *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.*
37:2 *And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.*

that we *must* come to some measure of surrender. The truth is that submission to them is bondage indeed. Thus the heart of the struggling, lonely spiritual leader is pressed by fear of the unpopularity a holy separatist position will bring. Thus the Christian training programme is forced to their “need” for secular accreditation. Thus the teenager is pushed to sacrifice his moral standards in his fear of social rejection. How Christian fundamentalism needs men such as Hezekiah, who “*clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him*” (II Ki. 18:6)!!

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Chapter 37

Here is a wonderful chapter of encouragements, answered prayer, and resounding victory.

37:1-7 – Assurance Through Isaiah

Vs. 1-2 – “*And he sent . . . unto Isaiah the prophet*” – Don’t miss the glaring fact that Hezekiah had a

37:3 *And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.*

37:4 *It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.*

37:5 *So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.*

37:6 *And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.*

37:7 *Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*

welcome from God and God's man through his sincere pursuit of God and His will (II Ki. 18:6-7; II Chron. 31:20-21). Compare I Peter 3:12, "*The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous . . .*". Contrast Elisha's response to King Jehoram of Israel (son of Ahab & Jezebel) when asked for help. He tersely told him to run along to his parents' prophets for help (II Ki. 3:13). The *Lord's* listening ear had everything to do with the listening ear of godly *Hezekiah*. Access to "*the throne of grace*" (Heb. 4:16) is ever the happy privilege of God's own children, when walking in the light.

Vs. 3 – "*The children are come to birth, and there is no strength to bring forth*" – They had followed the Lord's words, but right into a corner from which there seemed no hope of escape. As Moses and Israel at

37:8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.
37:9 And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,
37:10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.
37:11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?
37:12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?

the Red Sea. Just the kind of situation in which the Lord delights to display Himself!

37:8-13 – Rabshakeh’s Letter

Vs. 8 – With his demands ignored, Rabshakeh returned to his king, finding he had moved on to lay siege against the city of Libnah. With word that Ethiopia was coming against them (vs. 9), he sent another message to Hezekiah in the form of a written letter repeating his taunting blasphemies. Yet Sennacherib’s arrogant ambassador was correct in that there was simply no hope from a human, earthly perspective.

37:14-20 – Hezekiah’s Prayer

Vs. 14 – *“Hezekiah went up unto the house of the*

37:13 *Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?*

37:14 *And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.*

37:15 *And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,*

37:16 *O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.*

37:17 *Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.*

LORD, and spread it before the LORD” – Behold the king’s childlike faith. Hezekiah did not fearfully turn away from the Lord in his most terrifying moment. The enemy never succeeded in frightening him away from the Lord. He was only driven closer in desperate dependence.

Vs. 16 – *“Thou art the God, even Thou alone”* – The Lord alone is Creator of all and thus the only one able to help, and with power and *“hosts”* greater than anything the earth could ever muster. And Hezekiah knew Him as *“the God of Israel”* (*our* God, *my* God). See how Hezekiah encouraged his heart in the Lord, and claimed their relation to Him as reason for His help.

Vs. 17 – *“Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open Thine eyes, O LORD, and see”* – He pled that the Lord

37:18 *Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,*
37:19 *And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.*
37:20 *Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.*
37:21 *Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:*

might *listen* and *see*. There was no question in his heart about the Lord's ability to do something, if He would. And his plea is to "*the living God*", in contrast to the gods of the nations without eyes and ears. He made the point that it was *God* who was being reproached.

Vs. 18 – "*The kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations*" – He openly acknowledged the *hopelessness* from a human perspective. It was a case of the most complete dependence. What else?

Vs. 19 – Their "gods" were no gods at all. Created *by* man, not Creator of man!

Vs. 20 – "*Save us . . . that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the LORD*" – The king's purpose and longing was for the Lord's good as much as for their own protection. "Lord, in saving us, show

37:22 *This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.*

37:23 *Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.*

37:24 *By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof; and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.*

37:25 *I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.*

37:26 *Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.*

the world Your reality and power, unlike all the other flattened gods of man's creation”.

Such a simple prayer, expressing a simple faith. Understand what we have here; a prayer of faith, prayed from a devout life, with a passion to see God glorified, and based upon the promises of God's Word. And the result of it *absolutely legendary!* The man got what he asked and far more! The terrifying power of Assyria was crumpled like a piece of paper in the great big hand of the Almighty. We shall see another example of the Lord's answer to a simple prayer in the next chapter.

37:21-35 – God's Word to Assyria

37:27 *Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.*

37:28 *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.*

37:29 *Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

37:30 *And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.*

37:31 *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:*

Vs. 22 – The tables would be turned, with “*the daughter of Zion*” (Jerusalem) mocking at the last.

Vs. 23-25 – “*By thy servants hast thou reproached the*

Lord” – The Lord took their reproach personally, as if spoken against Himself.

Vs. 26-27 – “*Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it?*” – Again, their successes against “small power” were by God’s design and doing, for Assyria was merely a tool in His hand. Compare 10:15-19.

Vs. 28-29 – “*Therefore will I put My hook in thy nose*” – The Lord would respond to Assyria’s “*rage against Me*”. In His figures of leading them back to their

37:32 *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.*
37:33 *Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.*
37:34 *By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.*
37:35 *For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*
37:36 *Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*

place by “hook” and “bridle” He likens them to service animals.

Vs. 30-32 – “*For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant*” – A promise of provision for the remnant. The removal of the threat is assumed, and the Lord was already making promises for afterward.

Vs. 33-35 – “*He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there*” – A promise of protection upon “*this city*” that proved exactly true in every detail.

37:36-38 – Assyria’s Defeat

Vs. 36 – “*Behold, they were all dead corpses*” – That the report is so matter-of-fact expresses the ease with which the Lord dispatches tiny tyrants. It took only *one* angel *one* night to flatten Assyria’s terrifying

37:37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

37:38 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

army.

Vs. 37 – The great king of Assyria went home looking pretty small.

Vs. 38 – “*As he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god*” – Don’t miss the stark contrast of the Lord’s ample protection with that of powerless false gods.

The only true and living God does what He says!!

“He shall feed His flock
like a shepherd:
He shall gather the lambs
with His arm”

(Isa 40:11)

Class 13 – Isaiah 38-40

38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

In chapter 37 we considered that simple yet effective prayer of King Hezekiah when the threat of the Assyrian army was outside Jerusalem's gate. Hezekiah just went to the Lord with the matter in child-like faith. He went to the Lord for help when he was helpless, and with hope when all was humanly hopeless. And the terrifying power of Assyria was simply and marvellously swept away, literally over night! The true God of heaven showed Himself strong before a watching world, and recorded it in the Book for all ages. How often our God has shown Himself One who responds to the simple prayer of faith. Now in chapter 38 we find another simple prayer answered.

Chapter 38

Hezekiah's sickness, supplication, salvation, sign, and song.

38:1 – Hezekiah’s Sickness

“Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die and not live” – The prophet Isaiah, who had twice channelled such good news to the king in the previous chapter, now brought the most distressing news that Hezekiah’s illness would be his last. It was *“in those days”* and thus around the time of that confrontation with Assyria, probably soon after Sennacherib fled in defeat. In fact we’re able to discern the when of this event;

- We know that King Hezekiah died in the 29th year of his reign (II Ki. 18:2).
- As we discover here, the Lord gave him an extra 15 years at this point.
- Subtracting those added 15 years, this must have been the 14th year of his reign.
- His 14th year was the very same year Sennacherib came against Judah according to II Kings 18:13.

Thus this sudden, life-threatening illness came in the same year of Assyria’s invasion. And this 2nd threat not from an earthly enemy, but from the Lord Himself. For *“Thus saith the LORD”*, saith the prophet. And we see no indication that this sudden peril was due to some sin in Hezekiah. The Lord

38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,

never queried his self-assessment in vs. 3.

Note the obvious ring of finality in the prophet's blunt announcement, expressing the seeming hopelessness of this 2nd threat as well. But after Assyria, this man had come to view nothing as hopeless. As well, why make announcements at all, unless some possible hope was subtly implied? As Jonah's hard announcement on the streets of Nineveh that *"yet forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed"*, in contrast to no public notice made in Sodom and Gomorrah. The announcement itself implied some opportunity, though the message suggested none.

38:2-3 – Hezekiah's Supplication

Vs. 2 – *"Then Hezekiah . . . prayed unto the LORD"* – See how consistently Hezekiah responds to bad news with his face turned to the Lord in prayer! As would later be Nehemiah's practice in prayer as well, Hezekiah reminds the Lord of his virtues. And remember that his consistent way had always been to walk with the Lord previously, not only when

38:3 *And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.*

facing trouble. He walked *“in truth”* as a lover of that which is so close to the Lord’s heart. That he loved what God loves shows his love for the God of truth. He pointed to his own *“perfect heart”*, as a man who kept his heart right before God, with no check in his spirit. He indicated the record of his good actions, reigning and reforming and moving according to the Lord’s word. Hezekiah would have had no freedom to appeal to the Lord on the basis of these claims if they were false. His devotion had indeed been of an unswervingly wholehearted nature, and his behaviour consistent with such a pure heart. Compare again II Kings 18:6-7; II Chronicles 31:20-21. How vital now at such points of threat that such had always been his way before the Lord.

Then we read that *“Hezekiah wept sore”* (vs. 3). Don’t underestimate this factor, underscored here with a double mention (vs. 5). There’s no getting around the fact that our God is affected by the earnestness of the prayers of His children. Compare how Jesus highlighted pleading prayer persistence in the gospels (Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8). Perhaps the Lord

38:4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,
38:5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.
38:6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

waits until we're earnest enough to *cry* before Him. Nehemiah's sincere tears are mentioned also as greasing the skids of the Lord's delivery bay (Neh. 1). "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*" (James 5).

38:4-6 – Hezekiah's Salvation

Vs. 4-5 – "*I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold I will add . . . fifteen years*" – *He got it!* What had come across as an unalterable death sentence turned out to be negotiable with the Lord after all! And again, through the simple, earnest prayer of this godly man.

Vs. 6 – As with the Lord's "*exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*" answer in the previous chapter, not only would He preserve the king's life and the city of Jerusalem, but He removed any concern that Assyria could ever later return to avenge their losses.

38:7 *And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;*
38:8 *Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.*
38:9 *The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:*
38:10 *I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.*

On the Side I

In II Kings 20:5 we discover that the Lord used *time* in Hezekiah's healing, for only "*on the third day*" would the king be well enough to "*go up unto the house of the LORD*". Though the Lord could have healed him in a moment, He chose to restore his health over a period of several days. As well, the Lord used *means*, as we see here in vs. 21. There was some wound or boil involved with Hezekiah's sickness, and Isaiah prescribed a "*lump*" or poultice of figs (a common form of medication) to be placed over the wound.

We're led to understand by this that going to a doctor or using medication or looking for improvement over a period of time rather than immediately is not inconsistent with faith, is no evidence of unbelief, and is not any less a miraculous healing of God than

38:11 *I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living:
I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.*
38:12 *Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I
have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness:
from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.*
38:13 *I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones:
from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.*
38:14 *Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine
eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for
me.*

the lightning bolt type.

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On the Side II

It is perhaps questionable whether it was really best for Hezekiah to receive an extension on his earthly life. For it was during those additional years that so much negative resulted through him. During those added 15 years;

- Hezekiah's heart was lifted up in pride with the Babylonian emissaries (39:1-2; II Ki. 20:12-13), attracting Isaiah's rebuke from the Lord and promise of judgment (39:3-7), and demonstrating Hezekiah's selfish indifference toward the following generations (39:8).
- Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, was born (21:1), that desperately unfortunate combination of

38:15 *What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.*
38:16 *O LORD, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.*
38:17 *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.*
38:18 *For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.*

Judah's worst and longest reigning king.

Perhaps through the clarity of hindsight, the Lord's Plan A or *perfect* will in Hezekiah's immediate death would have proved the better option. With his untimely death, Hezekiah would have retired from the field of service as an untarnished hero, suggesting again that we not fight the Lord's perfect will for us, though it seem at the time the bitterest pill we've ever swallowed. The Lord's "no" answer to our prayer, though it may seem harsh at the time, may be the greatest blessing in the long run. Remember that blessed "no" to Christ's repeated request in the Garden of Gethsemane. *Praise God the answer was "no" there!* – resulting in the eternal blessing of millions. Sometimes *yes* and sometimes *no*. And sometimes "yes" in His permissive will, through our pleading, when "no" really would have been the perfect way, though it didn't seem so to us.

38:19 *The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.*
 38:20 *The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.*
 38:21 *For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.*
 38:22 *Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?*

The best attitude in us is always that settled resolve underlying Christ's earnest request in the Garden, *"Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done"*.

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38:7-8 – Hezekiah's Sign

"I will bring again the shadow of . . . the sundial . . . ten degrees backward" – God would lengthen the day as proof to Hezekiah that he would be healed, the extended day signifying Hezekiah's extended life. It's unclear how many minutes this "ten degrees" represented.

38:9-20 – Hezekiah's Song

We don't find this hymn in the II Kings & II Chronicles records of this event.

Chapter 39

39:1 *At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.*

39:2 *And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.*

Throughout Hezekiah's wonderful experiences of salvation from Sennacherib and sickness and the sign sent to confirm, there could be no doubt that it was all of God. The king could fairly claim for himself only the simplest wisdom to turn to the Lord for help with faithful request.

39:1-2 – Ambassadors from Babylon

Vs. 1 – Babylon sent ambassadors *“to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land”* (II Chron. 32:31).

Vs. 2 – *“There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not”* – Don't miss the repetitive (and perhaps revealing) occurrences of the word *“his”* here in vs. 2. Hezekiah was glad to point these emissaries to *his* impressive things, though his life and deliverance was all of God. It was such a lost opportunity to testify of the true Strength of his kingdom, to render *“to the Lord the glory due unto His name”*. In response to the flattery

39:3 *Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.*

39:4 *Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.*

39:5 *Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:*

of feigned concern in these ambassadors the king proved to be a man more full of himself than of His God in this incident. Understand that Hezekiah was now at the very pinnacle of earthly popularity. Assyria had so miraculously fallen from their lofty perch before this great bully-slayer. And Hezekiah, with incredible speed, had recovered from a life-threatening illness. All over the world they would have seen the sundial return ten degrees, and this for King Hezekiah's benefit. Great treasures as well had now come to Hezekiah from the Lord (II Chron. 32:23, 27-29), *"so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thence forth"*. Gone were the days of cutting gold from the temple doors to raise funds (II Ki. 18:15-16). Never was the temptation for pride so great. See how defeat of outward enemies (Sennacherib and sickness) opened the way for the more effective inward enemy of pride (II Chron. 32:25-26). The Lord was allowing this to try Hezekiah, to know and display *"all that was in his*

39:6 *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*
39:7 *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*
39:8 *Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.*

heart” (II Chron. 32:31).

39:3-7 – Isaiah’s Rebuke

“Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts” – The threat of vs. 7 was fulfilled in Daniel and friends later removed to Babylon (Dan. 1:3-4). And yet see how the Lord turned even that judgment upon sin into great blessing, putting Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar as an interpreter of dreams in order to lay out for us a framework of prophecy.

39:8 – Hezekiah’s Response

“Good is the word” as long as *“there shall be peace and truth in my day”*. As long as the predicted trouble did not come in his own lifetime, Hezekiah was happy! Alas, short-sighted self-centredness does not think past its own grave. Let the next

generation take the hit! Hezekiah was not thinking like the Lord here, He who cares for the next generation as much as for the present.

And don't miss how this selfish "*my day*" attitude bore ugly fruit in never a more wicked man on the throne of Judah than Hezekiah's son Manasseh (II Chron. 33:2). Hezekiah's greater interest in his own concerns showed its proof in the pudding. Though taking action in his day for the good of the nation, Hezekiah has now later fallen to laying the groundwork for the undoing of all of his righteousness, through the sowing of his doing-good-for-himself attitude, come to harvest in his evil son. A closer, more honest look at the minister who's too busy in his ministry to others to find time for his own children will likely reveal an unhealthy dose of Hezekiah's selfish heart. Many are those pre-eminently into themselves and their own vainglory, under guise of the Lord's ministry.

Chapter 40

Chapter 40 is such a pivot point in Isaiah's message to God's people. Isaiah came with that typical two-pronged thrust which the Lord's prophets always brought. Something like, "*I've got bad news, and I've got good news for you; first the bad news . . .*". God's

warning of judgment for their unrepentant sin was the bad news. The Lord's assurance of future restoration and continued care was the good news. Isaiah dwelt long on the wrath and judgment of God to come upon his people and the nations in the first 39 chapters of his message, seeking to move them to repentance. But from the beginning of chapter 40 the focus changes to that of comfort and promise, of the blessing of God's restoration of His people to their land and to His favour, and of His presence with them through their trial (43:1-2). This bright and refreshing theme is the main current throughout the remaining 27 chapters of Isaiah's book, beginning with the very first words of chapter 40; "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned . . .*" Understand that the comfort the Lord brings to them (and to us) is never so much a matter of their pleasant situation. Rather it is always a matter of who their God is whatever the situation! For their/our joy is in the greatness of our God and in the greatness of His mercy. Thus the whole thrust of Isaiah 40 is the *greatness of God*, contrasted with;

- The weakness of man (vs. 6-8).
- The created earth (vs. 12-14).
- The smallness of the nations (vs. 15-17).

