

ISAIAH

**MADE EASY FOR
BUSY PEOPLE**

WRITTEN BY A BIBLE

SCHOOL TEACHER

FOR

THE PEOPLE IN THE PEW

BY: DON ARBAUGH

DEDICATION

This book is gratefully dedicated to my faithful wife Sally, who has always encouraged me in my work for the Master. She spent many arduous hours in the typing of this book and deserves a lot of credit for whatever good may be accomplished by our effort.

This material may be freely used to the glory of
God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When I originally began a study of the book of Isaiah, it was solely for the purpose of teaching the adult class at Overlook church of Christ in Dayton, OH. This became a time consuming task and many hours were dedicated to writing and re-writing the notes on each chapter. I definitely had no plans to publish a book but after some encouragement by friends and further consideration, I decided it would be a worthy effort. I did not use footnotes but in many instances I have given credit to various sources from which I studied. I am indebted to these and I will list them in the Bibliography. I give special recognition to Charles A. Pledge who reviewed the manuscript and made valuable suggestions and to Marion R. Fox who arraigned it into book format. I have attempted to write in a simple, straightforward manner to appeal to the average person in the pew, hence, the title “Isaiah Made Easy for Busy People.” It is a verse-by-verse study with the comments followed by the verse number in bold print. The comments are brief but should give basic understanding of the overall theme of the book. Hopefully, it will create a desire for a deeper study, not only of this book but the entire Bible. Whatever good may be accomplished – to God be the glory!

ISAIAH INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR AND DATE

The prophet Isaiah was the son of Amoz (**1:1**) and he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. His prophetic labors extended over a period of 40 to 60 years: 739-683 B.C. (Dates vary from source to source.) He lived in Jerusalem with his prophetess wife and at least two sons (**7:3; 8:3**). His name means "Jehovah is salvation." Prophets contemporary with him were Amos and Hosea, who spoke to the Northern kingdom (Israel) and Micah, who joined with Isaiah in the Southern kingdom, Judah.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was a time of political and religious turmoil. Israel was becoming more and more idolatrous despite the efforts of Hosea and Amos who tried to turn them back to the Lord. Israel would fall to the Assyrian Empire in 722/21 B.C., but Judah would be spared for another hundred-plus years. Assyria was becoming the strong world power while Egypt was declining in power. Judah was situated in between these two warring nations and was therefore, inclined to form alliances with them in hope of survival. They were trusting in human wisdom rather than relying upon the instruction and protection of Jehovah. The Lord's people desperately needed to learn that "Jehovah is salvation" and the messenger of the hour was Isaiah, the one who answered the call—"Here am I; send me." (**6:8**) It was an economically prosperous period but a time of corrupt government. Idol worship, sexual immorality, drunkenness and extortion were common among the people. Bribery had become a way of life for those in power and there was no regard for the fatherless and widows (**1:23**). A study of 2Kings 15-20 will reveal the corrupt conditions that prevailed during this time in Jewish history. For those who still offered sacrifices to Jehovah it was only a shallow, half-hearted offering for which God had said "I delight not" in your burnt offerings (**1:11**) and "I will not hear" your prayers because of the blood on your hands (**1:15**). Radical critics have cast doubt upon the authorship of this book but we will not attempt to answer these critics; rather we will focus on the New Testament references and allow the inspired writers to give us proper understanding. Charles Pledge said it best in his book "Getting Acquainted with the Old Testament" Vol. 2, pg. 88 where he states the following: "The New Testament writers offer conclusive proof that both parts of the book of Isaiah are by the same author and that single author is Isaiah. Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament more than all of the other prophets together. The use of Isaiah by the New Testament writers and speakers leaves no room for doubt that Isaiah was the author of the entire book that bears his name. In John 12:38-41, quotations are made from both parts of Isaiah and are attributed to Isaiah. In Romans, Paul makes abundant use of Isaiah's prophecies. One needs only to read Romans 9-11 to see how frequently Paul introduces Isaiah as the author of the entire book which bears his name." Finally, Isaiah is the most Messianic of any of the Old Testament prophets. Homer Hailey said "...it is generally conceded that Isaiah presented the most vivid picture of the Messiah and His kingdom of any of the prophets." (Hailey's Comments, Vol. 1, pg. 143)

I Prophecies concerning Judah and Israel (1-12)

Chapter 1

v. 1 THE INTRODUCTION

The writer identifies himself as Isaiah, the son of Amoz. The prophet begins the book by affirming the source of the message. It was from heaven and came in the form of a vision. The subject of the message was Judah and Jerusalem and it occurred during the reign of four of Judah's kings - a period of 40 - 60 years.

Vs. 2 - 6 THE CHARGE AGAINST THE PEOPLE

Heaven and earth are called to witness against the people of Jehovah for He hath spoken. Jehovah speaks as a disappointed parent who has reared children who have rebelled against Him (2). The ox and the ass recognize their owner and are more appreciative of the care given than Israel. God's people are described as ungrateful and inconsiderate (3). They are a sinful nation, weighted down with iniquity. As seed reproduces after its kind so they are the seed of evildoers, corrupting others wherever they go. They have forsaken God and angered Him with their arrogance and disobedience and have gone away backwards (4). Why will they continue on this path of destruction? The head and the heart, the center of thinking and emotions, are sick and faint (5). The rest of the body is diseased with putrefying, running sores and they have made no attempt to cleanse and dress them. This graphically describes their spiritual condition (6).

Vs. 7 - 9 CALAMITY RESULTS

Isaiah now begins to speak in prophetic perfect tense. These events have not happened but God can call "things which be not as though they were" (Rom 4:17), also cf. Rev 13:8 and Josh 6:2. The Assyrians did come into Judah during the time of Sennacherib in 714 B.C., (2Kings 18:13; cf. Isa 36:1ff) and the Babylonians also invaded in 606 B.C. (2Kings 24). Cities were made desolate and burned with fire and strangers had devoured the land (7). Zion will be like a lean-to shack in a vineyard or as a hut in a cucumber field (8). Judah would be completely destroyed were it not for the will of Jehovah of hosts who saw fit to preserve a small remnant. They would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah but the remnant was preserved because of the Messianic promise to David (2Sam 7:12ff). Paul made application of this verse in Romans 9:29 where he refers to the remnant as "a seed" (9).

Vs. 10 - 15 TEMPLE-TRAMPLERS' WORSHIP REJECTED

Judah is urged to hear the word of Jehovah and to give ear unto the law of our God. They are to hear with an attitude that desires to obey law. Their sacrifices are numerous but unacceptable because of their sins. When they come to offer worship, God says they are temple-tramplers offering worship that is vain and abominable. He commands them to cease bringing vain oblations. He hates the manner in which

they are observing the new moons and Sabbath and they weary Him **(10-14)**. God will hide His eyes from them when they lift their hands in prayer and thanksgiving because their hands are full of blood (cf. 59:1-3). God wants men everywhere to lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting (1Tim 2:8) **(15)**.

Vs. 16 - 20 REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

As Judah stands before Jehovah, they are defiled and unclean. They are commanded to wash and clean up spiritually and to quit doing “evil things” **(16)**. They are to learn to do well. Good conduct is learned conduct and Judah has been in error so long they must be taught what is right. They must seek justice and relief for the oppressed, the orphans and the widows **(17)**. God invites them to come and reason together. When you reason with God, the basis for reason is always truth...and truth never changes. It exhibit’s the same quality as its author and Jesus declared that God’s word is truth (Jn 17:17; cf. Ps 119:89,160). Correct reasoning will lead Judah to repentance and God promises forgiveness and cleansing. They will lose the crimson stain of sin to become white as snow **(18)**. If they change their will and become obedient, they will be blessed but if they rebel, the sword will devour them. The God who cannot lie (Heb 6:18) has spoken **(19-20)**.

Vs. 21 - 24 ZION’S CORRUPTION

Jerusalem has changed from a righteous city to a prostitute. It was a city of justice and righteousness but now murderers lodge there (cf. 3:14-15; 10:1-2) **(21)**. They had become as silver with impurities or water-diluted wine **(22)**. The rulers are rebellious, dishonest and associate with the thieves. Their judgment is influenced with bribes and they have no compassion on the fatherless and widows **(23)**. Jehovah will avenge Himself of His enemies, the ungodly, rebellious people who have thoroughly distressed and troubled Him **(24)**.

Vs. 25 - 31 JUDGMENT ON THE IMPENITENT

As a metal worker smelts the impurities away, so God will purge the impurities of His people in the furnace of His judgment **(25)**. Jerusalem will be restored “as at the beginning” and once more be called “The city of righteousness.” This redemption of justice and righteousness will come through the Messiah (cf. 59:20; Rom 11:26-27) **(26-27)**. The transgressors and they that forsake Jehovah shall be consumed together and they will be ashamed of the idol worship which they have desired and chosen (cf. 57:5; 65:3; 66:17) **(28-29)**. They will be as a dry leaf or garden that has dried up for lack of water. The strong men and the idol, which he has made, will burn together in unquenchable fire **(30 -31)**.

Chapter 2

Vs. 1 - 4 THE MESSIANIC AGE

The book of Isaiah began with the declaration that Isaiah saw a vision (1:1). Now, he says he saw “the word” of the Lord for it was He who had spoken (1:2). The Word or vision he saw, he once more affirms, was concerning Judah and Jerusalem. The prophecy to follow concerns the church which is to be established, the thought of which he has introduced in the previous chapter in verses 26 and 27 **(1)**. It shall come to pass “in the last days.” These days, this period of time, is defined by Peter in Acts 2:17 when he quotes from Joel 2:28) It represents the final dispensation of time. (cf. Heb 1:2; 2Tim 3:1-5). The “mountain of Jehovah’s house” represents the church or kingdom that was to be established, and Peter said, “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16) when the church was established on Pentecost. The house of God is the church of God (1Tim 3:15) and is to occupy an exalted position among the nations. It is to be international in scope for all nations will flow unto it. From Daniel we learn that it is an eternal kingdom “which shall never be destroyed” and “shall stand for ever” (2:44). Again Daniel said, “the stone...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (2:35) **(2)**. The kingdom is to be a teaching institution and “many peoples” come to the house of God to learn of His ways and how to walk in His paths (Jn 6:45). From Zion, New Jerusalem, the law and the Word of Jehovah shall go forth. This harmonizes with Christ’s teaching in Lu 24:46-47 where the preaching of repentance and remission of sins among all nations would begin at Jerusalem **(3)**. All the nation shall be judged and rebuked by the power of the Word and those who are receptive to the gospel will be peace loving and will not learn war any more. However, the most important aspect is the spiritual peace between God and man. Sin had caused God to look upon man in wrath and judgment. This sin has been removed; therefore, God now looks upon man with favor. Christ is the Prince of Peace (9:6) and all who follow Him will be at peace with God and man (11:6-9). Also compare Micah 4:1- 4 who was contemporary with Isaiah **(4)**.

Vs. 5 - 11 JUDAH’S PRESENT WICKEDNESS

After viewing the blessing of the future kingdom, the prophet now turns his attention to present-day Judah with a call to repentance and obedience **(5)**. The prophet turns to God in prayer, recognizing that God has rejected His people and that they are filled with customs from the east. Also, there are soothsayers among them like the Philistines which were forbidden (cf. Deut 18:9-13). They delighted in making deals and associating with the heathen nations **(6)**. They were hoarding silver and gold and this was forbidden in the law (Deut 17:17). The multiplying of horses was forbidden in v. 16 of this passage. They were not to trust in riches and military strength **(7)**. They had made them gods and engaged in idol worship in violation of the first commandment **(8)**. As a consequence of willful sins, all classes of men will be forced to bow down. Young says, “it is not a bowing performed out of adoration, but one which is brought about by compulsion” (Isaiah Vol. 1, pg. 120). The prophet

recognizes that when the judgment of God comes on them, there will be no forgiveness **(9)**. In the day of God's wrath, men will try to hide in the rocks and dust to no avail. Rebellious man will be made low, but Jehovah will be exalted **(10-11)**.

Vs. 12 - 22 THE APPROACHING JUDGMENT

Judgment is coming upon all men who have lifted themselves up against "Jehovah of the armies" **(12)**. All the items of strength and wealth that men trust in shall fail - cedars, oaks, high mountains, hills, high towers, fenced walls and the ships of Tarshish, all shall fail as man is brought low by Jehovah. Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. God is not displeased with the tall cedars or the high mountains but with men who trust in lofty things **(13-17)**. But the root of the problem is the idols and they shall be destroyed. In the day of His wrath, men will abandon their idols and will attempt to flee into the caves of the earth and the clefts. Men will be ashamed of their idols and will attempt to throw them "to the moles and to the bats" as they behold the glory of His majesty. Jehovah is pictured as a king arising from His throne as He sets himself into action to shake terribly the earth **(18 - 21)**. They are urged to stop trusting in man who is set forth in opposition to God. (cf. Ps 146:3-4; Jer 17:5) Man is frail and temporary. The only breath he has is in his nostrils. It was given by God and can be quickly taken away. The message is: reject man and seek the Heavenly Father. **(22)**.

Chapter 3

Vs. 1 - 12 JERUSALEM AND JUDAH'S DEVASTATION

Chapter two closed with the admonition “Don’t trust in man!” This is a continuation of the thought. Jehovah of the armies (implies peculiar strength, power and majesty) will take away the people in whom they trust. Bread and water represents their luxuries introduced by commerce. All is to be taken away which often happened in sieges and wars (cf. Lam 4: 4, 9) **(1)**. The *mighty man* was one of higher rank in the military. The *prudent* was a diviner or soothsayer and may refer to the false prophets on whose advice the nation might be relying. The *ancient* were the old men who had knowledge acquired by experience and conversation and were able to give advice (cf. 1Kings 12:6) **(2)**. The *captain of fifty* was probably another officer in the army and the *honorable man* and the *counsellor* were men in high office whom the people looked up to. The *cunning artificer* was one who was skilled in the art of engraving metal or wood and the *eloquent orator* practiced magic or divination **(3)**. Unqualified, inexperienced men will rule the nation because the rest have been taken away **(4)**. Anarchy and confusion abound as they lose respect for their weak rulers and for one another **(5)**. A man who has a change of clothes is deemed qualified to rule but none wanted to accept the responsibility under such adverse conditions **(6-7)**. Once again, the prophet uses the prophetic perfect tense to emphasize the certainty of the fall of Judah because their word and actions are against Jehovah **(8)**. Judah did not hide their sins but openly flaunted them and when judgment is rendered, they will have no one to blame but themselves **(9)**. God’s judgment shall be just, rewarding the righteous for their works. The wicked also shall “reap what he sows” **(10-11)**. Their weak, immature leadership is described as children and women ruling over them and they are being led into error and oppression **(12)**.

Vs. 13 – 15 THE INDICTMENT

Jehovah rises to indict and judge His wicked people. Yet He pleads with them, indicating mercy and forgiveness is still available (cf. Mic 6:2) **(13)**. Jehovah will enter into judgment with the leadership for mistreatment of the vineyard (His people). They had robbed the people by unfair judgment and had beaten them to pieces and mercilessly oppressed them (10:2) **(14-15)**.

Vs. 16 - 26 WOMEN'S ATTITUDE CONDEMNED

Isaiah reminds them that it is Jehovah who speaks and condemns the women for being haughty, flirtatious and extravagant. Their “stretched forth necks” are an indication of pride which is evinced by a lofty demeanor. They attempted to entice by the motion or glance of the eyes. In addition, they called attention to themselves by their gaited walk and the tinkling of their ankle bracelets **(16)**. They will be afflicted with scabs on their heads and baldness and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts. The enemy may do this as they come into Judah and Jerusalem **(17)**. In that day (the day in which He will inflict this punishment in the Babylonian captivity) Jehovah will take away their jewelry by the agents He will choose. The *caul seems*

to be a netting for the hair and the *round tires* were pendant for the neck, metallic ornaments in the shape of *moons* (18). The *chains* were a pendant for the ears, especially of pearls or precious stones. The *mufflers* were long fluttering veils (19). *Bonnets* were a fancy headdress; *ornaments of the legs* consisted of a short chain extending from one foot to the other, to give a measured and stately gait. The *tablets* were boxes containing perfumes or fragrant odors (20). *Rings, nose jewels* and *changes of apparel* are more evidence of their extravagant living. The *wimples* were a broad garment like a cloak in which the person usually slept. *Crisping pins* were money bags or purse, often very large and highly ornamented. The *glasses* were mirrors used to examine their appearance and *linen* was the finest of fabrics (21-23). The sweet smell of spices and perfumes will give way to stench; instead of beautifully adorned hair, baldness, and the fine linen will give way to rough sackcloth. The *burning* may allude to the branding of slaves or exposure to a scorching sun of a wearisome journey into captivity. The meaning of many of these words is uncertain but various scholars have given these definitions. (24). The men of war will be slain in battle and Zion will mourn her loss sitting upon the ground, desolate, depressed and humiliated (25-26). It is possible that this great luxury described here came about during the prosperous reign of Uzziah (cf. 2Chr 26:5-15). The New Testament does not forbid the adorning of women but places emphasis on “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit” (1Pet 3:1-6).

Chapter 4

v. 1 THE THOUGHT CONTINUES

“In that day” refers back to verses 25 and 26 of chapter three where the perils of war would destroy the men of Judah. Now there exists such a scarcity of men that the women will be willing to share a husband with other women. They would provide their own food and clothing if he would just let them wear his name to avoid the reproach of being unmarried (cf. Gen 30:22).

v. 2 THE BRANCH

“In that day” must be determined by the context and it is clearly different from the previous verse. This “day” is Messianic and is identified with the rod that “will come forth out of the stem of Jesse,” (11:1) and from that rod or shoot will come forth a Branch out of his roots. Branch means properly that which shoots up or sprouts from the root of a tree, or from a decayed tree. The Branch will come through the lineage of David. When the Messiah was to come, the family of David would be fallen into decay and almost extinct. Joseph was poor but he was of the lineage of David (Mt 1:20) and so was chosen to be the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus. God did “raise unto David a righteous Branch” (Jer 23:5,6) and Zechariah tells us he is a man whose name is The Branch (6:12,13). He also combines the office of priest and king. The Branch will be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely. This seems to be an equation, both parts of which are the Messiah. “Them that have escaped of Israel” are the remnant and it is “for them” that the fruit of the earth appears excellent and comely.

Vs. 3 - 4 THE REMNANT

The “escaped” or remnant are now described as “he that is left in Zion, and remaineth in Jerusalem”. These are called holy by virtue of the work of the Branch (60:21) and they are written among the living in Jerusalem (cf. Rev 3:5). This is the “church of the firstborn which are written in heaven” (Heb 12:22, 23) **(3)**. This all will happen “when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion.” This is the cleansing that allows one to be called holy (cf. Zech 13:1; 1Cor. 6:11). He will also “have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.” This will be accomplished by the spirit of judgment and burning (cf. Mal 3:2, 3).

Vs. 5 - 6 LEADING, LIGHT AND PROTECTION

Jehovah promises guidance and protection to the “whole habitation of Mount Zion.” The language is reminiscent of the wilderness wandering when He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This was to lead them and give them light (Ex 13:21). It also provided protection from the enemy (Ex 14:19-20) **(5)**. He promised to spread a tent over them for their safe protection **(6)**.

Chapter 5

Judah's Sins

Vs. 1 - 2 THE PARABLE

Judah is portrayed as a vineyard as it often is in the Old Testament (cf. Ps 80:8ff). The prophet chooses to teach this important lesson by singing a song about his beloved friend. This "Well-beloved" is Jehovah who has planted His vineyard in the very best location, here described as a fruitful hill. This would be on the side of a hill, having good drainage and exposed to the warmth of the sun **(1)**. Every effort has been made to prepare for the success of this vineyard. The stones have been gathered, the soil prepared and the choicest vine was planted (cf. Jer 2:21). He had built a tower for the sake of watching over and defending it. In anticipation of a bountiful harvest, He had made a wine press for the purpose of expressing the juice of the grapes (cf. Mt 21:33ff). He "looked" with expectation for the vines to grow and produce delicious grapes. But He was greatly disappointed because the fruit was wild grapes **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 7 THE APPLICATION

In view of the case presented, the people of Jerusalem and the men of Judah are asked to judge between Jehovah and His vineyard **(3)**. What more could Jehovah have done for His vineyard? Had anything been left undone? The answer is "Nothing." Then why did it yield wild, worthless grapes? **(4)** Thus we see the picture of a rebellious, sinful people who must be punished for their sins. God "will take away the hedge." He will withdraw his protection from Judah and allow them to be overrun by their enemies **(5)**. Utter desolation is promised. His vineyard will be left unpruned, uncultivated and unwatered **(6)**. His vineyard is identified as the house of Israel and the men of Judah as His "choicest vine." The fruit He had hoped for was justice but they had yielded oppression; He wanted righteousness but "behold, a cry." They had yielded the opposite of all He had looked for **(7)**.

Vs. 8 - 23 A SERIES OF WOES, SINS DENOUNCED

Vs. 8 - 10 COVETOUSNESS CONDEMNED

The first woe is pronounced against the greedy, covetous landowners who have squeezed out the poor and taken their house and land by unscrupulous means (cf. Micah 2:2) **(8)**. God had revealed this to the prophet. The hoarded fields and houses would be left desolate in the coming destruction **(9)**. Their land will cease to produce, yielding 7 1/2 gallons of juice from 10 acres of vineyard and 8 bushels of seed will yield about 3 pecks at harvest time **(10)**.

Vs. 11 – 17 INTEMPERANCE, REVELRY AND LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

The next woe is pronounced on those whose sole purpose for arising early was to consume strong drink all day and into the night. Drunkenness and reveling has dulled their senses. Their lives are consumed in pursuit of pleasure and know not that God is all around them in mercy and judgment **(11, 12)**. They have chosen not to acknowledge God, “therefore...captivity” (cf. Hos 4:6). The misery of famine and thirst are theirs now, in place of gluttony and banqueting **(13)**. “Therefore, Sheol,” the Hadean world, the abode of the dead shall be enlarged and consume great numbers of them **(14)**. The lowly, the mighty and the lofty shall be subdued, punished and brought down but Jehovah will be seen as just, righteous and holy **(15, 16)**. The lambs will be able to roam at pleasure and the desolate habitations of the rich people will become pasture land for strangers **(17)**.

Vs. 18 - 19 CONTEMPT FOR GOD

They drag their sins along like an animal pulling a heavy cart and they arrogantly taunt God by disbelieving the prophet and saying, “If God is going to punish us, let Him get on with it so we may see and know it.” This shows disrespect for the prophet and his message.

v. 20 PERVERSION OF TRUTH

Woe to them who confound all the distinctions of right and wrong and call evil good and good evil. Today, our conception is blurred by our use of words such as lifestyle, choice, gay and we call some sins a disease.

v. 21 VAIN PRIDE AND SELF CONFIDENCE

They judge themselves to be wise and prudent when their conduct proclaims them to be fools (cf. Rom 1:22).

Vs. 22 – 23 INTEMPERANCE AND RECEIVING BRIBES

Woe unto the mighty who prided themselves on their ability to drink much wine and strong drink without being intoxicated **(22)**. These were the magistrates who rendered unjust decisions for bribes and took away from the righteous that which was rightfully theirs **(23)**.

Vs. 24 - 30 PUNISHMENT ANNOUNCED AND DEFINED

God’s judgment will come upon them like a fire devoureth a field of stubble because they have rejected His law and despised His word **(24)**. The hills tremble symbolically at the presence of the great God of Israel (cf. Jer 4:24) but his hand is still out-stretched against them in judgment because they continue to sin (cf. 9:12-13) **(25)**. As a result of his outstretched hand, He will signal the nations from afar and they will come speedily **(26)**. Nothing shall delay them and they are girded for battle

(27). They will come with weapons sharp and ready, with horses and chariots **(28)**. The invaders will be like a hungry lion that drags its prey to its den and no one can deliver the prey from its grasp **(29)**. The enemy will come like a tidal wave and darkness will engulf the land **(30)**.

Chapter 6

Vs. 1 – 4 THE VISION

This vision came in the year Uzziah died. (c. 740 B.C.) It is impossible to know why this call to prophesy appears here in Chapter six. Young opines that Isaiah's style is to project the message while "the person of the prophet recedes in the background." He makes us familiar with the message and then we learn of the prophet's call. It is evident that he prophesied before the death of Uzziah because it is said that he saw the vision "in the days of Uzziah." (1:1) "I saw also the Lord" Adonai - Master. The prophet is allowed to look into the heavenly temple and to view the Lord seated upon the throne of glory. He is arrayed in kingly apparel and the train of His robe fills the temple. John tells us that it was the preincarnate Christ whom he saw. (Jn 12:36-41) (1) Above the throne stood the seraphims, these are heavenly beings as recorded by John in Rev 4:8 where they are appropriately called "living creatures" (ASV). "Seraphim" (mentioned only here) is from the Hebrew *sarap*, which means "to burn", perhaps designating their burning zeal for glorifying God (Wayne Jackson, Isaiah footnote, pg. 30). (2). They have voices with which they praise the Lord continually, giving "glory and honor and thanks to him." (Rev. 4:9) (3). The sound of this praise shook the temple "and the posts of the door moved." The house was also filled with smoke. Smoke and cloud are often used as a sign of divine presence. (4:5; 2Chr 5:13) (4).

Vs. 5 - 7 THE PROPHET'S REACTION

Isaiah was convicted of his unworthiness and was alarmed by having seen the Lord. He felt compelled to confess his sins and the sins of the people for he realized he was in the presence of "the King, the LORD of hosts." It is noteworthy here that the preincarnate Word is called "Jehovah of hosts." (5). One of the seraphims removed a live coal from off the altar and touched the prophet's lips as a symbol of the purification and forgiveness granted unto him. (6-7).

Vs. 8 - 13 THE COMMISSION OF THE PROPHET

The voice of the Lord sounds forth with this question "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He uses the plural form indicating the plurality of persons in the Godhead as in Gen 1:26; 11:7. He is seeking a brave volunteer who will undertake a difficult task. Having been assured that his sins have been purged, Isaiah immediately responds to the Lord's request. He is now ready to take the message to his countrymen (8). The Lord instructs to "go and tell this people" but also cautions that the message will fall upon deaf ears and closed eyes, a people who have hardened their hearts against the divine council (cf. Mt 13:13ff; Jn 12:40; Acts 28:25 ff.) (9-10). How long will the people continue to reject the message and how long shall I continue to preach to them? Until the cities are desolate and the houses without man. The people will remain obstinate until the land is completely destroyed by Divine judgment (11-12). But there is hope for a tenth or a remnant that will survive the impending disaster, thereby preserving "the holy seed." "Their

leaves” are not in the original text. The Hebrew means “in their falling” or “when they fall.” When the tree falls and decays, still the life remains in the root and new life springs forth. So the holy seed shall be preserved through the remnant **(13)**.

Chapter 7

Vs. 1 - 2 HISTORICAL SETTINGS

Ahaz, king of Judah reigned from 735 - 715 B.C. and it seems that these events took place in the early part of his reign. Rezin, king of Syria and Pekah, ruler of Northern Israel formed an alliance for the purpose of resisting the Assyrians. They tried to enlist the assistance of Ahaz, king of Judah, but he refused to participate and so they attacked Jerusalem but could not prevail against it (2Kings 16:5) **(1)**. When the house of Ahaz heard of the plot, they were moved by fear as a tree trembles in the wind **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 9 GOD ASSURES AHAZ

Jehovah instructs Isaiah to take his son, Shearjashub, and meet Ahaz. Shearjashub means "a remnant shall return." The names given by Isaiah to his sons were for signs to the people to teach the great truth that no matter how much they might suffer, the nation would not be totally destroyed. They were to meet Ahaz at the upper pool. Ahaz possibly went there to see if the fountain could be stopped up or the water diverted so that it could not be used by the enemy. The fuller's field was located near this water supply and was a place to suspend or spread cloth that was bleached or dyed **(3)**. The words of the prophet were to put Ahaz at ease and give him confidence. Jehovah calls the two kings "smoking firebrands." They are the ends of a firebrand, not blazing but only smoking. They are almost consumed and harmless. Pekah was not named but referred to as "the son of Remaliah." When the Hebrews wish to speak reproachfully of anyone, they omit his proper name and call him "the son of so and so," especially when his father is little known or respected. As an example, see 1Sam 20:27 where Saul speaks of David in contempt **(4)**. These kings have planned to invade Jerusalem and set up a king of their choosing, but Jehovah said that it would not happen **(5-7)**. The reason that it shall not happen is these plans are of men and are contrary to Jehovah. Rezin is the head of Syria and that is all he will rule over. Ephraim is used as a synonym for Israel and the prophet declares that it shall be broken within 65 years. Israel ceased to be a people when the king of Assyria, Esarhaddon brought people from Babylon and other places and put them in the cities of Samaria in 669 B.C. (2Kings 17:24) If Ahaz will not have faith in God's word, he will not be established **(8-9)**.

Vs. 10 - 16 SON OF A VIRGIN TO BE A SIGN

Ahaz is told to ask for a sign from God as means of confirming the message of the prophet. There seems to be no limit on what he could ask for as a miracle; a sign either in the earth or heaven above **(10-11)**. Ahaz refuses to ask and piously declares that he will not tempt God **(12)**. God had offered a sign and it had been rejected. The prophet now chastises the king and the "house of David" for wearying God **(13)**. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Matthew says this prophecy was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus (1:21-23) **(14)**. A diet of butter and honey suggests the child will be born to parents of meager means,

the food of scarcity as described in verse 21-22 **(15)**. How long will Judah suffer at the hands of the alliance between Syria and Israel? The span of time represented by the child's development to an age where he can discern good and evil, that's how long it will be before the kings of these two nations will be gone (cf. 2Kings 15:30; 16:9). While the coming of Immanuel is an event that will take place over 700 years in the future, the latter part of this prophecy is to give them immediate hope **(16)**.

