



THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of the book of Isaiah is simply this, God wants to have fellowship with all of mankind. Isaiah warns the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the surrounding nations of impending judgment and destruction because of their sins of pride, idolatry, and oppression of the poor. We have a historical interlude that leads to Judah's captivity by Babylon and God's efforts to get the attention of His children so they will return to Him.

We also read a lot about the Messiah and the Good News He will bring. Isaiah prophesied a lot about the Christ, in fact, he prophesied about Christ more than any other Old Testament prophet and he is quoted in the New Testament more than any other prophet. There are about fifty-four New Testament quotations of Isaiah.

CONDITIONS OF ISRAEL THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

Isaiah began to prophecy when it was outwardly rich and prosperous under the rule of Jeroboam II. Inwardly it was very corrupt. It soon went to pieces, however, in 621 B.C., being conquered and carried into captivity by the Assyrians.

CONDITIONS OF JUDAH THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

During the reigns of Ahaz, Jotham and Uzziah, oppression, wickedness and idolatry existed everywhere. Ahaz made an alliance with Assyria, which finally brought destruction to Israel, but Hezekiah listened to Isaiah and made reforms and God destroyed the Assyrian army before Jerusalem was destroyed.

AUTHOR

Although some people question who the author is and some people think more than one person wrote it. The genuineness of the section **Isaiah 40-66**, has been keenly opposed by able critics. They assert that it must be the production of a Deutero-Isaiah, who lived toward the close of the Babylonian captivity. This theory was originated by Koppe, a German writer at the close of the last century.

There are other portions of the book also e.g., **Isaiah 13-24**, and certain verses in **Isaiah 14**, and **Isaiah 21**, which they attribute to some other prophet than Isaiah. So they say that some five or seven, or even more, unknown prophets had a hand in the production of this book.

REASONS FOR ACCEPTING SINGLE AUTHORSHIP

1. Consistent with New Testament quotes from all sections of the book.
2. For over two-thousand years the Jewish nation has held no other view.
3. The opponents of a single authorship cannot agree on the most basic issues. How many writers there are, what chapters are and are not.
4. Isaiah says he wrote it. There is no other hint of anyone else writing it.
5. There are within **Isaiah 40-66**, acts of idolatry mentioned, this doesn't occur during or after their captivity.
6. Nobody knows who Deutero-Isaiah is.
7. **Isaiah 40-66**, reference to a more hilly terrain than the flat land of Babylon.
8. The Septuagint accepts the book as the book of the prophet Isaiah.
9. The documents of Qumran. Isaiah A scroll. There is no division in it is a whole book. There is no textual evidence to suggest there should be a division.

ISAIAH, THE MAN

Isaiah's name means God saves and his father was Amoz, **Isaiah 1:1 / Isaiah 2:1**, who was apparently a man of humble rank. He was married and his wife was called 'the prophetess,' **Isaiah 8:3**, either because she was gifted with the ability to prophecy, like Deborah, **Judges 4:4**, and Huldah, **2 Kings 22:14-20**, or simply because she was the wife of 'the prophet', **Isaiah 38:1**.

He had two sons, who bore symbolical names, Shear-Jashub means 'a remnant shall return', **Isaiah 7:3**, and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz means 'quick to plunder, swift to the spoil', **Isaiah 8:1-3**. Isaiah was in close contact with the royal family and spoke with them regularly. He exercised the functions of his office during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, **Isaiah 1:1**.

Uzziah reigned fifty-two years, B.C. 810-759, and Isaiah must have begun his career a few years before Uzziah's death, probably B.C. 762. He lived until the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, and in all likelihood outlived that monarch, who died B.C. 698, and may have been contemporary for some years with Manasseh. Thus Isaiah may have prophesied for a long period of at least sixty-four years. His first call to the prophetic office is not recorded. A second call came to him 'in the year that King Uzziah died', **Isaiah 6:1**. Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was murdered by being sawn in two, **Hebrews 11:37**.

DATE

Most commentators agree that the book was written sometime during the ministry of Isaiah, approximately 740–701 B.C., during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

OUTLINE

The prophet and the people. Isaiah 1-6
 The threat from Assyria. Isaiah 7-12
 Israel and the foreign nations. Isaiah 13-23
 Desolation, delivery, and triumph. Isaiah 24-27
 Continued threat from Assyria. Isaiah 28-35
 ‘Play it again’, Hezekiah. Isaiah 36-39
 God, captivity, and the Messiah. Isaiah 40-66

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.’ Isaiah 1:1

Isaiah was a member of a Royal family and his work lasted around forty-seven years. Here, here he receives a vision from God, **Isaiah 1:1**. The word ‘vision’ indicates a divine revelation, **Hebrews 1:1**. Most of what Isaiah wrote in his book came to him through visions from God and since they came from God we can be certain that they are accurate, **1 Samuel 9:9 / 2 Chronicles 32:32**.

His vision concerned Judah and Jerusalem, **Isaiah 1:1**. Judah at this time in history refers to the southern kingdom and the name Israel, which is used throughout the book refers to the northern kingdom. We get the date of his vision, 740-700 B.C. by noting those who was reigning at the time.

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty-two years, **2 Chronicles 26:1-15**. Jotham began to reign at the age of twenty-five and reigned for sixteen years, **2 Chronicles 27:1-2**. Ahaz began his evil reign at the age of twenty and reigned for sixteen years, **2 Chronicles 28:1-10**. Hezekiah was virtuous and upright and he began his reign at the age of twenty-five years, and reigned twenty-nine, **2 Chronicles 29:1-10**.

A REBELLIOUS NATION

‘Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.’ Isaiah 1:2-4

The chapter begins by introducing us to the people and the prophet Isaiah and we find a picture of a courtroom. God is publicly accusing his people and calls them to account for their behaviour. God is the judge and He is also the one doing the accusing. The heavens and earth are the juries, **Isaiah 1:2 / Romans 8:22**.

The people are being drawn to the fact that they will indeed be judged. Heaven and earth are called to witness the apostasy of His people, **Isaiah 1:2 / Deuteronomy 30:19 / Deuteronomy 32:1 / Psalm 50:1-6 / Micah 1:1 / Micah 6:1-2**. Isaiah records the charges which are set against God’s people. It appears that the corruption of the nation is shown to be the result of separation from God and the cause of the calamities that are coming upon the people.

Notice that God is pictured as their father and He calls them children, His own children, **Isaiah 1:2**, but God doesn't show favouritism to His own children. God had brought them up, **Exodus 4:22**, and made them a great nation, **Ezekiel 16:1-14**, yet they rebelled against the great Creator, **Isaiah 1:2**. They ought to have known better, they should know what God wants.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This complaint was often brought against the Jews, **Isaiah 63:10** / **Jeremiah 2:6-8**. This is the sum of the charge against them. God had shown them special favours. He recounted his mercy in bringing them out of Egypt and on the ground of this, he demanded obedience and love, **Exodus 20:1-3**.’

God loves them and because He loves them, He wants to help them but they had become as stubborn as an ox and as dumb as a donkey, **Isaiah 1:3**. The donkey and the ox know better than Israel. Israel don't have a clue, they are completely ignorant. **Isaiah 1:3**. God says although they are these things, they can't blame their actions on animal instinct.

Sin had separated the people from God, they had abandoned God and turned their back on Him but God would never do that to them. He says they are loaded with guilt and He calls them a sinful nation, **Isaiah 1:4** / **Deuteronomy 7:6**.

The words, ‘the Holy one of Israel’ **Isaiah 1:4**, are used twenty-five times in this book, twelve times in **Isaiah 1-39**, and thirteen times in **Isaiah 40-66**, it only appears three times in the Psalms and twice in Jeremiah.

Throughout this book, we find many different phrases in reference to holiness, such as ‘Holy one’, ‘Holy one of Jacob’, ‘His holy’, ‘Your holy’ and ‘Whose name is holy’. The Holiness of God refers to being free from sin and hatred of sin but it is rooted in his love for mankind. Our hatred of sin needs to be oriented by the love of the sinner.

‘Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil. Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege. Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.’ **Isaiah 1:5-9**

God is smitten with sorrow and He is grieving, hence why He asks, why do you want to be beaten even more? Why persist in rebellion? **Isaiah 1:5**. The word ‘beaten’ refers to suffering and it speaks of the whole body as being sick, from the head to the feet, **Isaiah 1:6**.

Kinder, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The picture in **Isaiah 1:5-6**, is not of a sick man but of someone who has been flogged in an inch of his life yet asking for more. Therefore sores in **Isaiah 1:6**, are actually weals.’