40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

- The foolishness of idols (vs. 18-25).
- The vast universe (vs. 26).

Creator greater than creation!

40:1-2 – Call to Speak Comfort

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God” – God’s prophet is now called to the happy task of bringing words of comfort to his people in hope of a day when all conflict is accomplished and all iniquity pardoned.

40:3-5 – Way Prepared

Vs. 3-5 – *“Prepare ye the way of the LORD”* – After the figure of the old practice of working a road to make it easy travelling for a coming king. This *“voice of him that crieth in the wilderness”* was applied to and fulfilled in John the Baptist, as he arose before Christ’s coming to bring hearts to readiness for the soon coming of Messiah (Matt. 3:3).

40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:
40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.
40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:
40:7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The principle is here for us. When the way (heart) is properly prepared, the Lord will come in His fullness. When the temple is put right God's glory falls and fills it. Compare Moses' careful preparations of the tabernacle just "*as the Lord had commanded Moses*" in Exodus 40, before "*the glory of the Lord*" was "*revealed*". Compare the same with Solomon's temple put right in I Kings 8:10 - 11. Compare Isaiah's call to service only after the temple of his heart was prepared through confession and cleansing (chapter 6). Every valley, filled with other things, must be filled with the Lord. Everything proudly exalting itself like a mountain must be flattened. Wherever pride lifts its ugly head in us it must be ruthlessly lopped off. Every crooked thing, not straight according to the Lord's righteous standard, must be put straight. Every root or rock left in the way of easy progress must be dug out and removed. What stones of neglect are still left in the way in your heart and life, things others are sure to

40:8 *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*
40:9 *O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!*
40:10 *Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*
40:11 *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

stumble over? Compare the similar picture in Song of Solomon 2:15 of *“the little foxes that spoil the vines”*, needing to be caught and removed. The result of such righteous work of preparation is that *“the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”*.

40:6-8 – Contrasts of God’s Greatness

“All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field” – A humbling message, designed to lower lofty man and lift high the exalted Word of God, which alone is able to give new birth and eternal life as the incorruptible seed (I Pet. 2:23-25).

40:9-11 – Message to Zion

“Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” – A message of hope in the God of strength and

40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

40:13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

40:14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

40:15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

40:16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

40:17 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

tenderness for Judah and Jerusalem. Verse 9 could be understood as a doubled call to proclaim the gospel (“*good tidings*”) to Jerusalem. Compare in Revelation 11 the “*two witnesses*” who will do the same in the last days.

40:12-14 – God Greater than Earth

“*WHO?*” is indeed the vital question! God is uncreated, unguided, uncounselled, and untaught. He is Himself the source of all such.

40:15-17 – God Greater than the Nations

“*Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket*” – Is there anything littler than “*less than nothing*”? (vs.

40:18 *To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*
40:19 *The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.*
40:20 *He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.*
40:21 *Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?*
40:22 *It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:*
40:23 *That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.*
40:24 *Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.*
40:25 *To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.*

17) Even terribly intimidating Assyria and later Babylon were only “*as the small dust of the balance*”, not even recording a weight.

40:18-25 – God Greater than Idols

“*To whom then will ye liken God?*” – It is utterly impossible to express One so great by any fixed form or likeness.

40:26 – God Greater than the Universe

“*Lift your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things*” – The Lord has names for each of the

40:26 *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*
40:27 *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?*
40:28 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

countless millions of stars! Such is His intimate awareness of every detail of His creation.

40:27 – God’s Omniscience

“Why sayest thou . . . My way is hid from the LORD”
– When threatened captivity had come and they were removed to Babylon they must never foolishly think One so vastly great was unaware, or unfair, or unable to help. He would have them to know who He is and that He was visiting them with just judgment and that they must believe Him for their comfort.

40:28-31 – Blessing on His Servants

Vs. 28 – *“Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard?”*
– It’s the same probing question of vs. 21. Do you not yet understand that the Lord is *without limit* in His abilities and awareness? Can you not read of His attention, power, and grace in every line of His creation, if not in His written Word? You are never

40:29 *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.*
40:30 *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*
40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

alone or without help when you belong to the Lord! He who is “*the everlasting God*” (El Olam) is the contrast of every phoney god, all having their day in the sun, only to fade from man’s focus with time.

“*There is no searching of his understanding*” – All that He is and understands cannot ever be fully searched out or known by man. Compare Romans 11:33 and Job 38-42.

Vs. 29 – The Lord never faints, and gives power to those who do, strengthening all who hope in Him.

Vs. 30 – “*Even the youths shall faint and be weary*” – When the young and strong, those with seemingly endless energy, grow tired and discouraged, those who wait on the Lord are able to carry on.

Vs. 31 – “*But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength*” – Here is a promise of provision and protection in the midst of trouble for those who

“wait upon the Lord”. He is there to strengthen and help His own to endure. He is able to make them to soar above every troubling situation as an eagle soars above the earth. Through our close walk with the Lord we can rise in happy transport above all of the fears, anxieties, uncertainties, and sorrows of this life. In whatever situation you may face, if you will determine to walk with God in it and call upon Him for help, He will lift you above the trouble and torment!

It is the promise of God!

Class 14 – Isaiah 41-43

41:1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

41:2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

Chapter 41

From chapter 40 the contrast continues between the Creator of all and the idols of the nations. The words of comfort for the Lord's people in this 2nd half of Isaiah's message were given for the days of Israel's captivity in Babylon, and beyond

41:1-9 – Nations on Trial

Vs. 1 – “*Keep silence before Me, O islands*” – The Lord calls a solemn assembly of the nations to give an accounting of themselves before Him. His purpose in the meeting is to reason with man, and particularly with His own people. He seeks to display the truth about Himself that He might be recognized and worshipped above every other so-called god.

41:3 *He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.*
41:4 *Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.*
41:5 *The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.*
41:6 *They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.*

Vs. 2-5 – The Lord’s lifting of the nation of Israel to prominence from Abraham (*“the righteous one from the east”*) is given as evidence of Himself. The Lord is still calling righteous ones *“to His foot”*, to follow Him as did faithful Abraham. As Abraham and his small band pursued and conquered the confederation of eastern kings (Gen. 14), so the nation descending from Abraham rose to take the nations of Canaan and to rule *“over kings”* in their days of godly leadership. Israel was strong when her heart as a nation was like godly Abraham’s. The Lord’s reality and power was so evident in days of victory (vs.4), especially in the Exodus and Canaan conquest, such that even the Gentiles could not deny it (vs. 5).

Vs. 6-9 – *“But thou, Israel, art My servant”* – Idols, the servants of their creators (vs. 6-7), are contrasted with Israel, the chosen servant of the Lord (vs. 8-9). As the united work of men can be seen in the

41:7 *So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.*
41:8 *But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*
41:9 *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.*

construction of an idol, so the Lord could be seen in the construction of Israel. Compare Elijah's prayer at the Mt. Carmel confrontation, "*LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant*" (I Ki. 18:36).

Though Israel was a nation in trouble through their stubborn honouring of idols, yet that "*seed of Abraham My friend*" was not cast away by the Lord (vs. 9). He who made them will keep them. The point is perhaps implied here that the father of their nation was called *away* from honouring the gods of that same land to which they would return in captivity. Therefore they must not revert to that from which they had been delivered in Abraham during their sojourn there. Remember Abraham's grave concern that Isaac not return to his land to find a wife there (Gen. 24:6 & 8). Compare our own call away from honouring the gods of our sojourn in this life, to a

41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*
41:11 *Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.*
41:12 *Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.*

heart that ever lives in the light of our heavenly Master and citizenship (Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1).

As well, the Lord supplies His people with the comforting thought that as He had led Abraham from Babylon to the land of promise, so He could and would do the same with them, though they must be held for a time in captivity there.

41:10-20 – Israel’s Protection & Provision

Vs. 10 – *“Fear thou not: for I am with thee”* – Our courage is found in the One who is with us (Emmanuel). How very strong the emphasis here on *“fear not”* (also vs. 13-14). It is not of the Lord that we should ever be afraid of anything below the sun (Matt. 10:26-31). Compare II Timothy 1:7, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear”*. Faith in the assurance of who our God is, and that He is with us,

41:13 *For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.*
41:14 *Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*
41:15 *Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.*
41:16 *Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.*

will move us to greatest confidence and courage in this life. He strengthens the weak, helps the helpless, and upholds those sinking down. Compare Christ's rescue of Peter when sinking into the waves.

Vs. 11-12 – “*Behold . . . they that strive with thee shall perish*” – With greatest emphasis He gives the assurance that every angry enemy of His saints will be completely removed in the end (Ps. 112:10).

Vs. 13-16 – “*For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand*” – Though Jacob's descendents are an insignificant (“*worm*”) people, the Lord would use them to bring every proud aggressor to nothing. Their strength is not in themselves, but in their Helper. See how the Lord describes them as but a tool in His hand. Israel's continued existence and more recent successes are examples of the same. This is a prophecy of what shall become of the

41:17 *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.*

41:18 *I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.*

41:19 *I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:*

clamouring haters of the Jewish people.

Vs. 17-20 – *“That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together”* – The Lord’s ample provision for His own would be a testimony to His reality. Compare His care for Israel in the midst of His plagues upon Egypt. Never will this be more true than during the coming tribulation period (Rev. 12:13-17).

Consider how this evident care is fulfilled in the salvation of a soul as well, who finds in Jesus an oasis of refreshment, as *“a pool of water”* in *“the wilderness”*. Our satisfaction in Christ should be *real* and *real obvious* to all looking on. Walking with Jesus, one is able to face *“wilderness”* experiences as if walking through a shaded forest near flowing water.

Vs. 20 – The Lord takes care of His people because

41:20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

41:21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

41:22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

41:23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

He cares for them, but also that He might be made manifest to the world.

41:21-29 – Return to Trial

The Lord challenges the nations to produce evidence of the value and trustworthiness of their gods.

Vs. 21 – *“Bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob”* – Present your best arguments in support of your cause. Let’s hear your case!

Vs. 22 – *“Let them show the former things, what they be”* – How have your gods ever proven themselves in the past? Let’s view the video of history.

Vs. 23 – *“Show the things that are to come hereafter”* – Let them prove their deity through their ability to foresee all and faultlessly predict the future, or

41:24 *Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.*
41:25 *I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.*
41:26 *Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.*

through their ability to bring both good and calamity to pass.

Vs. 24 – “*Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought*” – The true God made blunt accusation concerning every false god and idol in this trial of the nations. *They are nothing!* And every idolater is abominable!

Vs. 25 – “*I have raised up one from the north*” – The Lord would call His servant Cyrus to bring an end to Babylon, that seat and source of idolatry. Cyrus came at the head of Media “*from the north*” and Persia “*from the rising of the sun*” [east]. And he came with an awareness of the Lord and a desire to honour Him (Ezra 1:1-4). The Lord was making public announcement of this ahead of time, that His omniscience might be evident when it came to pass.

Vs. 26 – “*Who hath declared from the beginning, that*

41:27 *The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.*
41:28 *For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.*
41:29 *Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.*

we may know?” – The Lord challenged any so-called god to do the same, to make bold declaration as He does concerning the future and cause it to come to pass. *“There is none”* (3 times).

Vs. 28-29 – *“For I beheld, and there was no man . . . could answer a word”* – When none rose to the Lord’s fair challenge the case was closed, and all images proclaimed *“vanity . . . nothing . . . wind and confusion”*.

Chapter 42

Perhaps in comparison to the Lord’s servant Israel (41:8-9), we’re now introduced to the Lord’s Servant the Messiah. Compare how Jesus *“took upon Him the form of a servant”* (Phil. 2:7).

42:1-4 – Servant Described

Vs. 1 – *“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth”* – See how Jesus is

42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

the object of the Father's most intense interest and care (Matt. 3:17). For us to respond to Him in the same way is to adopt the Father's own heart.

"I will put My Spirit upon Him" – In Christ's earthly ministry the Spirit was upon Him (Matt. 3:16) and without measure (John 3:34). See how the Lord upholds and endows with His Spirit those He appoints to His service. Compare vs. 6.

That *"He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"* was quoted of Jesus by Matthew (12:17-21) as the Jewish opposition of His day began to gather momentum, and the focus began to look away to the nations.

Vs. 2-4 – *"He shall not cry, nor lift up"* – The Messiah in His first coming would be quiet, gentle, and undaunted (50:7), until He has accomplished *"judgment in the earth"*. He would come at the first with long-suffering, graciously enduring the venomous rantings of the wicked.

42:4 *He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.*
42:5 *Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:*
42:6 *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;*

42:5-7 – Servant Commissioned

Vs. 5 – “*Thus saith God the LORD, He that created*” – What shall we do with this creative role of Jehovah (“*God the LORD*”) ascribed to *Jesus* in Colossians 1:16 & John 1:3?

Vs. 6 – “*I the LORD . . . will hold thine hand, and will keep thee*” – The angels ministering to Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry and the Father speaking His delight in Him were part fulfilment of this promise.

“*For a light of the Gentiles*” – Wherever Jesus Christ enters He brings *light*. Compare 9:1-2 & John 1:4-9; 8:12.

Note the focus upon the His ministry to “*the Gentiles*” (vs. 1, and even vs. 4 in LXX). God never meant to exclude the Gentiles, as the Jews of Christ’s day had

42:7 *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*
42:8 *I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*
42:9 *Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.*
42:10 *Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.*

come to believe. Our involvement in His plan of salvation was in His original covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:3, “*and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*”).

Vs. 7 – “*To bring out the prisoners from the prison*” – Wherever Jesus enters He brings *liberty*. Every carrier of the gospel fulfils this role of deliverer. Cyrus was perhaps something of a type of Christ in this sense, releasing those imprisoned by Babylon. And Babylon becomes something of a type of Satan’s kingdom (Col. 1:13). Revelation 18 is a picture, not only of a new, final, literal city of Babylon, but of Satan’s kingdom as a whole. Remember that revealing vision of Satan behind Babylon’s king in 14:12-14.

42:8-12 – Praise of the Lord

Vs. 9 – “*Behold, the former things are come to pass,*

42:11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

42:12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

42:14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

42:15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

and new things do I declare” – Promises fulfilled are the assurance of promises yet to be fulfilled. And in His sure word are the hearts of His saints lifted to joy and praise. Compare in Luke 24 the same combination of assurance in God’s fulfilled promises and “*great joy*” in the days following Christ’s resurrection.

42:13-15 – Wrath of the Lord

“The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man” – In contrast to Messiah’s gentle attitude in His first coming (vs. 2-3), there comes a time when the Lord will no longer hold His peace and wink at man’s ignorance (Acts 17:30). This current era of His effort to reach souls with His light will be followed by one in which He invades earth with His might. Christ began the dismantling of Satan’s domain in His

42:16 *And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.*

42:17 *They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.*

42:18 *Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.*

42:19 *Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?*

42:20 *Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.*

42:21 *The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.*

death and resurrection (Col. 2:12-15), and will finish this work through His earthly kingdom (Dan. 9:24).

42:16-17 – Results of God's Invasion

“They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed” – Captives freed and crooked straightened. Idolatry will ultimately be seen by all for what it is, and the redeemed remnant of Israel *“shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him”* (Zech. 12:10).

42:18-25 – Israel's Condition

“Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see” – This image of Israel is fulfilled in their current condition – blind, deaf, spoiled, snared, etc.

42:22 *But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.*
42:23 *Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?*
42:24 *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.*
42:25 *Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.*
43:1 *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*

Vs. 24-25 – “*Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robber?*” – It was the Lord who handed them over for a prey, because of their refusal of His law and way.

Chapters 43

Coming off of the Lord’s comments as chapter 42 closed, one might expect His condemnation and abandonment of His people. But note God’s gracious words of encouragement here from the start, and interwoven throughout this and the following chapters.

43:1-7 – Words of Courage

Vs. 1 – “*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have*

43:2 *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*
43:3 *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.*
43:4 *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.*

called thee by thy name; thou art Mine” – Again the command to “*fear not*” (5; 41:10, 13, 14) for they are created, redeemed, called (“*by thy name*”, personally, intimately), and possessed by the Lord. Even so the church are,

- “*A peculiar people*”, or people of His own (I Pet. 2:9).
- Those “*created in Christ Jesus*” as “*His workmanship*” (Eph. 2:10).

Vs. 2 – “*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*” – Why fear even the worst of tragedies when truly believing that “*I will be with thee*”. Consider the literal fulfilment of this in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3. Compare Psalm 23:4.

Vs. 3 – “*For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel*” – Behold the glorious names of that One with them.

43:5 *Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;*
43:6 *I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*
43:7 *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*
43:8 *Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*

Vs. 4 – *“Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life”* – When others, such as Egypt and Ethiopia, would hold or harm them, the Lord allows the other to fall rather than those *“I have loved”*. How often He has shown His willingness to step on the world in arranging the best for His own. He shows *“Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him”* (II Chron. 16:9). How the Lord delights in the undelightful, and loves the unlovely. These same terms of preciousness are used of all who are in Christ, for we too are a people of His delight above all people. Self-esteem is not our answer, but God-esteem, for the One who would so cherish a *“worm”*.