Vs. 17 - 25 JUDAH'S DESOLATION

Ahaz has been assured that his kingdom would be safe from the invasion that was threatening it. He is now informed that it would be endangered from another source and the devastation would be greater than any since the kingdom divided. This would be caused by the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser, whom Ahaz had looked to for protection **(17)**. The invaders are pictured as a plague of flies from Egypt and a swarm of bees from Assyria **(18-19)**. The coming invasion and desolation will be as if the Lord had hired a barber with a razor to shave all the hair from Judah, a humiliating experience (cf. Ezek 7:16-18). This humiliation will come at the hand of the king of Assyria in whom Ahaz has trusted for help which he never received (cf. 2Kings 16: 7-8; 2Chr 28:19-25) **(20)**. In place of great herds, a man's possessions are reduced to a cow and two sheep **(21)**. Their diet will be butter and honey - a diet that will be eaten by everyone left in the land, reflecting the intense desolation **(22)**. The desolation of the vineyards will give way to wild growth of briars and thorns; men will hunt for the wild game living there and the once cultivated hills will become a place for the few cattle and sheep to roam **(23-25)**.

Chapter 8

Vs. 1 - 4 SYRIA AND ISRAEL SUBDUED BY ASSYRIA

Isaiah is instructed by Jehovah to write upon a great roll the word, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning “haste to the spoil, haste to the prey” (1). Faithful witnesses were called to verify the recording of this prophecy (2). The prophet’s wife bears a son and the Lord said to call him “Maher-shalal-hash-baz” for before the son is old enough to cry “my father and my mother,” the riches of Damascus and Samaria will enrich the king of Assyria. Within two years, in 732 B.C., Damascus was plundered by Tiglath-pileser and the “riches of Damascus” were spoils of the king of Assyria and Rezin, the king of Syria was slain (2Kings 16: 9). “The spoil of Samaria” must refer to the plunder of the cities of the land of Samaria and not the capital city Samaria. The capital city of Samaria was not plundered until 18 years after the time here mentioned by the prophet (2Kings 17:6). The fulfillment of this prophecy will assure the people that God will fulfill the prophecy concerning the virgin of 7:14 (3-4).

Vs. 5 - 8 JUDAH ALSO UNDER SIEGE

Jehovah condemns his people who refuse the peaceful water of Shiloah (representing God’s government) and rejoice in their alliance with Rezin and Pekah. (5-6). Therefore, Jehovah will bring the waters of the river upon them, the king of Assyria and his army, and he will cover the land as a great flood, reaching even to Judah and “to the neck” (Jerusalem). His wings will fill the whole land. The land was not totally subdued because it belonged to Immanuel, the Immanuel of 7:14. (7-8).

Vs. 9 -15 GOD’S JUDGMENT SURE AND UNSTOPPABLE

The prophet challenges the other nations to fight against God but assures them that they will be broken in pieces because “God is with us” (Immanuel) (9-10). Don’t be intimidated by those who accuse you of conspiracy, when you warn them against making alliance with Assyria. Sanctify the Lord of hosts (follow and respect His authority) and fear no one but Him (cf. 1Pet 3:15) (11-13). To the obedient He will be a sanctuary but to both houses of Israel He will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and He will cause “many among them” to stumble, fall and be taken (cf. 1Pet 2:7,8 also Rom 9:30-33) (14-15).

Vs. 16 - 18 PROPHECY CONCERNING CHRIST

The great roll of verse 1 containing Isaiah’s testimony is now to be sealed and the disciples along with Isaiah will wait on the Lord who will bring better times to them. Isaiah and his children are for signs and for wonders. Their names suggested both deliverance and destruction. This ultimately finds its fulfillment in the incarnate Christ, describing His complete trust and faith in His heavenly Father (cf. Heb 2:13) (16-18).

Vs. 19 – 22 WARNINGS ABOUT WIZARDS AND DIVINERS

They are warned against seeking counsel from wizards and people who claimed to converse with the dead. They are encouraged to seek unto their God. It is folly to seek the dead on behalf of the living. Look to the law and to the testimony which expressly forbid the Jews from such things (cf. Lev 20:6; Deut 18:10-13) **(19-20)**. The picture is one of intense anguish and frustration brought on a people who have forsaken the true God and are caught up in trouble and darkness **(21-22)**.

Chapter 9

Vs. 1 - 7 THE SPIRITUAL REIGN OF MESSIAH

"But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations." Verse 1 (ASV)

The former time" refers to the invasion of Israel by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria (cf. 2Kings 15:29). Matthew quotes these verses in relation to Jesus' teaching in Galilee (Mt 4:12-16) (1-2). The Messianic era will bring great joy to the new "holy nation"(1Pet 2:9) as the joy of a bountiful harvest or the victors spoil (3). "For thou hast broken the yoke," the cause for joy is the realization that men have been set free from the oppressive yoke of sin. This is compared to the victory God gave them over the Midianites in Judges 7 (4). Peace will reign in this kingdom and the armor and the bloody garments will be fuel for the fire (cf. ASV) (5). "For unto us a child is born" the Christ child becomes the focal point and the reason for the increased joy and the broken yoke. (cf. 7:14; Lu 2:11).

"A son is given" (Jn3:16) and *"the government shall be upon his shoulders."* Divine government will originate through him (cf. Zech 6:12, 13; Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-23)

He will be *"called Wonderful,"* a miracle worker—doer of marvelous things. These are the words and works that distinguished the Messiah.

The word *"Counsellor"* is one who is fitted to stand near princes and kings as their adviser, and is expressive of great wisdom with the Godly qualifications to instruct, guide and direct the human race. (Barnes, pg. 192)

"The mighty God" is often applied to Christ (cf. Jn 1:1; 1Tim 3:16; Heb 1:8).

"The everlasting Father," which is the Father of eternity (cf. Jn 1:1; Col 1:17; Jn 8:58; Rev 1:11, 17, 18).

"The Prince of Peace" - This Prince would seek to put an end to wars and peace would reign between men and God through the gospel (cf. Rom 5:1; Heb 12:14; Phil 4:7) (6). His reign on David's spiritual throne will increase and prosper until the end of time. It will be fulfilled because it is the sure word of Jehovah of hosts (7).

Vs. 8 - 10 ISRAEL PROUDFULLY VOWS TO REBUILD

The northern kingdom had already suffered some destruction from Tiglath-pileser in 733 B.C. (2Kings 15:29), but they did not view it as a warning from God. They refused to repent and vowed to rebuild. They were a proud, stubborn people who trusted in their own resources instead of God.

Vs. 11 - 12 JEHOVAH WILL PUNISH

The Syrians and Philistines will be used by God to punish Ephraim. His anger is not turned away and His hand is stretched out in judgment against them.

Vs. 13 – 17 LEADERS, OLD MEN, LYING PROPHETS

God's anger continues against them because the people refuse to repent or seek His favor. The older men and lying prophets shall be cut off for they are the cause of the sins **(13-16)**. Because of the wide spread corruption all classes of people will be punished, even the fatherless and widows **(17)**.

Vs. 18 - 21 EXCESSIVE SIN PROVOKES MORE WRATH

Unchecked, sin burns like a fire until it consumes the whole forest **(18)**. God's wrath will also burn and devour the people and the people will turn on each other **(19)**. A condition of anarchy, discord and want will exist and every man will "eat the flesh of his own arm" or will turn against his own flesh and blood **(20)**. The hostility will divide those who had been closely allied, Manasseh and Ephraim. Even when they are united in opposing Judah, they will seek to destroy each other (cf. 2Kings 15:10, 14, 30) **(21)**.

Chapter 10

Verses 1- 4 are a continuation of the prophecy commenced in 9:8 and should have been with chapter 9.

Vs. 1 - 4 CORRUPT JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SYSTEM

A woe is pronounced upon rulers and judges who make laws and statutes that are oppressive and unrighteous (1). Instead of protecting and supporting the unfortunate ones such as widows and orphans, they were using the law and judicial system to rob and oppress (2). In the day of desolation they will not have God to help them. God asked them where they will leave all their riches they have taken from the poor? It will become spoils for the conquering nation. They will become prisoners and bow down to their oppressors or fall among the slain in battle. God's hand is still stretched out in judgment against them because of their wickedness (3-4).

Vs. 5 - 11 ASSYRIA, THE ROD OF GOD'S ANGER

Assyria will become an agent used by God to punish Israel. God will use Assyria's malicious spirit but they will not be aware that they are being used to accomplish His will (5-7). "Are not my subordinates clothed with royal power and majesty?" This is an expression of the Assyrian's confident boasting of his might and power (8). These are cities that had been subdued by the king of Assyria. By mention of Samaria, it is evident that this prophecy was written after Samaria had been destroyed in 721 B.C. (9). The argument in these two verses is this: "The nations which I have subdued were professedly under the protection of idol gods. Yet those idols were not able to defend them - though stronger than the gods worshiped by Jerusalem and Samaria." (Barnes, pg. 207) The king of Samaria views Jerusalem and Samaria as just another example of idol-worshipping cities (10-11)

Vs. 12 - 14 ASSYRIA TO BE PUNISHED FOR PRIDE

When the punishment of Jerusalem is complete, then will God punish the king of Assyria for his "stout heart" and his "high looks." (Note personal pronouns in vv.13 & 14) The king boasts that it was as easy to subdue these kingdoms as it is to take the eggs from an unprotected nest. No one offered any resistance, not even a peep.

Vs. 15 - 19 GOD WILL DESTROY ASSYRIA

God uses the figure of a saw, boasting of what it had accomplished, not realizing that it was but an instrument in the hand of the sawyer. This was to remind the Assyrian monarch that he was a mere instrument in the hand of God and it would be just as absurd for him to boast as it would for the saw, axe or rod to boast against he who wields it (15). The once-fat armies of the Assyrians will become lean and be destroyed by "the light of Israel."

Like a farmer burning off a briar patch they shall be consumed **(16-18)** and so few will be left that a child would be able to count them **(19)**. 185,000 soldiers were slain in one night during the reign of Sennacherib (37:36, 37; 2Kings19:35, 36)

Vs. 20 - 23 A REMNANT SHALL RETURN

The time will come when a remnant comprised of both Israel and Judah will learn that it is not wise to trust in political alliances such as Assyria, but rather their complete faith must be in Jehovah **(20)**. A remnant shall return, including the house of Jacob and compared to the original nation, would be few in number. The consumption of them was a totally righteous decree **(21-22)**. The Lord God of hosts (Addonai Jehovah) has by divine justice determined that there will be consumption in the land of Israel **(23)**.

Vs. 24 - 27 ASSYRIAN YOKE TO BE LIFTED

Those people that dwell in Zion (Judah) are encouraged not to be afraid of Assyria. By God's decree, he will be an instrument of punishment to them but in a little while he will be destroyed **(24-25)** just as Midian was (cf. Judg. 7:25) **(26)**. God will deliver His people just as He did in the exodus and the yoke of Assyria shall be lifted off their necks **(27)**.

Vs. 28 - 32 ASSYRIANS ADVANCE TO JERUSALEM

The towns named in these verses are small towns located around Jerusalem and picture the march of the Assyrian army toward Jerusalem causing great fear to the inhabitants **(28-31)**. Sennacherib gets as close as Nob from where he could see Jerusalem, and he shakes his "fist" against it as he utters his threats **(32)**.

Vs. 33 - 34 HALTED BY THE LORD OF HOSTS

These verses are to bring comfort to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Sennacherib has advanced within sight of the city, and flushed with success, he is confident that Jerusalem will fall. But the prophet announces that Sennacherib's career is over and using the figure of the tree that he began in vv.18 & 19, he proceeds to picture the bough lopped off and the forest destroyed. Lebanon refers to Assyria as in Ezek 31:3. The Lord of hosts does all of this and Jerusalem is spared.

Chapter 11

Vs. 1 – 5 THE NATURE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

Assyria is to be destroyed as the trees of a forest, never to rise again. But the house of David, here represented as “the stem of Jesse,” shall send forth a rod or shoot. This indicates that life remains in the stump of the tree, even though it had been brought low and had fallen into a state of dishonor (cf. Amos 9:11). From this, the Branch will come forth and bear fruit (Jer 23:5; Acts 13:22, 23) **(1)**. “The Spirit of the Lord (Jehovah) shall rest upon him,” (Mt 3:16, 17; Acts 10:38) and He will be filled with “wisdom and understanding” (1Cor 1:30; Col 2:3) **(2)**. Christ will not judge superficially but with divine insight shall look upon the heart (Mt 9:4; Jn 2:25). The poor and the meek shall be judged fairly and the wicked punished. “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth” - that which issues forth from His mouth will condemn and punish the wicked (cf. 2Thess 2:8; Rev 19:15) **(3-4)**. Christ will be totally righteous and totally faithful **(5)**.

Vs. 6 - 9 THE NATURE OF HIS SUBJECTS

In the Messiah's kingdom, peace will reign among those who have subjected themselves to his rule. Those animals that are natural enemies, living together in harmony, graphically illustrate it. It is a mere poetic description denoting great peace and security and all the changes that must take place in sinful men in order to produce and perpetuate such peace **(6-8)**. This is clearly proclaimed in v.9 as the prophet declares that the nature of men have changed so that they will not “hurt” nor “destroy” in all my holy mountain (2:2-4). The universal proclamation of the gospel is referred to as the earth being full of the knowledge of the Lord (cf. Col 1:23).

v. 10 THE BRANCH IS A UNIVERSAL RULER

The Gentiles will be brought under the reign of the One who springs forth from the root of Jesse. He will stand as an ensign around which all nations shall rally. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (Jn 12:32) The Gentiles were receptive to the gospel and were grafted into the olive tree (Rom 11). Also this verse is quoted in Rom 15: 9-12. The “rest” here may apply to the peace, security and forgiveness promised to the souls who turn to Christ. He said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

Vs. 11 - 16 UNITY OF BELIEVERS

The Lord had promised to bring back a remnant of Jews from Captivity (2Chr 36:20-23; Jer 29:10-14) and now He promises to gather a “second time” from all the nations and assemble them under the banner of Christ by means of the gospel (Rom 1:16). The envy that existed between Judah and Ephraim will be abolished. They will dwell together in this new kingdom where peace will prevail **(11-13)**. The spread of the gospel will break down national barriers and the obedient of the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites will become part of the remnant. Just as the waters were parted for the children of Israel when they left Egypt, so all obstacles will be removed from before those who seek the “highway for the remnant of his people” **(14-15)**. This remnant of people shall be delivered from Assyria just as surely as Israel of old was delivered from Egyptian bondage **(16)**.

Chapter 12

Vs. 1 - 6 A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Just as Israel celebrated in song after deliverance from Egypt, so these citizens of New Israel will break forth in exaltation to the Lord in appreciation for salvation in the kingdom of Christ. The Lord's anger and resulting punishment had brought about repentance and now they are comforted in Him **(1)**. Jehovah is their salvation and their strength (Ex 15:2) and it is fitting that He be the object of this song of praise **(2)**. In scripture, a fountain or well represents refreshment, producing joy. Their song of joy results from their appreciation of the overflowing mercies brought about by drawing from the wells of salvation. The water from the wells was called "living water" by our Lord. (cf. Jn 4:10, 14). They will fill the soul with happiness as the discovery of a bubbling fountain or brook in the desert fills the weary pilgrim with rejoicing **(3)**. Those who drink of this water with joy will want to praise Jehovah and "declare His doings among the people," that is, tell the world that the wells of salvation are open to all nations **(4-5)**. The inhabitants of New Jerusalem are commanded to shout the good news and to proclaim that the Great Holy One of Israel dwells in the midst of His people (cf. Ps 48:1ff) **(6)**.

II Prophecies Regarding Other Nations (13-23)

Chapter 13

With this chapter, Isaiah begins a new prophecy. The first 12 chapters contained a series of prophecies concerning the Jews. Chapter 13 to chapter 23 inclusive forms the second portion of his prophecies. These chapters deal with predictions respecting other nations with which Israel was in various ways connected. Chapter 13 and 14:1-27, along with 21:1-10 contains the prophecy foretelling the destruction of Babylon. The last king under whom Isaiah prophesied was Hezekiah whose reign ended in 695 B.C. The Jews were carried captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. and Babylon was taken by Cyrus in 536 B.C.; therefore this prophecy was made at least 159 years before its fulfillment. At the time this prophecy was delivered, Judah was securely dwelling in their own country and in possession of Jerusalem, their capital. They had no controversy with Babylon and no reason to fear a people so far removed from them. At the distance of 500 - 600 miles Isaiah does not here foretell of their being taken captive, but speaks of them as being in captivity and predicts their deliverance. The purpose of the prophecy is to show them that the complete overthrow and destruction of Babylon is to occur and will result in the deliverance of Judah.

v. 1 THE BURDEN

The burden or doom is pronounced upon Babylon, the nation who is to conquer Assyria and later Judah. Babylon was the capital city of Babylonia and was built upon a plain of fertile rich soil. It consisted of two parts, being divided by the Euphrates River that ran through the middle of it. It was a walled city and Herodotus said the walls were 87 feet thick and 350 feet high and were made of sun-dried brick, cemented together by a kind of glutinous earth from the local region. A huge ditch from which the clay for the brick was obtained surrounded the whole city. This ditch was filled with water and provided a secondary measure of defense. The walls formed a square, 15 miles long on each side for a total of 60 miles in perimeter. There were 100 gates to the city, 25 on each side, made of solid brass. From the gates there were streets, 151 feet in width, running through the city, forming 676 squares. There was a bridge 60 feet in width over the Euphrates River, and there were two palaces, one on each side of the river. There is also said to have been a tunnel under the river, connecting the two palaces. The Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World was there. It was a city of great wealth and power. For a more detailed description, the reader is encouraged to consult Barnes commentary, from which this writer obtained this information. (Pg. 246-247)

Vs. 2 - 5 GOD ASSEMBLES HIS FORCES

God will call an army together to execute His will (2). They are called His "sanctified" or "consecrated" ones—not sanctified in a spiritual sense but set apart for to accomplish a Divine intention. They are also called "my mighty ones," a force great enough to perform the task at hand. They will "rejoice in my highness," glory and rejoice in their success, not realizing they are accomplishing God's plan. The

ASV calls them "my proudly exalting ones." (3) The prophet then hears the noise and commotion of these warring hosts as they assemble to do Jehovah's bidding. It is God who "mustereth" them, He collects, puts them in military array. He uses the plural, "kingdoms," because it is the Medo-Persian empire that will be used to destroy Babylon (v.17). It is a "far country, from the end of heaven," a distance of 350 miles from Babylon (4 - 5).

Vs. 6 - 16 WRATH IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

It becomes very clear that the "day of Jehovah" is not something to be desired. (cf. Zeph 1:14-18; Amos 5:18-20) It is a time of fear, destruction, howling and pain. The people will be in a state of shock and unbelief as they witness the fall of their great nation (6-8). The day of the Lord will be cruel - that is, it will be destructive and painful; an exhibition of justice and the inhabitants of Babylon will be destroyed (9). The darkening of the sun, moon, etc. depicts the fall of governmental powers, in this case, Babylon (10). God will punish them for their wickedness, pride and haughtiness (11). The destruction will be so thorough that a man will be more precious than fine gold, even the pure gold of the country of Ophir (cf. 1Kings 9:26-28) (12). Intense wrath is expressed by the shaking of the heavens and earth (13). "The chased roe" was a deer of the most delicate frame; the species that is most fleet and graceful in its movements, properly the gazelle. Babylon, who was once so proud and arrogant, shall be as the trembling gazelle that is pursued by the hunter. They shall be as the scattered flock of sheep that do not have the guidance and protection of a shepherd. Jeremiah describes Babylon as containing a mingled population (Jer 50:37). People living there who are of other nations shall flee the calamities and return to their own country (14). There will be an indiscriminate slaughter of all that are found in the city or fleeing therefrom. Their houses will be plundered and their women and children barbarously slain (15-16).

Vs. 17 - 18 THE MEDES - GOD'S INSTRUMENT

The instruments of God's wrath will be the Medes. They have no regard for silver and gold so they cannot be bribed. They will savagely kill the young men, children and even those in the womb (17-18). Concerning this prophecy, the following is a quote from Barnes Comm. pg. 256."In looking at this prophecy, we are therefore to bear in mind: (1) the fact that, when it was uttered, Media was a dependent province of the kingdom of Assyria; (2) that a long time was yet to elapse before it would become an independent kingdom; (3) that it was yet to secure its independence by the aid of that very Babylon which it would finally destroy; (4) that no human foresight could predict these revolutions, and that every circumstance conspired to render this event improbable. The great strength and resources of Babylon; the fact that Media was a dependent province, and that such great revolutions must occur before this prophecy could be fulfilled, render this one of the most striking and remarkable predictions in the sacred volume."

Vs. 19 - 22 BABYLON'S FINAL DESTRUCTION

Babylon, known as "great Babylon" (Dan 4:30) and "the golden city" (Isa 14:4) will be completely destroyed as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will be desolate perpetually and will be unfit even for shepherds and their flock. It will become a home for wild beasts, owls, and doleful creatures (**19-22**). This will be accomplished through King Cyrus of the Median Empire. (See 44:28; 45:1-14; Jer 51:11)

Chapter 14

The Burden of Babylon Continues (1-27)

Vs. 1 - 2 JUDAH TO BE RESTORED

Because of Jehovah's mercy, Judah will return to their own land and people of other lands shall join with them. "They shall cleave to the house of Jacob" indicates that the Jews have made proselytes of some of the Babylonians and have so endeared themselves to them that they want to accompany them and be their servants. In this way the oppressors become subject to the oppressed and serve them willingly. (cf. Esther 8:17) "And the people shall take them and bring them to their place" - The Jews will receive assistance from the people of other lands in their return to Palestine. (Ezra 1:2-6; Neh 2:7-8) As suggested by Young and others, we should look for a figurative fulfillment, this being a foreshadowing of things to come under the Messiah. The ultimate fulfillment was accomplished by the power of the gospel as Gentiles in great numbers were added to the church.(cf. .49:22; 60:9,14)

Vs. 3 - 20 A TAUNTING SONG OF JUDGMENT

This taunting song is to be sung after the time of hard servitude is over, when they have "rest from thy sorrow" **(3)**. It is a song of celebration of the cessation of the rule of a wicked king **(4)**. Jehovah has broken the power of the wicked rulers who governed with anger and wrath. The whole earth is at rest and rejoices in song **(5-7)**. The fir trees and the cedars of Lebanon rejoice over the fallen tyrant and express feelings of security **(8)**. The scene now is shifted to the abode of the dead. Departed monarchs taunt the Babylonian king and remind him of his loss of pomp and power. He is now reduced to the same low state as they themselves; his body in the grave covered with worms **(9-11)**. The fallen monarch takes on the image of the morning star. His glory is dimmed as he falls to the earth **(12)**. It was the king's purpose and design to be recognized as supreme; that all the nations would pay homage to him. He arrogantly proclaims he is to be exalted above God **(13-14)**. Instead of ascending up to his lofty heights he is brought down to "the sides of the pit", to Sheol, the abode of the dead. There he will be the object of ridicule by those who recognize him as the once powerful conqueror of kingdoms. He was cruel and oppressive and never released prisoners that they might return to their home. He is now in prison from which there is no release **(15-17)**. It is common practice for kings to be buried in magnificent surroundings; tombs that they had constructed for themselves. But this Babylonian king will be denied a regal burial and will be cast out as a worthless branch and as a carcass trodden under feet. His land will be destroyed and his people slain and the dynasty would end with him **(18-20)**.

Vs. 21-23 BABYLON'S ROYAL FAMILY EXTINGUISHED

The children of the king are to be slaughtered so as to stop them from building cities and continuing their cruel, arrogant reign. This is as a consequence of the sins of their fathers. The Lord will destroy "the name, and remnant." The name of the monarch shall become extinct and the family shall cease to exist. The land shall be the home of wild creatures and pools of water.

Vs. 24 - 27 ASSYRIAN DEFEAT IS SURE

The design of the prophecy was to give hope to the Jews in Babylonian captivity and so he turns his attention to the king of Assyria and declares that Jehovah of hosts will "break the Assyrian in my land" and it is sure to happen. This event would have already happened prior to their Babylonian captivity. This refers to the defeat of Sennacherib at Jerusalem (10:24-27) and as God would surely fulfill this prophecy, so they are assured that He will fulfill his predictions respecting their release from Babylon. All the nations of the earth are to be affected by His purpose and no earthly power can disannul it.

Vs. 28 – 32 THE BURDEN OF PHILISTIA

This prophecy is dated in the year king Ahaz died **(28)**. Philistia is warned not to rejoice at the defeat of the one who had smitten them with the rod because their new oppressor would be more venomous. Assyria is "The rod of him that smote thee" because God had clearly designated them as "the rod of mine anger" (10:5) **(29)**. The prophet now uses a pastoral illustration to describe the care God will give the Israelites when He refers to them as "the poor shall feed and the needy shall lie down in safety." In contrast the Philistines will be destroyed by famine and not even a remnant left **(30)**. Philistia will howl at the time of desolation. The "smoke" will come from the north; the dust of the invading army of Babylon, as they advance in close military array **(31)**. Any nation that makes inquiry should be told that Jehovah hath founded Zion and His people shall dwell there in complete trust and safety **(32)**.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 and 16 make one complete prophecy concerning the burden of Moab. Moab is a region east of the Dead Sea, inhabited by descendants of Moab, a son of Lot and his eldest daughter (Gen 19:37). As the Israelites journeyed to the Promised Land they were opposed by Balak, the king of Moab, who hired Balaam to curse them (Num 22-24; Deut 23:3-5). During the periods of the judges, Eglon, king of Moab attacked Israel, captured Jericho and held Israel in subjection for eighteen years (Judg 3:12-14). Moab was conquered by David and the Moabites became David's servants (2Sam 8:2). Thus there had been conflicts between the two nations for centuries. (Additional references: Amos 2: 2-3; Zeph 2: 8-9)

v. 1 THE MAIN CITIES ARE DESTROYED

Ar is the capital of Moab, situated south of the river Arnon. The city is to be laid waste and brought to silence "in the night." This could mean that it was sudden or it was a night-time raid. The prophet uses the prophetic perfect to indicate the certainty of the event. The same fate is to befall Kir of Moab, thought to be a fortress city.

Vs. 2 – 4 GREAT SORROW AND LAMENTATIONS

The cities, Bajith and Dibon, were the high places where idolatrous worship was conducted. The people go up for the purpose of weeping but weeping before helpless idols will not bring relief. There is howling at Nebo and Medeba. Their humiliation is represented as baldness and loss of their beard. In times of great calamity or grief, they cut off the hair and even the beard (2). They also express their deep grief by going about in sackcloth, publicly weeping and howling (3). Two more cities are named and they cry out in deep anguish. The military men cry as they view the hopeless condition of their city and country (4).

Vs. 5 - 7 THE FLIGHT OF DESPERATION

Isaiah's heart cries out in sympathy for Moab because of the intense suffering of the people as they flee the destruction. Moab is compared to a 3 year old heifer, one untamed and new to the yoke, in this case, new to the yoke of suffering (5). The waters of the springs of Nimrim are stopped up and the river that once watered the land has dried up. The once lush pasture land has now withered; there is no green thing left (6). The people take whatever possessions they have saved and flee into neighboring Edom. The "brook of the willows" is possibly the Zered River that they must cross to get to Zoar of Edom (7).

Vs. 8 - 9 CRIES OF ANGUISH, RIVER OF BLOOD

Two more cities are mentioned as the howling continues round about the borders of Moab (8). The river Dimon (Arnon) runs with the blood of the slain but this is not the end of their suffering. God will bring lions upon the remnant that remains (9).

Chapter 16

Vs. 1 – 5 MOAB TO ALLY THEMSELVES WITH JUDAH

The Moabites had paid tribute to Israel but when King Ahab died they rebelled and refused to send tribute (2Kings 3:4, 5). They had fled to Sela of Edom with their flocks because of the invasion from the North. They are now exhorted to send the customary tribute to the king of Judah and to seek his protection and submit to him **(1)** the women of Moab are pictured as young birds who are driven from the nest and have no home or place of refuge. They are gathered at the river Arnon and are endeavoring to flee from the desolation coming upon them **(2)**. There are diverse opinions on verse 3-5. Barnes writes “Most commentators regard it as addressed to the Moabites by the prophet or by the Jews.” (pg. 298, vol.1) They are encouraged to hide the fleeing Jews. They are to offer them comfort as shade offers protection from the noon day sun. They are to hide the fugitives and not betray them to the oppressors. "Let mine outcast dwell with thee," not permanently, but sojourn as exiles **(3)**. It is not clear as to whom the extortioner is, but it is "at an end" and "the spoiler ceaseth." The Jews are asking for temporary refuge and they will be able to repay the kindness to Moab after this crisis is over **(4)**. The king who shall sit upon the throne of David will show mercy to the Moabites and his actions will be in truth or faithfulness. He will be fair in judgment but "seeking justice."(ASV) This must be viewed as messianic. Those that heed the words of the prophet make up a small remnant and will have opportunity for redemption under the reign of the Messiah **(5)**.