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Israel was consequently experiencing the destructive results of her sin in national disease and in political and social catastrophes, **Isaiah 1:5-6** / **Isaiah 53:4-10** / **Deuteronomy 27-30**. It was customary in Isaiah's day for people to squeeze the puss out of a wound, to pull a cut together with a bandage, and to pour olive oil on sores to aid healing.’ The land had become desolate, **Isaiah 1:7** / **Leviticus 26** / **Deuteronomy 28-29**. In other words, the land suffered at the hands of the Assyrians, **2 Chronicles 28:19**. Their enemies came and helped themselves, which was evidence of their punishment. This is a picture of how God just left them to it.

God is hurt by the people's rebellion. His daughter of Zion, **Isaiah 1:8**, that is, Jerusalem, with open wounds stands oppressed, dusty, abandoned, and rotten, no wonder God is grieved. Calamity was the result of their sins, they were left like a shelter in a vineyard, **Isaiah 1:8**. In other words, sin reduced them to such privation that what they had left was like a hut in a cucumber field, **Isaiah 1:8** / **Numbers 11:5**. They were left like a city under siege, **Isaiah 1:8**.

His people continue in rebellion, God sees their rejection and neglect and their future doesn't look good. Jerusalem is on its way out. If God didn't intervene, Jerusalem would be wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah, **Isaiah 1:9**, but God spared the lives of some people.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Many Israelite families lived in villages but built little shelters in their fields and camped there during the harvest season. After the harvest, these little shacks looked pitiful, abandoned, useless, and deteriorating. Unless the LORD of armies had preserved a few faithful in Judah, as He preserved Lot and his family, He would have destroyed the nation as He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, **Isaiah 1:10 / Genesis 19 / Romans 9:29**.’

‘Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah! “The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths, and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood! Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.’ **Isaiah 1:10-17**

Isaiah tells God's people they are just like Sodom and Gomorrah, they had forsaken the law of God, **Isaiah 1:10 / James 3:1**. It appears that God doesn't want to destroy them but to shake them up and bring them to the knowledge of the fact that they need to be free from their sin and inequity.

The Israelites were defending themselves by saying look at us God, we are still doing the sacrifices, **Isaiah 1:11**. In other words, they thought their religion was ok. God anticipated their defence, their religion and He says, He is not interested in it, He hates it, **Isaiah 1:11**. They just do these things to let their attendance known. It's clear that God is angry, He says, ‘this trampling of my courts’, **Isaiah 1:12**, and so, because He has had enough and He asks them to get themselves right, He is not interested in an outward show, **Isaiah 1:13-14 / Psalms 11:5**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the new moon, **Isaiah 1:14**.

‘On the appearance of the new moon, in addition to the daily sacrifices, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep, with a meal-offering, were required to be offered to God, **Numbers 10:10 / Numbers 28:11-14**. The new moon in the beginning of the month Tisri (October), was the beginning of their civil year, and was commanded to be observed as a festival, **Leviticus 23:24-25**. The appearance of the new moon was announced by the blowing of silver trumpets, **Numbers 10:10**. Hence, the annual festival was called sometimes, ‘the memorial of the blowing of trumpets.’

Their relationship with God is seen in that weren't worshipping because of their faith in God. Their self-righteousness caused God to refuse to listen or even answer their prayers because their hands were full of blood, **Isaiah 1:15**. People can lift up holy hands to God in worship but they need to ensure that their lives are holy, **Psalm 24:3-4 / 1 Timothy 2:8**. Their iniquity had gone too far, so God would now turn His back on them.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the spreading out of your hands in prayer, **Isaiah 1:15**.

‘This is an expression denoting the act of supplication. When we ask for help, we naturally stretch out our hands, as if to receive it. The expression therefore is equivalent to ‘when ye pray or implore mercy,’ **Exodus 9:29 / Exodus 17:11-12 / 1 Kings 8:22**.’

Notice there are eight admonitions, ‘wash and make yourselves clean, take your evil deeds out of my sight and stop doing wrong’, **Isaiah 1:16**, all relate to the removal of evil, **Ezekiel 20:31 / Ezekiel 23:30 / Hosea 5:8 / Hosea 9:4 / Psalms 51:2**. ‘Learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the fatherless and plead

the case of the widow', Isaiah 1:17, all relate to the performance of that which is good, Exodus 22:22 / Deuteronomy 10:12-13 / Deuteronomy 24:17 / Micah 6:8.

God tells them to do the more important things and learn to do the right, such as encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, and plead the case of the widow, Isaiah 1:17 / James 1:27. The things that God had given them, mercy, justice, and faithfulness, Matthew 23:23, they disregarded them.

The sacrifices were to remind them of God's mercy, all these things were to remind them of God's attitude towards them. They made all the sacrifices and made them the important things, Matthew 12:1-14. God has made it clear time and time again that obedience is better than sacrifice, 1 Samuel 15:22 / Jeremiah 6:20 / Hosea 6:6 / Amos 5:21-24 / Micah 6:6-8 / Matthew 23:23.

God isn't against sacrifices, after all, He ordained it but He is against it when we replace the importance in those things instead of the heart, Mark 7:1-9. Religion has to do with relationships and people, not things we do, 1 John 4:20.

'Come now, let us settle the matter,' says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' Isaiah 1:18-20

Here we read of God's offer of pardon and a challenge for Israel to prove her case. This is the turning point in the chapter because now God's love is shown, prior to this He had shown His wrath. He is stooping low here, for them to reason with Him, Isaiah 1:18. Even though they are totally guilty, Isaiah 1:18 / Revelation 4:6-8, God truly is the great God of mercy, the great forgiver, the comforter, Isaiah 1:18.

God is appealing to those who have hated Him and despised Him. God's people cause Him grief and God shows says the sins of man will be cleansed as white as snow and wool, Isaiah 1:18 / Revelation 3:4-5 / Revelation 7:14.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'White, in all ages, has been the emblem of innocence, or purity, Psalms 68:14 / Ecclesiastes 9:8 / Daniel 7:9 / Matthew 17:2 / Matthew 28:3 / Revelation 1:14 / Revelation 3:4-5 / Revelation 4:4 / Revelation 7:9 / Revelation 7:13.'

God shares the terms and conditions of forgiveness, they need to be obedient in their heart. God's mercy is always on the basis of obedience, Isaiah 1:19. God gave them a choice, they could accept God's terms and be rewarded, that is, they would get good land, Isaiah 1:19, or they could reject God's terms and be punished, that is, they will be destroyed by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, Isaiah 1:20. In other words, they needed to repent, God's forgiveness was based on their repentance.

'See how the faithful city has become a prostitute! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.' Isaiah 1:21-23

Here we find God lamenting over Jerusalem and Isaiah speaks on God's behalf to the city and gives them the full status of their being, the true definition of their status and position. He says they were faithful but now they have become spiritual prostitutes, Isaiah 1:21 / Jeremiah 3:8-9 / Jeremiah 5:7. This reminds us of the story of Hosea and his wife who was a prostitute, Hosea 1:2-4 / Hosea 2:19-20.

Notice the tenses in these verses, they were once full of justice but now they're not, Isaiah 1:21, but they will be full of justice again, Isaiah 1:26. God wants to give them forgiveness but they don't want to receive it. The 'silver', Isaiah 1:22, represents princes or rulers, they were corrupt in their business practices in that they mixed pure silver with

other metals in order to profit from dishonest trade. The ‘wine’, **Isaiah 1:22**, represents the leading men of Jerusalem, their wine was diluted, they were good but turned bad.

Jerusalem was no longer a city of justice but a place where the rulers accepted bribes, **Isaiah 1:23**. Even the widows and the orphans couldn’t receive justice, **Isaiah 1:23**. Because the poor couldn’t pay the bribes, they received no justice.

‘Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. I will restore your leaders as in days of old, your rulers as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.” **Isaiah 1:24-26**

Notice the names given here for God, Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, **Isaiah 1:24**. Because they had become so corrupt, there was nothing left for God to do except to pass sentence upon His people, **Hebrews 12:29**. God’s holiness and justice will be manifested and action from God would be poured out on Jerusalem and Judah, **Isaiah 1:24**. God would purge or burn the wickedness out for the purpose of making man better, **Isaiah 1:25**. When the dross was taken from the molten metal, only the pure remained. In other words, God would take His hand of discipline over Jerusalem and remove all the dross of sin and what would be left would be pure, that is, the minority who were faithful.

It appears that God wants to restore His people back to the time before the period of the kings, **Isaiah 1:26**, that is, the time would come when there would be no more kings. Judah will be restored but only after some severe scourging, **Hebrews 12:29**. Afterward they will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City, **Isaiah 1:26 / Isaiah 1:21**.