Vs. 5-7 – *“Bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth”* – The One standing with Israel will regather them.

43:8-13 – The Lord’s Witness

43:9 *Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.*

43:10 *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*

43:11 *I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.*

43:12 *I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.*

43:13 *Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*

“Let all the nations be gathered together” – The Lord had a message to be proclaimed to the nations, who were so like their dead idols, with eyes and ears that neither see nor hear (Ps. 115:4-8). Israel (as the church) was to be the Lord’s witness to them. Consider how this witness was fulfilled in Babylon, not only in God’s great deliverance through the fire in Daniel 3, but in the supernatural interpretation of dreams in Daniel 2, the deliverance from lions in Daniel 6, the reading of the handwriting in Daniel 5, and the accurate prediction of successive kingdoms given through Daniel. The tragedy of Israel’s captivity in Babylon became opportunity for the gathered nations (vs. 8-9) to behold the Lord’s testimony of Himself in His people. And see how the Lord put that witness of His light in the very blackness of darkness, right in the very heart and

43:14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

43:16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

43:17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

source of idolatry, in the very lap of “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5). The nations must know that He alone is the true and living God (vs. 10) the only Saviour (vs. 11) and eternal Sovereign (vs. 13), who alone can declare the end from the beginning (vs. 12).

43:14-17 – Deliverance from Captivity

“I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King” – In the midst of continual reminders of who the Lord is, as displayed in His names, He assures that it was He who appointed them to Babylon and would deliver them from the same, even as He had mightily delivered them from Egypt, making *“a way in the [Red] sea* (vs. 16). Their captivity was no demonstration of His weakness, but of His purpose and power, of His holiness and justice (compare 42:24-25).

43:19 *Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.*

43:20 *The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.*

43:21 *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.*

43:22 *But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*

43:23 *Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.*

43:18-21 – Provision in the Wilderness

Vs. 18-19 – “*Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth*” – Pre-eminent above even “*the things of old*”, when the Lord had so ably displayed Himself, would be the “*new thing*” of His keeping of His people throughout their dispersion.

Vs. 20-21 – “*This people have I formed for Myself*” – They were a people satisfied, chosen, and formed by and for the Lord. We too are formed to show forth His praise in the wilderness of this world among the heathen.

43:22-28 – Grace Mishandled

“*But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob*” – Israel ignored their gracious King to whom all glory was due.

43:24 *Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.*
43:25 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*
43:26 *Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.*
43:27 *Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.*
43:28 *Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.*

It's all "*not . . . neither . . . no*" here. While they became tired of the Lord (vs. 22), they tired Him with their evil (vs. 24).

Vs. 25 – "*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgression for Mine own sake*" – Yet still He stands ready to forgive and even forget their sins upon confession.

Vs. 26 – "*Put Me in remembrance*" – Surely we should be ready to put and hold in our remembrance He who "*will not remember*" our sins.

“Look unto Me,
and be ye saved,
all the ends of the earth:
for I am God,
and there is none else”

(Isaiah 45:22)

Class 15 – Isaiah 44-46

44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Chapter 44

Having come off reproof for the provoking way of His people at the end of the previous chapter, the Lord again turns to words of encouragement, even as He began chapter 43. Though so grieved by their sin He cannot get away from His heart for His covenant people.

44:1-2 – The Lord’s Heart

“Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen” – Again the Lord refers to Israel as His servant (41:8-9). It was important for them to understand that though punished by the Lord, they were not forsaken by Him (41:9, *“I have . . . not cast thee away”*), even though they would be cast out of their land. Lest His people think their chances were finished with the Lord and thus that they were free to consider other gods, here is now the hug after the hiding. They were still His covenant people. Their

44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.
44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

God gives words of promise relating to the past (“*chosen*”, two times & “*formed*”), present (“*fear not*”), and future (“*will help*”). The Lord Himself stands in aid of His chosen servants.

Vs. 2 – The name “*Jeshurun*” means “upright one” (Deut. 32:15). Though Israel was not upright in practice she was in her position as the Lord’s chosen people. After the same principle N.T. believers are justified or made righteous in their position before God, though not necessarily righteous in practice.

44:3-5 – The Lord’s Blessing

“*I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed*” – When Jesus spoke of sending “*the promise of My Father*” (Lk. 24:49) He referred to portions like this (also Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28). The Holy Spirit is described in John 7 as poured out waters as well. The fulfilment of this pouring out of the Spirit in the new covenant is seen in this current age from Pentecost (Acts 2), and is reserved for a restored Israel in Christ’s

44:4 *And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.*

44:5 *One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

44:6 *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

coming earthly kingdom (Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:25-31).

Sin forgiven and forgotten (43:25) opens the door for the entrance of the Spirit. The crooked places must be made straight before *“the glory of the LORD shall be revealed”* (40:4-5). Yielding and cleansing are still the way to the blessing of Spirit filling.

Vs. 5 – Perhaps a reference to those like Ruth, who are drawn to the true God through His hard dealings with His people in Babylon.

44:6-8 – God Alone

Vs. 6 – *“I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God”* – Israel’s LORD, King, and Redeemer is first, last, and God alone. He was there as the first cause of all, the self-existent One. He will be there through a forever future as the Eternal One. *“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen”* (Rom.

44:7 *And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.*

44:8 *Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.*

44:9 *They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.*

11:36). There is no other being in existence able to match such a claim. Compare similar words spoken of Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:16-17; Revelation 1:11, “*I am Alpha and Omega*”.

Vs. 7 – Again, what this One declares will come to pass. Who else can do as He? The Lord is leading up to His naming of Cyrus (vs. 28) two centuries before he was raised up for Israel’s deliverance, and this long before they were even confronted with their need of a deliverer from captivity in Babylon, for they were still secure in their land at the time of Isaiah’s prophecy. It was a message for Israel;

- Of *comfort* – That they might rest in captivity on the promises of God.
- Of *warning* – Against trusting any other god.
- Of *assurance* – Against fearing any other so-called god.

44:10 *Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?*
44:11 *Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.*
44:12 *The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.*

The Lord doesn't only foresee, He *sets* and *appoints* "*the things that are coming*". This is why only He can accurately predict.

Vs. 8 – "*Fear ye not, neither be afraid*" – Therefore be of good courage all who put their trust in the Lord.

44:9-20 – Idolatry Ridiculed

Again, in anticipation of His people being immersed in the land of idolatry in their captivity, the Lord seeks to pre-empt all competitors to His trust.

Vs. 9-10 – "*They that make a graven image are all of them vanity*" – Idolatry "*shall not profit*".

Vs. 11 – Idol makers "*shall be ashamed*".

Vs. 12-17 – The simple details of the actual production of idols is quite enough to display the foolishness of any trust in them;

44:13 *The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.*

44:14 *He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.*

44:15 *Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.*

- Idol makers are just common craftsmen, not sacred or religious men (smith, carpenter, vs. 12-13).
- They are men subject to human frailty (hunger, weakness, thirst, weariness, vs. 12).
- They use no sacred implements, but the basic tools of their trade (hammer, rule, line, plane, and compass, vs. 12-13).
- They return God a disfavour, making their god after *man's* image (vs. 13).

The tree used is not considered to have any particularly sacred value, from no consecrated forest. In fact only with “*the residue thereof he maketh a god*”, after using a portion of the tree to cook and warm himself. Never a thought of these blessings of eating and warmth as gracious provisions of the true God.

44:16 *He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:*

44:17 *And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.*

44:18 *They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*

- The wood from this tree is consumed by fire, showing no more capability in it of supernaturally protecting itself than any other wood. Just an ordinary tree.
- The Lord seems to indicate that the portion of wood used for heating and cooking actually provided a greater service to man than the resulting idol (“*satisfied*”, “*Aha, I am warm*”, vs. 16).

Vs. 17 – “*And with the residue thereof he maketh a god*” – Yet for all this, the idolater cannot seem to grasp the ridiculousness of bowing in humility before it, as if he were the idol’s *servant* rather than its *creator*. He ascribes worth to the crafted idol as if it were worthy of adoration. He prays to it, appealing to the idol for rescue as if dependent upon it, owning it as “*my god*”. The senselessness of it (as with the evolutionist’s theories) can only be sourced in the rebellious heart of a man desperate for any answer

44:19 *And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?*

44:20 *He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

44:21 *Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*

other than submission to God. Rebellion against the Lord is a blindness in itself, leading on to greater, more blatant self-deception.

Vs. 20 – “*A deceived heart hath turned him aside*” – Only when one finally comes to this question, “*Is there not a lie in my right hand?*” is there hope for deliverance. Compare Habakkuk 2:18, where every idol is proclaimed “*a teacher of lies*”, for that which is lifeless and breathless can never truly speak or teach. Any trust placed in some small piece of this old earth is just as ridiculous as the shameful scenario given here.

44:21-23 – Happiness is the Lord

The hollowness and hopelessness of dead idols is now contrasted with happiness in the living God. The Lord appeals to His servant Jacob to *remember*

44:22 *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

44:23 *Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*

44:24 *Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;*

(vs. 21) and *return*, as those He has redeemed (vs.22). Compare 46:8-9.

Vs. 21 – “*Thou art My servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me*” – In light of the fact that the Lord will never forget you, remember whose servant and creation you are when tempted to serve other masters.

Vs. 22 – “*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions*” – Our sin is “*as a thick cloud*”, separating us from the warmth and light of the Sun of Righteousness (59:2). Only the Son can dissolve that cloud of separation through the blazing grace of Calvary. Redemption is only through the blotting out of our sin, and the terrible price of it bids us to “*return unto Me*”.

44:24-28 – God’s Proven Power

44:25 *That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;*
44:26 *That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof;*

Vs. 24 – “*I am the LORD that maketh all things*” – “*Alone*”, “*by Myself*” – The only God has no co-creator, nor does the omnipotent One need a helper. The Lord’s power is without equal. Captive Israel need not fear that the Lord cannot effect His promised deliverance.

Vs. 25 – Israel’s future deliverance from Babylon would frustrate “*the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad*”. This is a reference to the false prophets of Babylon, who would point to signs of assurance that the nation would continue forever. Yet they would be proven lying fools at the last through Cyrus’ crushing victory.

Vs. 26 – “*That confirmeth the word of His servant*” – In contrast, the Lord is the One who confirms His words through sure and complete fulfilment. More than a century before Jerusalem was even ruined and *uninhabited*, the Lord here speaks of a day of her restoration. As with the 666 of Revelation 13, this was a prophecy with most of its meaning only for

*44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:
44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my
pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the
temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

another day.

Vs. 27 – “*I will dry up thy rivers*” – Perhaps an indication of the way Cyrus would take the city of Babylon, through diverting the Euphrates River and coming under the wall in the dry riverbed. When the true God is involved, no obstacle is insurmountable.

Vs. 28 – “*That saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure*” – This shows us that our God can do what no other can. He actually *named* the man He would raise up to Israel’s deliverance and aid some 210 years before the time. Imagine the growing excitement among the Jews in Babylon when the name “Cyrus” began to feature in the newspapers toward the end of their 70-year captivity!

Chapter 45

45:1-4 – A Word to Cyrus

Cyrus was of the Medes. He rose to fame when

45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

successfully leading in the defence of his country against the nation of Lydia, and then in counterattacking he ultimately conquered that wealthy nation and many others. Then in confederacy with his uncle Darius of Persia, Cyrus led his famously successful attack against the capital city of Babylon. And this again all so many decades after the Lord named the man through Isaiah.

The Lord's specific naming of Cyrus is one cause giving rise to those who believe in a multiple authorship of Isaiah, as discussed in the introduction. With actual names being given, the faithless feel that this later portion of the book must surely have been written much later than the first 39 chapters, from the perspective of history rather than prophecy. For the same reason and in the same way many struggle to see the detailed prophecies of the book of Daniel as prophecy spoken before the events described.

Vs. 1 – *“Thus saith the LORD to His anointed, to*

45:3 *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

45:4 *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*

45:5 *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:*

Cyrus” – The detail here was fulfilled in Babylon. The loins of Belshazzar were loosed (wet his pants?) when the hand wrote on the wall announcing his fall with the city to Cyrus (Dan. 5:6). Compare Cyrus’ own words of the kingdoms of men the Lord gave to him in Ezra 1:2, and his will to do the Lord’s will.

Vs. 2-3 – The ruined gates of the city of Babylon were indeed made of brass. The Lord would be his helper in removing every obstacle to his success and in richly rewarding him.

Vs. 4 – God used Cyrus as He used Babylon, “*for Jacob My servant’s sake*” – the one for blessing and the other for cursing, but both for Jacob’s best!

45:5-6 – “*None Else*”

The God of the Bible will display to the world that He is unique (“*none else*” 3 times), and all others who claim to be gods are lies. *Cyrus* would do well to

45:6 *That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.*
45:7 *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*
45:8 *Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.*

remember this as well, when at the top of the heap of human power.

45:7-14 – The Sovereign Lord

Vs. 7 – *“I form the light, and create darkness”* – Not that the Lord is the Author of sin, but that He creates *“evil”* in the sense of allowing trouble or calamity. This is no proof-text for the overboard sovereignty of the Calvinist. It is the Lord who holds the palette, appropriately touching both lights and darks to the canvas of our lives.

Vs. 8 – *“I the LORD have created it”* – With the repeated command word *“let”*, the Lord speaks here as He did at Creation (Gen. 1). His plan of redemption is His throughout. As *“every good gift and every perfect gift”*, so righteousness in Christ *“came down”* from heaven (Jn. 6). And salvation was brought forth when the earth opened, displaying the empty tomb.

45:9 *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?*
45:10 *Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?*
45:11 *Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.*
45:12 *I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.*

Vs. 9-10 – Woe to the one foolish enough to strive with his Maker. As if the lesser is a wiser and more fit ruler than the greater.

Vs. 11 – “*Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons*” – The verbs “*ask*” and “*command*” are not written as commands in the Hebrew, but are in the future tense. In the context these are perhaps to be understood as searching questions (“shall you?”) from the Lord. When Peter enquired of “*the things to come concerning*” His sons, Jesus suggested he mind his own affairs (Jn. 21:21-22). Korah’s demanding enquiry concerning his brothers bought him a free-fall to hell (Num. 16). Man is *never* bidden to command God, as some among our charismatic brothers suggest from this verse. Men are only bidden to humbly ask of the Lord. Compare the gracious example of Abraham in Genesis 18:23-33. It’s a question of *who* is in authority over *whom*.

45:13 *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.*
45:14 *Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.*
45:15 *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*
45:16 *They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.*

Vs. 12 – Compare 44:24.

Vs. 13-14 – “*He shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives*” – Again concerning Cyrus. The Lord displayed His sovereign rule in bringing to pass what He had said in Cyrus.

45:15-17 – Eyes for the Unseen

“*Yet shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end*” – Though the Lord is invisible (vs. 15), yet those who trust in Him will be blessed with salvation and never ashamed of their trust (vs. 17). Contrast idolaters with visible “gods”, who shall come to shame (vs. 16).

45:18-19 – Ears for Right Things

As His *works* (vs. 18, “*created . . . formed . . .*

45:17 *But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*
 45:18 *For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.*
 45:19 *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.*

established”), so His words (vs. 19, “*spoken . . . said . . . speak . . . declare*”) excel beyond all other so-called gods;

- The Lord’s words are spoken clearly and publicly, not as the “*wizards that peep, and that mutter*” (8:19). Compare the very public voice of divine wisdom in Proverbs 1:20-21 & 8:1-3.
- The Lord’s pure words lead to righteousness, in contrast to the degraded lifestyle to which “*seducing spirits and doctrines of demons*” lead. Only the pure-hearted will be drawn to the purity of His light (Jn. 3:19-21).
- The Lord’s words hold promise, rather than the vain words of the false.
- The Lord’s words are right, ringing true within us and “*rejoicing the heart*” (Ps. 19:8).
- The excelling calibre of His words prove the

45:20 *Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.*

45:21 *Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.*

45:22 *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

Lord to be the true God. That this is recognizable by all is assumed.

45:20-25 – Appeal to the Nations

Having proven that He is worthy of our trust above all, the Lord again turns to the nations with a stirring appeal. The message seems to be aimed particularly at those released with Israel from fallen Babylon (*“ye that are escaped of the nations”*, vs. 20), and this in the telling context of the weakness of that very source of all idolatry on display before the Lord’s prophecy and power. It was Mt. Carmel revisited on an international scale.

Vs. 20 – *“That set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save”* – The idolater is as ignorant as his god is powerless.

Vs. 21 – *“Who hath declared this from ancient times?”*

45:23 *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*

45:24 *Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*

45:25 *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

– In the revealing moment of the victory of Cyrus over Babylon;

- The Lord's omniscience was displayed, for it happened just as He *"told it from that time"*.
- The Lord's omnipotence was displayed, for it was a deliverance *"no god else beside Me"* could either effect or thwart.
- The Lord's justice is displayed, for it was *"a just God"* bringing judgment upon evil.
- The Lord's grace was displayed, for it was *"a Saviour"* bringing deliverance to the captives.