Vs. 6 - 12 PRIDE TO CAUSE DESOLATION

The Jews had heard of the pride of Moab and his haughtiness. The prophet's conclusion is that he will not pay the tribute nor consider the counsel and his boastings will be false because he will not be able to perform them. He had boasted of his strength and security and wanted no part of a friendship with the Jews **(6)**. "Therefore", or because of his pride, Moab shall howl for Moab because the vines will be dried up and there will be no more raisin cakes **(7)**. Likewise, the invaders destroy the vineyards of Heshbon and Sibmah. The vines once covered the land, reaching to the Dead Sea **(8)**. As the people of Jazer weep, Isaiah also sheds tears of grief and sympathy because of the destruction and desolation that is coming upon the vineyards. The usual joy of harvest time will not be realized **(9)**. Gladness, joy and singing had always been brought about by the bountiful harvest but God had caused that to cease. The presses will produce no wine because the grape vines have been destroyed **(10)**. (Note: Here the sweet juice of the grape is called wine.) Isaiah's heart is broken and he grieves for Moab, especially when he sees Moab in weariness, praying to his false gods but finds no relief **(11-12)**.

Vs. 13 - 14 THE TIME OF THE DESTRUCTION

Jehovah has spoken concerning Moab and it will be a definite time of three years before the destruction will be accomplished. As a man that is hired keeps a record of his time for which he has agreed to work, so the prophet says that this time is fixed and shall not be varied. All of the things that Moab had gloried in shall be destroyed along with all the vast population and only a very small and weakened remnant shall remain **(13-14)**.

Chapter 17

Vs. 1 - 3 SYRIA AND ISRAEL ARE CONDEMNED

Damascus, the capital of Syria and the oldest city in the world is to cease to exist as a city and is to become "a ruinous heap" (1). The cities of Aroer will be desolate and shall be a place where flocks can graze and lie in peace and safety (2). Ephraim shall cease to be a fortress. Israel and Syria are mentioned together because they were confederated together against Ahaz and Judah and will be involved in the same overthrow. Syria is to share "the glory of the children of Israel" as they both experience captivity and desolation (3).

Vs. 4 - 11 THE DESTRUCTION OF EPHRAIM

"The glory of Jacob" denotes everything that the Northern kingdom had gloried in; their dignity and power of which they had boasted. But this glory shall waste away as a body wastes away when afflicted by disease (4). Just as the farmer cuts down the corn and removes it from the field, the enemy of Ephraim shall remove the people and their wealth to a distant land. Two kings of Assyria, Tiglathpileser and Shalmaneser, as recorded in 2Kings 15:29; 17:6, accomplished this (5). As the reaper always leaves a few grapes or olives behind, so a small remnant of Israel shall remain (6). In that day, some men of Israel and Syria will look with respect upon the Creator, the God of Israel. They will seek His aid and protection. They will realize that the images, the groves and the idols, which their hands have made, are powerless to help them. Young said, "Isaiah has told us of a true conversion of the remnant" (vol.1 pg. 471) (7-8). Some cities will be left because of the children of Israel, similar to the gleaning of the olive trees. But over all, the land will be desolate (9). Israel had forgotten God in whom is salvation and strength. They are compared to a vineyard in which good vines have been planted along with "strange slips"; vines that are of a purpose contrary to righteousness. With great care they cause the plants to grow and flourish but the harvest is one of grief and sorrow and a day of desperation (10-11).

Vs. 12 - 14 ASSYRIAN ARMIES DOOMED

A woe is pronounced upon the great multitude of people whose noise is like rushing water, a description of an army and the associated noise, shouting and tumult. They rush onward, confident of victory, not knowing that when God's purpose has been accomplished, they will be destroyed. They flee as chaff that is chased by the wind. "They shall flee far off" could refer to the return of Sennacherib to Assyria (2Kings 19:36) (12-13). "Before the morning he is not" describes the 185,000 that were slain in one night by the angel of the Lord (2Kings 19:35). That was the destiny of the destroyer who spoiled and robbed the people of God (14).

Chapter 18

Barnes quoting a certain bishop Horsley writes, “The eighteenth chapter of Isaiah is one of the most obscure passages of the ancient prophets.” A bishop Lowth says, “The object of it, the end and design of it; the people to whom it is addressed; the history to which it belongs; the person who sends the messengers; and the nation to whom they are sent, are all obscure and doubtful.” (Barnes, pg.313) It is needless to say, this writer is perplexed as well, by the obscurity of this passage but we will do what we can toward understanding it.

Vs. 1 - 2 THE MESSENGERS AND THE MESSAGE

The word “woe” may be a mere interjection or salutation, and would be appropriately rendered by “Ho!” Or it may be a word denouncing judgment, or wrath, as is often used in this prophecy. (Barnes, pg. 314) The RSV renders it “Ah.” “Rustling wings” may allude to a land teeming with insects or to one densely populated. “Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia” is a territory in the region of the Nile and its tributaries. Ethiopia was also known as the ancient land of Cush and were military people. There were Ethiopians in the army of Shishak, king of Egypt, when he came against Jerusalem during the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chr. 12: 2-3). Asa, king of Judah, defeated Zerah, the Ethiopian, when he came with a large army to the valley of Zephathah(2 Chr.14:9-15. When Sennacherib was intent on conquering Jerusalem, he was deeply troubled when he heard that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was coming to make war with him (Isa 37:9; 2Kings 19:9). These people definitely had the power and numbers to make war (1). They send ambassadors by the sea in light vessels made of papyrus. These are boats that could be used on a river but would be unfit for a large body of water. To whom do they send these ambassadors and for what purpose? One possibility is they are seeking to form an alliance with Judah against Assyria. The word “*saying*” is an added word supplied by the translators and may change the meaning of this passage. It is possible that the prophet sends the “swift messengers” back to their own people. The rest of the verse describes the people and their location (2).

Vs. 3 - 6 JEHOVAH’S CALMING MESSAGE

Isaiah now breaks forth with a message, advising all the nations that unnecessary preparations for war should cease, for help is on the way. Jehovah of hosts will take care of the situation in due time and all the nations need to watch and listen for the ensign and the trumpet (3). The source of the message is Jehovah and He is pictured as One resting in heaven and observing the actions of those nations involved. He is calm and serene, not at all agitated and hurried as the swift messengers from Ethiopia. He will watch from His throne in heaven until the time to intervene. “Heat” and “dew” are necessary for the crop to grow and mature, ready for harvest. God says I am “like” them. His period of inactivity allows the enemy nations to grow until the fullness of time has come (4). Before the time of harvest actually arrives, God will begin the pruning process. Just when the vine is budding and flowering and a bountiful harvest is seemingly assured, then God begins to prune

sprigs and cut and take away the spreading branches. It seems that Assyria is the vine and the vinedresser is now pruning the vine and robs her of her strength and bountiful harvest (5). These branches that have been cut away now become food for the flesh-eating birds to feed upon in the summer and the wild beasts will finish the job in the winter. This certainly could refer to the bodies of the 185,000 who were slain by the angel of the Lord in one night (37:36) (6).

v. 7 ETHIOPIA PAYS HOMAGE

The Ethiopians now bring tribute to Jehovah of hosts in His city, Mt. Zion, that is, Jerusalem. They see Him as one to fear and reverence and bring a present to express thanksgiving for the mighty deliverance He had wrought. "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Ps 68:31) (7). The immediate fulfillment is unknown but the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy would be found when a remnant of every nation becomes obedient unto God through Christ Jesus and bring their offerings to Him in the church.

Chapter 19

The Burden of Egypt

Vs. 1 - 4 CONFUSION IN EGYPT

This is a message of judgment for Egypt. God is pictured as riding on a swift cloud and coming into Egypt. He is often seen this way in scripture (cf. Ps 104:3; Jer 4:13; Mt 24:30). The idols of Egypt are personified and tremble in fear before Jehovah. The people also tremble when they see the power of Jehovah **(1)**. Internal strife among the Egyptians will break forth **(2)** and because of this civil war brought on by the Lord, their spirit will be broken and they will turn to their idols and wizards for counsel **(3)**. (When God sets a nation against itself, there can be no unity and can only self-destruct.) Now in this confused and weakened condition, God says, "and the Egyptian will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord" and they will be ruled by a "fierce king". The fulfillment of this is uncertain but the Sovereign One who has all power is in control and His Word is sure **(4)**. The Assyrians did conquer Egypt in 671 B.C. and they were ruled by Esarhaddon, a cruel king who was the son of Sennacherib (2Kings 19:37).

Vs. 5 - 10 LIFE - GIVING RIVER WILL FAIL

The Nile River was essential to the prosperity of the nation and was so revered by the Egyptians that it came to be worshiped as a god. It was referred to as a sea due to its great width (cf. Nah 3:8 ASV fn.) but this great river would be dried up **(5)**. The irrigation canals would dry up and the crops that were "sown" by the brooks will wither and die **(6-7)**. The fishing industry would also suffer and mourn and this valuable food source would be no more **(8)**. The textile workers would be distressed because there will be no flax from which to weave their cloth **(9)**. All of society will suffer, from the pillars down to those who work for hire; all will grieve **(10)**.

Vs. 11 - 15 POLITICAL COUNSEL TO FAIL

The wise counselors of Pharaoh are fools. How can they claim to be wise, descending from ancient kings, when they don't know how to solve the present crisis? **(11)** Isaiah taunts, "where are thy wise men?" If they are so wise, let them tell us what Jehovah has in store for this nation **(12)**. The princes who were supposed to be wise were fools and had led Egypt astray and they are pictured as the cornerstone of the tribes or castes **(13)**. It is Jehovah who has allowed their perverse spirit and Egypt is like a drunken man staggering about in his own vomit **(14)**. There will be no work for anyone, whether upper or lower caste. All will be facing economic hardship under a cruel king **(15)**.

Vs. 16 - 22 SOME WILL WORSHIP JEHOVAH

In that day or in the time of the judgment, Egypt will fear as women. The mighty men of Egypt will tremble because of the threatening hand of the Lord (16). Egypt will be afraid of Judah and even the mention of her will bring fear, not because of her size and power but because of her Jehovah of hosts (17). It seems that the thrust of the prophecy now turns to the reign of the Messiah. In that day five cities of Egypt speak the language of the Hebrew people and will swear allegiance to Jehovah. One city shall be called "Destruction" but Barnes says the word can be rendered as "Deliverance" which is in harmony with verse 20 (18). Isaiah continues to build his case that Egypt will begin to worship Jehovah. "The altar in the midst of the land" means that the true God will be worshiped there and "the pillar at the border" clearly set forth to all men that they are entering a country that worships Jehovah (19). Egypt, who had been an oppressor of the Israelites, now becomes oppressed. They will cry unto the Lord for relief and He will send them a Saviour, a great One, a Deliverer. This is ultimately fulfilled in Christ (20). The prophet continues to describe their worship using the symbols of the Old Testament Hebrew worship but it is a metaphorical picture of a people drawing near to God. "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day" can only come about by the preaching of the gospel. "The mountain of the Lord's house" was to be established and many people were to go up to it and be taught of His ways (Isa 2:2,3). They will "do sacrifice" and "vow a vow unto the Lord" just as all Christians must do. This is what Timothy had done when he "professed a good profession" (1Tim 6:12). These are taking their vows seriously and they perform it (21). In the process of bringing them to maturity, the Lord will use a system of "smiting and healing." This is the discipline that God uses on His children (cf. Hos 6:1) (22).

Vs. 23 - 25 A HIGHWAY FROM EGYPT TO ASSYRIA

Isaiah uses the figure of a highway to represent the unity that will be apparent between Egypt and Assyria. The once hostile nations have beaten their "swords into plowshares" as they became brothers in the family of God (cf.35:8; 62:10) (23). Israel shall be a third with Egypt and Assyria and will be a blessing as they all in unity serve the Deliverer and Saviour (24). Jehovah of hosts now blesses Egypt and addresses them as "my people" and Assyria as "the work of my hands" and Israel as "my inheritance," the one chosen of old times to be God's people, through whom the Messiah should come (25). This brings to mind Peter's words- "which in times past were not a people but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."(1Pet 2:10) And so these people who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world are now become one new man and fellow citizens in the household of God (cf. Eph 2:12,19).

Chapter 20

v. 1 THE DATE OF THE PROPHECY

The judgment prophesied in the previous chapter is now beginning to happen. Judah is warned against seeking help from Egypt because Egypt is headed for disaster. The prophecy was delivered in 711 BC, the year that Assyria marched toward Egypt. Sargon II, king of Assyria, sent Tartan, his commander-in-chief, against Ashdod, a seaport city of the Philistines and it was taken. According to Young, Tartan is not a proper name but a title. (Vol.2, pg.52 fn.)

Vs. 2 - 4 THE SIGN AND ITS MEANING

Three years earlier, in 713 BC, Ashdod had been under Assyrian control but had rebelled. Other cities of Philistia had revolted and Edom, Moab and Judah were invited to join. Egypt had also pledged their support but the Lord prompted Isaiah to speak out against such foolishness. Isaiah is told by Jehovah to remove his sackcloth loin cover and his shoes and to go about "naked and barefoot" (2). Isaiah laid aside his outer garment and went about in his under garment for 3 years as a sign to Judah that trust in Egypt and Ethiopia was futile. They were to be lead away captive by the king of Assyria, naked and barefoot and to be further humiliated by uncovered buttocks. This shows us that the word "naked" does not mean "nude" because he would not have had to speak of the "uncovered buttocks" if they were completely nude (3-4).

Vs. 5 - 6 SHAME AND FUTILITY

Judah will be afraid and ashamed because they had expected help from Ethiopia and Egypt. Egypt had been the glory in which they had boasted but this has now turned to fear and shame (5). The prophecy ends in a note of despair. The inhabitants of the coast line of Palestine are the spokesmen. They say, "we trusted in Egypt and Ethiopia to save us and look what happened to them. Where are we going to get help to deliver us from the king of Assyria?" The weakness of Egypt was certainly revealed by Sargon but the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy came during the reign of Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib (670 BC) 2Kings 19:37 (6).

Chapter 21

Vs. 1 - 5 CONCERNING BABYLON

A woe is pronounced upon the city that is called “the desert of the sea.” Most scholars see this as Babylon and may be referred to as a desert because of the destruction that is to come upon it. Isaiah had prophesied this destruction in 13:19-22 and 14:22-23. The sea refers to the Euphrates River as in 19:5. The destructive armies that will bring desolation will come “as whirlwinds in the south pass through.” These were fierce desert winds of which they were familiar. Isaiah sees them coming from a “terrible land” (1). The prophet describes the vision as grievous or harsh and Babylon is described as a treacherous and violent destroyer who will be conquered. Elam and Media are assigned the task that will bring relief to those who have groaned under the oppressive hand of Babylon (2). The prophet supposes himself to be in Babylon and the vision causes him intense pain. He literally says, “I am bent, bowed down, twisted.” He became so dismayed that it interfered with his senses (3). It so affected him physically that his “twilight time” which was normally relaxing, became a time of anxiety and fear (4). Meanwhile, in Babylon, order is given to prepare the table for a night of eating, drinking and merrymaking but also, they are ordered to set a watch so that they might revel without fear. But then the alarm is sounded as they are warned of an unexpected attack; they are to arise and anoint the shield - prepare for battle (5).

Vs. 6 - 10 THE WATCHMAN SEES BABYLON FALL

The Lord told Isaiah to set a watchman on the watch-tower and let him announce what he sees (6). What he saw was an invading army, cavalry, pack-animals - the horsemen riding two abreast and he prepares to sound the warning (7). The watchman proclaims faithfulness to his duty (8). He sounds the alarm. He sees horsemen riding two abreast, the cavalry drawing near and hastening to the battle. The ruin of Babylon is inevitable and so his answer is: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” and her idols, those powerless gods, are broken to the ground (cf. Jer 51: 47, 52) (9). “O my threshing and the corn of my floor” refers to Israel whom God had permitted Babylon to thresh completely, is now like the corn that has come from the floor. But in their darkest hour, a ray of hope appears. Isaiah has declared to them what he has heard from Jehovah of hosts. Deliverance is to come and Babylon—the instrument of threshing—will fall, and there will be freedom for those who are the threshed grain (10).

Vs. 11 - 12 THE BURDEN OF EDOM

Dumah, which is Hebrew for “silence” (Ps 94:17; 115:17) the silence of death, refers to Edom, the land south of the Dead Sea. (Hailey, pg. 177, Commentary on Isaiah). Seir is the principal mountain of Edom or Idumea and in this vision Isaiah hears voices that cry unto him from Seir. Isaiah is the watchman and is here recognized as a representative of the true God, one who can give information concerning the outcome of the terrifying invasion. The question is: “Watchman, what part of the

night is it?” The urgency is indicated by the repeated question. A suffering people, oppressed by Assyria, cry out. How long until the morning light and the darkness of night is gone? **(11)**. “The morning cometh and also the night” was the answer to their question—“The morning cometh” to the captive Jews and “also the night” to the Edomites. A time of calamity and affliction will continue for Edom. One should refer to Jer 49:7-22 for a thorough description of the desolation and destruction of Edom. Barnes said, “During the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, the Idumeans invaded and took possession of the southern part of Judea. The prophet here refers to the fact, perhaps, that on the return of the Jews to their native land, they would revenge this by expelling them and by inflicting punishment on the land of Edom” (pg. 357). In spite of all this, Edom is encouraged to “return” and “come to the Lord” **(12)**.

Vs. 13 - 17 THE BURDEN UPON ARABIA

Dedan was the grandson of Abraham and Keturah (Gen 25:1-3). They were merchants in precious cloths (Ezek 27:20) and are here described as “traveling companies.” They are here advised to take refuge in the forest of Arabia, which would be a place covered with underbrush **(13)**. The Temanites are people who were hospitable and offer bread and water to those fleeing from the Assyria oppressors **(14-15)**. The Lord has revealed to Isaiah that all of this would come to pass within a year. “According to the years of a hireling” means it would be an exact time as specified. Kedar was a wandering tribe named after Kedar, the son of Ishmael (Gen 25:13) but is used sometimes to denote Arabia in general. (Barnes, pg. 361) Kedar is to be destroyed and there will be few of the archers or bowman left. This is sure prophecy of Jehovah **(16-17)**. The precise fulfillment of this prophecy is hard to determine, so says Young, Barnes and Wayne Jackson.

Chapter 22

Concerning Jerusalem V. 1 - 14

Rebuke of Shebna V. 15 - 25

Vs. 1 - 3 CONFUSION IN THE CITY

Jerusalem is called the "valley of vision" because it is eminently the place where God made known his will to the prophets. "What aileth thee now? What is the cause of the confusion, commotion and excitement and why are the people up on the housetops (1)? In spite of the approaching danger, there seems to be a spirit of riot and revelry and those men who have died were not killed in battle by the sword. This probably means through cowardice the soldiers had fled before the enemy and had died in less than honorable fashion (2). The rulers or military leaders had fled rather than defend the city. They are captured and "bound together" as prisoners and taken far away (3).

Vs. 4 - 8 GRIEF AND THE IMPENDING CALAMITY

Isaiah is overcome with deep sorrow and requests to be left alone to weep bitterly and indulge in overwhelming grief because of the ruin and desolation of Jerusalem (4). It is a day of trouble when all that is sacred is trodden under foot of the enemy. The cause of all of this is "Adonai Jehovah of hosts" and the people are perplexed because they can find no relief. There seems to be some "breaking down of the walls" even though Sennacherib was unable to take the city. The people's cry of lamentation reached to the surrounding hills and mountains (5). Assyria is assisted in its conquest by the Elamites who were distinguished for the use of the bow (cf. Jer 49:35) and by Kir, a city of Media (6). The rich and fertile valleys around Jerusalem will be occupied by the armies of the Assyrians and they shall advance to the gate of the city (7). Now it seems that God has withdrawn His "covering" of Judah and has left them vulnerable to defeat, but rather than turn to God for protection, they look to the armor of the "house of the forest". This is the armory that was built by Solomon (1Kings 7:2-5; 10:17) (8).

Vs. 9 - 11 PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENSE

This section could very appropriately been titled "Misplaced Faith and Trust" because the Jews tried every method of defense rather than trusting in Jehovah for protection. They had surveyed the walls and found breaches, places that needed repair (2Chr 32:5). They had used material from houses to make repairs of the wall. The water of the lower pool had been allowed to flow into the valley of Hinnom but under Hezekiah, a way was devised that allowed the water to be stored for the city's use (2Chr 32:4) (9-10). A reservoir was constructed between the two walls for more water storage but they failed to consider Jehovah who had made the water source nor did they realize that it was He who had brought this crisis upon them. Jehovah rebukes them for not looking "unto the maker" in contrast to their looking unto the

physical armor of verse 8. Compare verse 8 - "thou didst look" to this "ye have not looked" as God points out their lack of respect for Him (11).

Vs. 12 - 14 DECLINING MORALS

In such a time of calamity, God required those afflicted to weep and fast and pray. It was to be a time of mourning (12). But rather than mourning and repentance, they manifested an attitude of banqueting, drinking and merriment. Death seemed so imminent that their focus was on the "here and now" - "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die" (13). Jehovah reveals the final destiny of this people to Isaiah. A rebellious, reveling people will enter eternity with sins not purged, sins for which there is no pardon (14).

Vs. 15 - 19 REBUKE AND FATE OF SHEBNA

It seems Shebna occupied an office that was second only to the king. This man's actions were self-centered and having provoked Jehovah, Isaiah is instructed to seek him out and give him a message. "What hast thou here?" was the first question - What right do you have to expect to be buried in such a splendid sepulchre? "And whom hast thou here" or who among the dead that are buried here, do you claim to be related to? This seems to indicate that Shebna had no connection to the royal family. But he had taken it upon himself to hew out a sepulchre out of rock in a high place, a place usually reserved for princes and rich men (15-16). This man had been entrusted with a position of national trust and as his nation faced the threat of Assyria, he was only interested in occupying a place, even in death, to which he had no title. He will not occupy his sepulchre for Jehovah will carry him away into captivity and will cover him with shame and humility (17). God will throw him like a ball into a large country, probably Assyria, there he will die, and there he will not ride in his glorious chariots but will bring shame upon the king who appointed him and upon the one whom he served (18). He is to be removed from his office of trust and responsibility (19).

Vs. 20 - 25 ELIAKIM TO BE HIS SUCCESSOR

God will call his servant Eliakim to succeed Shebna and will clothe him with royal apparel and place the reins of government into his hand and he will be a father to the people of Jerusalem and the house of Judah. God will place upon his shoulder the key to the house or dynasty of David. He was to manage well the Davidic government and was to have complete control to open and shut. These same words are used to describe Christ as John wrote to the church at Philadelphia (Rev 3:7) (20-22). Eliakim will be as a peg driven into the wall, firm and cannot be easily removed, and in contrast to Shebna, will bring glory to his father's house (23). Many of Eliakim's kinsmen will elevate themselves to glory through him and "they shall hang upon him." "The offspring and the issue" indicates that all who were connected to the family rose to prosperity through the favors of Eliakim (24). That "peg in a sure place" was cut down and fell and all that were hung upon it fell and Isaiah

graphically describes the downfall of Eliakim. We can be sure it happened for "Jehovah hath spoken it" (25).

Chapter 23

The Burden of Tyre

Tyre was a thriving seaport city of Phoenicia on the Mediterranean coast. It was comprised of two cities; the old Tyre was a walled city on the coast and insular Tyre was built on an island about 3/4 mile from the coast and was unapproachable by its enemies. It was a city distinguished for its commercial importance, luxury and magnificence.

Vs. 1 - 7 DOOM OF TYRE ANNOUNCED

Tarshish was a city in Spain and did much trading in Tyre. The ships are told to howl for the great city of Tyre is destroyed; destroyed so completely that no house is left and no port where the ships dock. The news was made known to them in Chittim or Cyprus, 150 miles away (1). The inhabitants of the coast of Phoenicia are to be still (and mourn?) for the great city which the merchants of Sidon had trade with (2). One of the great sources of revenue was the export of crops from the fertile Nile (Sihor, cf. Jer. 2:18) river basin that contributed to Tyre's reputation as the "mart of nations" (3). Sidon was known as the mother of Tyre and is told to be ashamed or grieve for she has lost her child. Tyre, personified as a woman laments because she has born no children and is now totally destroyed (4). When the news reaches Egypt it causes great pain because with Tyre conquered, Egypt must face the oncoming Assyrian foe as well as the loss of her treasured seaport, thereby causing economic disaster (5). Isaiah now advises the inhabitants to seek refuge in Tarshish and those who live on the coast are to howl and lament (6). Is this the joyous city, the city that was of old times? Many of the inhabitants of this once proud city will walk over land to sojourn in a distant land (7).

Vs. 8 - 12 JEHOVAH DESTROYS BECAUSE OF PRIDE

Who could have taken counsel against this proud, magnificent city? Was it man or God? This is the city that has crowned many kings and whose merchants and traffickers were due the highest of honors (8). Jehovah of hosts has purposed the destruction of this city. Their pride was offensive to Him and it would serve as an example unto all other nations of the earth who are lifted up with pride and refuse to keep the Great God of the universe in their knowledge (9). Tyre being destroyed, the colonies, represented by Tarshish, are commanded to pass freely over their land like the Nile River. They are now free of the restraining hand of Tyre (10). God shook the kingdoms when He stretched His hand over the sea. The commandment given was that the stronghold cities of Canaan be destroyed (11). Sidon had established Tyre and was referred to as the virgin daughter of Sidon; virgin in respect to having never been violated by an enemy. But now her people are told to flee into Cyprus where they will not find the rest they desire (12).

Vs. 13 – 14 BABYLON—GOD'S INSTRUMENT

Babylon was not an organized government at the time of Isaiah's prophecy; hence they were a people who "were not." Assyria is credited with bringing Babylon to prominence and building the towers in Babylon. It was Babylon who overthrew the palaces of Tyre and brought the city to ruin (13). Again, the ships of Tarshish are to howl for they have lost their source of strength (14).

Vs. 15 - 18 TYRE TO BE RESTORED

After her destruction, Tyre is to be forgotten for a period of seventy years, at which time she will return as a harlot who returns to ply her trade once more (15). The figure of the harlot continues as she plays the harp and goes about the city singing songs to woo her lovers back to her home. The idea is that she will work hard to regain her prominence in the commercial world (16). At the end of seventy years, the Lord will visit Tyre, not to punish her but to restore her. She will resume her trade with all the nations and her purpose is still as before, self-gratification (17). Sometime after Tyre's restoration there is a change in attitude toward Jehovah. Her wealth is no longer hoarded as before (Zech 9:3) but it becomes "holiness to the Lord" (18). Tyre and Sidon did make contribution to the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3:7). Jesus visited there (Mt 15:21) and they came to hear Jesus and to be healed (Lu 6:17). Paul found disciples there when he was on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-4). Jerome says there were many churches there and they were quite generous in their support of the gospel (4th century A.D.). (Wayne Jackson's Comm., pg. 48) "After the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, it remained desolate until the close of the Babylonian monarchy. Then a new city was built on the island that soon rivaled the former in magnificence. That new city was besieged and taken by Alexander the Great, on his way to the conquests of the East (Barnes, Isaiah vol. 1, pg. 387).

III Judgment upon the World (24 - 27)

"With these chapters we come to one of the most remarkable sections of the entire prophecy. It is obvious that they form a close connection with the preceding prophecies against the nations. Indeed, they are a fitting conclusion to those prophecies. What is the prophet talking about? Why does he not identify more clearly his themes? These questions really receive an answer when we perceive that he is now uniting into one, as it were, all those enemies of God's people which he had previously (chapters 13-23) discussed individually. Consequently, when he now predicts judgment it is not local but universal, one which will cover the entire covenant-breaking earth; and in this judgment the theocratic nation Judah will also be included (24:1-13, 15, 16, 18-23). After this widespread judgment (and essentially the same picture is found in 2:12 ff.) there will come a world-embracing salvation (25:6-8; 26:9, 21; 27:1, 6), with the result that the remnant saved from the four corners of the earth will praise the glory and majesty of God and the prisoners who have been delivered from Assyria and Egypt will worship the Lord in Jerusalem (24:15,16; 27:13)." (Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*. 2, p. 146, 147)

Chapter 24

Vs. 1 - 12 CALAMITIES TO COME UPON THE LAND

This chapter opens with "Behold, Jehovah." It is He who makes all of this judgment to come upon the earth. It is emptied, made waste, turned upside down and the inhabitants scattered abroad **(1)**. All distinctions and class will be obliterated and this will lead to anarchy **(2)**. The land is to be emptied and spoiled because Jehovah has spoken **(3)**. The earth, the world and the haughty people lose strength and fade away **(4)**. The cause is the people. The earth is defiled by the judgment that is brought about by transgression of the laws, ordinance and everlasting covenant. (Note the verbs: transgressed, changed and broken) **(5)**. Therefore, or because of their sins, the curse has devoured the earth. The people are found guilty and are burned and only a few men are left. They are burned in the sense that they endure the withering, burning, consuming effect of the wrath of God. Only a few men were left after the invasion of the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:14-16) **(6)**. The new wine is used by way of metonymy for the grapes and the grapes mourn because of their withered condition brought about by the weakness of the vine. The merry hearted sigh because they are deprived of their luxury **(7)**. The joy and noise of the reveling people ceases and the music and the song will end. The strong drink becomes bitter without the usual music and singing **(8, 9)**. There are varied opinions as to the meaning of the city of confusion. Barnes emphatically states that it is Jerusalem but others are not so sure. Young said it "must in some sense be representative of the universality of the sin and judgment" (Vol.2, pg.163). Therefore, it would not be a specific city but would be a city of the world. The city is broken down and the people are so terrified that they have closed and bolted their doors or the entrance to their houses is obstructed by debris so that it makes it impossible to enter **(10)**. There is no wine available for refreshment and joy and

happiness has disappeared **(11)**. There is desolation within the city and the gate is also in ruin **(12)**.