‘Zion will be delivered with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness. But rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish. “You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced because of the gardens that you have chosen. You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire.” **Isaiah 1:27-31**

God would be the means by which Zion would be redeemed, **Isaiah 1:27**. Rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish, **Isaiah 1:28 / Lamentations 2:11 / Lamentations 3:47 / Proverbs 16:18**. Judgement on the part of the ‘oaks’ and ‘gardens’, **Isaiah 1:29-30**, refers to the items and places of idolatrous worship, places where the lustful idolatries were practised and impure ceremonies were conducted, **Deuteronomy 16:21 / 1 Kings 16:23 / 2 Kings 16:4 / Ezekiel 6:13 / Ezekiel 16:16 / Ezekiel 16:39 / Exodus 34:13 / Judges 3:7 / 1 Kings 18:19 / Isaiah 17:8 / Micah 5:14**. They were an abomination to God. Sin had brought them to a spiritual drought, which made them like dry leaves ready to be sparked into a fire, **Isaiah 1:31**.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days, the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will

stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.’ Isaiah 2:1-5

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD

This is what Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem and it’s a picture of the glory of Zion. We must note that the word ‘Jerusalem’, [Isaiah 2:1](#), isn’t speaking of the physical structure, it speaks of all the pure things, which Jerusalem represents.

The words in [Isaiah 2:2-4](#), are virtually the same as the word we read in [Micah 4:1-3](#), however, in the context of [Micah 3](#), the words follow the destruction of the temple. Isaiah and Micah foretold of the coming response to the future kingdom reign of Jesus.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The tremendous importance of these passages in Micah and Isaiah is such that there cannot possibly be any wonder that God gave the same message twice. In the first place, this teaching is not talking about the earthly Jerusalem at all, but the ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ which is our mother, [Galatians 4:26](#). God simply was not speaking of the literal Jerusalem, nor of the Law of Moses in any sense whatever in this passage. Moses’ law never went forth from Jerusalem, but from Sinai, and ‘many peoples’ have never flowed unto the literal Jerusalem, but unto the spiritual Jerusalem, which is Mount Zion, [Hebrews 12:22](#).’

The first five verses of this chapter foretell the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth, the conversion of the Gentiles and their admission into the church. The prophet is looking forward and refers to the last days, [Isaiah 2:2](#). In other words, the Old Testament system was merely preliminary and would serve to spread the Gospel blessings when they arrived. The ‘last days’ refer to the last dispensation or the Christian dispensation, the days of the Messiah.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the last days’.

‘This is an expression that often occurs in the Old Testament. It does not of itself refer to any ‘particular’ period, and especially not, as our translation would seem to indicate, to the end of the world. The expression properly denotes ‘only future time’ in general. But the prophets were accustomed to concentrating all their hopes on the coming of the Messiah. They saw his advent as giving character, and sublimity, and happiness to all coming times. Hence, the expression came to denote, by way of eminence, the times of the Messiah, and is frequently used in the New Testament, as well as the Old, to designate those times, [Acts 2:17](#) / [Joel 2:28](#) / [Hebrews 1:2](#) / [1 Peter 1:5](#) / [1 Peter 1:20](#) / [1 John 2:18](#) / [Genesis 49:1](#) / [Micah 4:1](#) / [Deuteronomy 4:30](#) / [Jeremiah 48:47](#) / [Daniel 11:28](#).’

The mountain, [Isaiah 2:2](#), refers to the house of God, [Luke 17:20-21](#). The Lord’s house being established far above all earthly governments, it will be raised, that is, spiritual raised, as ‘the highest of mountains’, [Isaiah 2:2](#), which refers to the majesty and exaltation of the church, [1 Corinthians 3:16](#) / [Hebrews 12:18-23](#) / [1 Timothy 3:5](#). Today, we are the house of God, [Ephesians 2:20-22](#). The enemies of Jerusalem will now stream to it, [Isaiah 2:2](#) / [Isaiah 11:10](#) / [Isaiah 42:1](#) / [Isaiah 42:6](#) / [Isaiah 49:22](#) / [Isaiah 54:3](#) / [Isaiah 60:3](#) / [Isaiah 60:5](#) / [Isaiah 60:10](#) / [Isaiah 62:2](#) / [Isaiah 66:12](#) / [Isaiah 66:19](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the words ‘all nations will stream to it’, [Isaiah 2:2](#).

‘The expressions evidently refer to that period elsewhere often predicted by this prophet, [Isaiah 11:10](#) / [Isaiah 42:1](#) / [Isaiah 42:6](#) / [Isaiah 49:22](#) / [Isaiah 54:3](#) / [Isaiah 60:3](#) / [Isaiah 60:5](#) / [Isaiah 60:10](#) / [Isaiah 62:2](#) / [Isaiah 66:12](#) / [Isaiah 66:19](#), when ‘the Gentiles’ would be brought to the knowledge of the true religion.’

The church began in Jerusalem, [Isaiah 2:3](#) / [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Luke 24:47](#) / [Acts 1:8](#), and ‘many peoples’, [Isaiah 2:3](#), which would include the Gentiles came. The apostles began to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, [Acts 2](#). All the nations, that is, all the Gentiles nations, those nations which have destroyed Jerusalem, are now streaming to it for lessons and guidance, [Isaiah 2:3](#) / [Luke 17:20-21](#), they now submit to the law of God, [Isaiah 2:3](#) / [Zechariah 8:22-23](#). Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

In the house of God, and in his ordinances only, can we expect to hear the pure doctrines of revelation preached.

1. God alone can give a revelation of his own will.
2. We must use the proper means in order to know this will.
3. We should know it in order to do it.
4. We should do it in order to profit by it.
5. He who will not walk in the light when God vouchsafes it, shall be shut up in everlasting darkness.
6. Every man should help his neighbour to attain that light, life, and felicity: ‘Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.’

God would send judgment among the nations by the preaching of His word, [Isaiah 2:4](#). The judgment would come by the authority of the Word, [John 12:48](#) / [John 9:39](#) / [Acts 13:46](#). God will judge the world at the final judgment through Jesus and His Word, [Acts 17:31](#) / [Romans 2:16](#).

When Jesus reigns, He will judge between the people and war will cease, [Micah 4:3](#). [Micah 4:3](#), and [Isaiah 2:4](#), both read, ‘they will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.’ But in [Joel 3:10](#), we find the words, ‘beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears’.

In Micah and Isaiah the weapons are made into farming implements but in Joel the farming implements are made into weapons. The point is when Micah and Isaiah speak, they both speak in terms of peace which will come in the future, hence why the weapons are made into farming implements. But in Joel, there will be no peace for God’s enemies because they are about to be judged, hence why the farming implements are made into weapons.

The weapons are made into farming implements and when they go up to Jerusalem, they will receive spiritual peace, [Ephesians 2:11-16](#). Jesus gives us peace of mind, [John 14:27](#) / [John 16:33](#) / [Romans 5:1](#) / [Philippians 4:7](#) / [Colossians 1:20](#) / [Colossians 3:15](#) / [2 Thessalonians 3:16](#). In other words, in the last days, there is hope. God invites the descendants of Jacob to come and walk in the light of the LORD, [Isaiah 2:5](#) / [Isaiah 2:3](#) / [Romans 6:4](#) / [Romans 8:1](#) / [1 Corinthians 5:7](#) / [Galatians 6:16](#).

Under Old Covenant, God dwelt with the nation, today He deals with the individual. What is the prophet saying here? Jesus is a Jew, our knowledge of God comes from the Jews, we had to learn about God from the Jews, [John 4:22](#) / [Jeremiah 31:8](#). The Scriptures came from the Jews. The word went from Jerusalem, from Jews to Jews, [Acts 2](#), and then from Jews to the Gentiles, [Acts 10](#) / [Romans 15:27](#).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

‘You, LORD, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs. Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. So people will be brought low and everyone humbled—do not forgive them.’ Isaiah 2:6-9

The remainder of this chapter foretells the punishment of the unbelieving Jews for their idolatrous practices and their failure to trust God. Instead of depending on God, the people depended on the fortune-tellers of the Philistines and other heathen nations, [Isaiah 2:6](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘East,’ that is, Arabia, Persia, Chaldea, etc., was the country where astrology, soothsaying, and divination particularly abounded, [Daniel 2:2](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:9-11](#).’

They engaged in trading contracts and covenants with foreign nations and they built up their forces for physical strength, [Isaiah 2:7](#). In an effort not to forget their idol gods, they formed a presentation of their god out of silver and gold, [Isaiah 2:7](#) / [Colossians 3:5](#). Horses and chariots, [Isaiah 2:7](#), were forbidden by God, [Deuteronomy 17:16](#) / [1 Kings 10:26](#), and are mentioned among the wares and merchandise of Rome in [Revelation 18:13](#). They turned to idols instead of worshipping to God, [Isaiah 2:8](#). In other words, idolatry is now everywhere, [Isaiah 2:8](#) / [Hosea 8:4](#) / [Hosea 10:1](#) / [Revelation 9:20](#).

They were to lower themselves or the judgment, which is coming, will bring them down, [Isaiah 2:9](#). Isaiah describes a people who are proud of themselves, they trust in everybody and everything except God. They only looked after their own needs and didn’t look after the needs of anyone else.