Vs. 22 – *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth"* – Now there is no excuse for any man throughout *"all the ends of the earth"* to not know the One to look to for salvation.

Vs. 23 – *"I have sworn by Myself"* – Those refusing to bow will ultimately be forced to acknowledge the

46:1 *Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.*
46:2 *They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.*
46:3 *Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:*

Lord's pre-eminence above all anyway. This the Lord affirms with a most solemn vow. He could swear by no greater than "*by Myself*" (Heb. 6:13). The Apostle Paul amazingly applied these words directly to Jesus Christ in Philippians 2:9-11. Jesus can be none other than the Jehovah (LORD) of the O.T.

Chapter 46

Having indicated the coming failure of Babylon with her gods, the Lord now leaves no doubts.

46:1-2 – Hostage Gods

"Their idols were upon the beasts . . . they are a burden to the weary beast" – Another touch of irony here. Bel and Nebo were prominent gods of the Babylonians. Not only would their gods be powerless to keep their people, but the same idols would be carried into captivity as Babylon did Israel. The

46:4 *And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.*
46:5 *To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?*
46:6 *They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.*
46:7 *They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.*

point? Such gods can't even carry their own weight let alone protect themselves or their followers. At last it came clear that it was never a matter of stronger gods, as the heathen had assumed and celebrated, but the Lord's purpose to punish His wayward people. As in Egypt, the Lord stated both what He would do and when He would do it, and then did as He said without the least bit of hindrance.

46:3-4 – Carrying God

“I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry” – See now the stark contrast in the Lord. Whereas the false gods cannot even carry their own weight (vs. 1), the Lord has borne and carried (5 times mentioned here) His people throughout their existence.

46:5-7 – Immobile Gods

“They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him,

46:8 Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.
46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,
46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:
46:11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

and set him in his place” – Not only must idols be made, they must be carried if they would move. Not only the burden of their production, but of their transport (and protection) rests upon their followers. How can the true God, who carries His people to victory, be likened to these?!

46:8-13 – Call to Repentance

Vs. 8-11 – *“Remember this . . . remember”* – “Don’t forget how I did what I long ago said I would do”.

Vs. 11 – The *“ravenous bird from the east”* is a reference either to Babylon falling upon Judah or Cyrus coming like a raptor upon Babylon.

Vs. 12-13 – *“Hearken unto Me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness”* – The Lord demands that the stubborn of the earth *“listen”* to Him and *“look*

46:12 *Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:*
46:13 *I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation*
shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

unto” (vs. 22) Him. The people of earth are condemned by their refusal of Him. They are *without* righteousness (in fact are “*far from righteousness*”), they *need* righteousness if they would be saved, and they are *near* righteousness, for the Lord brings “*near My righteousness*”. God’s salvation is not elusive! Compare in Deuteronomy 30:11-14 and Romans 10:6-8 that “*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach*”.

“I gave my back to the smiters,
and my cheeks to them that
plucked off the hair:
I hid not my face
from shame and spitting.
For the Lord GOD will help me;
therefore shall I not be confounded”

(Isaiah 50:6-7)

Class 16 – Isaiah 47-50

47:1 *Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.*

47:2 *Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.*

47:3 *Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.*

Chapter 47

A word for Babylon.

47:1-6 – Babylon Brought Down

Vs. 1 – *“Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon”* – The Chaldean life of luxury (*“tender and delicate”*) would come to an end.

Vs. 2 – Describing the work and way of slaves. They would be put to forced labour and abused, as they had done to others.

Vs. 3-5 – *“Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen”* – Babylon would be reduced from greatest prominence to public shame when the LORD of hosts rose up in vengeance against her.

47:4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

What hope did she have when it was *God* meeting her and not mere man? “*Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*” (Heb. 10:30-31). Woe to the one against whom the Lord arises in vengeance. Compare I Thessalonians 4:6, of those who take advantage of others.

Vs. 4 – “*Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name*” – The Lord would have them to know who they had touched. They would dare to abuse a people whose “*Redeemer*” (kinsman redeemer) is “*the LORD of hosts*”, the “*Holy One*” related to Israel. This kinsman redeemer or *goel* was the one whose right and duty it was;

- To buy a near relative out of poverty (Ruth 4).
- To serve as an “*avenger of blood*” for a murdered near relative (Num. 35:19-21).
- To marry the childless widow of a near relative in order to produce an heir (Deut. 25:5-10).

47:6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke
47:7 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

There was such fearful threat in this bit of information. Babylon would dare to touch a people whose *Goel* proved much too big to handle.

Vs. 6 – “*I was wroth with My people, I have . . . given them into thine hand*” – The Lord explained why Babylon would gain dominance over His people. It was a matter of His purpose, never of Babylon’s power as they supposed. From the start their role in the matter was always more pot than potter, more weapon than warrior. Because Babylon misused the prominence and dominance allowed them by the Lord in accomplishing His purposes, they would be brought down to loss and shame.

The lesson is here for us. Use aright what the Lord has granted you, or He will surely take it away. Compare Christ’s parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Compare Jeroboam’s folly in I Kings 11:31ff; 12.

47:7-10 – Why Babylon’s Fall

47:8 *Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:*
47:9 *But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.*

Vs. 7 – *“Thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever”* – They sourced their success in themselves and arrogantly proclaimed it eternal. Even as Babylon again *“saith in her heart”* in Revelation 18:7, on the verge of her fall, *“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow”*. Man is a fool to think this way in his heart, and forget the Lord of *“the latter end of it”*.

Vs. 8 – *“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures”* – They were carelessly *“given to pleasures”*. We are ever wise to recognize the obvious, that those who live only for pleasure shall meet God’s wrath. Those who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God shall come to sorrow at the last.

“I am, and none else beside me” – They claimed self-existence as God (again in vs. 10), and they dared to forecast their own continuance.

Vs. 9 – Their *“sorceries”* and *“enchantments”* were

47:10 *For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.*

47:11 *Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.*

47:12 *Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.*

“an abomination unto the LORD” (Deut. 18:10-12). There is great emphasis here upon *“the multitude”* and *“great abundance”* of these occult practices. Babylon is known above all as the seedbed of all such black arts. Compare Revelation 18:23, of Babylon, *“for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived”*. And all such *“unfruitful works of darkness”* are still with us in *“great abundance”* today.

Vs. 10 – They trusted in their wickedness to provide deliverance, and denied God’s omniscience (*“None seeth me”*).

47:11-15 – Unavoidable Fall

Vs. 11 – *“Therefore shall evil come upon thee”* – There is great emphasis here on the surprise, suddenness, and certainty of their end. Compare similar themes in Babylon’s fall *“in one hour”* in Revelation 18:10,

47:13 *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.*
47:14 *Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.*
47:15 *Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.*

17, 19.

Vs. 12-13 – “*Stand now with thine enchantments*” – “Let’s see now if there is any protection in your divinations against My purposes”, the Lord suggests. Consider how all of Belshazzar’s counsellors couldn’t even decipher the handwritten message of destruction on the night Babylon was taken, let alone thwart the Lord’s purpose (Dan. 5:8).

Vs. 14-15 – “*Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them*” – The Lord predicted that there would be no protection, nor any vestige of them remaining. History now displays the truth of it.

Chapter 48

A word for Israel.

48:1-8 – Israel Reproved

48:1 *Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.*

48:2 *For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.*

48:3 *I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.*

48:4 *Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;*

48:5 *I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.*

Vs. 1-2 – “*Hear ye this, O house of Jacob*” – Though they were “*called by the name of Israel*” (meaning “a prince with God”, Gen. 32:28) and “*swear by the name of the LORD*” and even made mention of the Lord upon occasion, yet there was no truth or righteousness within them.

Vs. 3-8 – “*Because I knew that thou art obstinate*” – Because they were a people hard of neck, sinew, and brow, the Lord had spoken His prophecies and fulfilled them, both the judgment of their captivity in Babylon (Deut. 28-29) and their deliverance through Cyrus and restoration to their own land (Isa. 45:1ff). He refused to allow them to attribute His works to their idols or to their own foreknowledge. Thus, fulfilled prophecy is meant to impact the hardhearted. Only a fool, or those determined to

48:6 *Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.*
48:7 *They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.*
48:8 *Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.*
48:9 *For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.*
48:10 *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.*

“deal very treacherously”, would refuse to acknowledge the Lord as the true God in the light of His specific prophecies fulfilled.

48:9-11 – Reason for Rescue

Vs. 9 – *“For My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off”* – The Lord would defer His anger *“for Mine own sake”* (twice spoken, vs. 11) and name and praise, that His mercy might be displayed, and that the world might know who is God. As Proverbs 19:11 teaches, one shows discretion by suppressing his anger. Prudence cuts a long fuse and a willingness to overlook or forgive faults is an ornament of glory. Their deliverance (as ours in Christ) had nothing to do with their own worth or earning.

Vs. 10 – They were His people, *“chosen . . . in the*

48:11 *For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.*
48:12 *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*
48:13 *Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.*
48:14 *All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.*
48:15 *I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.*
48:16 *Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.*

furnace of affliction” in Egypt. The Lord is bound to them by covenant.

48:12-16 – Sovereignty on Display

Vs. 12 – Compare 41:4.

Vs. 13 – Whether below or above us, the Lord God made it all. Another reminder of who is Creator (40:12-17; 42:5; 44:24; 45:7, 12, 18).

Vs. 14-15 – *“The LORD hath loved him: He will do His pleasure on Babylon”* – The Lord would prosper His beloved people over Babylon and her gods. Again the question is *“which among”* her false gods have done as the Lord, predicting both Israel’s deliverance and Babylon’s destruction?

48:17 *Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.*
48:18 *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:*
48:19 *Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.*

beginning” – Again, the Lord was quite public in Vs. 16 – *“I have not spoken in secret from the* proclaiming His plan, from centuries prior (45:19).

48:17-19 – Reasoning with His People

“I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit” – Not only does the Lord point us to the way we should go, but to the way of our *“profit”* (vs. 17), *“peace”* (vs. 18), and produce (vs. 19). He brings to a humble heart a peace flowing deep and strong and constant as a river. His ultimate purpose is never to diminish us. He has only our greatest benefit or advantage at heart! And how He longs for us to put ourselves in the way of His blessings by hearing and heeding His commandments. He holds in His hand such an abundance of good things ready to be poured out, *“to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him”*. Only with greatest reluctance and regret does He empty His

48:20 *Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.*
48:21 *And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.*
48:22 *There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*

hand of His good gifts to take up His rod of correction.

48:20-22 – Flee Babylon

“The LORD hath redeemed His servant Jacob” – As Israel’s Exodus from Egypt, so her deliverance from Babylon becomes another picture of salvation or redemption. At salvation we are rescued from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, and *“with a voice of singing”*. With such deliverance we are ready to *“utter it even to the end of the earth”* that *“the LORD hath redeemed”* us. And from that point of inward deliverance we’re bidden of the Lord to *“come out from among them, and be ye separate”*.

Vs. 21 – *“He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them”* – For whom the Lord delivers He provides, and that from the most unexpected of places.

49:1 *Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.*
49:2 *And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;*
49:3 *And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.*
49:4 *Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.*
49:5 *And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.*
49:6 *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

Vs. 22 – *“There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked”* – Those rescued are contrasted with the unredeemed, who have peace neither in heart nor with heaven (57:20-21).

Chapter 49

49:1-12 – Servant-Deliverer Presented

Vs. 1-3 – *“The LORD hath called Me from the womb”* – The Lord called, named, equipped, and protects His Servant.

Vs. 4 – *“Then I said, I have laboured in vain”* – Christ’s

49:7 *Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.*

49:8 *Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;*

49:9 *That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.*

49:10 *They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.*

49:11 *And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.*

49:12 *Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.*

life seemed largely “*for nought*”, coming to a criminal’s death, and leaving behind only a scattered, fearful band of a few followers. Even so the planting of any seed seems for the moment only loss. Yet it’s no loss, but an investment. Here is a lesson on being patiently resolute when our labour seems in vain, for God’s great Servant felt the same way before glorious fruit sprouted from the planting of His life. No man is the assessor of the true value of our work, but “*surely my judgment is with the LORD*”.

Vs. 5-7 – “*Though Israel be not gathered . . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles*” – Though the

49:13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing,
O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have
mercy upon his afflicted.
49:14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath
forgotten me.
49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have
compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not
forget thee.
49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are
continually before me.
49:17 Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee
waste shall go forth of thee.
49:18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves
together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely
clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee,
as a bride doeth.

Servant's mission "*to bring Jacob again to Him*" seemed to have failed, yet the Lord's purpose ranged wider to include "*the Gentiles*", even "*the ends of the earth*", which resulted from Jacob's rejection.

Vs. 8-12 – "*I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people*" – The Lord would hear and help His Servant and make Him a Deliverer after all.

49:13-26 – Israel's Restoration

Vs. 13 – "*The LORD hath comforted His people*" – The Lord's mercy and comfort when restoring His people to their land will be greatest cause for singing.

Vs. 14 – "*But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me*"

49:19 *For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.*

49:20 *The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.*

49:21 *Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?*

49:22 *Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.*

49:23 *And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.*

49:24 *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?*

– A similar complaint as in 40:27.

Vs. 15 – *“Can a maid forget her sucking child . . . yet will I not forget thee”* – The Lord is more sure to remember His own than a woman her infant.

Vs. 16 – *“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands”* – This was literally fulfilled in Christ’s nail prints, the marks of His stubborn love.

Vs. 17-26 – *“All these gather themselves together, and come to thee”* – All the redeemed will be delivered from every oppressor and gathered to Israel during

49:25 *But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.*

49:26 *And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.*

50:1 *Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.*

50:2 *Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.*

Christ's Millennial Kingdom. It's a picture of the great company of saved souls delivered from Satan's oppressive hold and translated into "*the kingdom of His dear Son*" (Col. 1:13).

Chapter 50

Responses of man to the Word of God, both the written Word and the living Word.

50:1-3 – Response to Written Word

Vs. 2 – "*Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?*" – The Lord queries why when He came and called to men there was no response. Men show their attitude toward God in their attitude toward His words. And

*50:3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.
50:4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should
know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth
morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*

God's response to a soul will be based upon one's response to His words through His servant. Compare 65:11-12; 66:4; Hebrews 12:25-26.

50:4-11 – Response to Living Word

A return now to the Lord's common theme of His righteous Servant, Jesus Christ (42:1-4; 49:5-6; 52:13; 53:11). This One is all of God's theme, and so should He be all of ours as well. The Lord comes in His servants, and particularly in that greatest Servant. And "*he that receiveth you receiveth Me*" (Matt. 10:40).

Vs. 4 – "*The LORD God hath given Me the tongue of the learned*" – The Servant's wisdom – He received a learned tongue as one skilled to answer aright. A wise tongue will always go hand in hand with an ear wise "*to hear as the learned*". How we often saw these supernatural abilities in Christ's responses to the Jewish leaders. Compare the spiritual gifts of a word of wisdom and knowledge in I Corinthians 12:8. Compare the Lord's promise to be with Moses' mouth

50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

in Exodus 4:11-12. Compare the same promise to those facing persecution in Luke 21:15. As with all spiritual gifts, the wise use of the tongue is to be for the benefit of others, to lift and encourage “*him that is weary*”.

Vs. 5 – “*I was not rebellious, neither turned away back*” – The Servant’s commitment – This refers either to the Lord speaking in the ear of His Servant what He would face in His earthly ministry, or to the practice of marking one a permanent servant through piercing the ear (Ex. 21:1-11). Compare the prophecy of Jesus in Psalm 40:6-8 and quoted in Hebrews 10, expressing God’s desire for a sacrificed life above all other sacrifice. The expression here is of the Servant’s unresisting submission to His Father’s will.

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On the Side

Consider how the very first ordinance of the law after the Ten Commandments of so marking a willing slave

(Ex. 21:1-6) is a foreshadow of Jesus Christ. In a sense it was the Father, with awl in hand, piercing His willing Servant on the cross. His blood sprinkled on that “door post” was that of the true Passover Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world, and marking the only door of passage into eternal life. The scars of His pierced body forever mark Him as the willing bond-slave of His Father.

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Vs. 6 – *“I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair”* – The Servant’s experience – Though Jesus knew His earthly calling would not bring immediate honours or prosperity, but rather shame and brutal persecution, yet He refused to shrink from His Father’s will. He stood straight and faced His tormenters squarely, taking man’s vicious cruelty and not hiding His face. *“I gave”* indicates the voluntary nature of His sufferings.

Consider how we do what Jesus refused to do, to turn away back, when we shrink from being, saying, or doing all that the Lord would have in and through us. We do the same when we compromise with evil, softening the Lord’s words, adding a dash of evil to holy living to make it more palatable to the wicked world, thus dodging scorn. Will you please yourself

50:7 *For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*

50:8 *He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.*

or your *Saviour*? Will you hold to your *reputation* before the world or to your *Redeemer*? Will you hide the gospel or be hidden in the hollow of His hand? *“For even Christ pleased not Himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me”* (Rom. 15:3).