Vs. 13 - 16a REMAINING REMNANT IS JOYFUL

After the judgment comes upon the nations, not all people will be destroyed as indicated by the olive tree/grapes illustration. The same figure was applied to Israel in 17:5-6 **(13)**. The remaining remnants lift up their voices in song and praise to Jehovah and glorify his name from the east to the west **(14, 15)**. Isaiah concludes the thought by saying that we have heard these songs of the righteous ones of all the earth as they praised God for their deliverance **(16a)**.

Vs. 16b - 23 MORE CALAMITIES

The calamity causes intense grief to the prophet and he feels "leanness" of soul because of the treacherous nature of the nations **(16b)**. There is no escape from the calamities. If a man escapes one danger, he falls into another. The wrath of the Almighty is poured out of the windows on high and it shakes the foundation of the earth (cf .Gen 7:11, Mal 3:10) **(17, 18)**. Utter desolation and ruin has come upon the earth as the earth is broken down, dissolved and moved **(19)**. The earth's agitation is then described as the staggering of a drunken man and shall move like a small, temporary cottage. All of this violent action is caused by the weight of transgression and the earth falls and is not able to rise again **(20)**. In that day, Jehovah will punish the ecclesiastical powers as well as the kings of the earth **(21)** and they shall be treated as prisoners of war, taken captive for a time but after many days they shall be visited for mercy and deliverance **(22)**. Heavenly bodies represent the princes and kings of the earth and they are covered with shame when Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion and Jerusalem before the elders of His people **(23)**.

Chapter 25

Vs. 1 - 5 THE PROPHET PRAISES JEHOVAH

The prophet reverts back to 24:14 where he depicts the people singing praises to Jehovah. The reason they sang was stated in 24:16-23 where it is described how God had triumphed over His enemies. Isaiah claims Jehovah as his God and breaks forth with praise unto Him. God had done wonderful things such as the miracles associated with the deliverance from Egypt. His counsels were of old time, i.e., devised long ago, faithfully executed, and consisted solely of truth (1). God had destroyed cities and made them into a heap of rubble. Here, he refers to "a city" which could be Babylon but could mean any city that was an enemy of God's people. "A palace of strangers" could apply to Babylon as it was a city of splendor with a palace on each side of the river and they were foreigners or strangers. This heap or ruin will never be rebuilt and could also apply to Babylon (cf. 13:19-22) (2). Because of this manifestation of Jehovah's mighty power, the strong people of this defenced city will glorify and fear Jehovah (3). Jehovah is now praised for the refuge He had provided for the poor and the needy. He has protected them from the storm, shaded them from the heat and made the blast of the enemy as ineffectual as a storm blowing against a wall (4). The "noise of the strangers" may refer to the tumult of battle or the celebration of victory and the related revelry. Just as an intervening cloud can provide relief from the searing heat of the sun, so will the Lord bring to silence the tumultuous noise and song of the enemies (5).

Vs. 6 - 8 A GREAT REJOICING IN JERUSALEM

The prophet now returns to the thought he had left in 24:23 where Jehovah of hosts is reigning in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. With the beginning of the reign of a new king it is customary to celebrate with a feast. The Lord of hosts provides this feast and all people are invited. They will have the finest food and drink represented by "fat things full of marrow" and "wines on the lees, well refined." This signifies the spiritual blessings that God brings to all men in the kingdom of the Messiah (6). In this mountain, Jehovah will destroy or abolish "the face of the covering" and "the veil that is spread over all nations." These figures represent the ignorance and sorrow which had covered the earth and it evidently refers to the custom of wearing a veil in mourning or sorrow (cf. 2Sam 15:30). The knowledge provided in this mountain will destroy the veil (60:2-3; Eph 4:17-18) (7). Then the cause of sorrow and mourning is swallowed up or removed, that is, death. This is done "in victory" and Paul gives understanding to this in 1Cor 15:54 where he said it happened when "this corruptible shall have put on immortality" at the resurrection. In verse 57 he said "the victory (is) through our Lord Jesus Christ." Isaiah then expresses the tender care that God will have for His people in the mountain. He will wipe the tears from their eyes because the cause of the tears has been removed, namely death, and the reproach of His people is also removed, all of this being accomplished at Calvary (8).

Vs. 9 – 12 JOY FOR ZION; PROUD TO FALL

With their God providing such victory, it is natural that the people will boast in their God. They have waited for Him and He will provide salvation for them **(9)**. For in Mount Zion the hand of the Lord provides protection, but Moab will be trodden down as straw is trodden under the feet of animals. Moab is used as an example of the enemies of God who are characterized as proud, boastful people (16:6; Jer 48:29-30) **(10)**. God's action is like the broad, sweeping stroke of a swimmer. The desolation of his enemies is thorough and their pride and spoils will go down with them. Some commentators believe it is Moab who "spreadeth forth his hands to swim" as a drowning man attempts to save himself. The NKJV translators rendered verse 11—"And He will spread out His hands..." meaning it is an action of God **(11)**. Their high walls of defense will not save them for God will "bring down, lay low and bring to the ground" their fortress and the message is further strengthened by the words - "even to the dust" **(12)**.

Chapter 26

Jerusalem's Song of Deliverance

Vs. 1 - 10 COMPLETE TRUST IN JEHOVAH

This song is to be sung in the land of Judah by the people of God as they are restored to their own land. No two commentators agree on this chapter so we will look at it literally and make application where possible to spiritual Jerusalem, the kingdom and church of the Messiah. The people proclaim that they have a strong city because God is defender and protector of it and it will not depend on walls and bulwarks (1). The city has been prepared and the returning people cry out for the gates to be opened so that the righteous who has kept the truth can enter in. These are they who have not apostatized from the truth during their captivity but have faithfully worshiped Jehovah (2). These Jews had suffered much hardship but the faithful had their mind and thoughts on Jehovah. They believed that he could and would deliver them and this gave them perfect peace (3). In view of this precious, perfect peace, they are exhorted to continue to trust Jehovah for in Jah (Yaw) Jehovah is a rock of ages, one of everlasting strength (cf. 1Cor 10:1-4) (4). His everlasting strength has been demonstrated when He brought down the lofty city, laid it low, "even to dust." The city of Babylon is in view (cf. 25:12) (5). The poor and needy had been oppressed by them but now will walk where the proud and arrogant once walked (6). The just walk in uprightness for The Most Upright One directs their path (7). They had walked in the way of the judgments of Jehovah; the judgments that He had brought upon the wicked. They had waited for Him in the sense that they desired to be able to know Him as they once did. The desire of their soul was a remembrance of their closer walk with Him and a return to His loving care (8). It was the desire of the righteous Jew to seek God, whether early or in the night, and their desire was to please Him. They realized that the calamities of judgment inflicted on them were intended to lead men to learn righteousness (9). They encourage God to show favor to the wicked by bringing His judgments upon them for they admit that the wicked will not seek righteousness while being blessed in the land of uprightness, but will continue to deal unjustly and will fail to see and appreciate the love and majesty of Jehovah God (10).

Vs. 11 - 15 JEHOVAH'S NAME TO BE GLORIFIED

Some men refuse to see the power and authority of God when His hand is lifted, either to bless or curse, but eventually they will see and will be ashamed that they did not sooner recognize the zeal God has for His people. It will be too late for them and "the fire of thine enemies shall devour them" (11). Peace is assured to God's people and its assurance is based upon God having worked all our works for us; he has done all we need for perfect peace and well-being (12). During their captivity, the Babylonian rulers had oppressed them and held them in subjection to their laws but now that they are restored to their own land they will mention only the name of Jehovah as their God (13). These kings are now dead and shall not rise up ever again to plague the people of God, for God had visited them through the person of Cyrus

and destroyed them. In contrast to Jehovah's name, which will be mentioned, these king's names will perish from the Jews memory (14). The population of the nation was increased by the many converts who came with them from Babylon (14:1, 2) but this verse may be messianic and as the kingdom increases in number and territory, God is glorified (15).

Vs. 16 - 19 JUDAH'S CRY AND GOD'S REPLY

In the time of trouble, Israel had visited Jehovah through the medium of prayer and this continued as long as His chastisement was upon them (16). This time of deep sorrow and grief was compared to the pain of childbirth and it was a time when they cried out because of their suffering (17). They have been as the pregnant women; they have been in great pain but they were not able to deliver but brought forth only nothingness. They tried to free themselves from bondage but failed and were not able to overthrow their captors. Human efforts apart from God had brought only failure and disappointment (18). Israel now is pictured as dead men being resurrected. They are told to "awake and sing." The dew from heaven refreshes and revives them "and the earth shall cast out the dead." We must not limit this to old Israel but we must see this as a prophecy of dead men coming alive through obedience to the gospel of Christ. A careful study of John 5:24-25 and Eph 2:1-6 will show that we are resurrected from the dead when we hear and obey. Ezekiel prophesied of a resurrection when God's children would become one nation under one king, all of this coming forth from a valley of "dry bones." The reader is encouraged to make a study of Ezek 37 (19).

Vs. 20 - 21 GOD'S INDIGNATION AGAINST SIN

The people are urged to retire to their chambers and hide themselves. Here again, it will be but "a little moment" by God's reckoning of time until "this mountain" (chap 25) and "the vineyard of red wine" (chap 27) will be established. They are to patiently wait until God's indignation is past and the way of salvation is open to all men (20). Jehovah will come out of His place and will punish men for their sins. No nation or people will be able to conceal their guilt in the shedding of innocent blood (21).

Chapter 27

v. 1 GOD SMITES BABYLON

"In that day" refers to the last verses of the previous chapter. It is the time when Jehovah comes out of His place to punish all the forces that have fought against God and His purpose. Isaiah employs three figures from mythology and describes them as a piercing serpent, a crooked serpent and a dragon. But these evil forces are no match for the "hard and great and strong sword" of Jehovah (1).

Vs. 2 - 6 GOD CARES FOR HIS VINEYARD

Israel is to sing respecting God's vineyard. Barnes suggests it is a responsive song where one portion of the people responds to another. A vineyard of red wine is the title of the song. This suggests that the vineyard is productive, in contrast to the one in 5:1ff where it brought forth wild grapes (2). Jehovah will personally tend to this new vineyard and will faithfully water, protect and care for it night and day (3). He is not angry with them anymore. If enemies of His vineyard (represented by briars and thorns) try to invade He will destroy them by burning them together (4). The enemy does not have to remain an enemy of God and face certain destruction. He can reach out to God and receive of God's strength, peace and protection (5). The vineyard is going to take root and flourish. New spiritual Israel shall blossom and bud and bring forth fruit. This represents the growth of the kingdom as the gospel goes "into all the world" (6).

Vs. 7 - 9 JUDAH SHALL NO MORE BE IDOLATORS

Has God smitten Judah as He smote those that smote Judah? Or is Judah slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by God? The thrust of this verse is to show a difference in the chastisement of God upon His people as compared to their enemies. Their enemies were to be completely destroyed. "Thou hast visited and destroyed them and made all their memory to perish." (26:14b) While Judah was punished for their sins they were not destroyed and a righteous remnant was preserved through whom the Saviour was to come (7). Young translates this verse - "In measure, in the sending her away, thou dost contend with her. By his hard wind he removes her in the day of the east wind"(Vol 2, pg.243). The thought of this very difficult verse seems to be that Judah's suffering and punishment is mild when compared to the judgment that has come upon the whole earth (8). But the design of the punishment was to purge or purify Judah's sins and this was the "fruit" or purpose. Judah had been guilty of idol worship and had by Jehovah been banished from their homeland that their sin may be taken away. The stones of the altar become soft as chalkstone and are beaten to powder and the groves and images shall not rise up anymore (9).

Vs. 10 – 11 NO COMPASSION FOR CITY

Yet the fortified city, which seems to be Jerusalem, shall be desolate like a wilderness, and the calf will feed there and eat the branches of the trees that spring up there **(10)**. The dry branches shall become fuel for the fire and women will come and gather them. These are a people without understanding of Jehovah and His will (Dt 32:28; Jer 4:22), and He will not show them mercy or favor **(11)**.

Vs. 12 - 13 ISRAEL RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

It shall come to pass in that day—the day of the vineyard—that the Lord will "beat off" and gather His children one by one. The figure is one of a farmer beating off fruit from his tree or the beating out of grain. Jehovah will gather His people from the Euphrates River to the Nile of Egypt. This represents the remnant that will respond individually to the gospel and become children of spiritual Israel **(12)**. The sound of the trumpet will call them from every place where they have been ready to perish and where they have been outcasts and they will worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-24) **(13)**. The following quote from Young describes this section as dealing with conditions in Christ's kingdom:

“The first thing to be accomplished, indeed, the purpose of the entire ingathering, is that the dispersed ones may worship the Lord in Jerusalem. In the light of this description it would seem that the verse refers, not primarily to the exile, but to the return of sinners in Jesus Christ. It is in Him that God has gathered into one His people scattered throughout the earth. “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph 1:10). (Vol 2, pg. 252-253)

IV A Series of Woes (28-35)

Chapter 28

While is it impossible to know exactly when this prophecy was uttered, it is clear that it was before the fall of the ten tribes, the northern kingdom of Israel, here referred to as Ephraim and also known as Samaria. It could have been during the reign of Ahaz when Pekah, king of Israel, had entered into a league with Rezin, king of Syria, for the purpose of resisting the Assyrians.

Vs. 1 - 4 THE OVERTHROW OF EPHRAIM

This chapter opens with a woe pronounced upon the Northern kingdom of Israel. Samaria was their capital and was situated on a hill overlooking a rich, fertile valley and so it is referred to as "the crown of pride." Intemperance was a prevailing sin in Israel and was also present in Judah (5:11, 12). Israel is called "drunkards" and is "overcome with wine." Time was running out for Samaria which was soon to be destroyed by the Assyrians and the ten tribes will be carried into captivity (2Kings 17:3-6) and so they are described as a "glorious beauty" but a flower that is fading away (1). The destroying force, which the Lord will use, is likened to a hail storm, a destroying storm and a raging river overflowing out of its banks with the ability to cast down to the earth with the hand of violence (2). It is the drunkards of Ephraim who are the object of God's wrath who will be trodden under feet (3). Samaria is to be destroyed swiftly and its inhabitants carried away, just as a hungry man picks the first-ripe fig and hastily eats it "while it yet in his hand" (4).

Vs. 5 - 8 JEHOVAH TO PRESERVE JUDAH

With this verse the subject changes; while Israel is to be destroyed, the kingdom of Judah would be preserved. Jehovah will be their crown of glory and a diadem of beauty; this in contrast to Israel's "crown of pride" in v.1 (5). He will enlighten those who sit in judgment that they might judge righteously and will be strength to them who defend His city, even to driving their foes back to the gates of their own city (6). Judah has also erred through wine and strong drink, even the priests and prophets have indulged in this sin and it has affected their vision and caused them to stumble in judgment. "They are out of the way" indicates how far they have strayed from the paths of righteousness (7). Their tables are full of vomit and filthiness and this shows how God looks upon this conduct with disgust and contempt (8).

Vs. 9 - 13 CONTEMPT FOR PROPHET'S MESSAGE

The people express contempt for the way in which God is instructing them through the prophet. He teaches us as if we were but infants just weaned from the breasts (9). They ridicule the prophet's manner of teaching them the basic truths of righteousness. The prophet used repetition and it became a "precept upon precept" type of teaching that the people resented (10). This is God's response to them - "Since they don't want to receive my instruction through the prophets, I will speak to

them through men of strange lips and another language.” They are going to be humbled by their captivity among a foreign and barbarous people (11). God had offered them rest through the prophets but they had refused to hear and obey (12). Therefore, God will teach them in the same manner they had ridiculed. They will have plenty of time to learn the lessons - line upon line as He teaches them lessons of judgment among a strange people. They will be "broken and snared, and taken" (cf. 8:14, 15) (13).

Vs. 14 - 15 A COVENANT WITH DEATH AND HELL

Jehovah now addresses the scornful men who rule the people of Jerusalem and admonishes them to hear Him (14). The people were living as though they had made a covenant with death and Sheol and both of these would have no effect upon them. They had so fabricated their lies that they had convinced themselves that there was safety in their falsehoods. The overflowing scourge of judgment would pass them by and they would be totally untouched (15).

Vs. 16 - 22 RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT PROMISED

They believed an alliance with Egypt would give them the desired security but God tells them that they will be provided with a "sure foundation" on which to build their lives. There can be no doubt that this refers to the Messiah because the New Testament so states (Rom 9:33; 1Pet 2:6-8) (16). But the people of Jerusalem shall be judged according to the exact rule of law and the lies which they were trusting in will be swept away by the overflowing waters which they had said would pass them by (17). Their covenant with death and Sheol would not stand when the overflowing scourge shall pass through and they will be trodden down by it. This refers to the Assyrian invasion that would come upon them (18). And when this judgment comes upon them, it will be continual vexation, day after day, night after night, and the message will be one of terror (19). The Jews will find that the lies they had trusted in will not protect them and will be like the bed that is too short and the cover that is too narrow (20). For the Lord shall rise up, or break forth in a sudden manner as He did at Perazim (2Sam 5:20) and will destroy Jerusalem and Judea. God will be as angry as He was in the Valley of Gibeon (1Chr 14:16) and He will do a work which men will think is strange because He will inflict punishment on His own people (21). Isaiah delivers a message he had heard from Jehovah. Judah must cease the scoffing or their punishment will be lengthened and intensified and will come upon the whole earth (22).

Vs. 23 – 29 GOD’S CHASTISEMENT ILLUSTRATED

In this section the emphasis is placed on the different processes a farmer uses in order to bring forth a proper harvest. He does more than just plow; he breaks up the soil to get ready for planting (23, 24). When the soil is ready, he plants the various seeds in the proper fields and all of his learning has come from God who endowed him with understanding and taught him by his providence (25, 26). The different

crops require different instruments in order to thresh out the grain without crushing or destroying it **(27)**. Corn for bread is more severely threshed than the cummin but he does not continue to thresh it. This is not his only business. It is only part of the process of obtaining grain for bread **(28)**. God will deal with His people in like manner. When severe measures are necessary, He will use them to punish His people. But like the farmer, He will vary His methods to what is fair and just **(29)**.

Chapter 29

Woe to Jerusalem

Vs. 1 - 2 ARIEL TO BE FILLED WITH GRIEF

It is not clear as to why the prophet addresses Jerusalem by this name but it is certain from context that Jerusalem is the subject. (Ariel means the lion of God.) It is identified as the city where David dwelt (cf. 2Sam 5:7-9). The prophet uses irony here when he tells them to go on year after year and kill and offer the sacrifices in their heartless, vain worship to God (cf. verse 13). **(1)** There will be distress, heaviness and sorrow during the siege, which God says He will bring upon it. Ariel also means "an altar" and this seems to be what God means here when He says "it shall be unto me as Ariel." It becomes a burning place of wrath where His enemies will be consumed as if they were a sacrifice on an altar **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 4 JEHOVAH TO ENCAMP AGAINST IT

God speaks of the armies, which he employs as under His control, and speaks of their actions as if it were He who was doing it. It was the army of Sennacherib who camped round about and prepared to lay siege against Jerusalem **(3)**. Judah's voice of arrogance now becomes a speech of humility, "low out of the dust." Assyria may not have brought them down to this state but Babylon later destroyed the city and took the people captive (Hab 1:5-11) **(4)**.

Vs. 5 - 6 BESIEGING ARMY TO BE DESTROYED

Just when it seems as though Jerusalem is doomed, Jehovah intervenes. The huge army described as a "multitude of strangers" becomes as fine dust and as chaff that passeth away with the wind. And "it shall be at an instant suddenly" just like a wind storm and the siege will be ended (37:33ff) **(5)**. They will be visited by Jehovah of hosts and the figure of a storm, earthquake and fire represents the sudden and awful judgment that will come upon them **(6)**.

Vs. 7 - 8 ENEMY TO BE DISAPPOINTED

Assyria and all who are allied with her in their fight against Jerusalem shall be as a dream of a night vision, when the dreamer awakes and realizes it was not reality but only a dream **(7)**. It is further illustrated by the hungry or thirsty man who dreams that he is eating and drinking but when he awakes he is still faint and has an unfulfilled appetite. So it was with the Assyrian who had visions of the wealth of Jerusalem that would soon be theirs, only to awake to great disappointment **(8)**.

Vs. 9 - 12 JEWS ARE SPIRITUALLY BLIND

Stop and stare at yourselves and wonder, be ye dazzled and blinded. The people of Jerusalem are drunken, but not with wine. They are morally and spiritually

intoxicated. They have perverted doctrine and erred from truth so that they cannot see clearly or walk steadily (9). God had allowed the Jews to fall into a spirit of deep sleep and their eyes were closed as was the prophets and seers (10). And the words of the prophet became to them as a closed book or like a letter to a man who cannot read (11, 12).

Vs. 13 - 16 HYPOCRISY ABOUND

These people had kept up a form of worship, which was only lip service, and the heart was not in it. Their fear of God was not from the Scriptures but was learned from men's doctrines (cf. Mt 15:9) (13). Therefore, Jehovah will proceed to bring judgment upon them, viewed here as a marvelous work, and it shall baffle their wisest and most prudent men (14). Woe is pronounced upon those who would try to hide their hypocrisy from Jehovah. They think that He does not see and know that their works are of darkness (15). They had turned things upside down. They had failed to honor Jehovah as the potter. It was as absurd as if the clay was to deny that it was a creation of the potter. They supposed that God was destitute of wisdom and did not know their thoughts and actions (16).

Vs. 17 - 21 CHANGES AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

Within an unspecified time, Lebanon would become a fruitful field. "This is evidently a proverbial expression denoting any great revolution of things." (Barnes, vol.1, pg. 444) The effect of such is stated in the following verses. It is a contrast of old national Israel to the new spiritual Israel (17). "In that day" there shall be a spiritual awakening wherein the spiritual deafness and blindness shall be cured; this in contrast to the condition described in vv. 9-12 (18). Those who have learned meekness through their trials and sufferings will joyfully serve the Lord and the poor (poor in spirit) shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. These have been subjected to oppression and poverty and have learned to trust Jehovah as their protector and defender (19). There will be a great change in morals of those who hold offices of power and the oppressors will be stopped. The scornful (28:14) will be consumed and those who seek for opportunity to commit crimes are cut off (20). These are those who were in charge of judicial proceeding and took advantage of the poor by means of misuse of the law (21).

Vs. 22 - 24 JACOB NOT ASHAMED OF HIS CHILDREN

All of these spiritual changes will result in Jacob being able to look with pride upon his people (22). These who are walking by faith are his children but Jehovah declares they are "the work of mine hands." Men who are recovered from sin are saved by the agency of God alone (Eph 2:8-10). They sanctify His Name and fear the God of Israel. This refers to the spiritual children of Jacob, the church of the New Testament (Gal 3:29; 6:16) (23). This new Israel "shall come to understanding" (2Tim 3:16-17) and "shall learn doctrine" (2Jn 9,10) (24).

Chapter 30

BACKGROUND

It was at this time in Judah's history that Hezekiah had rebelled against the king of Assyria (2Kings 18:7). The Jews were alarmed at the prospect that their land would be invaded by Sennacherib since it was known that he intended to make war on Egypt and he could easily take Judea on his way there. The purpose of this prophecy is to lead them to look away from Egypt and to place their confidence in God, at whose hand they were about to experience so great a deliverance from the much-dreaded invasion of Sennacherib.

Vs. 1 - 7 REBELLIOUS JUDAH TRUSTS IN EGYPT

Jehovah's message is one of rebuke to rebellious children who counsel with Egypt rather than trust Him for protection (1). They travel to Egypt to seek the strength of Pharaoh, which will be to their shame. This means that Egypt would not enter into an alliance or was unable or unwilling to defend them (2, 3). Judah's most honorable men, the princes, were sent as ambassadors to negotiate at Zoan and Hanes. Zoan was a city where the residence of the king was located (4). They were ashamed when they realized that their efforts to secure an effective alliance had failed and they had sought it rather than depend on God (5). They will load their treasures on beasts of burden and make the dangerous trip to the south, but it shall not profit them (6). Egypt's help will be worthless and Isaiah had tried to tell them that Egypt's power was waning. "Their strength is to sit still" means they are not the power they once were (cf. 36:6) (7).

Vs. 8 - 11 JUDAH'S REBELLIOUS ATTITUDE

The prophet receives a command to make a permanent record of the character of Judah. He was to "write it before them" that they might see the record and have it before them. It was to be written on a tablet and it is probable that this was for public display. But it was also to be recorded in a book for future generations to read and understand that this is a rebellious, lying generation who turn their backs upon Jehovah whom they had solemnly promised to take as their God. They are people who turn a deaf ear to the commands of God (8-9). They tell the seers, "See not"; in other words, we don't want to hear from Jehovah and they tell the prophet that they don't want to hear "right things." "Speak unto us smooth things" or make us feel good about ourselves by telling us those things that are in harmony with our desires and prejudices. Speak things that assure us of prosperity and success and please leave off all this talk about judgment and punishment. Just allow us to be deceived (10). Turn aside from the way, the way of the true precepts of religion and turn to the way of falsehood and deceit. We are weary of hearing of the Holy One of Israel, which you are forever speaking of (11).

Vs. 12 - 17 JUDAH'S JUST PUNISHMENT

Isaiah still speaks to them by the authority of the Holy One of Israel. Because you despise this word and love not truth, like a weak, bulging wall shall judgment come down upon you suddenly, without notice (**12, 13**). The ultimate end of Israel is to be like a piece of pottery that is broken into pieces, the pieces of which are so small that one could not transport a live coal or dip water out of a pit with it. The sense is that the republic of Israel will be finally destroyed, first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (2Kings 25) and then by the Romans in A.D. 70 (**14**). Jehovah had offered them peace and safety if they would place their confidence in Him (cf.7:4) but they had refused (**15**) and had chosen to place their trust in the horses of Egypt. (This was forbidden by Moses in Dt 17:14-16.) Their just punishment would result in them fleeing before their enemy, not because they were outnumbered but because of the Just One. They would stand out as a symbol of disobedience, much like an ensign erected on a high hill (**16, 17**).

Vs. 18 - 22 GOD IS GRACIOUS TO THOSE WHO WAIT

Jehovah will be gracious and merciful to those who will have confidence and wait for Him. After this time of calamity there will be a time of blessings when His people will dwell in Zion (**18-19**). And though the adversity must come, the Lord will provide teachers and you will hear His instructions that will keep you in the way (**20- 21**). The idols they had worshiped will be counted as defiled and cast away (cf. Dt 7:25) (**22**).

Vs. 23 - 26 GREAT BLESSINGS FLOW

In the day of the Messiah, God will bless the land with great fruitfulness (**23, 24**) (cf. Joel 2:21ff; 3:18-20). Rivers and streams of water upon every high mountain are also indicative of abundant blessings. It is to be after the great slaughter, which may be the Assyrian defeat, and "when the towers fall" could refer to Babylon (**25**). The intense light of the moon and sun represent the scriptural enlightenment of the gospel age.

Vs. 27 - 33 GOD'S WRATH UPON THE NATIONS

The prophet now returns to his own time and begins to express God's anger in figures of fire and an overflowing stream and leads them to destruction with a bridle in their jaws (**27-28**). Judah would have cause for great rejoicing (**29**) as the Lord expresses His anger in the figures of these natural calamities upon the Assyrian, which had been His rod of correction (**30, 31**). All who witness the overthrow of the enemy by Jehovah will celebrate with tabrets and harps (**32**) and the army of the Assyrians will be destroyed, as if it were a large pile of wood, set on fire by the brimstone breath of Jehovah (**33**). Tophet is a place S.E. of Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnon (Jer 7:31).

Chapter 31

Vs. 1 - 3 THE FOLLY OF SEEKING EGYPTIAN AID

A woe is pronounced on them that trust in horses and chariots. They think that the great number available and the strong men of Egypt will provide more protection than the Holy One of Israel (1). God is wise and He knows their thoughts as well as their actions and He will bring just punishment upon them. He will not violate His words and He will not retract them. He will arise against the house of the evildoers, the house of Jacob, and against the Egyptians that help them in their rebellion (2). The foolishness of trusting in men in lieu of God is pointed out. It is the difference between creature and Creator. When Jehovah stretches out His hand to punish, Egypt and Judah both shall fall (3).

Vs. 4 - 5 GOD TO PROTECT ZION

Jehovah now speaks through the prophet with two illustrations of His determination to preserve Jerusalem against the Assyrian attack. Just as the lion is intent on his prey and cannot be deterred by a great number of men, so it would be with Jehovah whose intent is to protect Mount Zion (4). Then He compares Himself to birds that hover over the nest to defend their young. God will "deliver" and "preserve" Jerusalem (5).

Vs. 6 - 7 A CALL TO REPENTANCE

Judah has been presented with the wisdom and the all-sufficiency of Jehovah and now they are urged to turn from rebellion and revolution and repent (6). For in the day of the attempted invasion of Sennacherib, every man will realize that his idols are worthless and will cast them away. They had sinned against Jehovah when they made them with their hands (7).