‘Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty! The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, for every trading ship and every stately vessel. The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear. People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth. In that day people will throw away to the moles and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth. Stop trusting in mere humans, who have but a breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem?’ Isaiah 2:10-22

Here we read on God’s day, He will bring judgment on the proud and self-sufficient and we see how the people will be humbled, [Philippians 2:11](#). They didn’t recognise everything they had actually came from God. When God is exalted, men are humiliated and the day was coming, when the idolaters would hide from the terror of the Lord, [Isaiah 2:10](#), and in their terror, they would seek to hide themselves in caves and caverns, [Isaiah 2:10](#). Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 2:11-12](#).

‘In the day of which the prophet speaks, when God would punish them for their sins, Reference is probably made to the captivity at Babylon. It may be remarked that one design of punishment is to lead people to regard and honour God. He will humble the pride of people, and so pass before them in his judgments, that they shall be compelled to ‘acknowledge’ him as their just Sovereign and Judge.’

Although they were as proud as the cedars of Lebanon and strong as the oaks of Bashan, [Isaiah 2:13](#) / [Numbers 21:33](#) / [Numbers 32:33](#) / [Psalms 22:12](#) / [Ezekiel 39:18](#) / [Amos 4:1](#) / [Micah 7:14](#), in fear, they would seek refuge from the judgment of God. Isaiah speaks of high things, [Isaiah 2:13-15](#), upon which the judgement of God would fall and

he says all the fortified walls, would fall, [Isaiah 2:15](#) / [Revelation 12:6](#) / [Revelation 12:12-17](#). Their trading ships and stately vessel, [Isaiah 2:16](#), wouldn't save them, they too would fall.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Ships of Tarshish are often mentioned in the Old Testament, but the meaning of the expression is not quite obvious, [1 Kings 10:22](#) / [2 Chronicles 9:21](#) / [2 Chronicles 20:36-37](#) / [Psalms 48:7](#). It is evident that ‘Tarshish’ was some distant land from which was imported silver, iron, lead, tin, etc.’

He tells us that God alone will be exalted, [Isaiah 2:17](#), and all the idols will be destroyed, [Isaiah 2:18](#) / [Haggai 2:6](#) / [Hebrews 12:26](#) / [Revelation 6:15-16](#) / [Revelation 18:11-19](#). When the Assyrians or Babylonians came upon them, they would run for cover, [Isaiah 2:19](#), and their idols would be thrown away, [Isaiah 2:20](#), because they would fail them, [1 Corinthians 8:4](#). All the idols made of gold and silver, [Isaiah 2:20](#), would be utterly useless when they are on the run from the Assyrians and Babylonians. They will throw them away to the moles and bats, [Isaiah 2:20](#). In fear, they will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags, [Isaiah 2:21](#) / [Revelation 6:15-17](#). Isaiah tells them to stop trusting in mere humans, [Psalms 146:3-4](#) / [Jeremiah 17:5](#), who are nothing but a breath, [Isaiah 2:22](#). They have no power, they are of no use against God, therefore, it doesn't make sense to trust them, instead of God, [Psalm 118:8](#).

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘See now, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water, the hero and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counsellor, skilled craftsman, and clever enchanter. “I will make mere youths their officials; children will rule over them.” People will oppress each other—man against man, neighbour against neighbour. The young will rise up against the old, the nobody against the honoured. A man will seize one of his brothers in his father's house, and say, “You have a cloak, you be our leader; take charge of this heap of ruins!” But in that day he will cry out, “I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house; do not make me the leader of the people.” Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.’ [Isaiah 3:1-9](#)

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM AND JUDAH

This chapter gives us a picture of doom and gloom for Jerusalem and Judah and we see the judgment and effects on the leadership of the people. All was perfect, Jerusalem was the centre of all the world's religions peace went throughout the earth. The problem was Jerusalem failed to shine out, this was against what God wanted, He wanted the word to go out.

The multiple names of God hint at judgment to come, [Isaiah 3:1](#) / [Isaiah 1:24](#) / [Isaiah 10:16](#) / [Isaiah 10:33](#) / [Isaiah 19:4](#). We read of famine and drought and the essential supplies are going to stop and so is their leadership.

If the bread was removed, the life of the people was removed, [Isaiah 3:1](#) / [Leviticus 26:26](#) / [Psalm 105:16](#). They couldn't trust in their supply of water, [Isaiah 3:1](#), that came into the walls of Jerusalem through the conduit that Hezekiah built, [Jeremiah 38:21](#) / [Jeremiah 38:9](#) / [Lamentations 4:4](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The reference here is probably to the invasion of the land by Nebuchadnezzar. The famine consequent on that invasion is described in [Jeremiah 38:21](#) / [Jeremiah 38:9](#) / [Lamentations 4:4](#).'

There is a lot of insecurity because there was no direction or leadership, [Isaiah 3:2-3](#) / [2 Kings 24:14](#) / [Leviticus 19:32](#) / [2 Chronicles 31:17](#) / [1 Kings 12:6](#) / [1 Kings 12:8](#). God would replace them with youths and children or those who behaved as mischievous children and insolent novices, [Isaiah 3:4](#) / [Ecclesiastes 10:16](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'The Lord would remove the leading men in the military, political, religious, and commercial spheres of life. These were people the Israelites depended on. This happened when the Babylonians conquered the city and the land, [2 Kings 24:14](#), and earlier when the Assyrians defeated Israel.'

The trust that Israel placed in man was the besetting sin in Isaiah's day, [Isaiah 3:5](#) / [Leviticus 19:32](#) / [1 Kings 3:7](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'In turn they shall oppress and vex one another. Hebrew 'man by man, and man by his neighbour', a strong mode of expression, denoting that there would be a state of mutual strife, and violation of rights, [1 Kings 20:20](#).'

It appears if you had a cloak you would be picked as a leader, [Isaiah 3:6](#). Anybody who has clothes on his back would be counted worthy enough to rule. In that day he will cry out, I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house, do not make me the leader of the people,' [Isaiah 3:7](#).

Motyer, in his commentary, says the following.

'Isaiah is in reality describing a breakdown in national character and seriousness; the spirit which treats national welfare, politics and leadership as a joke.'

We see the actual Jerusalem, immoral and corrupt, there was no true religion just weakness and insecurity. They are standing on the edge, all God was to do was to give a push that would cause an end to their wickedness. Jerusalem and Judah have sinned in what they say and in what they do, [Isaiah 3:8](#) / [Matthew 12:36-37](#).

Just like Sodom, [Isaiah 3:9](#) / [Isaiah 1:10](#) / [Genesis 19:5](#), they didn't care who saw their sins, [Isaiah 3:9](#) / [Romans 1:27](#) / [Ephesians 5:12](#). When they suffered God's judgment they would then understand that they brought their disaster upon themselves, [Isaiah 3:9](#). In other words, if they tried to blame God, they would realise they forsook God's laws.

'Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done. Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. My people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path.' [Isaiah 3:10-12](#)

God is going to be just, [Genesis 18:25](#), and so, the righteous who were left in the land would escape, [Isaiah 1:19-20](#), and all will reap what they sowed, [Isaiah 3:10-11](#) / [Jeremiah 6:19](#) / [Galatians 6:8](#). Notice the youth oppress God's people, [Isaiah 3:12](#). This has reference to the nature of the rulers. Their leaders led them into apostasy because they didn't stand up for that which was right, [Isaiah 3:12](#). In other words, the rulers didn't have enough backbone to rule right, [James 3:1](#).

'The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people. The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. What

do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?’ declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.’
Isaiah 3:13-15

God speaks against the leaders and He is coming in judgement, [Isaiah 3:13-14](#). God’s people were God’s vineyard, [Psalm 80:9-13](#) / [Isaiah 5:1-7](#) / [Jeremiah 2:21](#) / [Jeremiah 12:10](#) / [Ezekiel 15:6-8](#) / [Hosea 10:1](#), and they had taken away that which belonged to the poor as their own, [Isaiah 3:14](#).

The rulers had, by their exactions and oppressions, ruined the people, and destroyed the country. The leaders and elders have looked after their own needs and oppressed the poor, [Psalm 94:5](#) / [Leviticus 19:9-10](#) / [Deuteronomy 24:20-21](#). The rulers reigned with little concern for the poor and they ruled for their own sake, and not for the sake of the people, [Isaiah 3:15](#) / [Psalms 94:5](#) / [Micah 3:2-3](#).

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Micah describes how easy it is for a false prophet to lead the people astray. ‘If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying I will prophecy unto thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people’, [Micah 2:11](#). The same principle can be observed today. Our country is on the verge of political and economic ruin because of unsound leadership. Also, the church has experienced apostasy and spiritual chaos because of the leadership of elders, preachers, and leaders who regard not the Lord’s way, but follow their own.’