Vs. 7-9 – The Servant’s Confidence

Vs. 7 – *“The Lord GOD will help Me”* (twice, also vs. 9). Jesus knew that His Father stood with Him in *“the burning fiery furnace”* of His sufferings. Compare the Apostle Paul’s confidence in his preserving, even in his darkest hour of trial (II Tim. 4:16-18). The Lord is never closer than when we stand up for Him in this wicked world and reap the bitter harvest of hatred.

“Therefore shall I not be confounded” – He knew the Lord’s help extended into the future (*“shall”*), that He would not in the end be ashamed (again, the thought repeated at the end of the verse for emphasis). Therefore He could set His *“face like a flint”* on *“the*

50:9 *Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.*
50:10 *Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*

joy that was set before Him". Compare Hebrews 12:2-4. The Lord's Servant was undaunted, unafraid, undiscouraged, unswayed – **resolute!!**

Vs. 8-9 – "*Behold, the Lord GOD will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me?*" – "*Who . . . who . . . who?!*" Using courtroom terms (justify, contend, adversary, condemn) the Servant assures His heart that though mankind would cast Him from the earth His great heavenly Judge had declared Him right and stood with Him. The believer only by virtue of his oneness with Christ enters into this same glorious position of "*no condemnation*". Compare Romans 8:31ff. This relegates to irrelevance every contender or adversary. It's good comfort for our hearts in the furnace of persecution.

Vs. 10 – "*Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God*" – The Servant's challenge – Will you too walk in trusting dependence even in the dark? It's a question of whether we will follow the Servant's example of resolute confidence in the Lord.

50:11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

Note how obeying the voice of His Servant is put on an even par with fearing the LORD here.

Vs. 11 – “*Walk in the light of . . . the sparks that ye have kindled*” – Here is the contrast of those trusting in lesser, lower lights, those attempting to light up their own darkness, kindling their own fire to walk by, rather than putting their trust in the Lord’s light. The Lord labels all such feeble attempts of man as mere “*sparks*”. Here are human devices for salvation or guidance, such as religiosity, Bagavad Gita, Koran, good deeds, prayers, candles, Joseph Smith, Watchtower, hail Mary’s, crystals, etc. All such manmade “sparks” are no true lights to warm or guide us. All such “sparks” shine from below rather than from above, and will surely lead only down to eternal “*sorrow*”.

Class 17 – Isaiah 51-54

*51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD:
look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence
ye are digged.*

Chapter 51

51:1-8 – Call and Comfort to the Righteous

Be careful to not miss the obvious things when examining a Bible portion. Notice the Lord's triple call to "*hearken unto Me*" in these verses (vs. 1, 4, 7). Note His great focus on righteousness;

- He speaks to "*ye that follow after righteousness*" (vs. 1), and to "*ye that know My righteousness*" (vs. 7).
- He assures that "*My righteousness is near*" (vs. 5).
- He proclaims that "*My righteousness shall not be abolished*" (vs. 7), and "*shall be forever*" (vs. 8).

Vs. 1 – "*Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged*" – We are

51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

not wise to lose track of our first estate, as evil as it was hopeless, before the Lord raised us up out of the miry clay to seek Him in righteousness. Remember how He has blessed!

Vs. 1-3 – The Lord bids His people to look back to their humble beginnings in Abraham and Sarah. As the Lord called their great patriarch out of the land of the Chaldeans and blessed him with increase, so He would bring comfort and restoration to Zion. Though Israel was again so greatly reduced, their God was quite able to increase them, as He did at the first. There is surely a tacit reminder here as well of the *faith* of Abraham and Sarah that brought their blessing (Rom. 4, Heb. 12).

Vs. 4-6 – “*For a law shall proceed from Me*” – The Lord’s forsaken righteous law was the reason for their captivity in Babylon. It was a time to refocus on the cause of their current trouble. It was a time

51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

to “*hearken*” and “*give ear*” to the law of their God. Some shall be judged by the Lord’s arms, and for others, “*on Mine arm shall they trust*”. Always the Lord’s righteous law has the same dual effect on man. Some baptised with the Holy Spirit and some with fire (Matt. 3:11). In some His words combine with faith to their eternal blessing, in others “*not being mixed with faith in them*”, alas, it “*did not profit them*” (Heb. 4:2).

“*My righteousness is near*” – His way is never out of man’s reach, but “*is near*” (46:13), yea “*even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach*” (Rom. 10:8).

Vs. 6 – “*But My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished*” – Though “*heaven and earth pass away*”, with “*all the goodness*” of “*all flesh*” fading and withering with it, yet the Lord’s righteousness expressed in His words

51:7 Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

“shall not pass away”, but “shall stand forever”
(40:6-8; Matt. 24:35).

Vs. 7-8 – *“Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings”* – Listen to the Lord’s words, rather than fearing the words of passing man. Every soul standing in Christ’s righteousness shall be as forever as His righteousness (vs. 6 & 8).

51:9-11 – Prayer for Help

The righteous now call upon the Lord to arise with that strong arm upon which they trust (vs. 5). They cry for deliverance from their captivity as in the Exodus of old. The past deliverances of their God speak as well of His will and ability for present and future help.

Vs. 9 – *“Art Thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?”* – The Hebrew word *“Rahab”*

51:10 *Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep;
that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass
over?*
51:11 *Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with
singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they
shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*
51:12 *I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest
be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be
made as grass;*

means something like arrogance or fierceness. Apparently it's used here as a symbolic name for the nation of Egypt. "*The dragon*" is perhaps a reference to Leviathan, the greatest of sea dinosaurs. As we've before considered (27:1), the creature was untouchable by men but taken out by the Lord (Job 41).

Vs. 10 – "*Art Thou not it which hath dried the sea?*" – Note how the prophet of God did not consider Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea a shallow crossing, as some among the faithless insist, but through "*waters of the great deep*" and "*the depths of the sea*".

51:12-16 – The Lord's Answer

He surely answered their plea (vs. 9-11), but only many decades after it was here first expressed. Time, even beyond the reach of a man's life, is not a matter of concern with the Lord.

51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?
51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.
51:15 But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.
51:16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

Vs. 12-13 – “Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?” – Because the Lord personally stands for our comfort (“I, even I”), He entertains no excuse for any foolish fear of dying men in us. To *fear* the fury of mortals is to *forget* the only One we rightly should fear. To not be awed only with our Creator is a form of rebellion. “Where is the fury of the oppressor?” Where are Assyria, Babylon, and Rome now? How the Lord in His grace desires and seeks our comfort! Those anxious in exile (vs. 14) need to know who is their God (vs. 15), exercising His creative power in the keeping of His people (vs. 16).

51:17-23 – A Call to “Stand Up”

Israel having called upon the Lord repeatedly to “*awake, awake*” to their aid in vs. 9, the Lord now calls upon them to “*awake, awake*” and arise above fretting, fear, and fury.

51:17 *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.*

51:18 *There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.*

51:19 *These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?*

51:20 *Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.*

Vs. 17 – *“Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling”* – Israel had drunk deeply of the Lord’s wrath (*“cup of His fury . . . of trembling”*). Every soul who dares drink from the cup of rebellion shall be made to drink from the bitter cup of trembling.

Vs. 19 – The twin woes of emptiness and ruin had come upon the nation.

Vs. 18 & 20 – *“There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth”* – None among them was strong to trust the Lord through their trial, or to recognize the Lord’s wise designs in it, saying with the Psalmist, *“it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes”* (Ps. 119:71). All were lying down in despair or raging *“as a wild bull in a net”*, serving only to more completely entangle themselves.

51:21 *Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:*
51:22 *Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of*
his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling,
even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:
51:23 *But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said*
to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body
as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.
52:1 *Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful*
garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more
come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.
52:2 *Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose*
thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Vs. 21-23 – “*But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee*” – With His judgment accomplished upon Israel, the Lord would give “*the cup of His fury*” to her oppressors who had used God’s people as if paving stones (47:6). Final Babylon shall be an oppressor of souls as well (Rev. 18:13).

Chapter 52

52:1-6 – Zion’s Final Deliverance

Vs. 1-2 – “*Shake thyself from the dust; arise*” – Israel is encouraged to make preparations to leave, to shake off the dust of mourning, for a day of song and gladness had come. Looking beyond her deliverance from Babylon the prophet’s vision seems to take in Christ’s kingdom, when Jerusalem shall never again be subject to foreign dominion.

52:3 *For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.*
52:4 *For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.*
52:5 *Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.*
52:6 *Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.*

Even so the unsaved soul is called to arise out of sin's bondage. Compare vs. 11. *"The Spirit and the bride say, Come . . . and let him that is athirst come"* (Rev. 22:17).

Vs. 3-5 – *"Ye sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money"* – His people having sold themselves to slavery for nothing, the Lord would pay no price in taking them back.

Vs. 5 – He would take His people back because there was no advantage to Him in leaving them there. Their captors only blasphemed, claiming themselves too big for God, and His captive people only howled to Him of their discontent. Whenever the Lord's people run again to the bondage of sin, they become cause for the world to blaspheme (Rom. 2:23-24). Compare I Timothy 6:1.

52:7-10 – Joy in the Lord's Return

52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

Vs. 7 – *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings”* – Paul applies these words to the carriers of the gospel message in Romans 10:15. The indication is that the deliverance of God’s people from Babylon, with the carriers of that good news, was a foreshadow of the deliverance of redemption in Christ, with its happy heralds. To be such a herald of the good news of the gospel message is a beautiful thing from heaven’s perspective. Does the Lord ever call man’s creations or possessions *“beautiful”*? When shall we align our lives and labours with God’s heart?

“Thy God reigneth” – The good news of Israel’s deliverance from captivity carried this assurance, for in that great event the false gods of idolatry were proven powerless phoneyes and God alone supreme (Col. 2:15). And thus Christ’s victorious return to the ultimate deliverance of His people is pictured as well.

Vs. 8 – *“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice”* – The

52:10 *The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*
52:11 *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*
52:12 *For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.*

“*watchmen*” picture those watching and awaiting the Lord’s return, when at last “*they shall see [Him] eye to eye*”.

Vs. 10 – “*The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations*” – “*All the ends of the earth*” shall meet Him, either in joy or as Judge. John the Baptist applied these words to the salvation Christ brought in His first coming (Lk. 3:6).

52:11-12 – Flight from Bondage

Vs. 11 – “*Depart ye, depart ye . . . go ye out of the midst of her*” – It’s a call to claim the liberty the Lord has made available, leaving behind the pollutions of the world and shedding the defiled grave clothes. Even so liberty from sin’s bondage stands waiting for all who will hear God’s call or command and believe in Jesus to the saving of their soul.

Vs. 12 – “*For the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward*” – This promise of

52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

protection may have been the basis of Ezra's confidence (Ezra 8:21-23, 31).

52:13-15 – Servant Deliverer

Attention now turns to the One who will bring “*so great salvation*”, pictured by all other such earthly deliverances.

Vs. 13 – “*Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently*” – Great emphasis upon His future exaltation (“*shall . . . shall*”). The Lord begins with this foremost in view.

Vs. 14 – “*As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man*” – Here is the contrast of His past (“*were . . . was*”) earthly humiliation. Never was a man so physically abused. Satan's bottled-up rage at God was poured out in the most complete hatred on Christ.

Vs. 15 – “*So shall He sprinkle many nations*” – The

53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

benefits of the Servant's ministry to mankind into the future (back to "*shall . . . shall*"). Many will be cleansed, finding their bitter hearts and words toward Him quite changed. See how Satan's bitter wounding of the Servant was turned by God to the very means of sprinkling the nations.

Chapter 53

The previous chapter ended with a brief discussion of the *Gentile* response to Jesus (52:15). In this chapter we find the response of the *Jewish* nation (an expansion of 52:14).

53:1 – The Prophet's Lament

"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" – This the cry of every godly preacher, for so few ever believe the truth of God or perceive the God of truth (Rom. 10:16). The Jewish nation could not have been more extensively prepared to recognise their Messiah, yet how few even among them? John proclaimed Jewish unbelief the fulfilment of this prophecy in John 12:35.

53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

53:2 – An Unattractive Servant

“He hath no form nor comeliness . . . no beauty that we should desire Him” – It seems Jesus was not physically striking. And He came at the first in weakness (*“tender plant”*), not with glory or presence. He arose from an unlikely, unpromising situation (*“root out of dry ground”*);

- Born of a virgin.
- And of a *poor* virgin.
- And from Galilee, from which no prophet should arise (Jn. 7:52).
- And out of Nazareth, out of which nothing good was expected (Jn. 1:46).
- His entrance without man’s accreditation or celebration.
- No *place* of His own, let alone a *palace*.
- His living only through the giving of others.

Mankind, so impressed by the outward, must rather

53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

be impressed by the inward beauty and worth of Christ. And still He comes in the same way through the gospel, in an unobtrusive manner, with apparent foolishness rather than human impressiveness (I Cor. 1-2).

53:3 – Despised Servant

“He is despised and rejected of men” – Small man looked down on sovereign God. Man turned his face from Messiah in His trouble, thinking Him unworthy of our sacrifice toward His help, while He was in fact making the supreme sacrifice of Himself toward our help!

Never do we read of that *“man of sorrows”* joking or laughing, for He ever carried in His soul the solemn seriousness of man’s sin and need of salvation.

53:4-6 – Smitten Servant

53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

53:7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

Vs. 4-5 – “*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*” – While man assumed Jesus coming to such trouble a measure of His own badness or worthiness of God’s punishment, His afflictions were in fact a measure only of *our own* evil and enmity with God. He was indeed “*smitten of [by] God*”, but not as man mistakenly thought. For God struck Him instead of sinful mankind, as He “*carried our sorrows*” when “*the Lord . . . laid on Him the iniquity of us all*”. It was the Father causing our sin to meet on the Son. And it was the Father striking Him for it in our stead. See how it’s all “*our . . . our . . . our*” sin He was removing and peace for us He was securing. *All for us!*

Vs. 6 – “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way*” – It was our stubborn demand for our own way that put Him there. How desperately careful I should be to never so respond to Him in rebellion again.

53:7 – Silent Servant

53:8 *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

53:9 *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

“As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” – It’s a picture of the Lamb of God, patiently submissive to His Father’s will. He needed not to plead His innocence, for His Father knew and that was enough. Contrast captive Israel, thrashing about *“as a wild bull in a net”* (51:20), so far from this example of meekness left us that we *“should follow His steps”* (I Pet. 2:18-23).

53:8-9 – A Dying Servant

“Who shall declare His generations?” – Death released Him *“from prison and from judgment”* and the resurrection then released Him from the confinement of death and the tomb. Who can declare the untold results of His sacrifice through the following generations?

Vs. 9 – *“And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death”* – Though Jesus died among criminals, His burial was not so, testifying to His innocence. Though called a deceiver, God

53:10 *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
53:11 *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

cleared His Servant of that charge, for there was never a bit of “*deceit in His mouth*” (I Per. 2:22).

53:10-12 – A Living Servant

Vs. 10 – “*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief*” – Again it was the Lord who bruised His Servant. He Himself “*put Him to grief*”, in making “*His soul an offering for sin*”. Yet the prophet predicts the rest of His story. Christ’s resurrection is implied in His prolonged days. Far from being God’s enemy, as man presumed, the Lord’s pleasure only prospers in His righteous Servant.

Vs. 11 – Note the great theological concepts here;

- Propitiation – “*He . . . shall be satisfied*” – The Father is “*satisfied*” in the Son’s sacrifice in our behalf.

Or perhaps this is a reference to Christ’s satisfaction with the results of His suffering

53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

sacrifice in the salvation of souls, the eternal pleasures worth the temporary pains. It's a lesson for us in "*our light affliction, which is but for a moment*", yet working "*for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" (II Cor. 4:17).

- Justification – "*Shall My righteous Servant justify many*" – To know Christ is to be justified or made righteous or right before God (Jn. 17:3).
- Substitutionary Atonement – "*He shall bear their iniquity*" – Jesus as our sin-bearer (vs. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12). Compare the scapegoat of Leviticus 16:20-22, carrying our sin away.

Vs. 12 – "*Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great*" – Rewards for faithful service. Jesus is rewarded, both for His death in humiliation and for His ever living "*to make intercession for*" us. Perhaps there's a reference here to His prayer at the cross for the forgiveness of His persecutors. His dividing "*the spoil with the strong*" perhaps refers to the "*spoil*" of

54:1 *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.*

54:2 *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;*

54:3 *For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*

54:4 *Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.*

54:5 *For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.*

many souls delivered from Satan’s “*power of darkness*” and translated “*into the kingdom of His dear Son*” (Col. 1:13). Compare Christ’s reference to Satan in His illustration of the strong man spoiled in Matthew 12:29.

Chapter 54

Israel’s release from Babylon as a picture of their millennial restoration.

54:1-3 – Unequalled Numerical Growth

“*For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife*” – Israel’s reduction to relatively few, pictured in the barrenness of Sarah at

54:6 *For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*
54:7 *For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*
54:8 *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.*
54:9 *For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.*
54:10 *For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.*

the first (Gal. 4:27), shall be turned to such numbers that her tent must be pressed out on all sides.