Vs. 8 - 9 JEHOVAH DEFEATS ASSYRIA

Assyria will fall by the sword but it will not be by the sword of man. It will be by the direct intervention of Jehovah (2Kings 19:35-36). The Assyrian monarch was able to flee back to his own land (8). Assyria's "rock" or strength is replaced by fear and his princes are dismayed when they see any ensign or banner. Jehovah's fire remains at Jerusalem where the altar was and where He was worshiped (9).

Chapter 32

Vs. 1 - 8 A RIGHTEOUS KING TO REIGN

Isaiah now looks ahead to the righteous reign of a new king, the Messiah. The princes are the “royal priesthood” (1Pet 2:9). It is a reign of true righteousness as compared to the corrupt rule of the kings of Judah **(1)**. This man is not just any man but He is the king of Righteousness (Jer 23:5). He will provide shelter from the storms of life (25:4), water for the refreshing of the soul (Jno.4:14) and shade for the weary traveler **(2)**. It will be a time when Divine truth will be clear and men will understand and be ready to communicate, in contrast to the Jews of 6:9-10 **(3-4)**. Men will be recognized for their true character and their evil nature will be exposed **(5)**. For the fool will prove by his words, deeds and manner of life that he is evil and will not fail to destroy the poor with lying words **(6-7)**. But the nobleman makes noble plans and stands by them **(8)**.

Vs. 9 – 15 COMPLACENT WOMEN WARNED

The prophet calls upon the women whom he had vividly described in chapter 3:16-26, women who were basking in affluence and comfort, to heed the message **(9)**. Sometime in the future the vintage crop will fail and the harvest will not come. This will come about because of the invasion by the Assyrian army **(10)**. Take off your splendid garments and dress in sackcloth and lament **(11)**. Lament, for the pleasant fields that have been your source of nourishment will become barren and overgrown with thorns and briars **(12-13)**. The palaces and the city shall be forsaken and become a habitation for flocks and wild animals **(14)**. The effects of this devastation will continue "until the Spirit be poured on us from on high" at which time the wilderness becomes the fruitful field again **(15)**. This is in reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (cf: Joel 2:28ff; Acts 2:17ff)

Vs. 16 - 20 HAPPY TIMES TO FOLLOW

Justice and righteousness shall prevail in the kingdom of the Messiah and the work of righteousness shall be peace; peace between men, and between men and God that produces quiet confidence **(16-17)**. God's people will dwell in peace and safety but the Assyrian army shall reap the judgment of God and be stripped of their power as a forest is stripped of its leaves in a hail storm (cf. 10:18, 19, 33, 34) and the city in humility shall be humbled. This may refer to Nineveh when the pride of the capital city would be humbled by the complete overthrow of their army and the annihilation of their hopes **(18-19)**. The blessed (those in the kingdom) will live in peace and will enjoy quiet resting places and continual blessings as illustrated by those who “sow beside all waters” (cf. 30:23-26) **(20)**. Peace in the kingdom will be a different kind of peace; a peace that depends not on external circumstances of the world but on our relationship with God. (Jn 16:33; Rom 5:1)

Chapter 33

Woe to Assyria

Vs. 1 - 6 ASSYRIA TO BE DEFEATED BY JEHOVAH

This chapter begins with a description of Sennacherib and his army who plundered and devastated the cities and countries they had invaded and are about to advance to Jerusalem for this same purpose. They were going to cease to spoil and deal treacherously and then they were going to suffer at the hands of one who would deal treacherously with them, namely Babylon (1). The Jews offer a solemn prayer to Jehovah for deliverance from this threatened invasion (2). The Jews also recognized that the people fled and nations were scattered when Jehovah entered the battle (3). The Assyrians will leave spoils behind that will be gathered by the Jews, just like the caterpillar or the locusts hastily gather their food. (4). Jehovah will be exalted by this deliverance and Zion will be filled with reverence and respect for the judgment and righteousness rendered (5). Wisdom and knowledge will be available to those that trust in Him and those that fear Jehovah have the true treasure (6).

Vs. 7 - 12 JEWS ALARMED - JEHOVAH CONFIDENT!

The Jews had sent ambassadors to Sennacherib to enter into a negotiation with him to spare the city and the nation, but to no avail and they wept bitterly (2Kings 18:13-16) (7). The land of Judah had been devastated, people were afraid to travel. The Assyrians had not kept their word and had continued to plunder the cities as well as the various territories of the region (8-9). Jehovah announces He will now rise and be exalted as He takes action against the enemy. They will be like chaff and stubble and be consumed. The people shall be as lime that is burned in the kiln and as thorns or brush that are cut up and burned in the fire (10-12).

Vs. 13 – 19 JERUSALEM EFFECTED BY INVASION

The devastation of the Assyrian army would be so great that all nations would know, nations far and near. All of them, especially Judah should acknowledge that it was accomplished by the strength of Jehovah (13). The intensity of Jehovah's anger is so great that when witnessed by the sinner and hypocrites in Zion they ask; "Who can stand the devouring fire of His wrath forever?" (14) The characteristics of the righteous are described. He lives righteously and speaks uprightly. He will not be involved in false weights and false dealings and he rules fairly according to justice and will not be swayed by bribes. He will not be involved in violence and murder and will avoid places where evil is found (15). He will dwell in safety and God will sustain him (16). The eyes of the righteous shall be able to look into the distant future and see the Messiah, the King in His beauty, and also the land of promise offered to the faithful (17). They will meditate upon the terror that once dominated the land. The scribe, the receiver and he who counted the towers are examples of the enemy who had once been in control (18). "Thou shalt not see a fierce people,"

means that the enemy that is advancing with so much confidence will not come into the city (19).

Vs. 20 - 24 LOOK UPON ZION, THE CITY OF GOD

The Assyrians are gone and now God's people are commanded to look at Zion, the city of our set feasts. They are to see it as a place of habitation, a permanent dwelling place as opposed to a tent that had to be taken down and moved (cf. Heb 12:28) (20). But there, that is, in Zion, the glorious Jehovah will be unto us as broad rivers and streams, which are a source of great blessings and beauty. But the inhabitants of this city will be free from the threat of hostile forces and warships (21). For Jehovah is our Judge, Lawgiver, King and Saviour which describes the role of Christ in this New Jerusalem (22). The present physical Jerusalem is pictured as a ship whose tacklings are loosed, whose mast cannot be made firm and therefore unable to spread the sail. They are weak and defenseless but because of Jehovah's strength and intervention they are now able to divide a great spoil; it is the lame and weak that take the prey (23). And citizens of the New Jerusalem shall be healed of their spiritual sickness and have their sins forgiven (24).

Chapter 34

Vs. 1 - 4 THE ENEMIES TO BE DESTROYED

The nations and the people of the earth are invited to come near and hear the words of the prophet (1). Jehovah is angry at the nations and doom is pronounced upon their armies because of their opposition to His people. He speaks in the past tense as if it had already happened (2). Their people who die in the slaughter shall lie unburied (cf: 18:6) and the mountains would be saturated with their blood. Their destruction is further portrayed as the heavenly bodies being dissolved and dry leaves falling from the vine (3-4).

Vs. 5 - 8 EDOM - OBJECT OF WRATH

The sword of the Lord is intoxicated with wrath and descends upon the people of Edom to fulfill the judgment of God (5). The judgmental slaughter will be like the blood sacrifice under the law but Bozrah and the Edomites will be the sin offering (6-7). It is the day of Jehovah's vengeance when He will punish those who have had a controversy with Zion (8).

Vs. 9 - 10 EDOM - PERPETUALLY DESOLATE

The desolation of the land is described in highly figurative language. The river flows not with water, but with tar or resin and is pictured as aflame and the desolation is forever and ever. The image is taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Jer 49:17,18).

Vs. 11 - 15 EDOM - HOME TO WILD CREATURES

The land will be reduced to a wasteland that would not be inhabited by man, but would be the home of wild animals and birds. Jehovah will "stretch out upon it the line of confusion." God has marked it for desolation and He will perform it (11). There will be no need for the princes as there will be no people over which to rule. (12) The palaces are over grown with brambles and the dragons and owls shall live there. The wild beasts congregate there and the doleful cry of the satyr (pronounced saw-er') and the screech owl are heard there, along with the great owl and vultures (13-15).

Vs. 16 - 17 GOD'S WORD - SURE PROPHECY

Mankind is challenged to observe what Isaiah has written concerning the nations and the fulfillment thereof. They will know assuredly that none of these prophecies have failed (16). The lot has been cast, the line drawn and they (the wild beasts) shall possess the land of Edom forever, from generation to generation (17).

Chapter 35

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of the previous chapter. In chapter 34, the once rich land of Edom will become a desolate wilderness fit only for wild creatures to inhabit. Now in contrast we see the wilderness become a place of spring-like beauty.

Vs. 1 - 2 THE WAY OF BLESSINGS

The blessings of this chapter will find its ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah. It is “the wilderness and the solitary place” that are to experience a great transition as it enjoys the blessings that come upon it. It represents the empty, moral condition of the world that was to receive these great spiritual blessings **(1)**. The wilderness is personified and rejoices with “joy and singing.” They shall see the glory of Jehovah. This could only be “the Word (that) was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 4 THE WAY OF LEADERSHIP

The command is to the leadership. They are to strengthen the weak hands and fortify the weak knees (Heb 12:12) **(3)**. They are to encourage the fearful to be strong and realize that Jehovah will come with salvation for the obedient **(4)**.

Vs. 5 - 7 THE WAY OF MIRACLES

Those who are spiritually blind will be healed and the spiritually deaf will hear (Mt 11:4-5). The streams in the desert represent the water of life that the Messiah brought to mankind (cf. Jn 4:13,14) **(5-6)**. In this new era the sun-parched land becomes a pool of water symbolic of the great spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus **(7)**.

Vs. 8 - 10 THE WAY OF HOLINESS

Running through this lush, green well-watered land is a highway; a highway that shall be called The Way of holiness. The unclean shall not use this highway but it shall be for “those,” those being they who have had their eyes opened and their ears unstopped. These are now holy and can travel this highway. The wayfaring men, as fools, will not walk on this highway. “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”(Ps 14:1a) Proverbs describes a fool as one who hates wisdom (1:7; 24:7) so he will never walk in this “straight and narrow way. **(8)** Those who travel this way can do so in complete safety for no lion or ravenous beast shall travel thereon, but it shall be a highway for the redeemed to walk on **(9)**. The ransomed of the Lord are those who have experienced release from captivity and are now in Zion where there is singing and everlasting joy. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away for they cannot be present where rejoicing and gladness exist in abundance **(10)**. How blessed are those who know the Way, the Truth and the Life and are traveling that straight and narrow way to the eternal city where the Holy One of Israel reigns!!!

V Historical Section (36-39)

Chapter 36

This section, chapter 36 through chapter 39 contains the historical portion of Isaiah. At first, it deals with Sennacherib and his threat to Judah and Jerusalem, which ends with the destruction of his army. It also contains an account of the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah as well as an account of his boastful display of his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon. Parallel accounts of these events are found in 2Kings 18-20 and in 2Chr 32.

Vs. 1 - 3 SENNACHERIB INVADED JUDAH

Sennacherib came up against the defenced cities of Judah and took them but Libnah and Lachish are exceptions. (cf. 2Chr 32:9 and Isa 37:8) According to Assyrian records, he captured 46 Judean cities and took over 200,000 prisoners (Young, Vol.2 pg. 568) (cf. 2Kings 18:13-16)(1). The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh with a great army unto the representatives of King Hezekiah and they met by the upper pool. This is the same spot where Isaiah had met with king Ahaz who had rejected the word of God and instead turned to Assyria (7:12) (2-3).

Vs. 4 - 10 RABSHAKEH'S BLASPHEMOUS RESPONSE

Rabshakeh requests that they ask Hezekiah who it is that he trusts in and who had given him such boldness as to rebel against one so strong as the Assyrian forces (4-5). It is futile to trust in Pharaoh, king of Egypt, because he is like a broken reed and will not be a help but a hindrance (6). And if you say, "We trust in Jehovah," isn't that the god whose altars Hezekiah has destroyed? Surely he will be of no benefit to you since he is no longer worshiped. Sennacherib has misunderstood to whom the groves and altars had been dedicated (2 Ki. 18:4) (7). Rabshakeh continues- Now the sensible thing to do would be to give tribute to Sennacherib and I will give you two thousand horses if you can find riders to set upon them. Since you can't find that many how do you expect to defeat one captain and his men who would have more horses than that? Egypt cannot help you with chariots and horsemen (8-9). (The Law of Moses forbade Cavalry). (cf. Dt 17:16) Rabshakeh now claims Divine direction for his intended destruction of the land of Judah and Jerusalem (10).

v. 11 THE EMBASSY'S REQUEST

The Jew's representatives request that Rabshakeh speak to them in the Syrian language so the men that were on the wall could not understand the threat being made against them, lest they become discouraged.

Vs. 12 - 20 RABSHAKEH TRIES TO DEMORALIZE

The request was denied and Rabshakeh proceeds to threaten them with devastation so severe that the resulting famine will cause them to consume their own body wastes. He continues to speak in the Jews language and speaks for the king of Assyria **(12-13)**. He declares that Hezekiah cannot deliver them from the impending destruction and neither can Jehovah whom Hezekiah had encouraged the people to have faith in **(14-15)**. They are admonished to make peace with the king of Assyria and enjoy abundant blessings. He promised to move them to a land rich and fertile like their own land **(16-17)**. They are told not to believe Hezekiah when he promises that Jehovah will deliver them. All the other nations that had been conquered had gods that they trusted in but they were not delivered. Why do you think Jehovah will deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? **(18-20)**.

Vs. 21 - 22 EMBASSY REPORTS TO HEZEKIAH

The Jews representatives did not give Rabshakeh an answer for the king had so commanded them. They were greatly distressed and tore their clothes as they went in to the king and reported the words of Rabshakeh **(21-22)**.

Chapter 37

Vs. 1 - 5 AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Upon hearing the distressing news, Hezekiah dresses in sackcloth and goes into the house of the Lord (1) and he sent his representatives, also dressed in sackcloth unto Isaiah the prophet (2). They delivered the message from Hezekiah who mournfully proclaims that it was a day of trouble for Judah and they were not strong enough to resist the threats of Assyria (3). His hope was that Jehovah had heard the blasphemous words of Rabshakeh and would take action against him and he implores Isaiah to pray for the remnant (4-5).

Vs. 6 - 7 ISAIAH'S REPLY

Tell Hezekiah that this word is from Jehovah - Don't be afraid of the words you have heard from the servants of the king of Assyria (6). I will put a spirit in him, a change of will or disposition. Then he will hear a report that will influence him to return to Assyria and there I will cause him to die by the sword (7).

Vs. 8 - 13 SENNACHERIB BLASPHEMES

When Rabshakeh returned, he found Sennacherib warring against Libnah (8). Sennacherib had heard that the king of Ethiopia was coming to make war with him so he sent messengers to Hezekiah saying, don't let thy God, in whom you trust, deceive you by saying that Jerusalem shall not be possessed by the king of Assyria (9-10). Take a look at the nations we have destroyed and realize that you too will fall. Their gods could not protect them and my fathers destroyed them (11-13).

Vs. 14 - 20 HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

When Hezekiah received the letter, he read it and went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord and prayed (14-15). He addresses Him as "Jehovah of hosts, Elohim of Israel" and confirms his belief that He alone is Elohim of all the kingdoms and Creator of heaven and earth. He implores Jehovah to discern the reproachful words of Sennacherib (16-17). He admits the truth that Assyria had been successful in battle and had destroyed pagan gods, who were not gods at all. He asks God to save them from the Assyrian forces to show the kingdoms of the earth that He alone is God (18-20).

Vs. 21 - 29 JEHOVAH'S ANSWER

Jehovah now speaks through Isaiah and acknowledges Hezekiah's prayer against Sennacherib (21). Jehovah describes Jerusalem as one laughing at the threats of Sennacherib and scornfully shakes her head at him (22). Sennacherib has blasphemed and lifted up his voice against the Holy One of Israel (23). He has blasphemed through his servant as he boasted of his chariots and his ability to cut down the cedars and fir trees of Lebanon. He could dig for water and supply his

army or he could dry up the rivers of Egypt (24-25). Jehovah now claims that all of the power and workings of Sennacherib were His plan that was devised from before the foundation of the world and Assyria was but a tool in His hand. They were able to destroy these defenced cities and the inhabitants were powerless to stop them because it was the workings of Jehovah (26-27). God told Sennacherib, I know where you are and your every movement and your rage against me and I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips and send you back to where you came from (28-29)

Vs. 30 - 32 PROVIDENTIAL CARE PROMISED

This promise is to Hezekiah and Judah: The ground will supply their needs and within three years, things will be back to normal and Judah will prosper. A remnant will be preserved in Jerusalem by the zeal of Jehovah of hosts.

Vs. 33 - 35 JERUSALEM SAFE

Jehovah proclaims that Sennacherib will not enter this city nor assault it in any way and he will go back by the way that he came. The city would be saved for Jehovah's sake and for "my servant David's sake." (cf. 2Sam 7: 11-16)

Vs. 36 - 38 SENNACHERIB'S FATE

The angel of the Lord went forth that night (2Kings 19:35) and smote 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and Sennacherib went back to Nineveh and dwelt there. While he was worshiping his pagan god, two of his sons killed him with the sword and they fled to Armenia and another son, Esarhaddon, reigned in his place. Young says that this took place about 20 years after his return to Nineveh. (vol. 2 pg. 506)

Chapter 38

Hezekiah's Sickness and Recovery

Vs. 1 - 3 HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

It was in the days of the Assyrian invasion that Hezekiah was sick unto death. Isaiah was sent to him with a message from Jehovah - "Set your house in order for you are going to die" (1). Hezekiah's immediate reaction was to turn his face toward the wall and pray unto Jehovah (2). He asked Jehovah to remember his life of diligent service, walking in truth and with a perfect heart, and he wept with great weeping. At this time, Hezekiah had no son to be heir to the throne and so the Davidic dynasty through whom the Messiah was to come would end abruptly (3).

Vs. 4 - 6 JEHOVAH'S PROMISE

Jehovah answered Hezekiah's prayer immediately and told Isaiah to return to him with the message (2Kings 20:4). Jehovah said He had heard his prayer and had seen his tears and He would heal him; on the third day he was to go up to the house of the Lord (2Kings 20:5) (4-5). And he would add 15 years unto his days and he and the city would be delivered out of the hand of the king of Assyria and it would be done for Jehovah's sake and for David's sake (6).

Vs. 7 - 8 A SIGN GIVEN

Hezekiah had a part to play in his recovery. According to the 2 Kings account they were to place a lump of figs on the boil which they did, and he recovered. By the same account, Hezekiah was given a choice of signs from the Lord: he could have the shadow of the sun dial move forward or backward and he chose to have it go backward ten degrees (2Kings 20: 8-10).

Vs. 9 - 14 HEZEKIAH'S DEEP LAMENTATIONS

After his recovery, Hezekiah wrote a song expressing his feelings and fears when he faced the prospect of death and in the second part he expresses his praise to God for His goodness and mercy when He healed him and gave him life. Hezekiah felt that he was being cut off at noontide and was being deprived of the residue of his years that he could reasonably expect to enjoy. He was going to the "gates of Sheol," "the abode of the dead" (9-10). He expresses regret that he would no longer enjoy the company of Jehovah and the inhabitants of the world of the living (11). He sees his life as being as temporary as a shepherd's tent or as a rug that is removed from the weaver's loom before it is finished. God would cut him off in one day's time (12). His pain was equal to that caused by a lion who crushes the bones of his prey and brings about sudden death (13). He chattered like a bird and made a mournful sound like a dove. He looked to God for help and surety and to be relieved of his oppression (14).

Vs. 15 - 20 GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS

Hezekiah expresses surprise and gratitude for his deliverance. Jehovah had promised to heal and He had performed it. Hezekiah promised to walk humbly all the rest of his life and to remember these hours of deep distress from which he had recovered (15). He declares that by God's gracious words and deeds men live and God's words and deeds had caused him to live actively (16). In spite of the bitterness that had befallen the king, God had, in love, delivered his soul from the pit of corruption and freely forgiven him of all his sins (17). Those who enter Sheol with their sins unforgiven cannot praise God for they will be eternally separated from Him. The object of hope is to be "thy truth" and the truth of God's promises cannot be hoped for by these who have died in their sins (18). It is the living, especially those who live again, who can praise God as Hezekiah does this day. God has forgiven Hezekiah and restored his soul to life and it is the duty of the father to make known the truth of God's promises to his children (19). The Lord was prompt or quick to answer Hezekiah's prayer; therefore it was Hezekiah's desire that Judah sing this song of praise to Him all the days of their life in the temple of Jehovah (20).

Vs. 21 - 22 THE CURE AND SIGN

For comments on these verses refer to verses 7 and 8.

Chapter 39

Related References: 2Kings 20:12-19; 2Chr 32:24-31

Meradach-baladan, with the help of the Elamites, took possession of Babylon as early as 721 BC and reigned until 710 BC when Sargon II drove him out. After the death of Sargon he again conquered Babylon in 703 BC. He reigned nine months and was defeated by the Assyrians. (Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol 2 pg. 533)

v. 1 BABYLON SENDS EMBASSAGE

The news concerning Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous recovery had traveled to Babylon and Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon had sent letters and a present to Hezekiah.

v. 2 HEZEKIAH'S PRIDE

Hezekiah was flattered by all this attention. "His heart was lifted up" (2Chr 32:25) and so it seems that he had forgotten that he had vowed to "go softly all my years" (38:15). Pride got the best of him and he showed his potential enemy all his wealth and arsenal, which were extensive at this time (2Chr 32:27-29).

Vs. 3 - 4 ISAIAH INTERROGATES

Isaiah came to Hezekiah with three questions: (1) what did these men say? And before Hezekiah could answer (2) where are they from? Hezekiah answers with a boast - They have come from a faraway country unto me, even from Babylon (3). (3) What have they seen in thine house? Hezekiah answers "All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them." He is completely truthful with his answer and reveals all he had done (4).

Vs. 5 -7 DOOM PRONOUNCED

The message is from Jehovah of Hosts - the days will come when all that is in your house and all that was laid up by your fathers shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left. You have shown them all-all shall be taken away. Jehovah has said it (5-6). They will also take away your sons and they will be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (Dan 1:1-7) (7).

v. 8 HEZEKIAH'S RESPONSE

Hezekiah humbly accepts the words from Jehovah and says that it is "good." He is especially appreciative that this "carrying away" will not happen in his day but "there shall be peace and truth in my days." The captivity did eventually come - about 100 years later when Judah had become a very sinful nation (cf. 2Kings 24:10-16).

VI Israel's Restoration from Babylonian Exile

(40-66)

Chapter 40

In chapter 39, it was prophesied that Judah would go into Babylonian captivity. The theme of this last section of the book is written to give them hope and comfort and to point them to the coming of the Messiah where true comfort would be found.

Vs. 1 - 2 ISRAEL TO BE COMFORTED

The priests and the prophets are commanded to address the people with words of comfort from “your God.” He has commanded us to comfort you, His people **(1)**. They are to speak to them, here called Jerusalem, and vigorously proclaim (cry) unto them that their time of captivity is accomplished and their sins have been pardoned as evidenced by their release from captivity **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 5 PREPARE THE WAY

The New Testament makes it clear that the ultimate fulfillment of the voice crying in the wilderness is that of John the Baptist (cf. Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lu 3:4-6; Jn 1:23). He was to be the harbinger of the Messiah and he was to cry unto “my people” instructing them to make themselves ready for the coming of Jehovah **(3)**. It was a call to repentance and every obstacle is to be removed, here referred to as every valley exalted and every mountain made low. It was the work of John the Baptist “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Lu 1:17) **(4)** It was Jehovah who was to be revealed and all flesh was to see Him (Jn 1:14). It was sure to come to pass for Jehovah hath spoken it **(5)**.

Vs. 6 - 8 THE ETERNAL WORD

The voice said, “Cry.” And another voice said, “What shall I cry?” Neither voice is identified but the message is clear. All flesh is weak and temporary and is like the grass and the flower of the field **(6)**. The grass withers and the flower fades when the breath of Jehovah blows upon it and this is illustrated by both people and powers who have resisted Him **(7)**. The thrust of the message is all flesh is temporal but the word of our God is sure, steadfast, and will stand forever **(8)**.

Vs. 9 - 11 SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

The messenger who delivered the joyful news to Zion and Jerusalem is exhorted to boldly declare it to the cities of Judah saying, “Behold your God!” **(9)**. Jehovah will come with power and He will rule and accomplish what He wills and He will reward those who obey His will **(10)**. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. The lambs are gathered with His arm, the strong arm that is mentioned in the previous verse. He is able to protect His sheep and gently leads those that are with young **(11)**.

Vs. 12 - 17 WISDOM, POWER AND DOMINION

Who is this God that is coming with power to His people? The prophet now sets forth a description of the powerful work of the Creator. No man could measure the waters in his hand. Only an omnipotent Creator could do the things described (12). No one has directed the Spirit of the Lord and no one has taught or instructed Him (13-14). The nations and the isles are small when compared to the Creator (15). All the forest of Lebanon and the beasts thereof would not be an adequate sacrifice to one so great (16). The nations are counted less than nothing when compared to Almighty God (17).

Vs. 18 - 24 FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLS

The prophet begins to contrast Jehovah to the idols that the Israelites had worshiped and he challenges them to make a comparison. What likeness will ye compare unto him? The answer is obvious - none will compare! (18). Men make idols and cover them with gold (19). The poor man carves one from a tree and it cannot be moved about (20). The power of the true God had been demonstrated over and over to this people. He had revealed Himself to them from the beginning, from the foundations of the earth (21). Jehovah is so much greater than His creation that men are viewed as grasshoppers. The vast heavens are his curtain and are as a tent for Him to dwell in (22). Princes and judges are nothing when they rebel against Him (23). These rulers do not last long before God breathes upon them and they are withered and the whirlwind takes those away (24).

Vs. 25 - 27 BEHOLD YOUR CREATOR!

Who can compare to Jehovah? Who is His equal? These are questions asked by the Holy One (25). They are challenged to lift up their eyes and view the works of God's hands that are visible and that attest to His greatness. He brings out the stars and calls them by name and by His great might and power He sustains them (26). With Jehovah's great power in view, why does Israel claim that Jehovah does not know of their plight and why does He not respond and deliver them from their oppressors (27)?

Vs. 28 - 31 HE WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH

Israel should know that Elohim is everlasting, He is Jehovah, Creator of this entire vast universe and that He never grows weary as man does but is omnipotent. He is omniscient and knows the thoughts and needs of every man (28). He gives strength to the weak and increases strength to those who have no strength (29). Even in their youth men become weary and faint but those who look in faith to Jehovah shall find their strength renewed. They will soar on the wings of eagles, rising above the trials of life. They shall be able to run without weariness and walk in the daily walk of life

and not faint. These have exchanged their weak strength for a better strength and they grow stronger and stronger **(30-31)**!

Chapter 41

Vs. 1 - 4 A CHALLENGE TO THE NATIONS

The nations are commanded to be silent before Jehovah, to come near and consider just how great He is when compared to their heathen gods (1). Who rose up this man from the east that is to do Jehovah's righteous bidding? This is prophecy concerning Cyrus of Persia who will be used by Jehovah to subdue Babylon and thereby secure the release of His people from captivity (2). Cyrus will pursue and subdue his enemies with ease and safety (3). Jehovah now shows His superiority over their false gods by proving that He can prophesy an event and then cause it to happen years later. I, Jehovah, the first and the last, have called the generations from the beginning and all nations are established by me and are under my control (cf. Acts 17:26) (4).

Vs. 5 - 7 IDOLATROUS NATIONS RESIST CYRUS

The distant nations saw the successful conquests of Cyrus and witnessed the power of Jehovah above the power of idols. They gathered together and formed alliances and encouraged one another to resist the invasion of Cyrus and to make new images and to worship them zealously (5 - 6). These nations are thrown into confusion and all of the tradesmen encouraged each other as they hastily form and finish more idols to worship. These idols had to be fastened in place with nails to keep the helpless gods from falling over (7).

Vs. 8 - 16 JEHOVAH GIVES ASSURANCE TO ISRAEL

Israel has nothing to fear as they are designated as servants, children of Jacob, seed of Abraham, who has the high honor of being called "my friend." (cf. Jas 2:23) (8). Even though Israel had suffered from the captivity, they are comforted in the knowledge that they are God's chosen people and are not cast away (9). They are told to not fear or be dismayed and that they will be strengthened, helped and upheld by the mighty hand of righteousness (10). All of her enemies will perish and those that attempt to war against Israel shall be as nothing (11-12). For I Jehovah will hold your right hand and calm your fears. Though helpless and poor as "the worm Jacob," I, Jehovah will help thee so be of good courage (13 -14). Jehovah promises to make of Israel a new sharp threshing instrument that will enable them to conquer all their enemies who shall become as chaff, which the wind will carry away (15 - 16).

Vs. 17 - 20 JEHOVAH WILL COMFORT ISRAEL

Jehovah will hear the poor and needy when they thirst for water. He will provide water on the mountains as well as in the valleys and the wilderness and dry land shall have abundance of water. Water is often used in scripture to represent the mercy and blessings of God (17-18). The wilderness will flourish with vegetation and it will provide shade and comfort to His people and it will cause them to see, know and

understand that it had all been done by the hand of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel (19 -20).