‘The LORD says, “The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the LORD will make their scalps bald.” In that day, the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses and anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.’ [Isaiah 3:16-26](#)

The remaining part of this chapter speaks against the daughters of Zion, [Isaiah 3:16](#). We see the abnormal luxury of the women of Judah and Jerusalem is condemned. They were ‘haughty’, [Isaiah 3:16](#), that is, they were proud of themselves. They were ‘walking with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes’, [Isaiah 3:16](#), that is, they were walking while giving seductive glances, [Proverbs 6:13-14](#). They were strutting their stuff, so to speak and they were wearing expensive ankle bracelets, [Isaiah 3:16](#).

God is going to bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion and make their scalps bald, [Isaiah 3:17](#). In that day God is going to snatch away twenty-one items that they parading themselves with, [Isaiah 3:17-23](#) / [Titus 2:5](#) / [1 Peter 3:3-4](#). They did all these things and wore all these things to attract the men to them. Their worldly possessions will be taken away. All those things with which they dressed themselves would be traded for the rags of a captive, [Isaiah 3:24](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The prophet proceeds to denounce the ‘judgment’ or ‘punishment’ that would come upon them for their pride and vanity. In the calamities that would befall the nation, all their ornaments of pride and vainglory would be stripped off; and instead of them, they would exhibit the marks and wear the badges of calamity and grief.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The contrast between sash and rope is especially tragic. When Assyria led the northern kingdom into captivity, some 30,000 were herded in long lines to Nineveh with ropes joining the captives by being passed through their ears. These are indeed tragic words for God’s apostate people. The significance of [Isaiah 3:26](#), is that it unconsciously shifts from

‘the women of Jerusalem’, to Jerusalem itself, indicating that the vainglorious women were a type of Jerusalem in its apostasy.’

The war to come would take the lives of the all the mighty warriors, [Isaiah 3:25](#), and in desperation because of a lack of males, seven women would try to get the same man for her husband, [Isaiah 4:1](#). As a result, ‘the gates of Zion will lament and mourn, destitute and she will sit on the ground,’ [Isaiah 3:26](#) / [Lamentations 1:1](#). To sit on the ground, was the usual posture of grief and mourning, denoting great depression and humiliation, [Lamentations 2:10](#) / [Lamentations 3:28](#) / [Jeremiah 15:17](#) / [Job 3:13](#) / [Ezra 9:3-5](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is a remarkable coincidence, that in the medals which were made by the Romans to commemorate the captivity of Judea and Jerusalem, Judea is represented under the figure of a female sitting in a posture of grief, under a palm tree, with this inscription, ‘judea capta’. The passage here, however, refers not to the captivity by the Romans but to the first destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. It is a tender and most affecting image of desolation. During the captivity at Babylon, it was completely fulfilled and for ages since, Judea might be appropriately represented by a captive female sitting pensively on the ground.’

CHAPTER 4

‘In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, “We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!” [Isaiah 4:1](#)

While the seven women mourn at the city gates, fighting over a man to marry, [Isaiah 3:26](#), they soon discover that all the men have been slaughtered in battle and so, they are now desperate, [Isaiah 4:1](#).

For Jewish women not having children was seen as a sign of God’s disfavour upon them. The number seven is often used to denote a large though an indefinite number, [Leviticus 26:28](#) / [Proverbs 24:16](#) / [Zechariah 3:9](#).

THE BRANCH OF THE LORD

‘In that day, the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.’ [Isaiah 4:2-6](#)

Isaiah closes this section by returning to the Messianic theme, showing the internal condition of the church when the Messiah reigns, [1 Corinthians 1:2](#) / [2 Corinthians 1:1](#). The Branch is an obvious reference to the Messiah, [Isaiah 4:2](#) / [Jeremiah 23:5](#) / [Jeremiah 33:15](#) / [Zechariah 3:8](#) / and [Zechariah 6:12](#).

Archer, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the Branch’.

‘The Branch of Jehovah’, American Standard Version, refers to Christ himself, as the descendant of the promised line of David. The same word, literally sprout is used with reference to Messiah in [Jeremiah 23:5](#) / [Jeremiah 33:15](#) / [Zechariah 3:8](#) / [Zechariah 6:12](#). Note that the ultimate prosperity is promised only to the escaped of Israel,

although the nation as a whole must be rejected for disobedience. Only those who have been sanctified by the new birth and inwardly transformed to mirror forth Christ's holiness will be enrolled as citizens in the spiritual Jerusalem.' Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The Messiah is thus said to be 'a root of Jesse,' Romans 11:12 / Isaiah 11:1 / Isaiah 11:10, and 'the root and offspring of David,' Revelation 22:16, as being a 'descendant' of Jesse, that is as if Jesse should fall like an aged tree, yet the 'root' would sprout up and live. The word 'branch' occurs several times in the Old Testament, and in most, if not all, with express reference to the Messiah, Jeremiah 23:5 / Jeremiah 33:15 / Zechariah 3:8 / Zechariah 6:12.' The words beautiful, and glorious, Isaiah 4:2, are adjectives used to describe the remnant from which all the others shall spring. It's a state of blessedness, there will be a period of suffering, judgment and then blessings, Psalm 15 / Psalm 24. The Branch, that is, the Messiah brings the fruit of the land, that is, there will be growth and fertility, Isaiah 4:2 / John 15:1-8.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning those 'recorded amongst the living in Jerusalem', Isaiah 4:3

'The Jews were accustomed to registering the names of all the people. Those names were written in a catalogue, or register, of each tribe or family. To be written in that book, or register, meant to be alive, for when a death occurred, the name was stricken out, Exodus 32:32 / Daniel 12:1 / Ezekiel 13:9. The expression came also to denote all who were truly the friends of God, they whose names are written in 'his' book, the book of life. In this sense, it is used in the New Testament, Philippians 4:3 / Revelation 3:5 / Revelation 17:5.'

God is going to wash away the filth, Isaiah 4:4 / Isaiah 1:16 / Zechariah 13:1, and cleanse the bloodstain, Isaiah 4:4 / Isaiah 1:15 / Isaiah 3:24. The spirit of judgment, Isaiah 4:4, isn't speaking about the Holy Spirit, but God's breath of judgment that purged them of sin, Genesis 8:1 / Job 1:19. By his breath, He will judge them by fire, Isaiah 4:4 / Matthew 3:11-12 / Malachi 3:2-3.

The cloud and fire, Isaiah 4:5, are figurative, referring to the manifestation of God's divine presence, Exodus 13:21 / Exodus 14:20 / Numbers 9:15 / Numbers 10:34, meaning God is here. God's glory will be a canopy, Isaiah 4:5, the tabernacle, which is a picture of God's protection. His atoning grace would be a place of refuge for those who were weary of their sins, Isaiah 4:6.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

'I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.'

Isaiah 5:1-7

THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD

This chapter is the song of the vineyard, which portrays God's planting of Israel as a vineyard in the promised Land, Matthew 21:33-46 / Psalms 80:8-13. Sadly, it's not a joyous song, Song of Songs 1:6 / Song of Songs 8:12, but a song of judgment against Judah.

Oswalt, in his commentary, says the following.

'In a way similar to Nathan's, when he used a story to get King David to condemn his own action, 2 Samuel 12:1-7, so Isaiah sets his hearers up to judge themselves.'

THE VINEYARD

This is one of the most important products of Palestine. The first mention of it is in the history of Noah, Genesis 9:20. It is afterwards frequently noticed both in the Old and New Testaments and in the ruins of terraced vineyards, there is evidence that the Jews extensively cultivated it.

It was cultivated in Palestine before the Israelites took possession of it. The men sent out by Moses brought with them from the Valley of Eshkol a cluster of grapes so large that they bore it between two upon a staff, Numbers 13:23. The vineyards of En-Gedi, Song of Songs 1:14, Heshbon, Sibmah, Jazer, Elealeh, Isaiah 16:8-10 / Jeremiah 48:32-34 and Helbon, Ezekiel 27:18, as well as of Eshkol, were celebrated.

The church is compared to a vine, Psalms 80:8, and Christ says of Himself, 'I am the vine', John 15:1. In one of His parables, Matthew 21:33, our Lord compares His church to a vineyard which a certain householder planted and hedged around.

The preparation of a vineyard is the most costly and troublesome of all the operations of that primitive husbandry in Eastern lands, the methods of which have remained unchanged and unimproved from the earliest records. It is, in fact, the only branch of agriculture practised there that demands any considerable outlay.

In the first place, a permanent fence must carefully enclose the vineyard, which is required for no other crop. The pasturelands outside the villages are all unfenced, and the boundaries only are marked by well-known stones or landmarks. The grain fields are equally open or only protected by thorn branches strewn on the ground, whereas the olive yards nearer the town or village are equally unprotected.