54:4 – Shame Forgotten

54:5-10 – Gomer Restored to Her Husband

Vs. 5 – *“For thy Maker is thy husband, the LORD of hosts is His name”* – Here is the turning described by the Lord in Hosea 2:19-20.

Vs. 6-7 – *“For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee”* – Though Israel was forsaken and dispersed, yet she would, and will yet be regathered.

Vs. 8-10 – *“With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee”* – Though for a time the Lord turned

54:11 *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.*
54:12 *And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.*
54:13 *And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*
54:14 *In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.*

away from them in wrath, yet how very *emphatically* He promised a day when His wrath and rebuke would be forever replaced by kindness and mercy.

54:11-17 – Zion, the Glorious

Vs. 11-12 – “*Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires*” – The Lord sets before His people the beauty of a restored Jerusalem in Christ’s Kingdom and beyond. Compare Revelation 21:10ff.

Vs. 13-14 – In righteousness and the knowledge of God shall be her peace. Again, righteousness and peace are the hallmarks of Christ’s kingdom (11:4-9; 9:6-7).

Vs. 15-17 – “*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper*” – No aggressor shall ever be successful against Israel again after Christ’s return. Compare

54:15 *Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.*
54:16 *Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.*
54:17 *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

vs. 15,

“Behold, they shall surely gather together”, with Revelation 20:7-10.

Vs. 17 – None on earth can fairly condemn one whose *“righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD”*. Remember the *“who . . . who . . . who”* of the Lord’s Servant in 50:8-9. All who stand with that righteous Servant share in His eternal exoneration.

“Seek ye the LORD
while He may be found,
call ye upon Him
while He is near”

(Isaiah 55:6)

Class 18 – Isaiah 55-58

55:1 *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

Chapter 55

55:1-13 – God’s Salvation

Vs. 1-3 – “*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*” – Here is God’s great invitation of grace to His salvation. Note some aspects of this invitation;

- Not subtle, but shouting (“*Ho*”, like “hear ye!”). As Wisdom crying “*in the chief place of concourse*” (Prov. 1:20).
- Thrown open to “*every one*”.
- Yet available only for one “*that thirsteth*”. Thus an offer that passes right by those quite happy with the world or their own brand of self-righteousness, with no yearning for true peace with God.
- Four times commanded (“*come . . . come . . . come . . . come*”). How earnestly God bids man

55:2 *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*
55:3 *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

to come unto Him and receive what is only for his eternal blessing (45:22).

Jesus Himself is the living water flowing from the struck rock, from which if a thirsting soul should drink he *“shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”* (Jn. 4:14). Jesus referred these words to Himself in John 7:37, *“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink”*. As well Christ’s *“flesh is meat indeed”* and His *“blood is drink indeed”* (Jn. 6:55). All who *“eat of this bread . . . shall live forever”* (Jn. 6:51).

See how God’s grace only grows and abounds, exchanging His offer of mere water to *“wine and milk”*, and then further to the eating of what’s *“good”* and delighting *“in fatness”* (vs. 2). And all as a free gift, given *“without money and without price”*. The price for all the Lord offers has already been paid with *“the precious blood of Christ”* shed in our behalf (I Pet. 1:19).

55:4 *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.*

55:5 *Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.*

Vs. 2 – “*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?*” – The Lord scorns human pursuits, as expensive as they are unsatisfying. This world offers no true food for the soul, nothing that really satisfies.

Vs. 2-3 – “*Hearken diligently unto Me . . . incline your ear . . . hear*” – His most earnest plea is for man’s ear. The starting point for a soul’s salvation is to recognize our need and finally begin to really listen to God’s words.

Vs. 3 – “*I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David*” – Those receiving Jesus will find the Lord good for the same promise of mercy David received, in everlasting relation to God in the new covenant.

Vs. 4-5 – “*Behold, I have given him for . . . a leader and commander to the people*” – The focus seems to run beyond David to his Messiah descendant. Jesus is the Captain of salvation taking a spoil from Satan’s domain (53:12) among all nations.

55:6 *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:*

55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

55:9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Vs. 6-7 – “*Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*” – A call to the unsaved. Consider the great promise in the Lord’s mercy and pardon available still to the one who will “*seek . . . call . . . forsake . . . return unto the LORD*”. Note in this picture of repentance that the purge must penetrate beyond our “*ways*” to our “*thoughts*” (vs. 7). Consider the threat in these words “*while He may be found*” and “*while He is near*”. It will not always be so, for the Lord has warned, “*My Spirit shall not always strive with man*” (Gen. 6:3). Wisdom’s sound advice? Do not dare allow the opportunity to be put right with God to pass you by. Yet even in these phrases there is wonderful promise, that the Lord “*is near*” and that He “*may be found*” by every sincere seeker.

As well don’t miss the abundance of the Lord’s available pardon in vs. 7. Literally “He will multiply to pardon”.

55:10 *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:*
55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*
55:12 *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

Vs.8-9 – *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways”* – The thoughts and ways of the God of salvation are as distinct from man’s as the heaven is above the earth.

Vs. 10-11 – *“So shall My word . . . not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish”* – The means of salvation. The Lord sends His words as He sends the rain, for the benefit of man. *“It”* (God’s Word), as a seed, has power in itself to *“accomplish”* and *“prosper”* as a capable messenger. Compare the *living* seed of God’s Word in I Peter 1:23 & Hebrews 4:12.

Vs. 12-13 – The results of salvation.

Vs. 12 – *“For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace”* – *“Go out”* and *“led forth”* picture the Lord’s deliverance from captivity, whether from earthly or spiritual bondage. The Lord sends His

55:13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Word (vs. 11) to accomplish His work of deliverance. Therefore we have no business adjusting or holding back His words. Joy, peace, singing, and clapping are the happy results of God's salvation.

Vs. 13 – *“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree”* – God's curse on the earth (Gen. 3:17-18) will at last be turned. This to be fulfilled in Christ's coming kingdom.

Chapter 56

56:1-8 – Blessing upon the Righteous

Vs. 1 – *“My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed”* – God puts His salvation together with His righteousness, for salvation is only in God's righteousness received. Paul rejoiced in the gospel of salvation by faith in the promise of God, *“for therein is the righteousness of God revealed”* (Rom. 1:17).

56:2 *Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.*
56:3 *Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.*
56:4 *For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;*

Vs. 2 – “*Blessed is the man that doeth this . . . that keepeth . . . and keepeth*” – Every soul “*that layeth hold on*” God’s righteousness by faith will follow in right living.

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On the Side

Sabbath-keeping was an ordinance for Israel, not for the N.T. church. Compare passages such as Exodus 31:12-17 & Ezekiel 20:12 (context is specifically Israel). Sabbath-keeping is not made an issue in the epistles to the churches. The concept of Sabbath rest is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, in whom we entered our rest (Sabbath) at the moment of salvation. “*For we which have believed do enter into rest*” (Heb. 4:3).

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Vs. 3-8 – Gleanings from among the Gentiles. Here are words of encouragement now to those who might

56:5 *Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.*
 56:6 *Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;*
 56:7 *Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*

consider themselves lesser citizens among the Lord's people. All who *"choose the things that please"* the Lord have *"a place and a name"* in His house.

Vs. 6 – *"To serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants"* – Note how the phrase *"to love the name of the Lord"* is sandwiched between two dealing with service. To love the Lord is to serve the Lord. True love for Him will not be idle.

Vs. 8 – *"The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others"* – This gathering of *"others to Him"* began in earnest in Acts 13. Compare Christ's parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-10.

56:9-12 – Cursing upon the Unrighteous

The tone suddenly turns now to rebuke, as the Lord

56:8 *The Lord GOD, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.*
56:9 *All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.*
56:10 *His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*
56:11 *Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.*

displays attitudes and actions leading to captivity.

Vs. 9 – *“All ye beasts of the field, come to devour”* – The Lord calls all carnivores to a feast. This is a common prophetic image of Armageddon’s outcome (Jer. 12:9; Ezek. 39:17-20; Zeph. 1:7; Rev. 19:17-18).

Vs. 10-12 – *“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant”* – The centre of the problem was *“His watchmen”*, speaking of the prophets and other spiritual leaders of Israel. Their work it was to protect the Lord’s flock through their vigilance from the wild beasts of false shepherds and prophets and teachings. Yet these had become carelessly blind to danger. The application is to the spiritual leaders of Christ’s day as well, whom the Lord called *“blind guides”* (Matt. 23:16-26). They were as;

- Blind watchmen, who could not see the danger.

56:12 *Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*

- Dumb watchdogs, who could not sound the alarm.
- Guards sleeping on their watch.

Vs. 11 – *“Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough”* – They were selfish and greedy, while true *“love seeketh not its own”*.

Vs. 12 – *“Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink”* – They were given to drink, and were careless and confident of tomorrow.

It’s a sorry picture of spiritual leadership! Where are the shepherds so genuinely concerned with the welfare of the sheep that they’re willing to spend their lives for them? Where the Timothys *“who will naturally care for”* the state of God’s flock?

Chapter 57

Isaiah continues to express in this chapter the desperate spiritual condition of his people.

57:1 *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*
57:2 *He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.*
57:3 *But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.*
57:4 *Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood.*

57:1-2 – Righteous Removed

“The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace” – Before His wrath fell the Lord removed His own, perhaps in death.

- In mercy to them, that they be called to rest and spared the scenes of horror to come.
- In wrath toward the wicked, that their decay and slide to judgment in the absence of the salt might be all the more sharp.

As Matthew Henry put it, “It is a sign that God intends war when He calls home His ambassadors”. This a foreshadow of the rapture of the church before God’s judgment poured out in the Great Tribulation.

57:3-13 – Unrighteous Rebuked

Vs. 3 – *“But draw near hither, ye sons of the*

57:5 *Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?*
 57:6 *Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?*
 57:7 *Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.*
 57:8 *Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.*

sorceress” – The Lord calls the unsaved to gather for His reproof. “Sorceress” and “*whore*” are terms reminiscent of Babylon (Rev. 17).

Vs. 4 – “*Against whom do ye sport yourselves?*” – They despised and mocked the godly, when they themselves were the “*children of transgression*”. The Lord’s repeated question, “*against whom?*” is freighted with menace, for to mock the ambassador is to scorn the Lord who sent him (Acts 9:5).

Vs. 5-8 – “*Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree*” – The Lord again exposed their infatuation with idolatry.

Vs. 5 – They were offering their children in sacrifice to their idols.

Vs. 9 – “*And thou wentest to the king with ointment*”

57:9 *And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.*

57:10 *Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.*

57:11 *And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?*

– The Lord exposed their faithless alliances with the world.

Vs. 10 – *“Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope”* – Though they found no help or rest in their way, yet they would never come to acknowledge the hopelessness of it. Here is the world without Jesus, wearied and heavy laden with their way, spurning Christ’s offer of “rest” to all who would simply *“come unto Me”* (Matt. 11:28). There is no settled, hopeful rest outside of God’s way (vs. 20-21). As with the question in 44:20, before man finally looks above, he must look honestly at what he really has here below.

Vs. 11 – *“Have not I held My peace even of old, and thou fearest Me not?”* – The Lord had quietly allowed them to exchange fears.

Vs. 12 – *“I will declare thy righteousness and thy*

57:12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

57:13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

57:14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

works” – The Lord vowed to expose their false, useless righteousness.

Vs. 13 – “*When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee*” – All things (idols and alliances) replacing confidence in the Lord will blow away like the chaff that they are. As the Lord’s words to His people in Judges 10:14, when oppressed by Philistia and Ammon, “*Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*” A god proves his worth in trouble.

57:14-19 – The Lord, and Those Who Trust Him

Vs. 14 – “*Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people*” – The Lord is sovereign. Every seeming impossibility falls before “*the high and lofty*” God of the impossible, as He works His purposes. Here is a picture of captives released, with every obstacle to fulfilment removed.

57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

57:16 *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.*

57:17 *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.*

57:18 *I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.*

Vs. 15 – *“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit”* – The Lord both *transcends* and *condescends*. He is *“high and lofty”* and dwells on high, yet He dwells *“with”* the lowly among men. He is lofty and yet loving. In grace He desires to dwell with and revive the humble and repentant.

Vs. 16 – Though moved to wrath through our sin, the Lord leans toward mercy.

Vs. 17 – The Lord is just in His wrath against covetous, perverse (*“froward”*) man.

Vs. 18 – *“I have seen his ways, and will heal him”* – The Lord is willing and able to heal and restore, even though He has fully *“seen his [man’s] ways”*. He knows our evil, yet still He desires our best. Coming off vs. 17 we might expect vs. 18 to be much darker

57:19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.
57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

than this blessed wish for man's comforts. How compassionate the Lord is to so desire to comfort man in his mournful state. It's part of His ways and thoughts higher than ours (55:8-9).

Vs. 19 – *“Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near”* – The Lord's way is perfect peace. This both in our *“peace with God”* (Rom. 5:1) in restored relation to Him, and in *“the peace of God”* (Phil. 4:7) in wonderful serenity of heart in Christ.

Paul used this verse in Ephesians 2:17 to speak of both Jew and Gentile reconciled *“unto God in one body”*.

Hebrews 13:15 explains *“the fruit of our lips”* as praise and *“giving thanks to His name”*.

57:20-21 – Those Who Will Not Trust

“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” – Compare Jude's troubled picture of the godless as

58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

“raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame” and “wandering stars” (vs.13). Though the unsaved and false religionists may seem to be at peace, “there is no peace, saith my God”. Every faithless soul carries a troubling weight of sin and guilt on his conscience. Such a one has no settled assurance concerning eternity. The awareness of this fact God “hath set . . . in their heart” (Eccl. 3:11).

Chapter 58

58:1-2 – Preach to the Hypocrite

Vs. 1 – *“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet”* – Isaiah is bidden by the Lord to expose the sins of his people, loudly and without sparing.

- There is need to pointedly “*show*” a man his sin, though we may think him quite aware of it already.
- There is need to do so in earnest (“*cry aloud . . . like a trumpet*”), pressing the issue, bringing every influence to bear.
- There is need to go straight to the point,

58:2 *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.*
58:3 *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.*

without undue softening or hedging (“*spare not*”).

- There is need to not fear making enemies or permanent wounds.

Vs. 2 – “*Yet ye seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways*” – While continuing in their sin they hypocritically continued in their outward devotion to the Lord, looking for all the world like 1st class God-lovers. From the smile on their face (“*delight*”) in church to their seeming earnestness in Bible study they look like the genuine article. But their refusal of sin’s removal exposed their hate for true holiness. The same is true today. True revival hates and deals appropriately and thoroughly with sin!

58:3-7 – Wrong and Right Fasting

Vs. 3 – “*Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not?*” – They dared to scold the Lord for not taking their good deeds into account. Compare

58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

Cain's proud anger at the Lord's refusal of his sacrifice (Gen. 4). Compare the arrogant rage of the Pharisees at Christ's refusal of their outward righteousness. Exemplary life without true humility of heart before the Lord is not what He's looking for. Yet how proud hearts take pride in outward religious deeds. Compare the Pharisee boastfully back-patting himself before the Lord in Luke 18:12. They assume the Lord will take kind notice of their performance, and are angered at the suggestion that He does not. Understand when people begin to recite their good deeds list that they are exposing the *basis* of their confidence that God accepts them.

The Lord exposed wrong and right fasting. Wrong fasting is to fast while,

- Continuing in inappropriate pleasures (vs. 3).
- Continuing in unsettled strife, maintaining bitter feelings toward wrong in others instead of acknowledging their own wrong (vs. 4; Matt. 5:23-24). It seems this was coming even to fast day fist fights (smiting *"with the fist of*

58:5 *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?*
 58:6 *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*
 58:7 *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

wickedness”).

- Not actually fasting for the Lord, but for men to see. Compare Christ’s instructions for “*when ye fast*” in Matthew 6:16-18. Compare the Lord’s searching query in Zechariah 7:4.

Vs. 5 – “*Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?*” – Do you call this a proper fast? God’s idea of a proper fast is “*a day for a man to afflict his soul*” in repentance for sin.

Vs. 6-7 – “*Is not this the fast that I have chosen?*” – One who will be heard by the Lord for his fasting will;

- Despise and undo all oppressive dealings with others.
- Feed the hungry.
- Shelter the poor.

58:8 *Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.*
58:9 *Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;*
58:10 *And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:*
58:11 *And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drougt, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.*

- Clothe the naked.
- Not hide kindness from our fellow man.

It's a picture of basic compassion. Compare James' comments on pure and undefiled religion in James 1:27. All religion without a right heart is rejected by the Lord.

58:8-14 – Blessing upon the Righteous

Vs. 8 & 10 – *“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily”* – All *“light”* and *“health”* and *“glory”* for the one living right before the Lord.

Vs. 9 – *“Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer”* – A hearing ear in heaven they have.

58:12 *And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.*
58:13 *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:*
58:14 *Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

Vs. 11 – *“The LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought”* – The Lord’s guidance, satisfaction, and abundance is theirs.

Vs. 12 – *“Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations”* – Restoration and success will extend even into following generations.