Vs. 21 - 29 WORTHLESS HEATHEN GODS SHAMED

Jehovah renews the challenge to those who worship idols by showing evidence that their gods have no power. If they indeed are gods, they should be able to predict future events. Jehovah has demonstrated His power by rising up Cyrus and by the comfort and care of His people and their victory over their enemies (21 - 22). They are told to do something to prove their power, either good or evil (cf. Jer 10:1-5) (23). Behold, you are nothing and your work is nothing and anyone who chooses these worthless gods is an abomination unto God (24). Jehovah again cites His ability to predict future events and once again mentions “one from the North” whom He hath raised up, which would be Cyrus (25). Have any of the heathen idols predicted such events that we might know they were right? No! (26). Jehovah was first to prophecy of the restoration of Jerusalem and of the one who would deliver them from captivity (27). None of the idols could answer a word when God challenged them to show their power (28). Therefore they are nothing; they have no works and they are but molten metal images, lifeless and powerless (29).

Chapter 42

Vs. 1 - 4 THE CHARACTER OF MESSIAH

The preceding chapter ended with condemnation of the idols of heathenism and now we are to “behold my servant” who can be no other than the Messiah. Various opinions have been expressed concerning the identity of this servant but Matthew forever settles the matter in chapter 12:17-21, where he declares that this passage is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. From this passage we can see that He is the object of Divine favour and through Him salvation will come to the Gentiles **(1)**. He will not be loud or boisterous but will be a gentle, mild-mannered individual **(2)**. The work of the Messiah will be to lift up the weak and down-trodden as here represented by the bruised reed and the smoking flax. Truth will be the basis of His judgment **(3)**. He will not fail in His mission and the Gentiles will benefit from His law **(4)**.

Vs. 5 - 7 THE MISSION OF MESSIAH

Jehovah is the spokesman and He claims the authority to speak by the fact that He is Creator of the heavens and the earth and is the life-giving agent to the people **(5)**. The Servant cannot fail for Jehovah will support Him and it will be His mission to establish righteousness in the earth and institute a plan whereby all mankind could be saved (cf. Rom 1:16-17) **(6)**. He is to open the eyes of the blind and free the prisoners who have been sitting in darkness (cf. Lu 4:17-19; Heb 2:14-15) **(7)**.

Vs. 8 - 9 THE SURETY OF THE PROPHECY

Jehovah is the name of the One who will send the Servant and He will not share His praise or glory with idols **(8)**. The fulfillment of prophecy is sure evidence of the credibility of Jehovah. As the former prophecies have come to pass, so will the new things that are prophesied concerning the Servant and the covenant **(9)**.

Vs. 10 - 12 PRAISE TO JEHOVAH COMMANDED

Because of the universal blessings of salvation that have been announced, those blessings which are to come through the Servant, it is fitting that men everywhere sing a new song of praise to Jehovah. He will not share His glory with idols and it is proper that He should be worshiped by the whole creation.

Vs. 13 - 17 DELIVERANCE PROMISED

The Lord will go forth as a man of war and He will prevail against his enemies. He has been patient and forbearing but will cry like a woman in travail. He will go forth to destroy His enemies **(13-14)**. Jehovah will lay waste the cultivated portions of the country of His foes. Rivers become islands and the pools are dried up **(15)**. Jehovah will be a guide to the blind and will lead them in a way they know not. It can apply to His people as they are brought out of Babylonian captivity or to His people in the New Testament times. Darkness becomes light and crooked things become straight.

He removes all obstacles from their path and will never forsake them **(16)**. Those who have worshiped idol gods will be ashamed when they witness the care and protection God gives to His people **(17)**.

Vs. 18 - 25 ISRAEL – BLIND AND DEAF

Isaiah now commands the people to repent and to “hear” and “see” **(18)**. Israel has been chosen to bring light to the Gentiles but she cannot fulfill her mission if she is blind and deaf **(19)**. They had observed many wonderful works of God but they did not take it to heart **(20)**. The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake in spite of the failings of His people. He will show His law to be good, just and needful **(21)**. But this is a people who will endure the Babylonian captivity and no one will be able to set them free until Jehovah delivers them **(22)**. Who will learn the lessons that are implied by the judgment of God, which had taken them into the long captivity? Who will call the nation back to God **(23)**? It was Jehovah who has brought this calamity upon Israel and Jacob and it was caused by their sins. They would not walk in His ways nor be obedient to His laws **(24)**. Therefore He has poured out His anger upon them and although the Lord’s anger burned as a fire all around them, they still did not take it to heart and turn from their sins **(25)**.

Chapter 43

Vs. 1 - 7 CARE AND COMFORT PROMISED

The thought continues from the previous chapter. Jehovah wants Israel to know that they are His creation and they are not to fear even though they must face the captivity (1). They will pass through the waters and the fires of persecution but Jehovah will be with them (2). Jehovah is their God and has entered into covenant relationship with them. He has given Egypt and other nations up to suffer ruin as a ransom for the deliverance for His people (3). Israel was chosen of God to be His people and because of His abiding love, He is willing to give other men for Israel's life (4). Once again, they are admonished to "fear not" because their God will be with His prized possession. He will gather their seed from the four corners of the earth. The "seed" is their descendants and indicates the reference is to something more than Israel of that time. It must therefore refer to a future time when the Servant will call all mankind into one body. They will be called "from afar" and "from the ends of the earth" and it shows the universality of the promise and His lordship over all the earth (5-6). These are called by His name and created for His glory (7).

Vs. 8 - 13 JEHOVAH'S PREEMINENCE AFFIRMED

The nations of the earth are challenged to bring forth the people who are willing to see and hear and let them declare things that are to come to pass such as Jehovah has just done. Let them prove that they are what they pretend to be that they may be justified or let them hear Jehovah's words and confess that what He says is truth (8-9). Israel is witness to Jehovah's greatness by being chosen and protected by Him and that He is the only omnipotent God, now and forever. There can be no salvation in any other (10-11). He has proven His presence and authority by proclamation, salvation and demonstration as no strange god could do. He has proven His power since creation by deliverance and by His works, which cannot be hindered (12-13).

Vs. 14 - 17 BABYLON TO FALL

Jehovah speaks of a future action as if it were already done (prophetic perfect). Jehovah as their redeemer had sent Cyrus to Babylon to conquer the city, bring down the fugitives, and set the captives free. The Chaldean's shipping industry also was destroyed and thus the "cry in the ships" (14). Once again Jehovah reminds them that He is their Creator and King (15). He had redeemed them from bondage by making a way in the Red Sea and He will deliver them from spiritual bondage as well (16). The horse and chariot, the army and the power of Pharaoh were no match for the power of the Almighty and they were destroyed; they were quenched as a smoking flax or wick (17).

Vs. 18 - 21 A NEW THING PROMISED

The people are directed to turn their attention to the new thing, which Jehovah will do. It will be a work much greater than the Exodus so they are encouraged to forget it and look to the future. It is now in the early stages of fulfillment. It seems to point to their release from Babylonian bondage but they will be returning to the land where eventually the Messiah will be born. The ultimate fulfillment will be a spiritual deliverance that will come through the Messiah **(18-19)**. Just as the beast of the field suffer because of sin (cf. Joel 1:18; Hos 4:3), the beast of the field benefit from this new thing along with God's chosen people **(20)**. These are the people Jehovah has formed who will give Him praise (cf. 1Pet 2:9; Eph 3:21) **(21)**.

Vs. 22 - 28 ISRAEL'S SINS NOTED

Even though Israel was a special people to Jehovah, they had neglected their service to Him and had become weary of the offerings they were to bring **(22)**. From what Isaiah had written earlier (1:10-15) it appears that their offerings were not accepted because they had not "honoured me with thy sacrifices" **(23)**. But they had wearied Jehovah with their sins and iniquities **(24)**. It is Jehovah who is able to blot out transgressions on the basis of faith. It is done for "mine own sake" that He might demonstrate to the world His mercy, justice and love **(25)**. Having established that forgiveness is given without merit on their part, God proceeds to give them opportunity to call to His remembrance any works of merit that they possess that they might be justified in their attitude and actions. If they cannot justify themselves, then they need to submit to the righteousness of God **(26)**. Jehovah now reminds them of their history of sin; from the first father (Jacob?) to the teachers, they had repeatedly transgressed His commandments **(27)**. Because of their sins, the princes will lose their position and the nation will go into Babylonian Exile **(28)**.

Chapter 44

The first five verses of this chapter belong with the previous chapter and are the continuation of the argument being made. God will not leave His people even though He will punish them. He will not completely destroy them but will rescue and restore them to their own land.

Vs. 1 - 5 BLESSINGS IN SPITE OF SINS

The chosen people of God are admonished to hear the gracious promise that Jehovah will make in regards to their deliverance (1). Because they are the chosen of God who is their creator, who had formed them from the womb, they are told to “Fear not” for He will help them (2). Abundant blessings are pictured as water on a thirsty ground and God promises to bless their offspring by pouring His Spirit upon them (3). And they will grow and prosper as well-watered grass and as willows that grow by the river side (4). Others, i.e. the Gentiles, will be attracted to these blessings and shall seek to honor Jehovah, the God of Israel (5).

Vs. 6 - 8 JEHOVAH, THE TRUE GOD

Jehovah states the undeniable truth that He alone is Israel’s King and Redeemer, the first and the last (6). The heathen gods are challenged to predict the future events that will come to pass as God had done consistently for His ancient people (7). Israel is told to put away fear for God has told them He will take care of them and they are witnesses of that care through the years (8).

Vs. 9 - 20 THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLATRY

The idols that men worship are worthless and they profit them nothing. These graven images can’t see and can’t know anything and those who worship them will be ashamed (9). Who would form one of these idols knowing they are worthless? All who make and worship them shall be ashamed. They are but mortal men and when the trials come they will find that these dumb idols cannot protect them and only fear and shame will result (10-11). The blacksmith expends great effort and energy in forming his idol out of iron but it is the work of a mere man. He gets hungry, thirsty and tired but he finds no relief from the god he has formed (12). The carpenter likewise uses his tools and skills to carve out an idol but it is carved in the likeness of man by the hands of a man. Its only use is to sit in the idol’s temple (13). He carefully chooses his wood from the best trees of the forest (14), then he uses some of the wood for heat, some for baking and from the same wood he carves an image and falls down and worships it, the works of his own hand (15-16). It is from the residue or left-overs that he makes a god to which he prays and seeks deliverance (17). They cannot see the error of their ways because they have been blinded by their rejection of truth (18). If this one were to really consider his actions, he would declare it to be an abomination before God to fall down and worship this piece of a tree (19). He has been deceived and cannot deliver his soul nor does he recognize that this whole ordeal with idols is a lie (20).

Vs. 21 - 23 ISRAEL FORMED AND REDEEMED

The Lord resumes the discussion of His relationship to Israel; He is Master and Creator, Israel is servant and He will not forget them (21). God will blot out their sins and transgressions as easily as a cloud is carried by the wind, if they will return unto Him (22). All of creation is commanded to rejoice with singing at the good news concerning the redemption of Israel (23).

Vs. 24 - 28 CYRUS, THE DELIVERER AND SHEPHERD

Jehovah, the Redeemer claims for Himself the honor due Him. He has brought Israel into being and He alone has stretched forth the heavens and the earth and made all things therein (24). The efforts of diviners, deceivers, false prophets are frustrated and exposed to be foolishness (25). In contrast, Jehovah confirms the words of His prophets and the events foretold always come to pass. Therefore, Israel can have complete faith that Jerusalem will be inhabited and the cities of Judah will be rebuilt (26). The drying up of the rivers probably refers to the way Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River and took the city of Babylon by surprise (27). Cyrus is named as “my shepherd” and he will do the biddings of Jehovah. He is the one who will see that Jerusalem is rebuilt and the foundation of the temple laid. This is about 150 years before the fact and only Jehovah can foretell such events (28).

Chapter 45

This is a continuation of the subject introduced in the previous chapter. The name of Cyrus has been introduced as the one who will deliver God's people from captivity and restore them to their own land.

Vs. 1 - 8 CYRUS, GOD'S ANOINTED

The message is to Cyrus, Jehovah's anointed; anointed in the sense that he has been chosen by the sovereign God of Israel to accomplish a task. Jehovah will hold his right hand and will see that he is victorious over kings and nations. The gates mentioned are the gates of Babylon that were not shut on the night Cyrus overthrew the city (1). Jehovah promises to go before him and remove the obstacles from his path as he conquers nations (2). Cyrus will be given the treasures of the cities and nations he conquers but he is to know that the God of Israel has called him by name and through Him these treasures are acquired (3). It is for Jacob and Israel's sake that He has chosen Cyrus by name and given him the titles of "anointed" and "shepherd." This was done in prophecy long before Cyrus could know of the God of Israel (4). Jehovah stresses the truth that He is the only God and that He has chosen Cyrus and advanced his cause (5). All of the nations are to know that Jehovah is the only true God by which Cyrus has been richly blessed (Ezra 1:1-4) (6). Light and darkness are the creation of Jehovah and politically He can create peace or evil; evil-not in a moral sense but in political events. These come in the form of distress and disaster (cf. 47:10.11) (7). The skies are to pour down righteousness and the earth is to open and bring forth salvation, an obvious reference to the Messiah's work (8).

Vs. 9 - 13 A WORD TO THE SKEPTIC

The warning now goes out against any who will strive with his Maker. Man is like a broken piece of pottery and while he may strive with other men, he is foolish to strive against the Sovereign God. The vessel has no right to contend with the potter (9). The child has no right to question his parents as to why they brought him into the world (cf. Rom 9:20-26) (10). Israel is challenged by their Maker to ask of Him concerning their future for He brought them into existence as a nation and will mold and shape their future. He commands them to inquire of Him concerning "my sons" and "the work of my hands" (11). God asserts that He has created the whole universe and placed man upon it, and He is able to hear their cries and to raise up their deliverer (12). He will be raised up and directed by God. He will build the city and set the captives free, not for price or reward. Cyrus did set them free of his own accord and endowed them with valuable gifts (cf. Ezra 1:4-11; 6:1-5) (13).

Vs. 14 - 19 RESULTS ARE GUARANTEED

The deliverance of Israel through Cyrus will have a profound effect upon the Gentile nations. They will come willingly and want to become a part of Israel, recognizing that God is in them and there is no other God beside Him **(14)**. Israel breaks forth in praise to God because they see in all of His workings the ultimate end will be salvation for Israel and all mankind **(15)**. All of the men and nations who continue to trust in idols will be ashamed and confounded **(16)**. In contrast “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” This could only refer to spiritual Israel who has left the idols and are truly “in the Lord” (Gal 3:27). They will not be ashamed or confounded **(17)**. Jehovah again states that He created the heavens and the earth and the earth was created to be inhabited **(18)**. He had always spoken openly and plainly to His people by the prophets. He had not spoken a confusing message but had always spoken righteousness, giving direction for the good of His people **(19)**.

Vs. 20 - 25 A CHALLENGE TO THE NATIONS

A call goes forth from heaven to the Gentile nations to come near and listen to what Jehovah has to say. They who worship idols have no knowledge and ought to realize that a god whom you carry about cannot save or hear your prayer **(20)**. They are challenged to “counsel together” and foretell a future event and bring about its fulfillment. Jehovah has been doing this since time began and He is the only just God and Saviour **(21)**. An appeal is made to the inhabitants of the earth to look to Him and be saved **(22)**. God has sworn by himself (Heb 6:13) and the word has gone forth in righteousness and that word will stand. Every knee must bow and every tongue must swear that Jehovah is the only true God (Rom 14:11) **(23)**. Some men will come to Him in obedience, finding righteousness and strength; others will be incensed against Him reaping shame and disgrace **(24)**. Only “in the Lord” shall the seed of Israel find justification (Gal 3:26-29; 6:16) and in Him shall they glory (1Cor 1:30-31) **(25)**.

Chapter 46

The argumentation continues from the previous chapter that the worship of idols is vain and that the Jews should put their faith in Jehovah.

Vs. 1- 2 BABYLONIAN GODS ARE HELPLESS

Bel and Nebo are Babylonian gods and are helpless. They cannot protect themselves and surely will be of no protection for the Babylonian worshipers, and these heathen images will be carried away on beasts of burden (cf. Jer 50:1-3) **(1 & 2)**.

Vs. 3 - 4 ISRAEL'S GOD IS FAITHFUL

Jehovah calls on the house of Jacob and the remnant of Israel to hearken unto Him. They are reminded that their God has carried them as a father carries his children and He will not fail them in their old age but will continue to aid them and deliver them from captivity **(3 & 4)**.

Vs. 5 - 7 MAKE THE COMPARISON

They are challenged to make a comparison of Jehovah to idol gods **(5)**. Heathen worshipers give their gold and silver to a metal-smith who makes an image and they foolishly fall down and worship him **(6)**. They carry him on their shoulders to a place of worship and there he helplessly stands. They cry unto him and they receive no answer and he cannot save them in time of trouble **(7)**.

Vs. 8 - 13 REMEMBER AND HEARKEN

Israel is asked to remember these words and to act upon them as men. They are to make use of their God-given memory and to know they are transgressors **(8)**. Call to remembrance the care God had given them from old times and know that He is the only true God **(9)**. He is the only God who sees the end from the beginning and can foretell future events and know they will surely come to pass **(10)**. A man described as a ravenous bird from the east will carry out his mission and when this happens, they will have another example of the superiority of Jehovah God. This refers to Cyrus who has already been identified as God's choice to "perform all my pleasure" (cf. 44:28) **(11)**. He appeals to the rebellious, the transgressors of v. 8, to hearken unto Him and know that they are far from righteousness **(12)**. Salvation or deliverance shall come to those who accept His righteousness, which will only be possible by a change of heart. The salvation will be in Zion as Israel is once more restored to Jerusalem for the glory of God **(13)**.

Chapter 47

Judgment upon Babylon and Chaldeans

Vs. 1 - 5 SHAME AND HUMILIATION PROMISED

Babylon is addressed as a virgin daughter and is directed to “sit in the dust.” The throne has been destroyed; she has been humbled and has been brought down to the dust of the earth. Her way of life has been destroyed so she will not be viewed as tender and delicate anymore (1). She is reduced to the menial task of grinding meal and will be humiliated by removal of her expensive clothing as she performs her task (2). Babylon’s loss of power and prestige is seen as the shame of public nakedness. It is the exercise of God’s vengeance and no man will be spared from the righteous judgment of God (3). All of this will be accomplished by Jehovah of hosts, the Redeemer of Israel in whom the righteous trust (4). The once proud boasting city is told to be silent and is sentenced to a life of grief and despair as she sits in the darkness of sorrow and desolation (5).

Vs. 6 - 9 EXCESS CRUELTY ANGERS JEHOVAH

God had given His people into the hands of the Babylonians because He was angry about their sins. While divine justice demanded they be punished for their transgressions, the Babylonians had been extreme in their punishment and had shown no mercy, even causing the aged people to bear heavy burdens (6). Babylon thought that they would always be a powerful force and did not give consideration to the Jews and to Jehovah, their God, who was in control of everything (7). Babylon had conceited opinion of herself and boasted that there was no city like her. She thought she could never be destroyed and so declared she would never be a widow or suffer loss of her children (8) but both of these things “shall come upon thee in a moment in one day.” With these words, Isaiah prophesied of the sudden destruction awaiting them, and their sorcerers and enchanters will be unable to warn or protect them (9).

Vs. 10 - 11 THE CRIME AND THE PUNISHMENT

They felt secure in their wickedness and believed that they would not answer to anyone for their actions. Their wisdom and knowledge had caused them to think too highly of themselves (10). Because of their pride and haughtiness, evil will come upon them suddenly and they will not be able to withstand it. It will come without warning (11).

Vs. 12 - 15 SORCERIES CANNOT SAVE

Stand by your enchantments; put them to the test and see whether they will be able to save you. You have been involved in sorceries since the beginning of your nation so see if they can help you through this crisis (12). You have so many of these enchanters that you are wearied from the multiple advice and counsel. Let them now save you from these things that shall come upon you and thereby prove their power

(13). They can no more resist the judgment of Jehovah then stubble can resist the fire. They can't even save themselves and they shall be totally consumed by the impending calamities **(14).** The merchants with whom you have traded from your youth will not be able to save you but will flee from the city unto their own quarters. None shall save thee from the wrath of God **(15)!**

Chapter 48

Vs. 1- 8 CALAMITIES CAUSED BY CONDUCT

This chapter opens with the command to “Hear ye this.” They are addressed by God as the house of Jacob, which He often used when He was displeased with their conduct. They called themselves Israel; they sprang forth from Judah and they swore by the name of Jehovah but it was only an outward show of religion. They did not worship Him in truth and righteousness and so their hearts were far from Him (1). They claim to be citizens of the holy city and to look to Jehovah for sustenance but it is hypocritical (2). God calls attention to fulfilled prophecy; again, proving Himself to be the only true God who can foretell the events and then cause them to come to pass. “The former things from the beginning” probably refers back to Abraham and the early history of Israel (3). God declares them to be a hardheaded, rebellious people, given to idolatry. His purpose in declaring future events before they happen was to keep them from giving honor to their graven images and claiming that they had caused things to happen (4-5). You have heard the prophecy; you have seen the fulfillment and why won’t you declare that I alone am God and am worthy of your confidence. I have shown you “new things”; things that were hidden and you could only know it by revelation from Me. These “new things” probably are the things that will be discussed in the rest of the book concerning the Suffering Servant who will bring salvation to both Jew and Gentile (49:6). The creation of “new heavens and a new earth” will also be introduced (65:16-17) (6). These things have never been revealed before so that no man could say, “I knew them.”(7) The reason God had not revealed these things before was that He knew their nature, that they were a treacherous and perverted people. They would have ascribed the fulfillment of the prophecies to the idols and not to Jehovah (8).

Vs. 9 – 13 MERCY EXTENDED

The people will be delivered from their Babylonian captivity because God had deferred His anger. He would not cut them off as His people because of His promise to bring a Saviour into the world through His people Israel. This will bring praise and honor to Him (9). Their experience in captivity would refine them as silver is refined in a furnace. Silver requires extreme heat to melt away the impurities but God has spared them the extreme, choosing rather to deliver them from the furnace of affliction (10). All of this was brought about for Jehovah’s sake. He could not allow them to dishonor His name by their conduct and He will not allow His glory to be given to an idol god (11). He makes a solemn call for Israel to listen attentively and affirms He is the only Eternal God (12). His greatness and power are seen in His creation of heaven and earth and His continued command of them (13).

Vs. 14 - 16 BABYLON TO BE DESTROYED

The Jews are commanded to assemble together and hear the message of deliverance, a message only God could know and deliver. God had loved Cyrus and he would be

God's instrument to destroy Babylon and set the captives free (14). The message, the man and the method are all the work of Jehovah (15). God had spoken openly through the prophets and the message came through inspiration of His Spirit (16).

Vs. 17 - 22 LOOKING BACKWARD AND FORWARD

Jehovah now speaks as their Redeemer, who teaches those things that are for their welfare and leads them in the ways of righteousness (17). Oh, that they had listened and obeyed the Lord's commandments. They would have enjoyed peace as a river and righteousness in abundance as the waves of the sea (18). Their seed would have been as the sand of the sea and their name should not have been cut off. They were cut off for the sin of unbelief (cf. Rom 11:20) (19). They are commanded to go forth from Babylon, to seize the opportunity and flee. But they are to go singing with joy for the Redeemer has set them free. He provided water in abundance as they journeyed back to their homeland. They were at peace with God but there is no peace for the wicked and disobedient (20-22).

Chapter 49

Jehovah's Suffering Servant (49-57)

Vs. 1 - 6 THE MISSION OF THE MESSIAH

Jehovah's Servant of 42:1-7 speaks out and commands all people of the earth to hearken. It is by the authority of Jehovah that He has been called from the womb and has been given a name (Mt 1:21; Lu 1:31) **(1)**. His word shall be as a sharp sword (Heb 4:12) and He is like a polished arrow which is concealed in the quiver until the time comes for His ministry to begin **(2)**. He is called Israel because He will bring the glory to Jehovah that the nation Israel had failed to accomplish **(3)**. The Servant expresses deep disappointment concerning the success of His labors (cf. Jn.1:11) yet He is triumphant in declaring that His work will be approved of Jehovah **(4)**. The purpose of His calling is restated - to bring Jacob back to God and the restoration of Israel. But even though only a remnant was saved, His work is counted glorious in the eyes of Jehovah from whom He receives strength **(5)**. God now says that His mission to save the faithful of Israel would be "a light thing" and that He also will be given as a light to the Gentiles that all mankind may have salvation **(6)**.

Vs. 7 – 12 THE SUCCESS OF THE MESSIAH

Jehovah speaks to the Messiah—the one whom man despiseth (53:3), the one whom the nation of Israel abhorreth (cf. Rom. 9-11) and to one who became a servant of rulers. He obeyed man's law and submitted to rulers. But kings and princes will eventually bow before Him and worship because of the faithfulness of Jehovah **(7)**. Jehovah promises to hear the Servant in "an acceptable time and in a day of salvation." Paul makes it clear that this in the gospel dispensation when men have salvation by the gospel (2Cor 6:2). God will protect and preserve Christ until the appointed time (Jn 8:20) and then He would be given for a covenant of the people that would reach into all the earth (cf. 42:6) **(8)**. He will be able to release the prisoners from the dungeon of sin and to encourage those who walk in darkness to come into the glorious light of the gospel. God will feed them spiritually and will care for them. As a shepherd, He will lead them to springs of water **(9-10)**. Obstacles will be removed from their pathway as the mountains are made into a way (cf. 40:4) **(11)**. And people will come from far and near and from all nations in response to the gospel (cf. 43:5-7) **(12)**.

v. 13 THE PRAISE OF THE MESSIAH

Heaven and earth are exhorted to joyfully sing together of the comfort Jehovah has given His people and for the mercy offered to all who are afflicted by sin.

Vs. 14 – 21 ZION COMFORTED BY JEHOVAH

Zion represents the people of God and they feel that Jehovah has forsaken them. This can apply to the period of exile in Babylon but most probably refers to their period of waiting on the coming Messiah (14). A woman might forget to nourish a nursing child but Jehovah will never forget his children. They are ever before Him as if they were engraved on the palm of His hands and the walls of protection are ever before Him (15-16). The faithful children will hasten into the city and the enemies of Zion will depart (17). Zion is commanded to lift up her eyes and behold the children who are coming to her. They are to bond with these children as a bride adorns herself with ornaments. This represents the lost souls being restored to God under the reign of the Messiah (18). The land that was once destroyed and desolate is now restored but it is inadequate to contain all the increase in numbers of people who are coming into the New Zion. Those who would be her enemy will be removed far away (19). The children will be so great in number that they will request more room in which to dwell (20). The Jews will be surprised at the response of the Gentiles as they seek to be citizens of this new city. Even though they had lost many children in their period of exile, they now have a large, happy family (21).

Vs. 22 - 26 SALVATION TO THE GENTILES

Jehovah beckons to the Gentiles to come to the standard of the gospel and to bring their offspring to the Messiah (22). Kings and queens who one time were hostile to God's people will now look with respect upon this "royal priesthood" (1Pet 2: 9) and those who rely upon Jehovah shall not be disappointed or ashamed (23). But the question arises as to how can the captives be set free from so strong a captor (24)? Jehovah answers the question stating clearly that all things are possible with Him and the captives will be set free (25). The enemies of God's people will destroy each other through anarchy and internal strife, but all people will know that Jehovah is the Saviour of His people (26).

Chapter 50

Vs. 1 - 3 CAPTIVITY CAUSED BY SIN

Jehovah replies to the argument made in 49: 14 that God had forsaken His people. If God had divorced Zion, where are the divorcement papers? To whom would God owe a debt that would require Him to sell His children? He did not sell them into captivity but they had sold themselves because of their sins and had caused the separation of God from Zion (1). God had called to them through the prophets but He had not received an answer. He had called them to repentance but they did not heed. It seems they did not think that God had the power to redeem them even though He had repeatedly shown His power over all creation (2). He also had the power to turn the heavens into darkness as He did in Egypt. It was a darkness that could be felt (Ex 10:21). He made sackcloth for their covering, which was another symbol of mourning (3).

Vs. 4 - 9 THE SERVANT'S HUMBLE OBEDIENCE

The Servant of the Lord begins to speak and reveals that Adonai Jehovah has given Him a ready tongue that He might be able to speak a word to him that is weary. God is in constant communication with Him and the Servant is always an obedient hearer. This can be none other than the Messiah (4-5). The Lord was beaten by scourging, was buffeted, spit upon and shamefully treated before His crucifixion (cf. Mt 26:67; 27:26; Mk 14:65) (6). He knew He would have help from the Father; therefore He could not fail nor be ashamed. His face like flint indicated courage and determination (cf. Ezek 3:8-9) (7). God is the One who justifies the Servant and declares Him sinless so who is bold enough to contend with the Servant and bring accusation against Him? The Servant invites any who would contend with Him to stand before the great tribunal of God and there the adversary can make his claim against the Servant (Rom 8:32-34) (8). It is God the Father who will help the Servant and any who would condemn Him will be like an old garment that will be consumed by the moth (9).