When the vineyard has been consequently hedged, the next operation is to gather out the stones, not the small stones that strew all the hillsides and are indispensable for the retention of moisture in the soil but the larger boulders, which are heaped in long rows like a ruined stonewall. On these rows, the vines are trailed to preserve the fruit from dampness.

Next, there must be a wine press which is hewn out of the native rock, for the grapes are always pressed on the spot, lest they should be bruised and injured by conveying them a distance. These wine presses, or vats, are the most imperishable records of the past in the deserted land. They are simply two parallel troughs, one above the other, with a perforated channel between them. The bunches of grapes are thrown into the upper vat, where they are trodden, and the juice flows into the lower one.

These wine vats, found in abundance through the whole land and even far into the southern desert, are silent witnesses to its former fertility. Then, unless the vineyard adjoins the village, there must be a temporary lodge, or

booth, erected on poles. But, more generally, a permanent tower, of which many traces may still be seen, was built for the watchman to use during the season, to guard the vintage against thieves or jackals.

Israel is God's vineyard, the one He loves, [Isaiah 5:1](#) / [Psalm 127:2](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:12](#), but it yielded nothing for its owner. Isaiah describes a parable designed to set forth the highly favoured position of the nation and her failure. He describes the vineyard and says God has done everything he can for his vineyard but it didn't turn out right. It was fenced, that is, it had a wall around it, it had a tower for watching and defending, [Isaiah 5:2](#) / [Isaiah 1:8](#) / [Matthew 21:33](#). It had a winepress to squeeze the juice out of the grapes, [Isaiah 5:2](#) / [Matthew 21:33](#). Everything was done in order that faithfulness is produced and God's name glorified.

Israel was planted with all the advantages but produced wild and useless grapes, [Isaiah 5:2](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:32-33](#). She was now useless for bringing glory to God. God asks those living in Jerusalem and people of Judah to judge between Him and His vineyard, [Isaiah 5:3](#). What more could God have done for them, and yet they still produced only bad fruit, [Isaiah 5:4](#).

God would just take down the hedge, [Isaiah 5:5](#), that is, He took away His blessing and protection, and let the wild beast eat it up, [Isaiah 56:9](#), which is a reference to the captivity of Judah. Their farms were laid waste, [Isaiah 5:6](#), when thousands of Israelites were taken into captivity.

Every blessing would be withheld, even the rain, [Isaiah 5:6](#). God looked for justice and righteousness, the fruit of the spirit of God but found only bloodshed and distress, [Isaiah 5:7](#). There appears to be a play on word in [Isaiah 5:7](#). Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

'God looked for justice (mishpat in Hebrew) but received bloodshed, or oppression, (mispah in Hebrew). God looked for righteousness (tsedakah in Hebrew) but received a cry (seakah in Hebrew).'

WOES AND JUDGMENTS

'Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The LORD Almighty has declared in my hearing: "Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine; a homer of seed will yield only an ephah of grain." [Isaiah 5:8-10](#)

There are six woes found within the song and Israel are described as six types of rotten fruit, drunkenness, sarcastic, liars, conceited and perverse. The sins of the people and the woe that will befall them are set forth and this is followed by the announcement of the Lord's punishment.

The first woe is upon the greedy landowners who were so greedy they grasped everything on every side of them, [Isaiah 5:8](#) / [Micah 2:2](#) / [Nehemiah 5:1-8](#). They crowded out small farmers who were driven to the cities as the poor, [Numbers 27:1-11](#) / [Numbers 33:54](#) / [1 Kings 21:3-4](#). Large landowners made no room for the poor to glean from the leftovers.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Buying additional land is not wrong in itself, but when it involves abusing other people it becomes wrong. Isaiah was not decrying large farms or estates per se; he was condemning squeezing out the small man to make oneself more prosperous, secure, and admired. Those who did this in his day ended up isolated, rather than enjoying the fellowship of their brethren, [Matthew 16:25-26](#) / [Colossians 3:5](#).'

As a result, their houses became desolate, [Isaiah 5:9](#), which is a reference to the punishment from God when the Assyrians and Babylonians took them into captivity and their enemies raided their homes and stole their goods. The

land would also suffer, although ten acres would normally produce a lot of wine, here God says it wouldn't even make a bath of wine, which is around eight gallons, Isaiah 5:10.

‘Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and timbrels and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands.’ Isaiah 5:11-12

These verses speak against those who drink strongly, those who are living for pleasure, Isaiah 22:13 / Isaiah 28:1-8 / Hosea 7:5 / Joel 3:3 / Amos 6:6. It appears they get drunk in an attempt to drown their troubles, Isaiah 5:11 / 1 Thessalonians 5:7. The wealthy used most of their time at drunken parties, totally oblivious to the danger which was coming Isaiah 5:12. They didn't think about anyone else except themselves and thought they could carry on living like this.

‘Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; those of high rank will die of hunger and the common people will be parched with thirst. Therefore Death expands its jaws, opening wide its mouth; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revellers. So people will be brought low and everyone humbled, the eyes of the arrogant humbled. But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts. Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture; lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich.’ Isaiah 5:13-17

These words speak against those who are proud, the people who were spiritually dull, this is one of the reasons for Israel's captivity. The high rank of society will die of hunger and the common people would be parched with thirst, Isaiah 5:13.

Death, that is, the grave will be filled with the dead to the point that the dead couldn't be numbered, Isaiah 5:14 / Numbers 16:30. They refused to listen to God and as a result, all classes of people would be brought down from their stool of pride Isaiah 5:15. God shows Himself holy by His righteousness, God's justice and holiness are shown in His actions, Isaiah 5:16. Notice that the sheep and the lambs are pictures roaming where Jerusalem once stood, Isaiah 5:17. This is a picture of complete destruction.

Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 5:17.

‘Sheep shall feed on the desolated estates of the covetous and the last clause is a reference to the occupation of Israel's lands by wandering tribes of Arabs and others.’

‘Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, to those who say, “Let God hurry; let him hasten his work so we may see it. The plan of the Holy One of Israel—let it approach, let it come into view, so we may know it.” Isaiah 5:18-19

Here we read of a woe upon the materialists who have a false set of values. Their falsehood was the cords with which they drew their iniquity, Isaiah 5:18. In other words, common individual sins became cultural norms by which society conducted itself.

Scoffers doubted whether or not the day of Jehovah would come, they just made fun of God, Isaiah 5:19. Because of their arrogance and ignorance concerning God's work, they brought judgment upon themselves. What they thought would be God's good work in their lives was actually God working to bring His judgment upon them, Isaiah 5:19.

‘Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.’ Isaiah 5:20-23

Here we find woes against the moral perverts. They attempt to be two-faced and some brag about how much they drink, Isaiah 5:20. Darkness, Isaiah 5:20, signifies ignorance, error, false doctrine, and crime, whereas light, Isaiah

5:20, signifies truth, knowledge, and piety. Bitterness, Isaiah 5:20, signifies sin, Acts 8:23 / Romans 3:14 / Ephesians 4:31 / Hebrews 12:15 / Jeremiah 2:19 / Jeremiah 4:18.

Wiersbe, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Moral standards were destroyed by new definitions of sin, Amos 5:7, people using God’s vocabulary but not His dictionary.’

It appears that they were a law unto themselves, each decided what was good and what was evil and they thought they were wise and clever, Isaiah 5:21 / Proverbs 3:7 / Proverbs 26:12 / Romans 1:22. However, they had totally rejected God’s laws, Mark 7:1-9. They took pride in themselves because of the amount of alcohol they could consume, Isaiah 5:22 / Isaiah 56:12. However, as a result of their drunken state, these judges had become perverted in their justice toward the innocent, Isaiah 5:23 / Zephaniah 3:3. Their drunkenness was affecting their thinking and judgments, Amos 9:8.

‘Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the LORD’s anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.’ Isaiah 5:24-25

Here we have a warning against all evil workers and so, God calls and the nations of the world come to seek out Israel. This is a fiery judgment as God’s judgment on them would send thousands to death. They were corrupt to the root and so, brought forth blossoms of iniquity, Isaiah 5:24.

All this would happen because they had rejected God and His laws, Isaiah 5:24 / Hosea 4:6 / Mark 7:9. God is angry, Isaiah 5:25 / Isaiah 9:12 / Isaiah 9:17 / Isaiah 9:21 / Isaiah 10:4 / Isaiah 23:11, and because of their sins, God’s hand was stretched forth against them, Isaiah 5:25, which is bad news for them.

‘He lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily! Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal strap is broken. Their arrows are sharp, all their bows are strung; their horses’ hooves seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. Their roar is like that of the lion, they roar like young lions; they growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue. In that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks at the land, there is only darkness and distress; even the sun will be darkened by clouds.’ Isaiah 5:26-30

Hostile armies came from afar to fight against the people of God and here, God summoned the Assyrians to bring judgment upon His vineyard that had gone so bad. He lifts up the banner so that the army assemble for war against His people, Isaiah 5:26 / Isaiah 44:28 / Isaiah 45:1-7 / Isaiah 10:5-7 / Isaiah 9:11 / Isaiah 8:18. The Assyrian army would come quickly, Isaiah 5:26 / Job 39:19-25, fully prepared to carry out God’s judgment on His fruitless, sinful people, Isaiah 5:27-28.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 5:29.