Vs. 13-14 – Success upon those keeping the Sabbath. To delight in the keeping of the Sabbath was to show trust and delight in the Lord. For this step of obedience the Lord would send His blessing.

Class 19 – Isaiah 59-62

59:1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Chapter 59

The last chapter began with a moan from those offended that the Lord paid no credits for their religious practices (58:3). The Lord then began to explain why their religiosity got nowhere with Him, and what kind of a soul He would regard with pleasure. He continues on that theme, exposing why men are not heard and delivered.

59:1-8 – Not Inability but Unrighteousness

Vs. 1 – *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save”* – At every point the Lord is as able and willing to hear and help as always. He ever delights in the prayer of the upright (Prov. 15:8). And such prayer from such a source always avails much (James 5:16). Remember Hezekiah’s good success in prayer in chapters 37 & 38. The problem is never on God’s side.

59:3 *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.*
59:4 *None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity,
and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.*

Vs. 2 – *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God”* – It is the iniquity of man that stands in the way as a brick wall, separating man from God’s benefits. Not that the Lord is deaf to our words, but that we are deaf to His! In the terror of the Lord’s judgment upon Judah’s stubborn sin Jeremiah pictured the Lord covered with a cloud so *“that our prayer shall not pass through”* (Lam. 3:44). Though the Psalmist understood that *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”* (Ps. 66:18), yet in the rightness of his way he could gladly proclaim, *“but verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer”* (vs. 19). Solomon took it a fearful step further in Proverbs 28:9, stating that the prayer of the law despiser is an abomination to the Lord. Such is the barrier sin thrusts *“between you and your God”*, causing Him to turn His face and refuse all efforts to speak with Him.

Vs. 3-8 – A graphic image of the baseness of our sin.

Vs. 3 – *“Hands . . . fingers . . . lips . . . tongue”* all given to defilement and deception.

59:5 *They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.*
59:6 *Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.*

Vs. 4 – *“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth”* – No real interest in what is right and true. Behold the reflection of the modern church, no longer concerned or courageous enough to plead for what is true. They were trusting in empty things, following *“after the east wind”* (Hos. 12:1). They were inwardly conceiving evil as they linger long on lust, devising how to give birth to iniquity, and quite willing to lie in the doing of it. Compare lust conceiving and giving birth to sin in James 1:15.

Vs. 5 – *“They hatch cockatrice’ eggs, and weave the spider’s web”* – Their evil ways were like the hatching of venomous snakes or the laying of snares. All within their reach were in danger of snakebite.

Vs. 6 – *“Neither shall they cover themselves with their works”* – Their webs of deception are no adequate covering from the One who sees all.

Vs. 7 – *“Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood”* – They *“run”* and *“make haste”*,

59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

59:8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

59:9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

as if hungry and anxious for evil, as if quite experienced in it, and utterly without conscience. See how wicked thoughts (vs. 14) now give birth to wicked, wasted ways. Compare God's hate list in Proverbs 6:17-19. Compare Paul's Romans 3 argument for God's just condemnation of man (vs. 15-17).

Vs. 8 – *“The way of peace they know not”* – For *“there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked”* (57:21), both to leaders and followers. Choosing gratification over true satisfaction, such souls are clueless how to find true and lasting peace.

59:9-15 – Answer in Confession

If unrighteousness is the issue, confession is the answer. See here how 3rd person now shifts to 1st person, Isaiah again including himself with his unclean people (6:5). Mingled here with awareness

59:10 *We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.*
59:11 *We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.*
59:12 *For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;*
59:13 *In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.*

of the dark conditions brought by sin (vs. 9-11, 15) is a proper acknowledging of sinfulness (vs. 12-14). A man must “come to himself” (Lk. 15:17), to an honest assessment of himself and his condition before the Lord, before he can come in sincere confession. Compare 57:10 & 44:20.

Vs. 9-10 – “*We wait for light, but behold obscurity*” – They recognized their complete helplessness to handle the dark dungeon into which sin had deposited them. “*The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble*” (Prov. 4:19). The one who has rejected the light, refusing to come to it, must finally recognize that he has no light of his own.

Vs. 11-13 – “*For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us*” – Here is

59:14 *And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off:
for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.*

the anguish of sin's burden and consequences finally felt and freely expressed. As David at last acknowledging *"my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"* (Ps. 32:5). And *"if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (I Jn. 1:9).

Vs. 14 – *"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off"* – Proper shame acknowledges that our evil is not only a matter of the promotion of sin, but the demotion of God's *"judgment . . . justice . . . truth"*.

"Truth is fallen in the street" – Even so in our day, truth is no longer standing out in the street, with none daring to help set it back up. It's quite fashionable to consider truth to be whatever any man deems to be right in his own eyes. Thus a man and his personal opinions are esteemed of greater authority than truth and He who is truth. When truth (as God defines it) is fallen, that which is right or straight cannot find entrance into society.

59:15 *Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.*
59:16 *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.*

Vs. 15 – “*He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*” – The world will always place the one who dares to resist the common godless current as the target of their attack (“*a prey*”). Interesting the marginal note in my Bible suggesting the reading that the one departing from evil “is accounted mad”. They will freely use terms like “insane” or “bigot” or “ignorant”. Yet it’s the *Lord’s* smile we seek as we boldly stand for truth and justice.

59:16-21 – God Arises to Rescue

Vs. 16 – “*And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor*” – The Lord found all men either too wicked or too weak to faithfully stand in the gap for Him. He looked and was amazed that none met Him, as Abigail with David, to plead for the fool and seek to appease the Lord’s righteous wrath. Our fault is not only our evil, but our apathy towards our evil and that of others. Though we must always remember that our concern for the sin of others must never exceed our concern

59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

59:18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

for our own sin. Here is the spirit of the Lord's words in Matthew 7:1-5.

The Lord could find nothing in man to warrant his salvation, yet in grace He brought it anyway, making available to man His own sustaining righteousness by faith.

Vs. 17-19 – *“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate”* – The Lord girded Himself in His heavenly armour and went to battle for a spoil of souls from the evil one. Compare 53:12. We too are to wear the same armour, fighting this same ongoing battle in seeking a spoil for the Lord from the kingdom of darkness (Eph. 6).

Vs. 20 – *“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion”* – Jesus Christ, our Kinsman Redeemer, came and will come again to Zion. And He comes to all who repent (*“turn”*) and seek cleansing from sin in Him.

59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Vs. 21 – “As for Me, this in My covenant with them, saith the LORD” – Don’t miss the association between the Spirit and the Word. When the Spirit is within a soul in fullness, the Lord’s words will be in the mouth. Note the parallel between Ephesians 5:18ff and Colossians 3:16ff. Any “ministry” tending to diminish the words of God while exalting the Spirit, is promoting a spirit other than the Holy One! Compare Acts 1:8.

Chapter 60

Here now are the results of the Lord arising to confront the powers of darkness. We find in this chapter a picture of man’s salvation;

- Fulfilled partially in Israel’s deliverance from Babylon.
- Fulfilled further in eternal deliverance from the bondage of sin brought with Christ’s 1st coming.

60:1 *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*
60:2 *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*
60:3 *And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*
60:4 *Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.*

- Fulfilled further in Christ's 2nd coming to His Millennial Kingdom.
- Fulfilled finally in the new heavens, earth, and Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22.

60:1-2 – Call for Response

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee” – Allow yourself to be enlightened by *“the true Light”* (Jn. 1:9) who has come. Reject Him no more! Though the world remains in *“gross darkness”*, yet you arise with the risen Lord of glory and let *“His glory . . . be seen upon thee”*, in His pure character evident within.

60:3-17 – Nations Come

Vs. 3 – *“And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light”* – As we allow to be seen in us the light of Christ's love and

60:5 *Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.*
60:6 *The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.*
60:7 *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.*
60:8 *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*
60:9 *Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.*

patience and pure hatred for all that is evil, He will draw all men to Himself.

Vs. 4-5 – *“Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side”* – The remnant of Israel shall be gathered from afar at last, and with a right heart of fear.

Vs. 5-9 – *“The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee”* – As the Queen of Sheba with King Solomon and the wise men from the east with Jesus, even so the Gentiles will joyfully bring of their wealth to the Lord in His earthly kingdom. Not in forced tribute, but as free-will offerings.

Vs. 10 – *“The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls”* – The saved among the Gentiles will join in

60:10 *And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.*

60:11 *Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.*

60:12 *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.*

60:13 *The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.*

60:14 *The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*

restoring Jerusalem to a city of splendour. And this not because Israel is worthy, but because her God is merciful.

Vs. 11 – *“Thy gates shall be open continually”* – An indication of peace, without fear of violence in that day (vs. 18). Compare the open gates of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:15.

Vs. 12 – *“The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish”* – The uncooperative will be dealt with firmly, the Lord ruling then *“with a rod of iron”*. Compare Zechariah 14:16-19.

Vs. 14-15 – *“All they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet”* – Though

60:15 *Whereas thou has been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.*

60:16 *Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.*

60:17 *For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.*

Jerusalem has at times throughout history been destroyed, deserted, and despised, yet from the days of Christ's earthly reign;

- *"Eternal excellency"* will be her portion.
- Her names shall be *"the city of the LORD"* and *"the Zion of the Holy One of Israel"* (vs. 14).
- Her walls shall be called *"Salvation"* (vs. 18).
- And they shall call her *"gates Praise"*.

Everything shall then be restored, with redemption, resident Redeemer, riches, and reputation.

Vs. 16 – *"Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles"*
– Sucking the milk is an image of the Lord's benefits to Israel through the wealth of willing Gentiles in that day. And this wealth shall at last be understood by them as benefits from above.

60:18 *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.*

60:19 *The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.*

60:20 *Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

Vs. 17 – Supreme wealth will be the order of the day, and peace and righteousness will be the way of all leadership.

60:18-22 – Other Kingdom Conditions

Vs. 18 – *“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land”* – There will be no violent crime at all in Christ’s kingdom.

Vs. 19-20 – *“The sun shall be no more thy light by day”* – Sun and moon will be replaced by the *“everlasting light”* of God’s glory. And no more the temptation to worship such heavenly bodies. The Lord takes away what man abuses. Compare again the same details in the New Heavens, Earth, and Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23 & 22:5).

“The days of thy mourning shall be ended” – All sorrow, crying, and pain a thing of the past (Rev.

60:21 *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*

60:22 *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.*

61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

21:4).

Vs. 21 – *“Thy people also shall be all righteous”* – A righteous people. And this happy inheritance to them of eternal righteousness shall be all of grace, being all *“the work of My hands”*. And all that the Lord *“might be glorified”*.

Vs. 22 – A multiplied people.

Maranatha! Even so come Lord Jesus!

Chapter 61

A vision of Messiah’s 1st coming mingled together with His 2nd coming.

61:1-3 – Christ’s Purpose in Coming

Vs. 1 – *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me”* – Note

all three Persons of the Trinity in this first line, all working together with greatest focus on the greatest work of man's redemption. And again, we see Jesus equipped with the Spirit for the work to which He was appointed and sent (11:2; 50:4; Matt. 3:16). The Lord does not fail to equip those He sends.

“The LORD hath anointed Me” – The Hebrew verb translated “anointed” is *mashah*, from which comes the noun *mashiah* or Messiah, meaning “anointed one”. Kings, priests, and prophets were all anointed to their office.

Don't miss the work to which Messiah came. He was a *preacher*! It is the work of the greatest who ever lived! It is the very greatest work to which any man can be called.

Christ's purpose in coming was ever to bring benefit and comfort through deliverance and healing from sin's bondage and bruising. Through our sin we have robbed God of the glory due unto His name, and thus are held captive under the curse of God's offended law until full payment is made. Having no means to pay, and every kinsman who might serve as redeemer held fast in the same bondage, man's outlook is hopeless. To this darkness the light of Christ has shone. For He has made full payment in our behalf

61:2 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*
61:3 *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

for the debt of sin we owed. The court of heaven was thus satisfied, and fullest release provided to all who believe His Word and take advantage of His provision, bringing eternal peace and comfort to every redeemed soul.

Cyrus can be seen in the foreground of this vision, for he too was anointed to “*proclaim liberty to the captives*” in Babylon (45:1-3). This a foreshadow of the deliverance Jesus Christ brings.

Vs. 1-2 – Jesus gave the meaning of these verses when He read in the Nazareth synagogue as He began His great Galilean ministry (Lk. 4:16-21). He read only up to “*the acceptable year of the LORD*” (vs. 2), stopped in mid-sentence, closed the book, and claimed Himself the fulfilment of it. His coming in “*the day of vengeance*” and final “*comfort to all that mourn*” speaks of His 2nd coming. He knew of His coming rejection, death, resurrection, ascension, and eventual return even as He began His earthly work.

61:4 *And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.*
61:5 *And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.*
61:6 *But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.*
61:7 *For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.*

Vs. 3 – *“To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning”* – A vision of soul and millennial restoration, and a testimony to God’s ability in our every loss.

61:4-9 – Millennial Blessings

Vs. 4-5 – *“They shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations”* – Restoration of Israel’s cities and relations with all men.

Vs. 6 – *“But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD”* – In Christ’s kingdom the Jewish people shall receive appointment to spiritual leadership and a sharing of wealth. The church of this current age has received the firstfruits of this appointment, becoming a *“royal priesthood”* (I Pet. 2:9).

Vs. 7 – *“Everlasting joy shall be unto them”* – Ruin to

61:8 *For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*

61:9 *And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.*

61:10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

61:11 *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

rejoicing, and doubly so.

Vs. 9 – *“All . . . shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed”* – Though once despised (60:15), and though for long centuries so obviously cursed, yet the redeemed remnant of the Jewish nation shall be known by all in that day as those He has blessed.

61:10-11 – Rejoicing Remnant

Vs. 10 – *“For He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation”* – God has beautified the redeemed with His own sustaining righteousness (59:16), as if a garment. The surpassing joy of such clothing is pictured in a happy couple adorned for their marriage.

62:1 *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

62:2 *And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*

62:3 *Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.*

Vs. 11 – *“The Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth”* – A summary of the blessing of Christ’s kingdom. Every heart will sprout righteousness and praise as naturally as fertile ground sends up grass.

Chapter 62

62:1-5 – God’s Purposes for His People

Vs. 1 – *“For Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest”* – The Lord has vowed to not relent, to not rest until righteousness and salvation shine forth from Jerusalem.

Vs. 2 – *“Thou shalt be called by a new name”* – A new name to match the restored honour of His people in that coming day (60:15; 61:6).

Vs. 3 – *“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory . . . a royal*

62:4 *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*
62:5 *For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*
62:6 *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,*
62:7 *And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

diadem” – The people of Israel shall be cherished not only by the nations, but by the Lord. Israel, as the Lord’s crown, will be a living testimony of the way, wisdom, and wonder of He who so gloriously restored them at last to perfect righteousness.

Vs. 4-5 – *“Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken”* – That people whom the Lord forsook and left deserted shall happily become His delight (*“Hephzibah”* meaning “my delight in her”) as if fully restored to marital union (*“Beulah”* means “married”). Compare in Hosea 1:9-10 where Loammi (“not My people”) shall later be called *“the sons of the living God”*. Compare Hosea 2:14-20.

62:6-7 – Unsilent Watchmen

“Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence”
– All who belong to the Lord are to tirelessly labour

62:8 *The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:*

62:9 *But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.*

62:10 *Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.*

and long for that coming day of kingdom blessing. We are to proclaim Him as relentlessly as we pray to Him, *“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”*

62:8-9 – No More Invaders

“Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies” – As the Lord vowed never to again destroy the earth with a flood, so He will vow never again to ruin Israel through foreign invasion when Christ returns to His kingdom.

62:10-12 – Lord on His Way

Vs. 10-11 – *“Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh”* – As if the urgent call has gone out that the Lord is even now on His way, requiring great preparations in making ready the way before Him.

62:11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

62:12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

Vs. 12 – More names for the people and city of the Lord;

- People – “*The holy people*” (compare “*a holy nation*”, I Peter 2:9) and “*The redeemed of the LORD*”.
- Jerusalem – “*Sought out*” and “*A city not forsaken*”.

Matthew seems to combine a portion of this verse with Zechariah 9:9 in expressing the meaning of Christ’s Triumphal Entry (Matt. 21:4-5). Christ was and is the salvation of Israel coming to them, if only they would recognize and acknowledge Him.

“But we are all
as an unclean thing,
and all our righteousnesses
are as filthy rags;
and we all do fade as a leaf;
and our iniquities, like the wind,
have taken us away”

(Isaiah 64:6)

Class 20 – Isaiah 63-66

63:1 *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?
this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his
strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*

63:2 *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that
treadeth in the winefat?*

Chapter 63

We came out the end of chapter 62 with announcement as if the Lord is even now on His way (vs. 10-12) bringing deliverance to His people. Chapter 63 now opens with a scene of Christ's return.

63:1-6 – Christ's Return to Armageddon

Vs. 1-2 – “*Who is this that cometh from Edom?*” – Two questions are asked of this one striding forth “*in the greatness of His strength*”, coming up with glory from Edom;

- Who is this?
- Why are your clothes red?