Vs. 10 - 11 TRUST GOD OR PERISH

The Servant now exhorts those that fear Jehovah to trust Him and to lean upon Him in times of darkness and despair. The Servant has been the example in vv.7-9 and all are to obey the voice of the Servant as He proclaims His message and mission (cf. Jn 5:23) (10). But those who are wicked, who choose to reject the Messiah, will try to make their own light to walk by. Their fire will produce sparks that will burn them as they walk in the light of it. Their final doom is to lie down in sorrow for it has been decreed by God (11).

Chapter 51

Vs. 1 - 3 JEHOVAH TO COMFORT ZION

The righteous remnant is instructed to listen attentively unto Jehovah and look to the rock from which they were hewn, referring to Abraham, their father (1). Even though they are few in number; they are to remember that they sprang from one man alone, namely Abraham and his wife Sarah, whom Jehovah had blessed and increased in number (2). This same Jehovah shall comfort Zion. Her waste places and her wilderness will become beautiful and luxuriant like the Garden of Eden. Joy and gladness shall be the voice of the melody because of His great blessings (3).

Vs. 4 - 6 SALVATION EXTENDED TO ALL MEN

Again, they are told to “hearken” - that is, give close attention to the message for it is important to “my people” who are “my nation.” A law is promised that shall come from Jehovah (2:3) and this rule of law shall serve as a light unto all the “peoples (4). Righteousness and salvation are the works of the Messiah, and Jehovah speaks of salvation in the present tense because He can call “things which be not as though they were” (Rom 4:17). This plan of salvation will extend to the Gentile nations and will become the standard by which God shall judge all people (5). The heavens and the earth are viewed as temporary while salvation and righteousness provided to man by God shall endure eternally (6).

Vs. 7 - 8 FEAR NOT YOUR ENEMIES

Once again the righteous people are addressed. They are the people who have the law of God in their heart. They are not to be afraid of the reviling’s of men for they will be destroyed like a moth eats a garment but salvation and righteousness will continue through the ages.

Vs. 9 – 10 AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Isaiah now appeals to the “arm of the Lord” to awake and come to the aid of His people. He seeks to remind God of the wonderful defense He has given His people in past generations, especially in the exodus from Egypt when He parted the waters of the great sea and made a way for the ransomed to pass over. The word ‘Rahab’ here means Egypt (Barnes, vol 2 pg. 230).

Vs. 11 – 16 JEHOVAH REPLIES WITH ASSURANCE

Jehovah assures His people that they will return to Zion with joy and singing and the sorrow of the captivity will vanish **(11)**. Jehovah is the One who will comfort them and they are not to fear man for he is frail and will die as the grass of the field **(12)**. When compared to the Creator of heaven and earth the power of man is nothing. They had forgotten God's power and had feared their oppressor **(13)**. God will secure the release of the captives, will protect their lives and see to their physical needs **(14)**. Their assurance comes from the God who divided the Red Sea. Jehovah of hosts is His name **(15)**. This verse seems to point to the Servant, the Messiah, who had been given the Words of Jehovah, the word of the Lord that would go forth from Jerusalem (2:3) God speaks in the past tense and says that He has protected the Messiah with His hand that the creation of the "New Jerusalem" may be accomplished, using figures from the physical creation. It is through this work that He can truly say "Thou art my People" **(16)**.

Vs. 17 - 23 DIVINE WRATH TO CEASE

Jerusalem is now pictured as a woman who is drunken and has fallen. She has drunk of the cup of the Lord's anger. She is to awaken and stand up again **(17)**. There is no leadership available to lead Jerusalem, to take her by the hand and lift her up **(18)**. Desolation and destruction have come upon Jerusalem being caused by famine and the sword and there is no one who can comfort her **(19)**. The men of the city were weak and helpless as a bull that is ensnared in a net, all had fully drunk of the cup of the wrath of God **(20)**. They are now to hear the message. Jehovah is removing the cup of fury from their hand and they will drink of it no more **(21-22)**. The cup of God's fury will now be passed to the Babylonians who have shamefully treated the Jews by treading upon their prostrate bodies (cf. Jer 51:54-57) **(23)**.

Chapter 52

This chapter is a continuation of the message of the previous chapter concerning encouragement to Zion and the promise of their deliverance. This applies to verses 1-12 and at verse 13 the subject changes to the person and work of the Messiah, which continues through chapter 53.

Vs. 1 - 2 JERUSALEM—“ARISE AND DRESS”

Jerusalem is commanded to awaken and to dress herself in her beautiful garments. She is to cast off her old garments of mourning and to clad herself in garments indicative of joy and gladness. She is to put on her strength that comes from the arm of Jehovah (cf. 40: 28-31). The prophet's vision projects to the time of the Messiah when no uncircumcised or unclean person would enter spiritual Zion (1). The days of her grief have ended and so she is to arise and shake off the dust of mourning and then sit down with poise and dignity, taking her place once more among the nations. The bands of captivity have been loosed and she will soon be able to go home (2).

Vs. 3 - 6 DELIVERANCE PROMISED

Judah had gone into captivity and no price was paid for them. God said they would be redeemed without money, and so He rose up Cyrus who would allow the exiles to return to their own land (3). Jehovah cites two examples from history where He had secured the release of His people without money (4). God determines that He must intervene in the present state of His people because they are being mistreated and His name is being blasphemed every day (5). When the time comes for His people to be set free, they will know that He had spoken of this event beforehand and will truly recognize His power (6).

Vs. 7 - 10 A TIME OF REJOICING

The prophet sees the messenger who brings the message of peace and good tidings as one who has “beautiful feet.” He is a bearer of good news and salvation and the apostle Paul makes it clear that one who preaches the gospel of Christ fulfills this prophecy (cf. Rom 10:15). Zion is to know that Jehovah is reigning and in control (7). The watchman sits upon the wall and blends his voice in song with the people as they witness their King's return to Zion (8). The waste places of Jerusalem are commanded to break forth in joyous singing for Jehovah has comforted His people and the city of Jerusalem has been redeemed (cf. 44:26;51:3) (9). Jehovah responds to the cry made by Judah in 51: 9 and He made bare His holy arm before all the nations. The whole earth will see the salvation of our God (10).

Vs. 11 – 12 LEAVE UNCLEAN THINGS BEHIND

The exiles are commanded to leave behind Babylon and all her unclean things. They were to separate themselves wholly from this idolatrous nation and those who would bear the vessels of the Lord were to cleanse themselves (Lev 22: 6-7). These were

the vessels of the temple that were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar but would be returned to the Jews by Cyrus (Ezra 1:5-11) **(11)**. They were not to leave in haste, as had been the case when they left Egypt. They were to go in full confidence with Jehovah's protection before and behind them **(12)**.

Vs. 13 - 15 BEHOLD MY SERVANT!!

The subject changes to the Suffering Servant (as set forth in 49:5) and will continue through chapter 53. The word "Behold" is used to gain our attention to the important subject to be discussed, that of the Messiah. The word "servant" means that He will be employed in doing the will of the Father and will be in complete submission as a servant is to the law of his master. He will act wisely and ultimately, He shall be successful (cf. Jer 23:5). He shall be exalted, lifted up and shall be very high. This would be the final outcome of the life of service of the Messiah but He must first endure humiliation and suffering in obtaining the redemption of man (Mk 16:19; 1Pet 3:22; Eph 1:20-22) **(13)**. Many were astonished at Him. His suffering and disfigurement were so severe that it altered His appearance **(14)**. The nations are startled and the kings are silenced in amazement as they see and understand the things that are happening that had not previously been shown to them. Primarily, this would apply to the Gentile kings. The crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of our Lord would definitely cause them to stop in wonderment and amazement **(15)**.

Chapter 53

v. 1 THE JEW'S REJECTION

There cannot be any doubt as to who the “our” is or what the “report” is. The apostle John said that the people who heard Jesus and saw His miracles “believed not on Him” (Jn 12:37-41) and that this was the application of Isaiah’s prophecy. Paul applied it to the lack of obedience of the Jews to the preaching of the apostles (Rom 10:16-21). “Our report” or message would be the Messianic message as delivered by Isaiah, Jesus and the Apostles and which was generally rejected by the people. The “arm of the Lord” represents the power of Jehovah as revealed through the gospel of Christ that brings salvation unto all men (Rom 1:16).

Vs. 2 - 9 HIS REJECTION, SUFFERING AND DEATH

Christ will “grow up before him” - that is, He will grow and develop as a man before the watchful care of the Father. The Messiah is described as a tender plant or a shoot or sprout that grows on the trunk of a tree; then, as a “root out of dry ground.” Neither one gives much hope of strength and life. His earthly family was ordinary people, living in very basic conditions. There is nothing in His outward appearance that will cause men to look upon Him as a king. He wore no crown, no royal robe and there was no beauty that we should desire him (2). Jesus was despised and rejected of man. He was accused of being demon possessed (Jn 8:48); of blasphemy (Mk 14:61-64); of working for Satan (Mt 12:22-24) and He was rejected by the disobedient (1Pet 2:7) but “is made the head of the corner.” He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” as He grieved over the condition of His people, especially Jerusalem (Lu 19:41). His “strong crying and tears” are spoken of in Heb 5:7. The Jews despised Him and gave Him no esteem because He did not appear in the form they had anticipated (3). But He was worthy of esteem because He bore “our griefs and carried our sorrows;” it was for *our sins* He was smitten of God and not because He had sinned some grievous sin as the Jews though (4). The wounds to His body were caused by “our transgressions,” the nails in His hands and feet and the crown of thorns were examples of those wounds. He endured the beating and scourging which caused Him to be bruised for our iniquities. He was chastised for our sins and made it possible for mankind to have peace with God. By His stripes we are healed from our sins (5). “For all have sinned” (Rom 3:23) and all are like sheep gone astray, each one individually has turned to his own way. It was God’s plan that His Servant would become the sin offering for “us all.” Those who submit to His will by obedience to His word receive the benefit of His death (Heb 5:8, 9) (6). Jesus voluntarily offered himself for our sins (Gal 1:4). He patiently endured the oppression and affliction that was heaped upon Him during His mock trial and crucifixion. When He was reviled, He did not revile His attackers (1Pet 2:23). The lamb is used as a simile (two unlikes compared) to illustrate His submission to the entire ordeal (7). He was “taken” away by a terrible miscarriage of justice and put to death and who among this generation realized that He was dying for the transgression of God’s people (8)? They crucified Him between two thieves and would have buried Him with the wicked but the Father willed that He be buried in a

rich man's tomb, and so the body was given to Joseph of Arimathaea (Mt 27:57-60). His honourable burial was a reward for His sinless life "because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (9).

Vs. 10 - 12 THE TRIUMPHANT RESULTS

Jesus' death "pleased" the Father in that He had perfectly fulfilled the Father's will and had become a "sin offering" for all mankind. This had been the plan "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). Through His death, Jesus would "see his seed" as men and women were born into the kingdom, the new spiritual Israel (54:3; Rom 2:28-29). His days would be prolonged by means of the resurrection (Rev 1:17-18) and the pleasure or will of the Father would prosper in His hand "in bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb 2:10) (10). The Father was satisfied upon seeing the travail of the Servant's soul, knowing that a way had been made for man to be restored to the Father. The suffering was so great that Jesus cried out in anguish as He was forsaken by the Father and allowed to die (Mt 27:46). By the preaching of the gospel, men will have knowledge of His death and through obedience of the gospel many will be justified (Acts 13:38-39) (11). Jehovah will give Him a place of honor with the great. He has given Him a name which is above every name (Phil 2: 9-11; Eph 1:21) and He is "**KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**" (Rev 19:16). "He shall divide the spoil with the strong" by allowing those who are saved to share in the victory over Satan and to free them from the fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). This Triumphant Victory was secured by the vicarious death of One who willingly "poured out his soul unto death" and who "ever liveth to make intercession" for the transgressors (Heb 7:25) (12).

Chapter 54

Vs. 1 - 6 FAMILY ENLARGEMENT PROMISED

Zion had been barren during the time of her captivity, when she was separated from her husband, Jehovah. Now, she is to break forth in singing and rejoicing for the great number of children promised. She is back with her husband, the period of captivity is over, and the spiritual children will be more numerous than fleshly Israel ever had (1). Her tents are to be enlarged to accommodate the influx of her children that will come from the Gentile nations and will cause even the desolate cities to be inhabited (2-3). She is to forget the reproach of captivity, her widowhood, when she was separated from her husband. She has been re-united with her husband who is her Creator, who is also The GOD of the whole earth (4-5). Jehovah had forsaken her because of her sinful ways, leaving her in grief and sorrow (6).

Vs. 7 - 10 JEHOVAH'S COVENANT FIRM

But, it was for a short time...a small moment...that Zion was forsaken by her husband, but He will gather her to Himself, showing great mercies and everlasting kindness (7-8). God had made a covenant with Noah that He would no more destroy the earth by water; so likewise, He has promised that He would not depart from His people because the covenant of peace has been sealed by the blood of His Servant (53:5). Even though the hills and mountains be removed, His covenant of peace shall stand with His spiritual people (9-10).

Vs. 11 – 14 A FIRM FOUNDATION PROMISED

Jerusalem is afflicted and desolate but Jehovah promises she will be comforted and rebuilt with a foundation of costly stones (11-12). Citizens of this New Jerusalem shall be taught of Jehovah and that knowledge will bring great peace to their hearts. “They shall all know me” (Jer 31:34) “and they shall all be taught of God” (Jn 6:45). The city is to be established in righteousness (Ps 119:172) and they are not to fear for God has promised to protect His Holy City (13-14).

Vs. 15 - 17 SAFETY FROM HER FOES

Foes may gather together to fight against you but that will not be the work of My hand, and they will fall (15). The smith who makes the weapons of war and the waster whose job it is to destroy are all the works of My hand (16). Therefore, no weapon that is formed shall defeat you and every tongue which seeks to accuse you in judgment shall be overcome by the truth which comes from Me and abides in My people (cf. Mt 16:18). This is the heritage of Jehovah's spiritual city for their righteousness is of Jehovah (17). This prophecy guarantees that the church, New Jerusalem, God's spiritual city will stand throughout time.

Chapter 55

Vs. 1 - 5 COME, ENJOY FREE MERCY

The Messiah has come providing salvation to all men (ch. 53), the tent has been enlarged to accommodate the growing family and Jehovah has received Jerusalem back as his wife (ch.54). Now He invites Israel and all the nations to freely drink of the spiritual blessings provided by the Servant. Those who are thirsty are all who realize the need for salvation. They are invited to come to the waters - those who have no money are encouraged to buy, indicating that all is a free gift from God (Rev 21: 6; 22:17) **(1)**. Jehovah asked a question which is designed to cause the people to “consider your ways” - why do you spend money and labor and seek things that are not spiritually satisfying? Listen diligently unto me and eat that which is good, wholesome, soul-fulfilling food that your soul may have delight **(2)**. You need to come to Me and listen intently to Me and your soul will live. Then I will make an everlasting covenant with you called “the sure mercies of David.” (cf. 2Sam 7:12-16) Paul quoted this verse and declared that it was fulfilled in Christ and that forgiveness of sins and justification was promised to “all that believe” (Acts 13:34-39) **(3)**. Jesus Christ is to be “the faithful witness” to the peoples (cf. Rev 1:5) and He is to be a leader and commander to the peoples indicating He is one with authority from heaven (cf. Mt 28:18) **(4)**. Nations that have not known Him will now run to Him because of the glory that has been given Him by the Father, the Holy One of Israel (Acts 3:13; Eph 3:21) **(5)**.

Vs. 6 - 13 SEEK YE THE LORD

The Father has made a way for Jew and Gentile to be saved and now they are urged to seek the Lord while there is time and opportunity (cf. 2Cor 6:1-2) **(6)**. It is the wicked and the unrighteous that must change their ways and their thoughts. This is true repentance; a forsaking of old sinful ways that allows God to pardon and extend mercy **(7)**. It is impossible for man to think righteously and to view things as God views them without Divine edification. His ways and thoughts are as far above us as the heavens are above the earth. The only way to remedy this is to study His revealed word and “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2: 5) **(8-9)**. Rain and snow are from heaven and they do not return there until they have accomplished the task for which they were sent, providing seed to the sower and bread for mankind. In like manner, God sends forth His word to serve man’s spiritual needs and it will accomplish that purpose **(10-11)**. Whether the exodus from Babylon or the exodus from the captivity of sin is in view, they are to go out with joy and in peace. All nature shares in the joy and singing. The thorns and briers, indicative of desolation and sin will be gone and in their place will be the fir tree and the myrtle tree, representing the moral and spiritual improvement in man. This will stand as an everlasting memorial to Jehovah for His mercy and goodness revealed in the gospel and the gift of the Messiah **(12-13)**.

Chapter 56

Vs. 1 - 2 SALVATION IS NEAR

The subject of the Messiah and the coming kingdom continues in verses 1-8. Jehovah exhorts the people to “Keep ye justice and do righteousness.” The people are to bring their lives into harmony with Jehovah’s ethical and moral standards. “My salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed” indicates that deliverance from the exile is near and is but a shadow of a greater deliverance from the bondage of sin to be accomplished through the Messiah. The message of readiness and repentance was also preached by John (Mt 3:2) **(1)**. Blessings are pronounced upon the man who would keep the Sabbath and keep himself from doing evil. He was to worship God and to be honest and upright in his duties to his fellow-men **(2)**.

Vs. 3 – 8 STRANGERS, EUNUCHS - WELCOME

The stranger or Gentile who join themselves to the Lord are to enjoy full citizenship in the kingdom and are in no way to be made to feel inferior. Likewise, the eunuch who had been excluded from the congregation of the Lord (Dt 23:1) was now to be received. The eunuch of Acts 8 was enjoying this privilege for he had been to Jerusalem for to worship. The eunuchs that are obedient to the law of the Lord and take hold of the covenant receive a promise from Jehovah **(3-4)**. They will be given “a place...in my house” (1Tim 3:14-15) and a “better” and “an everlasting name” (Acts 11:26) **(5)**. They who enter the kingdom as proselytes are not inferior. They are to enjoy the same privileges as the Jew. They were to: (a) join themselves to the Lord indicating personal initiative and (b) their aim should be to serve Him, (c) to love the name of Jehovah with awe and respect, (d) keep the Sabbath and honor the covenant **(6)**. The son of the stranger and the eunuch will be welcome in the “holy mountain” (2: 2-3); their offerings and sacrifices will be accepted and His house will be a house of prayer for all people (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15) **(7)**. The Lord will gather the outcasts of Israel but will also gather the others (Gentiles) unto Himself (Jn 10: 16) **(8)**.

Vs. 9 - 12 BLIND WATCHMEN CONDEMNED

The subject changes here to the conditions of the nation and its leaders before the Babylonian invasion. The enemy is to come as wild beasts and spread terror and devastation **(9)**. The men who were to be watchmen are blind and ignorant. They have failed to perceive the sins of the people or refused to warn them. They are like lazy, sleeping dogs that will not bark to warn of approaching enemies **(10)**. They are greedy dogs that never have enough, always looking for more personal gain. They are shepherds who have no understanding of the people or their responsibility to them (Jer 12:7-10; Ezek 34:5) **(11)**. They habitually consume strong drink and look to tomorrow when they will continue their sinful ways **(12)**.

Chapter 57

In the conclusion of the previous chapter, the blind shepherds are unconcerned with their own sins and the sins of the people. The prophet continues to expose the sins of the nation describing them as people who are spiritual adulterers who have gone whoring after heathen gods.

Vs. 1 - 2 DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The righteous men were dying and the people were not concerned. It shows selfishness and stupidity. It seems these deaths were caused by persecution and violence. Barnes writes: “The word rendered ‘perisheth’ as well as the word rendered ‘take away’ denotes violence, and is indicative of the fact that they were removed by a premature death.”(Isaiah, Vol. 2. pg. 314). They are described as “merciful men”; men who are pious and devoted to God. The people had not considered that the death of the righteous would be a blessing for they would escape the Divine wrath, which is to come upon the nation **(1)**. They leave a world of trouble and enter their eternal rest where there is peace. These are men who walk in uprightness before God (Heb 4:9-10) **(2)**.

Vs. 3 - 13 JEHOVAH CONDEMNS GRIEVOUS SINS

The wicked and impenitent are called before Jehovah to hear their sentence and rebuke. He calls them “sons of sorceress” because they were addicted to sorcery and enchantments. Sorcery was their mother and they were walking by her example. They were spiritual adulterers who had forsaken their God for the heathen gods and abominations and the sins of licentiousness prevailed throughout the nation (1:4, 21; 2:6-9) **(3)**. They had made a mockery of God, opening the mouth and putting out their tongue at the prophets of God (cf. 2Chr 36:15-16). God considered them as children of transgression, living lives in opposition to their Creator (cf. Rom 6:16) **(4)**. They burned in lust toward their idols and took advantage of every opportunity to engage in their sinful worship. They sacrificed their children to these idol gods, commonly burning them as when they offered them to Moloch (2Chr 28:3; 33:6). All of this was an abomination in the sight of Jehovah God **(5)**. This verse is difficult but it clearly refers to their continued idolatry and their acts of worship. God asked if He should be pleased with this deplorable conduct **(6)**. They had gone to the mountains and offered sacrifices to heathen gods **(7)**. They had set up memorials to these gods in their houses and the language of this verse describes them committing spiritual adultery with the gods of other nations **(8)**. They had gone to kings and tried to form alliances with them, while rejecting the protection of Jehovah. In so doing, they reached a new low in debasement **(9)**. They were wearied by their journey away from God but they refused to change their direction **(10)**. They feared the pagan gods and had been unfaithful to Jehovah and because God was long-suffering, they had not feared Him **(11)**. Jehovah is going to expose their self-proclaimed righteousness and evil works that will profit them nothing **(12)**. God said they had trusted in idols and evil alliances, and when trouble arises, they should cry unto them for help. They

will surely find that the idols and evil alliances are unstable and the wind will carry them away. But the righteous will put their trust in Jehovah and shall inherit His holy mountain (13).

Vs. 14 – 21 CONSOLATION TO THE PENITENT

The righteous are to prepare the way and remove the stumbling block out of the way of His people (62:10) (14). The eternal God, whose name is Holy, promises to be with those who are humble and contrite (15). God will not continue to reprove in anger, neither will He be always wroth. If He continued His anger against men, they would be consumed (cf. Ps 78:38-39) (16). Jehovah was angry with the Jews because of their covetousness (cf. Jer 6:13) and He brought judgment upon them. He withdrew from them and left them to themselves and they went deeper into sin (17). God has seen their ways and after sufficient judgment He will restore comfort unto them for He is fully aware of their mourning in their painful captivity (18). Upon His forgiveness, the people praise God for peace and healing; this represents the forgiveness of Jew and Gentile in Christ (cf. Eph 2:13-18) (19). But the wicked, who do not seek forgiveness will have no peace but will be like the stormy sea. They will find no rest and their soul before God is like the murky waters of the troubled sea (20). There will be no peace for the wicked “saith my God.” (21).

Chapter 58

v. 1 PROPHET, LIFT UP THY VOICE!

Isaiah is admonished by Jehovah to “Cry aloud” and to lift up his voice. He is to use his full voice and to sound forth as a trumpet. The house of Jacob must be made aware of their sins and transgressions (1).

Vs. 2 – 3 REGULAR BUT EMPTY WORSHIP

Israel continues to worship daily but not from the heart. They profess to be a nation of righteousness but they act hypocritically. Yet they expect God to render righteous judgment unto them (2). They fasted regularly and were upset with God because He had not responded favorably. The prophet responds by pointing out their hypocrisy: (a) they were indulging in their own pleasures and lusts on the day of fasting and (b) they continued to work and demand rigorous labors of all under their control (3).

Vs. 4 – 5 IMPROPER FASTING CONDEMNED

Their occasion of fasting became a quarrelsome feud rather than a spiritual ritual. Their passions were unsubdued and they resorted to physical violence. As a result, their fasting and prayers were unacceptable to God (4). Jehovah asked if such a fast meets divine requirements. Just bowing the head and dressing in sackcloth and ashes does not make one acceptable to Jehovah (5).

Vs. 6 – 7 PROPER FASTING AND CONDUCT

Jehovah sets forth conditions of a true fast. They must remove all forms of oppression, breaking every yoke and letting the oppressed go free (6). They were to feed the hungry and especially the poor that are cast out. They were to clothe the naked and to see to the needs of their own kindred (7).

Vs. 8 - 14 ABUNDANT BLESSINGS TO THE OBEDIENT

When the Israelites bring their lives into harmony with His will, then, will He bless them abundantly. They will be led by righteousness and the glory of the Lord shall be their rear guard (8). Then they will have access to the Lord and He will answer their call and when they cry unto Him, He shall say “Here I am.” But they must put away the evil from their lives; remove the yoke of oppression, stop accusations against brethren and stop speaking wickedly (9). Then, on the positive side, they must feed the hungry and reach out to the afflicted soul giving counsel and comfort. Then the darkness will be dispelled and their light shine as the noonday (10). Jehovah will guide and comfort them and they will prosper and flourish like a watered garden and a never-failing spring of water. (11). Their descendants will “build the old waste places,” building upon the foundation laid by the faithful remnant, who shall be called “The restorer of paths” (12). They were to stop doing “their pleasure” on the Sabbath day and begin to take delight in proper observance.

They were to stop trivial conversation on the Holy day. Then they would experience delight in serving Jehovah and He would cause them to be exalted and enjoy the blessings of their father Jacob. It was a sure promise for the mouth of Jehovah had spoken it **(13-14)**.

Chapter 59

Vs. 1 - 8 SINS SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD

Isaiah has been instructed to declare unto the people their transgressions and sins (58:1). He has shown them how they have transgressed the law concerning fasting and Sabbath observance and now he will go into greater detail, rebuking them for their sins. Judah had complained earlier that God did not take notice of their fasting (58:3) and the prophet explains that it is sin that separates man from God and it is not caused by an infirmity with God **(1-2)**. Their “hands are defiled with blood” as Isaiah had earlier stated (1:21) and Micah had also written of this sin (Mic 7:2). Their fingers were into all manner of iniquity, their lips had lied, and their tongue muttered wickedness (cf. Mic 6:12) **(3)**. When they went to court, it was not for the purpose of obtaining justice but to take advantage of the poor. They did not pursue truth but spoke lies. Their thoughts were upon mischief and as a result, their deeds were iniquity **(4)**. Their deeds are compared to hatching the eggs of a venomous snake and anyone who eats of the eggs will die. The crushed eggs bring forth more snakes. They weave webs as a spider in order to ensnare the unwary. Neither their webs nor their works cover them for their hands are full of violence **(5-6)**. They aggressively rush into sin, and there is no thought of self-control as they shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil continually as they seek to destroy lives (cf. Mic 2:1-2) **(7)**. They walk a crooked path and there is no justice in their lives. The way of peace they will never know because their actions can only bring strife and discord. Paul made application of this to the people of his day in Rom 3:15-17) **(8)**.

Vs. 9 - 15a A CONFESSION OF WICKEDNESS

Jehovah has made accusations against the people and now the prophet answers for the people by confessing their sins. There is no justice among them, only gloom and despair. They look for light but walk in darkness **(9)**. They are like the blind that grope for the wall as they seek to find their way. At noon day, when the light is the brightest, they still stumbled about and they were as dead men in desolate places, unable to enjoy any peace or comfort **(10)**. They groan under the weight of their sins and look for justice and salvation from God but He cannot hear and answer their cries because of their sins. They were aware of their sins and their transgressions were multiplied **(11-12)**. They had denied Jehovah as their God and departed from Him. They oppressed others, misusing their power over them and they revolted against God. They conceived and spoke lies-lies that came from a corrupt heart. (cf. Mt 12:34; 15:19-20) **(13)**. When justice is turned away there can be no righteousness and when truth becomes a casualty, uprightness cannot be sustained **(14)**. When lying and falsehood become the norm, anyone who turns away from evil will be ridiculed, harassed and oppressed by evil men **(15a)**.

Vs. 15b – 19 JEHOVAH DELIVERS SALVATION

Jehovah saw the corrupt nature of Judah and He was displeased because there was no justice **(15b)** and He saw there was no one to intercede for His people. Therefore, His own arm would bring salvation and His righteousness would uphold Him as He redeemed His people from their transgressions **(16)**. The Lord symbolically clothes Himself with the spiritual armor which He later prescribes for the Christian (cf. Eph 6:13-17) and the “garments of vengeance” prepares Him to deal with His enemies. He wraps Himself in a mantle of zeal, ensuring that He will be triumphant **(17)**. He will recompense to His enemies according to their deeds, which also includes the islands or Gentiles **(18)**. From the East and from the West, men will respond to Jehovah with fear while giving Him glory for deliverance. When the enemy comes against His people, He will lift up a standard, thereby stopping the enemy and affording protection to His people **(19)**.

Vs. 20 - 21 A REDEEMER AND COVENANT GIVEN

The Redeemer will come to Zion and all who will turn from transgression will be redeemed. This is the covenant promised to them. Paul makes application of this scripture in the Roman letter at 11:26-27. This covenant is revealed through the gospel and His seed shall preach the words as revealed to the Redeemer from generation to generation from henceforth and forever **(20-21)**.

Chapter 60

Glorious City of Jehovah

This chapter continues the thought of the previous chapter; the Redeemer has come to Zion, a new covenant has been given and the words given to the Redeemer are to remain in the mouth of His seed forever. Physical Zion fades away and the new, glorious Zion arises under the reign of the Messiah. Isaiah uses the “prophetic perfect” tense; it is to happen in the future but he is so sure of its fulfillment that he speaks as if it has already occurred.