‘The extended metaphor of the lion, the lioness, and the young lions points squarely at the king of Assyria and his merciless armies as instruments through which the impending judgment of God’s rebellious and wicked people would be executed. A reading of Nahum 2:11-13, will quickly reveal how this lion metaphor constituted the universally known logo of Assyria, an identification that clung to that evil kingdom until their own final destruction.’

There is total darkness, Isaiah 5:30 / Isaiah 59:9 / Amos 5:18 / Amos 5:20 / Lamentations 3:2. It’s a distressing place and so, the Northern Kingdom of Judah would be no more. We must remember God doesn’t create evil, but He does use evil to bring about His purposes.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

‘In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” Isaiah 6:1-5

ISAIAH’S COMMISSION

Isaiah was to preach to people who were deaf or blind for an eighteen year period and they would see the effect of Isaiah’s preaching, it is a very real setting. His preaching will last until they see all his pain and sorrow. The vision is to prepare Isaiah for the seemingly fruitless efforts which he is going to expend but above and beyond this, it is a vivid description of the glory and majesty of the Christ who in this chapter, sits on the heavenly throne which has been established in the closing events of [Isaiah 4](#).

The previous chapter indicated that fleshly Israel cannot receive the blessings and this chapter shows that the cause for their rejection is the hardness of their hearts, [John 12:37-41](#). It identifies the prophet and his role and the people. In highly figurative language, he describes the appearance of Deity. Compared with God, Isaiah considered himself a man of unclean lips, unworthy to speak God’s Word.

In the year 740 B.C. Uzziah was almost seventy years old and he reigned for fifty-two years. Isaiah received this vision after Uzziah had died, [Isaiah 6:1](#) / [Isaiah 24:28](#). Because of Uzziah’s presumptuous behaviour in reference to the temple, he was cursed with leprosy, [2 Chronicles 26:16-21](#) / [2 Kings 15:1-7](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘For someone it might be, in the year that my wife, or my son, or my little gift died, or in the year that my business failed, or in the year my child became a drug-addict, or in the year when my son was born crippled, or in the year of any great personal tragedy. I SAW THE LORD SITTING ON A THRONE, high and lifted up.’

At this point in time, Isaiah was trusting God, and he needed to trust God as the King. God is portrayed as King sitting upon the throne, [Isaiah 6:1](#) / [1 Kings 22:19](#) / [Ezekiel 43:7](#) / [Jeremiah 17:12](#), and Isaiah sees God and His robe is filling the temple, [Isaiah 6:1](#). Above the throne of God were seraphim, [Isaiah 6:2](#), the burning ones, the flying fiery ones. These creatures are serpent-like creatures almost like a dragon.

The word seraphim is the plural form of seraph, in other words, you can have one seraph but if there are more than one, they are known as seraphim. The word itself means ‘burning ones’ and sometimes they are called, ‘ones of love’ because their name might come from the Hebrew root for ‘love’.

It may come as a surprise to some people, that these heavenly beings are only fully described in the Bible once, which is found here when Isaiah is being commissioned by God to be a prophet and he has a vision of heaven. According to Isaiah, these heavenly beings have six wings but they only use two of them for flying, [Isaiah 6:2](#). The other wings are used to cover their face and feet, [Isaiah 6:2](#).

Why do they cover their faces? One possible answer is that they cover their face because they were so close to God, they would witness His full glory which would be too powerful to behold. Feet seem to be considered ‘unclean’ and so not worthy to be shown to God.

Notice that Isaiah doesn’t tell us how many Seraphim there are present but because he uses the word, ‘they’, [Isaiah 6:3](#), we know it’s definitely more than one. Unlike the cherubim who are always portrayed as beside or around God’s throne, these heavenly beings are here flying above God’s throne. It seems as if their main role is to constantly glorify and praise God, [Isaiah 6:3](#). Someone suggested that they may also be God’s ‘personal attendants.’

The words they use, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory,’ [Isaiah 6:3](#), have been used in hymns and choruses by Christians for many years to remind them of the holiness of God. There is a threefold ascription of praise to God, and we see there is one ‘holy’ for each Person of the Godhead, [Matthew 28:19](#). It’s interesting to know that in Hebrew, whenever the same word is used three times to describe, something or someone, it always means that the person or object is completely like the word. Hence here, calling God holy three times means that God is completely and perfectly holy.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘repetition’ of a name, or an expression, three times, was quite common among the Jews. Thus, in [Jeremiah 7:4](#), the Jews are represented by the prophet as saying, ‘the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,’ are these. Thus, [Jeremiah 22:29](#) ‘O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord’, [Ezekiel 21:27](#) ‘I will overturn, overturn, overturn,’ see also [1 Samuel 18:23](#), and [Numbers 6:24-26](#).’

Make no mistake about it, this is a horrific sight for Isaiah as the seraphs are flying around saying ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty’, and the whole earth is full of his glory, [Isaiah 6:3](#) / [Psalm 8](#) / [Psalm 19](#). The temple shook and it was full of smoke, [Isaiah 6:4](#) / [Exodus 13:21-22](#) / [1 Kings 8:10](#) / [2 Chronicles 5:13](#) / [Ezekiel 10:4](#).

We must note that other than seeing the Lord, the One Isaiah saw in this vision isn’t specified. He isn’t identified specifically until John wrote centuries later concerning Jesus, ‘these things Isaiah said because he saw His, that is, Jesus, glory and spoke of Him,’ [John 12:41](#). We never really see God but a form of Him because God is spirit, [John 4:24](#).

Isaiah says, ‘he is ruined’, [Isaiah 6:5](#), that is, he confessed his unworthiness, [Hosea 10:15](#) / [Zephaniah 1:2](#) / [Hosea 4:6](#) / [Isaiah 15:1](#), which is the natural response when confronted with holiness, [Exodus 33:20](#). The closer we get to the presence of God, the more humble our worship becomes, [James 3:2](#). Isaiah felt really guilty because he knew who he was and he knew who God was, [Isaiah 6:5](#). In the presence of the king, he felt guilty and was guilty. He sees his own guilt and sees that he is beyond hope, [Luke 5:8](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Notice that Isaiah’s consciousness of God’s presence resulted at once in his awareness of his own sins and uncleanness. Throughout the Bible, this reaction on the part of any person becoming aware of God’s presence is normal, indeed without exception. Examples of this are Gideon, [Judges 6:22](#), Manoah, [Judges 13:22](#), Job, [Job 42:5-6](#), Peter, [Luke 5:8](#), John, [Revelation 1:17](#), and the thief on the cross, [Luke 23:40-41](#).’

Isaiah saw the King, the LORD Almighty, [Isaiah 6:5](#), he saw God, he saw Jesus before He added humanity to His deity, [John 12:41](#). We must remember that God isn’t physical, He is a spirit, [John 4:24](#), He hasn’t got a face any more than He has legs or arms. The descriptions of God having eyes, arms and legs, etc, are metaphors which help us understand God in human terms, [Deuteronomy 33:27](#) / [Genesis 6:8](#) / [2 Kings 19:16](#).

The point is that we can’t see Him with our physical eyes because He is invisible to the physical eye, [Colossians 1:15](#) / [1 Timothy 1:17](#). There’s also a sense in which we can’t see God because we are simply too sinful, whereas He

is just too glorious and holy, [Isaiah 6:1-6](#). This is one reason why we need Christ to act as our Mediator, [John 6:45-46](#) / [1 Timothy 2:5-6](#) / [1 John 2:1](#).

‘Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”
Isaiah 6:6-7

All of Isaiah’s uncleanness was burned away by the coal, [Isaiah 6:6](#). The seraphim didn’t by himself cleanse Isaiah but had to have coal from the altar, [Isaiah 6:6](#) / [Leviticus 6:12-13](#) / [Leviticus 9:24](#) / [Leviticus 17:11](#), this was divine fire. The coal that touches his lips is used to signify that Isaiah is now purified and fit to be a prophet. The coal came from the altar in heaven, so would have been very powerful.

Fire is also used in many religions and faiths as a way of purifying and cleansing something. God removes his sin, [Isaiah 6:7](#) / [Psalm 51:12](#) / [Psalm 51:14](#) / [Romans 3:23-26](#). Isaiah’s guilt was taken away when one of the seraphs touched his lips with burning coal, [Isaiah 6:7](#). This whole picture is in contrast with what Uzziah did in serving in God’s temple, [2 Chronicles 26:16-21](#). Because Isaiah’s mouth and heart were now cleansed of iniquity and sin, he can assume his destiny for God.