The answer clearly is Jesus Christ, wearing clothes

63:3 *I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*

63:4 *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

63:5 *And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.*

“dipped in blood” (Rev. 19:13), the blood of His enemies in His return.

Vs. 3 – *“I have trodden the winepress alone”* – He returns to crush His enemies as if squashing grapes in a wine vat. Compare the similar figure of *“the great winepress of the wrath of God”* in Revelation 14:19-20. The abundance of the 1st person (*“I”, “My”*) in vs. 3-6 highlights the Lord’s very personal role in coming to execute His wrath. He comes *“mighty to save”* (vs. 1), fully able to effect the complete deliverance of His people. He will not come this time as sufferer, but as sovereign avenger. And His return will bring both rescue and ruin, for it will be both *“the day of vengeance”* and *“the year of My redeemed”* (vs. 4). He will come with as much zeal to avenge His enemies and those of His people, as He comes eager to save His own. N.B. – *The day is on God’s calendar!!*

63:6 *And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.*
63:7 *I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.*
63:8 *For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.*

Vs. 5 – *“I looked, and there was none to help”* – Again the Lord wondered at the great absence of like-minded souls among men (Isa. 59:16).

Vs. 6 – *“I will tread down the people in Mine anger”* – Continuing the wine press theme, the Lord will completely reduce the strength of His enemies at the last.

63:7-14 – Remembrance of Lovingkindness

Vs. 7 – *“I will mention the lovingkindness of the LORD”* – Isaiah now ponders God’s *“great goodness”* toward His people. Consider how the calm, rightness of heart shining through these verses cannot dawn until God’s stormy wrath (previous verses) has put down all wrong. Isaiah 34 must precede chapter 35. The tragic ruin of the Flood must precede that image of the dove of peace. Sin must first be dealt with if there would be true serenity.

63:9 *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*
63:10 *But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.*
63:11 *Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?*

Vs. 8 – “*Children that will not lie*” – And this because they are God’s children, rather than lying children of the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).

Vs. 9 – “*In all their affliction He was afflicted*” – The Lord is never disconnected from the suffering of His people. He pities His own in their distress, moving His kind heart to their help. He reacts to their pain as if it were His own. And those who afflict His children trouble *Him*, making themselves *His* enemy. Compare the Lord’s words to Saul before his turning in Acts 9:4, “*Why persecutest thou Me?*”

Vs. 10 – “*But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit*” – It is man’s own rebellion that turns his greatest Friend to be the very worst of enemies. How unspeakably blessed the soul who knows the Lord for a Friend! Woe to the one who knows Him only for an enemy!

63:12 *That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm,
dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?*
63:13 *That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they
should not stumble?*
63:14 *As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused
him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious
name.*

Vs. 11-14 – *“Then he remembered the days of old”* – As the prodigal in the pigpen, the backslidden soul recalls what great kindness and deliverance he had with the Lord when His friend. He remembers God’s good guidance through godly leadership, the fullness of His Spirit within, and the joy of seeing every obstacle removed before him. It’s the same tenderness Hosea describes (Hos. 11:1-4), with the Lord taking His people by the arms in a fatherly manner and drawing them with cords of love. A man is a colossal fool to reject such a Friend, choosing rather the kind of enemy the Lord becomes to those rejecting Him.

63:15-19 – Prayer of the Punished

“Look down from heaven, and behold” – The prayer of complaint begun here continues to the end of chapter 64. Though God’s people, through their stubborn rebellion, were in no position to make any such appeal, yet the Lord has kept this prayer in His

63:15 *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?*
63:16 *Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.*

eternal Book, even as He stores our tears in His bottle (Ps. 56:8).

Vs. 15 – “*The sounding of Thy bowels*” refers to the Lord’s multiplied compassions.

Vs. 16 – “*Thou, O LORD art our Father, our Redeemer*” – They acknowledged themselves a far cry from their faithful forefathers, yet still they plead their relation to God. Compare Hosea’s contrast of these people with the faithful ambition of Jacob (Hos. 12:3-5).

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On the Side

Don’t miss the fact that though mention is made of human forefathers, their appeal in their time of need was not to such ancestors who could not help, but only to their heavenly Father. God never sanctions trust or prayer or appeal to the souls of dead people, great though they may have been in life. He seems rather to imply here that the dead are unaware of the

63:17 *O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.*

63:18 *The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.*

63:19 *We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.*

plight and pleas of the living (Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:5). It is never appropriate to combine ancestor worship or “saint” worship with the true worship of God.

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Vs. 17 – “*O LORD, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy way?*” – They lament the Lord’s work of hardening and His removal of the Spirit, asking “*why*” with perhaps an accusatory tone. They wouldn’t have to look very far to find the answer, yet it’s commendable that they recognized and mourned their lack of His gracious work in them. Remember that Isaiah’s commission from the beginning was to bring God’s hardening upon his people through the preaching of the Word (6:9-10), and so to prepare them for destruction (6:11-12).

Vs. 17-19 – The basis of their plea;

- They are God’s servants (vs. 17).
- They are God’s inheritance (vs. 17).

64:1 *Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down,
that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,*

- They are a people of God's holiness (vs. 18).
- They had only possessed their lost land for "*but a little while*" (vs. 18).
- It was "*Thy* sanctuary" that was "*trodden down*" by the heathen (vs. 18).
- They are the Lord's possession, more than the new inhabitants (vs. 19).

Chapter 64

The pleading prayer of the Lord's punished people for the Lord's intervention continues in this chapter.

64:1-3 – Prayer of Aspiration

Oh for a mighty moving of God's Spirit! This is still the longing of every godly heart. And indeed such passionate words of longing come *only* from godly hearts, for the ungodly are quite happy with the status quo.

Vs. 1 – "*Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down*" – They pray for an earth-

64:2 *As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!*
64:3 *When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.*
64:4 *For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*

shaking work of God (also vs. 3). Compare Acts 2ff.

Vs. 2 – “*As when the melting fire . . . causeth the waters to boil*” – They pray for an all-consuming work, boiling right over with fervency.

Vs. 3 – “*When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for*” – They long for an awesome, unexpected work.

Do you see what the smarting rod of God does? It not only brings out repentance, but carries a humble soul beyond to a yearning after the Lord’s presence (“*come down*”, vs. 1) and glory. Compare the closing words of God’s Book of books in Revelation 22:20, expressing the ultimate longing of all who “*love His appearing*”;

“Even so come Lord Jesus”

64:4-5 – God of Grace

64:5 *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.*

64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

64:7 *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*

Vs. 4 – “*What He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him*” – Man cannot fathom, apart from divine revelation, all of the rich wealth that God’s grace has prepared for him. Paul quotes these words in I Corinthians 2:9, adding that the Spirit has revealed much that awaits the waiting soul in all of the multiplied wonder of Messiah’s kingdom and beyond into eternity.

Vs. 5 – “*Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness*” – The Lord meets with good every soul who meets Him with a rejoicing in righteousness, remembrance, and repentance. Even as the father expectantly waited for his prodigal son, and openly met his return with compassion and reward (Lk. 15).

64:6-12 – Condition of Man

Vs. 6 – “*But we are all as an unclean thing*” – They acknowledged their desperate sinfulness and

64:8 *But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*
64:9 *Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.*
64:10 *Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.*

inability to ever put things right from their side. The best man can do in working righteousness is no more a fit covering than defiled rags. Every good we would do is corrupted with a measure of evil, and has “*come short of the glory of God*”.

Vs. 7 – “*And there is none that calleth upon Thy name*” – They owned up to their apathy toward the Lord and His concerns. Again, compare 63:5 & 59:16. How very few are the true Jacobs, with a princely, persevering determination to have the Lord’s blessed best.

Vs. 8 – “*We are the clay, and Thou our Potter*” – They acknowledged the Lord’s sovereign right to rule over them.

Vs. 9 – “*Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity forever*” – They earnestly pled for His pardon. The basis of their plea;

- They are God’s children (vs. 8).

64:11 *Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.*
64:12 *Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?*
65:1 *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.*

- They are God's creation (vs. 8).
- They are God's possession (vs. 9).

Vs. 10-11 – *“Thy holy cities are a wilderness . . . Jerusalem a desolation”* – Isaiah saw afar off the wasting of Judah and Jerusalem. Our righteous Lord stripped them of everything beautiful and pleasant.

Chapter 65

65:1-7 – Response to the Lord

Vs. 1 – *“I am sought of them that asked not for Me”* – This speaks of the Gentiles receiving the Lord. From the very beginning of Christ's earthly life He was *“sought of”* Gentiles; in the wise men from the east, the faith-filled Syro-phoenician woman, the faith-filled Centurion, the two Greeks who would see Jesus, etc.

65:2 *I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;*
65:3 *A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;*

“I said, Behold Me, behold Me” – Through the preaching of the gospel to the Gentile world our God in essence brings this command *“unto a nation that was not called by My name”*. He says the same in 45:22, crying *“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”*. Compare II Corinthians 5:20.

Vs. 2-7 – *“I spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people”* – This speaks of Jews rejecting the Lord. Paul applied vs. 1-2 to Gentile reception and Jewish rejection of the gospel in Romans 10:20-21. In fact he indicated that Isaiah was *“very bold”* to prophesy such a thing to his people.

Vs. 2 – The Lord’s offer to Israel of salvation in the Saviour was *first* and *continual* and *long-suffering*.

Vs. 3 – Yet as continually as He offered, so they provoked *“Me to anger continually”*. And this they did brazenly, right *“to My face”*. Compare *“before Mine eyes”* in 65:12 & 66:4. God’s wayward people were;

- Involved in idolatry (vs. 3).
- Consulting the dead.

65:4 *Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;*
 65:5 *Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.*
 65:6 *Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,*
 65:7 *Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.*

- Eating things forbidden (vs. 4). One wonders about that great herd of pigs run into the sea in Jesus' day.
- While claiming surpassing holiness (vs. 5). They put no difference between clean and unclean, by the Lord's standard, while claiming cleanness by their own. Such could only be referring to a surface, ceremonial holiness, having nothing to do with true moral purity. How often those who think themselves the most holy are the most *unholy* of all.

65:8-10 – Blessed Remnant

Vs. 8 – *“Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it”* – A small cluster of grapes on an unpromising vine gives hope of some life still in the root. Even so the small righteous remnant preserves the nation from complete destruction by the heavenly Husbandman.

65:8 *Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.*
65:9 *And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.*
65:10 *And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.*
65:11 *But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.*

Vs. 9-10 – A righteous “seed” will yet be extracted “out of Jacob, and out of Judah” to inherit and dwell in the restored land. Compare Hosea 2:15.

65:11-16 – Cursed Rebels

This now the contrast with the righteous remnant of the previous few verses.

Vs. 11 – “*But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget My holy mountain*” – Reference is made here to the preparations of some forbidden “*table for that troop*” and “*drink offering unto that number*”. The meanings are uncertain. Some suggest;

- “*That troop*” may refer to the proper name in Hebrew, “Gad”, or perhaps to the god, “Fortune”.
- “*That number*” perhaps the proper name,

65:12 *Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.*

65:13 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:*

65:14 *Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.*

65:15 *And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:*

“Meni”, or the god, “Fate”.

What is certain is that they were forgetting the tree of life while feasting on the forbidden tree.

Vs. 12 – Not only the passive refusal to hear the Lord, but the active, wilful choosing of that in which the Lord “*delighted not*”.

Vs. 13-14 – “*Behold, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry*” – The comforts of God’s own are set in contrast to the eternal discomforts of the cursed. Compare Christ’s account of the comforts of Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom, quite visible to the rich man in eternal torments (Lk. 16).

Vs. 14 – “*Ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of Spirit*” – While the redeemed “sing for joy of heart”, hear the howling response of all who

65:16 *That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.*

65:17 *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

65:18 *But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*

65:19 *And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*

discover themselves deceived at the last and cast to an eternal hell.

65:17-25 – Things Yet Future

Isaiah seems to see the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20) and the eternal state of New Heavens and Earth (Rev. 21-22) mingled together in this portion. Even as he saw Christ's 1st and 2nd comings as a unit in 61:1-2. Contrast vs. 17-18 with the mention of death in vs. 20. There will be no death in the eternal state (Rev. 21:4; 20:14). The further revelation of the N.T. fleshes out the details, providing needed distinction between the two eras.

Vs. 18-19 – *“Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create”* – All joy and rejoicing, both in saved and Saviour. Compare Christ's command to the redeemed in Matthew 25:21, 23 to *“Enter thou into*

65:20 *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

65:21 *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*

65:22 *They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

65:23 *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.*

65:24 *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

65:25 *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.*

the joy of thy Lord". It is into His joy that we will enter. "He will rejoice over thee with joy . . . He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

Vs. 20 – The first portion of this verse teaches longevity in the Millennium while the last phrase suggests the possibility of death in that kingdom era. Apparently death will only be for those who are judged and accursed as sinners in that day. Perhaps the age of 100 years will be an accountable age in Christ's earthly kingdom, when one yet judged a sinner will be put to death.

Vs. 21-25 – *"Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands"* – All prosperity, peace, and safety.

66:1 *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*

66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

66:3 *He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*

Vs. 24 – *“Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear”* – See the Lord’s supreme readiness to answer prayer in that day, even before one calls. Compare Daniel 9:21.

Chapter 66

66:1-2 – The Highest Looks to the Lowly

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit” – God’s attention and smile is not drawn by great works for Him as much as by great humility before Him. This excludes none but the proud! Here is the pleasing picture of one recognizing his own bankruptcy, genuinely penitent, and seriously listening with greatest care to God’s words.

66:3-4 – A Word for the Self-willed

66:4 *I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.*

66:5 *Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

66:6 *A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.*

The *sacrifices* of the wicked, with his *ways*, *thoughts*, and *prayers*, are all abominations to the Lord (Prov. 15:8-9, 26; 21:27; 28:9). The comparisons here express the magnitude of hypocrisy's great offence to God. In response to their choice of "*their own ways*" (vs. 3), the Lord "*will choose their delusions*" (vs. 4). Compare II Thessalonians 2:8-12. In contrast to those with trembling interest in the Lord's words, these cared little about what the Lord said, saw, or savoured. Compare the end of vs. 4 with 65:12.

66:5 – Comfort for the Contrite

Similar thoughts to 65:13-15. Those thinking themselves God's servants in harassing His true servants will be shamed and revealed as enemies of right in the end. The same applied to Christ's "*brethren*" in the Jewish leaders of His day, who fancied themselves God's servants in hatefully persecuting Jesus and His followers, as if these were

66:7 *Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.*
66:8 *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.*
66:9 *Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.*
66:10 *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:*

more blight than blessing. *“The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service”* (Jn. 16:2).

66:6-24 – God Finishes What He Begins

The Lord closes His message with the assurance that though there would often come the noise of conquest on the streets of Jerusalem, in times when she would be foolish enough to make herself His enemy (vs. 6), yet still the Lord will fulfil His plans of peace for her.

Vs. 7-9 – *“Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Saith the LORD”* – As He wonderfully began the coming of Israel to birth as a nation, so it is unthinkable that He would not bring His work in her to completion.

Vs. 10-14 – *“For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river”* – The Lord’s plans of

66:11 *That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.*
66:12 *For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.*
66:13 *As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*
66:14 *And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.*
66:15 *For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

peace for Jerusalem are cause for joy in all who love her. For all who love the Lord love Jerusalem, that city so close to His heart, and they rejoice in the hope of her comfort.

Vs. 15-16 – *“For by the fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh”* – Christ will return to Jerusalem’s rescue, with the fiery destruction of all who hate her. Note the emphasis on flames of fire here. Compare Christ’s return *“in flaming fire”* in II Thessalonians 1:8.

Vs. 17-18 – Rejecting Jews will be rejected, and receiving Gentiles will be received.

Vs. 18 – *“For I know their works and their thoughts”* – Again, the Lord’s gaze penetrates outward works,

66:16 *For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.*

66:17 *They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.*

66:18 *For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.*

66:19 *And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*

66:20 *And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.*

66:21 *And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.*

66:22 *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.*

to perceive inward thoughts.

Vs. 19-21 – *“And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles”* – A picture of great evangelistic outreach, both in this current age, and further during the coming Tribulation period through the 144,000 Jewish sealed servants (Rev. 7).

Vs. 22-24 – Blessing on the redeemed into the ages, and remembrance of cursing upon the condemned.

Vs. 22 – *“So shall your seed and your name remain”*

66:23 *And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.*
66:24 *And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

– Look well to the eternal continuance of Israel.

Vs. 23 – Again, a prophetic image of the centrality of the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem during Christ’s earthly kingdom and beyond.

Vs. 24 – *“For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched”* – How repeatedly Jesus quoted this when warning so extensively of hell in Mark 9:43-49.

Compare the similarly rather negative final words of the Old Testament in Malachi 4:6. Contrast the brighter prospect coming out the end of Revelation as the redeemed look expectantly to Christ’s return.

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Are you looking and longing for the return of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ? It is good indication of whether your soul is saved or not. The saved are *“looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious*

appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:13-14). The unsaved soul has no such interest or expectation, rather filling his life only with things under the sun. When we know He who made the sun as Father and Friend all else fades to more trivial concerns.

“Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price...incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David...seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:1,3,6)