Vs. 1 - 2 GLORIOUS ZION-ARISE AND SHINE!

Zion is given a double command to arise and shine. To arise infers that she has been down, possibly in a prostrate position. She has been given the power to “arise” through the Redeemer and the covenant that have come (59:20-21). She can “shine” because the glorious gospel has been given to her and the glory of Jehovah has been revealed through “the word (that was) made flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). Paul gave emphasis to this verse as he encouraged the church of Ephesus to reflect the light (Eph 5:14) (1). “Darkness” represents sin, sorrow and ignorance and it had covered the earth and “gross darkness” had covered the people. As the rising sun dispels darkness, the glorious appearing of Christ will dispel the darkness of sin upon Zion and those nations roundabout will behold it (2).

Vs. 3 – 4 THE GENTILES SHALL COME

The glory and splendor of the light will attract the Gentile nations and they will come and participate in the blessings of the gospel. That the light is provided by the gospel is made clear by Paul in 2Cor 4:3-6. The kings of the nations are attracted by the brightness of Zion as she reflects the true light (cf. 49:6; Rev 21:24) (3). Now, Zion is commanded to “lift up thine eyes” and see the great multitude of souls that are coming into spiritual Zion, the church of our Lord. They are coming from the nations as Isaiah had prophesied in 2:1-4. (cf. 49:18-22) (4).

Vs. 5 - 16 THE WEALTH OF THE GENTILES

Zion’s face will light up and her heart shall thrill at the sight of the influx of souls. The wealth of the sea and the Gentiles will be brought in abundance to God’s spiritual Zion (5). The prophet continues in figurative language, describing the great wealth that is brought to honor Jehovah. Gold and incense represents dedication of their best possession to the glory and praise of Jehovah. Kedar and Nebaioth were sons of Ishmael and their flocks were accepted in praise to Jehovah to show that they were equal with the seed of Isaac in this new spiritual house of glory (6-7). Zion sees ships coming, the sails of which resemble clouds or doves, ships bringing sons from far away isles. They bring their silver and gold with them unto Jehovah and the Holy One of Israel because of the glory He has given to Zion (8-9). Foreigners will build the walls of spiritual Zion (cf. 56:6-7). In His wrath, Jehovah had used foreigners to

break down the walls but now will show mercy and use their sons to rebuild **(10)**. Salvation will be the walls (v.18) also (26:1), therefore the gates are to be open continually, day and night, that Gentiles and kings may enter in (cf. Rev 21:24-26) **(11)**. The nations that reject the plan and do not serve in the spiritual city will perish (cf. Mic 5:15) **(12)**. Figurative language is employed to describe the beauty of spiritual Zion as it is to be a place for Jehovah's feet. It is to be beautified with all "the glory of Lebanon" **(13)**. The Gentiles had despised Jerusalem but their descendants will come in humble obedience to the will of God and call her "the city of Jehovah" **(14)**. In the past, Jerusalem had been forsaken and hated and so desolate that no man passed through her, but Jehovah promised to make her an eternal excellency, a joy to many generations **(15)**. Just as a nursing child is nourished by the mother, so will the nations sustain Zion and Zion will know that Jehovah is their Saviour, Redeemer and the Mighty One of Jacob **(16)**.

Vs. 17 - 22 HAPPINESS IN THE ETERNAL CITY

Each of the elements of the city will be replaced with things of greater value; gold for brass, silver for iron, brass for wood. The New Zion is superior, a city where peace and righteousness rule **(17)**. Violence, wasting nor destruction will have no place within this city for the inhabitants have converted their weapons into instruments of peace (cf. 2:2-4; 11:6-9). These have entered the gates of Praise and dwell within the walls of Salvation **(18)**. There will be no need of the sun and moon to illuminate the spiritual city for Jehovah will be an everlasting light. The day of mourning and spiritual darkness have ended and the true light will brighten the city (cf. 24:23; Rev 21:23) **(19-20)**. The citizens of Zion shall all be righteous, having been made righteous by obedience to the gospel (Rom 1:16-17). They will inherit the land forever, meaning that no enemy can take away their inheritance and separate them from the city of Light (cf. 57:13). Jehovah has planted Zion and she exists as a work of His hand to bring glory to Him **(21)**. The number of the citizens will increase, growing from a small number into a strong nation. These things will happen as Jehovah wills it to happen **(22)**.

Chapter 61

The Inner Beauty of Zion

Vs. 1 - 3 THE MISSION OF MESSIAH

The speaker declares that the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. Jesus read this passage from Isaiah and then proclaimed, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”(cf. Lu 4:16-21). Peter also stated that God had “anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Acts 10:38). Isaiah had before stated that the Spirit would be upon the “rod out of the stem of Jesse” (11:1-2). This clearly identifies the speaker as the Messiah, the Son of God. He will preach the good news to the meek and gentle—those who “have ears to hear.” He will bind up the broken-hearted, meaning that He will give healing to their sin-sick souls. He will “proclaim liberty to the captives,” releasing them from the bondage of sin (cf. 42:7; Jn 8:34). The imagery of releasing prisoners continues as He opens the prison of sin and sets them free **(1)**. He is to proclaim that it is the year of Jehovah’s favor, embracing this span of time when all men can experience “the Jubilee”, that is, set free from their sins (cf. Lev 25:10). But He is also charged to preach that there is a day of vengeance coming “when He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17:31). There is comfort in His message for all who will be obedient to the gospel. He will bless those that mourn for their sins (cf. Mt 5:4) **(2)**, and for those who mourn He promises joy and consolation, giving them a garland for ashes. They commonly cast dust on their head in time of mourning but the Lord promises a head-dress, turban, diadem or garland. The oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness is also promised that they might be known as “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” These citizens of Zion who have had a heavy, oppressed spirit have now been blessed with a new spirit and are described as majestic trees that bring glory and honor to the Lord who planted them **(3)**.

Vs. 4 - 9 THE BLESSINGS OF THE REDEEMED

Speaking in symbolic language, the Lord declares that spiritual Zion will rebuild the old waste cities and former desolations, the desolations of many generations. Spiritually, they will reclaim their lives from the desolation and degradation of sin **(4)**. The strangers (Gentiles cf. Eph 2:12) will work with the Jews in building up the “city of the Lord” **(5)**. All of the citizens will be priests and ministers of God (1 Pet 2:5, 9) and the city will benefit of the riches that are brought as the nations flow into it (cf. 60:5-11) **(6)**. They had received double for their transgressions (40:2) and now the Lord promises them a double portion of everlasting joy **(7)**. The speaker identifies Himself as Jehovah and expresses His love for justice and His hate for robbery or injustice. He will recompense every man for his work according to the standard of truth that is the basis of the everlasting covenant He will make with them **(8)**. Their children shall be known among the nations and all will know that they are the seed that the Lord has blessed **(9)**.

Vs. 10 - 11 GREAT REJOICING IN ZION !

Zion breaks forth in praise and rejoicing “in the Lord” for they have been clothed with the garments of salvation and have been covered with the robe of righteousness. They are compared to the bridegroom who wears a garland and the bride who adorns herself with jewels which represents things most precious **(10)**. It is by the power of the Creator that the earth brings forth her vegetation and the garden yields her fruit; so Jehovah will cause righteousness to spring forth by the preaching of His word and men will praise His name before all the nations **(11)**.

Chapter 62

Vs. 1 - 5 THE GLORY OF ZION

It is difficult to determine who the speaker is. Some writers have expressed opinions that the speaker is the prophet, some say Jehovah, and others say the Messiah. Regardless, it is the will of Jehovah and from the two previous chapters; it seems it is He who is speaking (cf. 42:14; 57:11). In these references, Jehovah declares that He has held His peace, but now, He will not hold His peace or rest for Jerusalem's sake. Spiritual Zion is to shine forth the righteousness of God and salvation is to be like a burning lamp. The "fullness of time" has come and it is urgent that the gospel go forth (1). Gentiles and kings will see the righteousness and glory of spiritual Zion, the church, because it will be universal in nature, going into "all the world." Zion will be called by a "new name" which Jehovah will name. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). The word called comes from the Greek word *chrematizo* and is used nine times in the N.T. and always means "a calling or warning directly from God." (cf. Rom 7:3; Heb 8:5; 11:7) (2). This new Zion will be a crown of beauty and a royal diadem in the hand of God (cf. Zech 9:16; 1Thess 2:19; Phil.4:1) (3). There is a distinction drawn between the city and the land. God had forsaken old Zion because of her sins (54:7) but new Zion will never be forsaken because she will be "the city of righteousness" (1:26). She will be called Hephzibah which means "my delight is in her." The land will no more be called Desolate but Beulah because "thy land shall be married" to Jehovah (4). The meaning of this verse is difficult but Hailey made the following comment: "The emphasis here is the joyous intimate relationship between the sons of Zion, who are Jehovah's people, and the land, which is His holy mountain (57:13; cf. 60:21; 61:7). As a young man marries a virgin and dedicates himself to protecting and caring for her honor, so the sons of Zion dedicate themselves to the honor of Jehovah's land and people - His kingdom. The relationship will be pure and chaste, and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, over their pure, divine love, so shall thy God rejoice over thee - over Zion's marriage to the land, His holy mountain." (Hailey, pg. 498)

Vs. 6 - 9 THE PROTECTION OF ZION

Watchmen are set upon the walls of spiritual Zion to protect her from those who would do her harm. They are constantly vigilant, day and night and they are Jehovah's remembrances that continually petition the Lord to establish and make Jerusalem (the church) a praise in the earth. This refers to the never-ending work of the citizens of Zion who are to preach, teach and pray for the good of the kingdom and the glory of the Lord (cf. Eph 4:11-12; Acts 20:28ff) (6-7). Old Jerusalem had been overrun by enemies who consumed the fruit of their gardens and vineyards but Jehovah has sworn by His strength that He will protect His people. But spiritual Zion (the church) shall eat spiritual food and praise Jehovah in His sanctuary. Jesus directed that we should work for the food, which abideth unto eternal life (Jn 6:27) (8-9).

Vs. 10 – 12 THE SALVATION OF ZION

The citizens of Zion are to go out through the gates and clear the way into Zion for the people. They are to lift high the banner so that the nations can find their way into the city. The banner or ensign they are to lift up is the Messiah for Isaiah had earlier stated that it (the ensign) was “a root of Jesse” (11:10) **(10)**. Jesus announced the fulfillment of this verse as He made preparation for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:5). Zion was to know that their salvation had come and He would reward or recompense according to a man’s works (Rev 22:12) **(11)**. Zion will be comprised of holy people, people who have been redeemed by Jehovah and she will be called “Sought out, a city not forsaken.” She will be a holy city and the Lord will never forsake her. The church must ever conduct herself so men will look upon her as a people of holiness (12).

Chapter 63

Vs. 1 - 6 JEHOVAH, THE MIGHTY WARRIOR

Edom had been a vicious enemy of Israel. Throughout their history they were unrelenting in their hatred and opposition to Israel so God's judgment must be brought upon them (cf. 34:5-10; Obad 10; Mal 1:2-5). Isaiah sees a great warrior coming from Edom, marching with great strength and confidence, dressed in glorious dyed garments. The question goes forth from the prophet, "Who is this?" and the warrior answers, "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." (cf. 45:19) **(1)**. "Why are your garments red like him that treadeth in the winevat?" **(2)**. As one treads the grapes in the winevat, so Jehovah had trampled His enemies and His garments were stained by their blood. He had trodden the winepress alone for there was no man with Him. **(3)**. The day of vengeance had come and judgment must be executed against man's sins **(4)**. God looked for help but there was none found; none to uphold righteous judgment; therefore He relied upon "His arm of strength" and His wrath to uphold Him **(5)**. All nations who oppose Him will be trampled in His anger and He will pour out their life blood on the earth **(6)**.

Vs. 7 - 9 JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

The prophet reflects upon the loving kindnesses of Jehovah and the praises that is due Him for all that He has bestowed on "us." It is because of His goodness, mercies, and multitudes of loving kindnesses that He has so blest the house of Israel **(7)**. The prophet looks back to the beginning of Israel when Jehovah had chosen them as "my people." They are represented as sons and are not to deal falsely. Jehovah was their Saviour as was expressed in the song of Moses (cf. 12:2; Ex 15:2) **(8)**. When Jehovah's people suffer, He suffers with them because of His deep abiding love. The preincarnate Christ saved them, He being the "angel of His presence" who was with them in the exodus and in their afflictions (cf. Ex 33:14; 1Cor 10:4). Jehovah loved them and had pity upon them. He redeemed them from bondage and carried them as a father carries his children **(9)**.

Vs. 10 - 14 BUT THE PEOPLE REBELLED

Jehovah had warned them not to rebel against Him and to obey the voice of the messenger whom He would send (Ex 23:20-21) but they did not heed the warning but rebelled from the beginning (Dt 9:7). Therefore, He became their enemy and fought against them. The message was brought to them by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Pet 1:21) therefore they vexed Him when they disobeyed **(10)**. "Then His people remembered the ancient days of Moses" (cf. ASV fn) and began to inquire of the whereabouts of their God. Where is the God who led Israel through the Red Sea? (The shepherd of his flock refers to Moses). Where is He that put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them? **(11)**. Where is He who manifested His power through Moses, who parted the waters and made Himself an everlasting name? **(12)** That led them through the deep (water deep enough to engulf them) as a horse is led on dry, level ground so that he does not stumble (cf. Ps 106:9)? **(13)** As cattle go down into the

valley for water and rest, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest in Canaan at the end of their journey. Jehovah, by His mighty power, led and cared for His people and made Himself a glorious name **(14)**.

Vs. 15 – 19 A PLEA FOR MERCY

After remembering the days of old and reflecting upon God's tender mercy and His great power, the prophet begins to pray to Him for help. He beseeches Him to look down from heaven and to take note of the suffering of His people. Where are the zeal and power once manifested and the compassion toward me? Are they now being withheld? **(15)**. There is no doubt that "thou art our Father" and though Abraham and Israel would reject us in our present condition, we appeal to you as our Father and Redeemer, the Eternal One **(16)**. The Lord knew His people and when He called Isaiah to prophesy He stated that he would "make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (6:10) for He knew the nation would not hear and obey. This verse has difficult wording but it seems that they recognize that this condition had come upon them. They beg God to return to them lest the tribes of His inheritance vanish from the earth **(17)**. The Israelites had possessed Zion "but a little while" and then their adversaries conquered them and the temple was destroyed **(18)**. They now confess that they have become like the adversaries, people over whom Jehovah has never ruled **(19)**.

Chapter 64

Continuation of the Prayer

Vs. 1 - 7 A PLEA FOR ACTION

The people desire Jehovah's presence and it is their plea that He open the heavens and come down, that they might feel His presence as they did at Mt Sinai (cf. Ex 19:18). **(1)**. The presence of Jehovah is like an intense fire that melts the mountains and causes them to flow down. Such a manifestation of divine power would cause the adversaries to tremble at His presence **(2)**. There were things that God did when He "came down" that struck terror in the heart of nations, and when He came down at Mt Sinai, the mountains did "quake and melt" (cf. Nah 1:5; Ex 19:18-20; Dt 5:22-27) **(3)**. For since the beginning of time, no man has seen or heard of a people who were loved and protected as were the people of God, who feared and respected Him **(4)**. Jehovah intercedes for him that joyfully does righteousness, all that remember God in the ways and means He has prescribed: prayer, sacrifice and praise. Behold, Jehovah is wroth with them because of their sins. They have continued in them and they ask, "Shall we be saved?" (cf. ASV) **(5)** The prophet sees the whole nation as unclean, their righteousness is as a polluted garment, and as such, they are unfit to approach Jehovah (cf. Hag.2:12-14). Spiritually, they are like a fading leaf and their sins are like a wind that is blowing them away from God **(6)**. The nation had ceased to pray; none were attempting to take hold of God. God had hid His face from them and they are weak and helpless because of their sins **(7)**.

Vs. 8 - 12 A RENEWED PLEA FOR MERCY

Once again Israel addresses Jehovah as our Father and also appeals to Him as their Creator, the one who created them as a potter fashions the clay. As a nation, they are the work of His hand **(8)**. Their plea continues that His wrath would subside, and that He not remember their sin to eternity for they are His people by covenant **(9)**. "Thy holy cities" of Judah are desolate, particularly Zion and Jerusalem **(10)**. "Our holy and our beautiful house," referring to the temple, is burned with fire and they are unable to worship Jehovah as their fathers had done. All their pleasant things that were associated with worship in the temple are laid waste **(11)**. The prayer closes with two questions. Will Jehovah allow these conditions to exist and will He continue their affliction indefinitely **(12)?**

Chapter 65

v. 1 THE CALL OF THE GENTILES

This chapter reveals Jehovah's response to the nation's prayer (63:15-64:12). Jehovah says a people that had not asked for Him will seek him and He would extend salvation unto them. Paul made application of this text to the Gentiles (Rom 10:20).

Vs. 2 - 7 APOSTATES REJECTED BECAUSE OF SINS

Paul further explained that Jehovah had extended His hands to Israel who were "a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom 10:21). Here they are described as "a rebellious people" whose manner of life is not good, being guided by their own thoughts (2). They had openly angered Jehovah, sacrificing to idol gods in gardens set aside for idolatrous worship (1:29) and burned incense upon altars of brick (3). They "remain among the graves" probably refers to an attempt to consult with the dead whom God had forbidden (cf. Dt 18:9-12). They were eating pork and violating the food restrictions placed upon them by the law of Moses (cf. Lev.11:7)(4). These were so spiritually deluded that they assumed a "holier than thou" attitude and they so angered Jehovah that they were like smoke in His nose and a continually burning fire (5). "Behold, it is written before me" may refer to a written record of these idolaters' sins or it may mean that it is a written principle in His law that He will not keep silence but will recompense for their iniquities (cf. Ps 50:3) and it will be a full measure of recompense(6). They were like their fathers who also sinned with a high hand, burning incense at the idol's altar and blaspheming God by their ungodly acts. These must have a full measure of recompense into their bosom (7).

Vs. 8 - 10 A REMNANT TO BE SAVED

National Israel had been a rebellious people but among them there had remained a righteous remnant. These are like the good cluster of grapes that are found among the worthless ones. We keep the good ones for there is a blessing in it, for in it the new wine is found. Jehovah said He would not destroy them all but would preserve the remnant for his servant's sake (8). From Jacob and from Judah, God said He would bring forth a seed, an inheritor of my mountains. His elect, His servants shall dwell there. This is the "land promise" of 60:21, given to the righteous, "the branch of my planting." From Romans 11:5 we learn there is a remnant and from verse 7 we find that the remnant obtained that which Israel failed to obtain (9). The sheep fold of Sharon represents protection; the valley of Achor where the herds lie down suggests abundant blessings and peace. These blessings will be enjoyed by "my people that have sought me" (10).

Vs. 11 - 12 THE FAITHLESS TO BE DESTROYED

In contrast to the faithful remnant, Jehovah now addresses those who forsake Him and forget His holy mountain. These have forsaken God to serve idols. They offer

food and drink offerings to these heathen deities, Fortune and Destiny (cf. ASV) (11). God says that their destiny is to be destroyed by the sword because they refused to hear and obey divine instruction but chose rather to openly do evil and live in rebellion to His revealed will (12).

Vs. 13 - 16 BLESSINGS AND JUDGMENTS

There is a contrast drawn between those who are “my servants” and those who “did not hear.” Spiritually speaking, the Lord’s servants shall eat, drink and rejoice, but His adversaries will be hungry, thirsty and put to shame. His servants shall sing for joy of heart, while the others cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit. Jesus came offering the bread and water of life; those who partake will never hunger or thirst (cf. Jn 6:35). “All spiritual blessings” are in Christ (cf. Eph 1:3). Those who reject Him shall be “thrust out” (cf. Lk 13:28) (13-14). The name “Israel” will forever stand for a rebellious people, rejected of God, a people to be destroyed (cf. Jer 24:9) and their name will represent a curse. Therefore, God will call His servants by another name; in the New Testament that name is Christian (cf. Acts 11:26) (15). He who invokes blessings upon himself shall bless himself in the God of truth. He shall not seek a blessing from a false god and he also will swear only by the God of truth. The former sins and resulting calamities are forgotten because they are hidden from God’s eyes. This came about by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus’ blood on Calvary so that the sins of His servants are remembered no more (cf. Jer 31:31-34) (16).

Vs. 17 - 25 NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

The new heavens and a new earth are symbolic of the church—the new dwelling place of His servants. The former things have passed away; they shall not be remembered. This represents old physical Israel with the ceremonial rites and its animal sacrifices. Its priesthood and old law will be abolished forever (cf. 2Cor 5:17) (17). We are to be glad and rejoice forever because He has created a rejoicing Jerusalem, a city of joy (18). Jehovah rejoices in Jerusalem and in His people which are one and the same, and weeping and crying shall not be heard for the former things have passed away (cf. Rev 7:17; 21:4) (19). Verse 20 is difficult but Hailey has a plausible explanation: “In Jehovah’s eternal nature, time is not an element to be reckoned with, for with Him a thousand years are as a day and vice versa (cf. Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8). He measures His activities by the accomplishment of the several aspects of His purpose, not by years. In the new order each citizen, whether for a brief moment (e.g., Stephen: Acts 7) or for a lengthy period (e.g., Paul and John) will fulfill his mission in God’s purpose. It is not the length but the fullness of one’s days that counts. And the sinner, regardless of the length of his days, is accursed. He will suffer the consequence of his deeds and die in his sins, regardless of when they were committed.”(Homer Hailey Commentary on Isaiah, pg. 519) It had been prophesied that because of the nation’s sins they would not enjoy the houses they had built nor the fruit of their vineyards (cf. Dt 28:30; Zeph 1:13; Micah 6:15). However, in the new age they will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor. They will enjoy security,

peace and Jehovah's providential care (cf. 62: 8-9) and "the days of a tree" indicates that their life will have permanence and endurance **(21-22)**. The citizens of Messiah's kingdom are "the seed of the blessed of Jehovah" (cf. Gal 3:29) and their labor will not be in vain (cf. 1Cor 15: 58). They shall not "bring forth for trouble" refers to their offspring who will not suffer the death and destruction that was brought on old Israel as a result of disobedience **(23)**. Jehovah will be so attentive to His people that He will know their needs before they call (cf. Mt 6:8), but He does expect His people to ask of Him those things which they need (cf. 1Pet 3:12; Phil 4:4-7) **(24)**. The prophet uses terminology reminiscent of 11:6-9 that illustrates the peaceful nature of those who inhabit Jehovah's "holy mountain." God's holy mountain is the mountain of His house unto which all nations will flow (2:2-4). The serpent had been told by God that He would "eat dust" all the days of his life (cf. Gen 3:14). This verse shows that he is to continue in a humbled condition in which he has no power over the inhabitants of this holy mountain (cf. Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8; 1Cor 10:13). "They (includes the serpent) shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."**(25)**.

Chapter 66

Vs. 1 - 4 A CONTRITE HEART PLEASES JEHOVAH

This chapter opens with the assertive that it is Jehovah who speaks and He represents Himself as a King, sitting upon a throne; His throne being the heaven and the whole earth His footstool. As the Jews return from exile, they will be concerned with erection of a new temple, so Jehovah interrogates them as to the nature of the structure that will house such a great and infinite God. No building of mortal man would be adequate and Solomon had expressed this truth at the dedication of the temple. (cf. 1Kings 8:27) Stephen clearly stated that “the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet” (Acts 7:48-50) **(1)**. All of the material that man would use has been created by the hand of God and therefore is temporal. There is a place that Jehovah prefers to dwell; in the heart of a man that “is poor (in spirit) and of a contrite spirit” and one who fears Him and obeys His word. Such individuals will become “living stones” in Jehovah’s new spiritual house (cf. 1Pet 2:5) **(2)**. It is apparent from the latter part of this verse that God is describing men who “have chosen their own ways” and that He considers their sacrifices as abominations. Their sins were being compounded in that the sacrifice of an ox became as offensive to God as if they had offered a human sacrifice. The sacrifice was right but the attitude was wrong as “their soul delighteth in their abominations” (cf. 1:11-15) **(3)**. In response to their choice, Jehovah chooses the calamities that will come upon them because they refused to hear and do His will and chose to do evil in His sight (cf. 2Thess 2:11-12) **(4)**.

Vs. 5 - 6 COMFORT TO THE FAITHFUL

Those who hate them will cast out the pious and faithful brethren and they will claim to do it for the glory of Jehovah. But the faithful will triumph and the persecutors will be ashamed. This certainly applies to the time of the Messiah when Jesus promised divine help to His disciples (cf. Mt 10:22; 24:9) **(5)**. This verse seems to speak of a rapid sequence of events that happened at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. It is the noise of the Roman soldiers as they burst into the city; it is the voice of Jehovah as He “rendereth recompence to His enemies.” It was vengeance taken on those who cast out their brethren (cf. Mt 22:7) and the faithful were saved for they had followed Jesus’ commands and escaped to the mountains (cf. Mt 24:16) **(6)**.

Vs. 7 - 14 ZION TO BE ENLARGED AND COMFORTED

Zion is portrayed as a mother who delivers a man-child. The birth comes suddenly, even before her pain of labor can commence. It is a picture of the sudden increase in the church of Christ as Old Zion passes away and New Zion swiftly increases in number (60:22) **(7)**. This is an event unparalleled in history, so unique that no such thing has been heard of. It happened so quickly that it is said to have been brought forth “in one day.” It is the birth of a nation, a land comprised of the children born of Zion and can only describe the events of Pentecost and the rapid growth of the

church (8). This has been Jehovah's plan from the beginning; the redemption of mankind and He will not stop the process but will see it to completion (9). The children are to rejoice with Jerusalem - "all ye that love her" and as a nursing child, they are nourished and delighted with the abundance of her glory (10-11). The peace that will be extended and the continued figure of a sucking child describe the care and prosperity provided by Jehovah. The response of the Gentiles to the gospel will be like an overflowing stream and God will comfort the righteous as a mother caresses her children and bounces them on her knee (12-13). They will see and know that it is the hand of Jehovah that blesses them and they shall rejoice and prosper like tender grass. They will also witness His indignation toward His enemies (14).

Vs. 15 - 17 JEHOVAH'S FOES PUNISHED

Isaiah continues to deal with the destiny of Jehovah's enemies. It surely will happen "For behold the Lord will come." He will come swiftly and with fierceness represented by fire and "chariots like a whirlwind" (15). This judgment will come upon "all flesh" and will encompass all who are caught up in the idolatry described in context and many will be slain by Jehovah. This pictures the judgment that was to come upon the Jews during the time of Christ and continuing on to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D by the Romans (16). They sanctify and purify themselves but it is a ritual of heathen worship. These are the nations that are so vividly described in 65:2-7. They consume swine's flesh and practice abominations that provoke Jehovah to anger (65:3) and shall be consumed together, saith Jehovah (17).

Vs. 18 - 21 SALVATION OFFERED TO ALL

For I, Jehovah, know their works and thoughts (this seems to refer back to the apostates) and the time will come when "I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory." At the beginning of his prophecy, Isaiah had seen the Lord's glory (6:1-5) and now he declares that all nations shall behold it. This seems to point to the destruction of the Jewish system and the glory that was displayed in the judgment of the disobedient nation and the establishment of true Israel which was designed to bring Him glory (cf. Eph 3:21) (18). God will "set a sign among them" and as a result, some will escape. Jesus' disciples asked for a "sign" regarding these events, and He told them what to look for and what to do when they saw it—"flee into the mountains" (cf. Mt 24:15-16). "Those that escape" have a mission - they will be sent by Jehovah to the nations that are "afar off" to declare His fame and glory to the Gentiles. This is accomplished by the preaching of the gospel, which brings glory to Jehovah "in the church" (19). The Gentile converts are now spoken of as "your brethren" and they become "an offering unto the Lord." The word for offering is "minhah," a bloodless offering. These will be brought by the swiftest means possible to "my holy mountain," "an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord" because they have been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God! (20). Under the old covenant, only members of one tribe were

admitted to the priesthood, but now, Jehovah will also take of the Gentiles, men who will be priests. All of the redeemed will be a “royal priesthood” who will offer up sacrifices to God through Christ (cf. 1Pet 2:9) **(21)**.

Vs. 22 - 24 ALL NATIONS WORSHIP JEHOVAH

The perpetuity of the church’s seed and name are assured as Jehovah compares it to the new heavens and the new earth. The old order of things will pass away and God will make new heavens and new earth and they shall stand before Him (cf. 65:17). It is a “new environment” for a “new creation” which has a “new name” which sings a “new song” and is New Jerusalem **(22)**. Using imagery familiar to the Jewish people, the prophet teaches that there will be prescribed worship of God on the part of all flesh in this new dispensation. It will be offered faithfully and regularly as indicated by the regularity of the new moon and Sabbath **(23)**. This last verse seems to be a contrast between old physical Jerusalem and new spiritual Zion and her children. The prophet uses figurative language to show that the rebellious apostates serve as reminders to the faithful of the punishment from which Christ has saved them. These transgressors are eternally lost, for Jesus described the eternal punishment of Hell with these words - “where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched” (Mk 9: 48). Thus the prophecy ends with this eternal truth that the prophet had written two times before - “There is no peace...to the wicked” (48:22; 57:21). **(24) But let us end our study with this thought - After this present world is destroyed by fire, there will be “new heavens and a new earth” in which the righteous will dwell. “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2Pet 3:13-14).**

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