‘Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” ‘He said, “Go and tell this people: “‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” Isaiah 6:8-10

Notice the use of the words, ‘I’ and ‘us’, [Isaiah 6:8](#), this is obviously the Trinity, the Godhead. It appears to be the same Person speaking in both the singular and the plural. In other words, it is the same Person, [Genesis 1:26](#) / [Genesis 3:22](#).

It appears that God wants a job done and Isaiah volunteers, ‘here I am send me’, Isaiah says, [Isaiah 6:8](#). Obviously, God knew that Isaiah would put himself forward to act on God’s behalf. It was the duty of Isaiah to deliver the message of God, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#).

Isaiah’s mission was a type of the mission of Christ, who was to come. Isaiah preached for more than forty years and more than thirty-three years of that time was used to harden the people’s hearts, [Isaiah 6:9](#). God hardened their hearts as did with Pharaoh, [Exodus 4:21](#) / [Exodus 7:3](#) / [Exodus 9:12](#), and those who refuse to love the truth, [2 Corinthians 4:4](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:9-12](#).

God is telling Isaiah to tell the people but they will not listen or understand but just do it anyway, [Isaiah 6:9](#) / [Matthew 13:14](#) / [Mark 4:12](#). He is to tell the people and increase their un-spiritual awareness [Isaiah 6:9-10](#). He is bringing about their spiritual downfall because they have no intention of changing their minds, [Matthew 13:14](#) / [Mark 4:12](#).

‘Then I said, “For how long, Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.” Isaiah 6:11-13

Isaiah asks, how long he was to preach? God replies until the cities are ruined, and the houses emptied, [Isaiah 6:11](#). Isaiah was to preach until the captivity but a remnant will return, [Isaiah 6:12](#) / [Romans 11:1-10](#). Isaiah would experience the fall of the Northern Kingdom but not the fall of Judah. The land would be laid waste, [Isaiah 6:13](#) / [Isaiah 17:2](#) / [Jeremiah 4:29](#) / [Zephaniah 2:4](#).

This prophecy has been made so clear by its accomplishment, fulfilment, that there remains little room for doubt about its fulfilment of it. Nebuchadnezzar took into captivity the great part of the people, the ‘tenth’, [Isaiah 6:13](#), remaining in the land, of the poorer people, followed Gedaliah, [2 Kings 25:12](#) / [2 Kings 25:22](#).

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘According to Isaiah, not ‘all Israel’ but the elect remnant alone, is destined to salvation. God shows unchangeable severity toward sin, but covenant faithfulness in preserving a remnant, and to that remnant Isaiah bequeaths the prophetic legacy of the second part of his book, Isaiah 40-66.’

But out of the stump, ‘the holy seed’, Isaiah 6:13, that is, the promise given to Abraham, would be continued through the Davidic seedline, Genesis 12:1-3. The remnant would emerge and remain and from that remnant, One would come who would be a blessing to all mankind, the Christ.

The purpose of the vision was simply this, for Isaiah to trust God as King, to see that the true power lay with God, not other nations around and to show God’s holiness. God calls us so that we are a holy people, 1 Peter 1:16, but it all comes down to the heart of the individual.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

‘When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it. Now the house of David was told, “Aram has allied itself with Ephraim”; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind. Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer’s Field. Say to him, ‘Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smouldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. Aram, Ephraim, and Remaliah’s son have plotted your ruin, saying, “Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.” Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “It will not take place, it will not happen, for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah’s son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”’” Isaiah 7:1-9

Beginning in this chapter through to Isaiah 12, we read that Immanuel offers relief to the oppressed. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, formed a confederacy against the king of Judah in the time of Jotham, Isaiah 7:1 / 2 Kings 15:37.

At the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, they invaded Judah with a powerful army and threatened to destroy the house or throne of David, Isaiah 7:2. Isaiah was sent to comfort the king and the royal family in their distress and to promise them that God would make good all of His promises to David and his descendants.

This chapter begins with a historical account of the occasion of this prophecy to assure the people that God would make good His promises and that although they would suffer and apparently be destroyed, the house of David would not completely perish until the miraculous conception of the Messiah who was to spring from the tribe of Judah.

Ahaz refused to receive a sign from the Lord, whereupon God promised to give a sign as the world had never seen before the virgin birth of Immanuel. The Syrians formed an alliance with Ephraim, that is, Israel the Northern Kingdom.

The heart of the people and Ahaz were shaking just like the trees were shaking by the wind, Isaiah 7:2 / Chronicles 28:5-6. Why? Because of the Northern alliance but Ahaz didn’t want this alliance. Notice that Isaiah didn’t tremble as the trees did.

Rezin took Elath, 2 Kings 16:2-6 / 2 Chronicles 28:1-5 / 2 Chronicles 28:8, and Aram and Ephraim wanted to take Jerusalem but God said this wouldn't happen. Ephraim and Syria are described as the remains of a burnt-out torch that is, they are like smouldering pieces of wood.

Isaiah's son, Shear-Jashub, Isaiah 7:3, whose name means a remnant shall return, Isaiah 8:18. The remnant refers to Judah. The remnant will return possibly to God, Isaiah 10:21. Ahaz began a tunnel project to bring water from a pool outside Jerusalem into the city, this project was later completed by Hezekiah, Isaiah 22:9 / Isaiah 22:11 / 2 Kings 18:17 / 2 Chronicles 32:3-4 / 2 Chronicles 32:30.

God basically tells Ahaz to take it easy, don't panic, Isaiah 7:4-5. They want to go to Jerusalem and replace Ahaz with the son of Tabeel as king, Isaiah 7:6. Tabeel's name means the goodness of God, the father of one whom the kings of Syria and Samaria in vain attempted to place on the throne of Ahaz.

Aram and Rezin will fall within sixty-five years, Isaiah 7:7-8, a time following the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. and Ahaz appears to be faithless, Isaiah 7:9. Because of his lack of faith in God to protect Judah, the Assyrians would plunder the countryside of Judah, ravishing the land of its productivity.

The land would revert to open pasture lands where roaming livestock would feed. This takes us to 669 B.C. Samaria has been destroyed and the inhabitants have been taken away and Samaria is repopulated. God gives Ahaz a firm warning through Isaiah, he needs to believe and stand firm or he will fall, Isaiah 7:9.

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

‘Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.” Isaiah 7:10-17

Since Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, Isaiah 7:10-11, Isaiah gave his own sign in an effort to persuade Ahaz to trust God. Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask God for a sign but Ahaz, like a true hypocrite, says, no I won't test God, Isaiah 7:12 / Exodus 17:2 / Deuteronomy 5:16 / Matthew 16:1.

God gives Ahaz a choice, Isaiah 7:13, but Ahaz refuses because he obviously isn't a God-fearing man but God will give Ahaz a sign anyway, Isaiah 7:14. It appears at this time, Ahaz had already decided to make an alliance with Assyria in order to resist the attack of Rezin and Pekah. He was determined to trust in Assyria and not God. The son of a virgin Isaiah 7:14, was to be a sign that David's house would not be destroyed.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The virgin conception was a supernatural event which was fulfilled by the birth of Jesus, Matthew 1:18-23. This prophecy was not merely applied to Jesus' conception but the Scriptures said it was fulfilled therein. There is a vast difference between a prophecy being applied and one being fulfilled. The Christ is on His throne of glory in chapter six and here in chapter 7 is seen as being conceived, in chapter nine as having been born and qualified to serve, in chapter eleven as over His kingdom.’

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Syriac version, perhaps the oldest known version of the Old Testament, renders this word ‘almah’ as ‘virgin’. The Greek Old Testament, translated by 72 of the world's finest scholars renders this word ‘parthenos’, a Greek word

which always means virgin and nothing else. The 47 scholars who translated the King James Version rendered the word as ‘virgin’. The one hundred and one scholars who translated the American Revised Version of 1901 rendered this word as ‘virgin’. This is a total of two hundred and twenty scholars, not counting those who made the Syriac version. In addition, Matthew, an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ, translated this as ‘virgin’, **Matthew 1:18-24**. Here are two hundred twenty-one witnesses, one of whom was inspired, and they are unanimous in declaring that this word means ‘virgin’. Who declares otherwise? Neo-orthodox modernists who do not believe in the inspiration of the scriptures nor the virgin birth of our Blessed Lord. It is disconcerting to find those who claim to believe the Bible and be defenders of the faith who accept the modernistic viewpoint. **Isaiah 7:14** means ‘virgin’. It does not mean anything else and there is no reason for claiming it does except to try to make infidels out of people and destroy their faith in the virgin birth of Christ.’

The purpose of this prophecy is to show that man couldn’t set aside God’s plans. The name ‘Immanuel’, **Isaiah 7:14**, means God is with us, which is a clear refence to Christ, **Matthew 1:23**. It is very possible that this prophecy was twofold and was partly fulfilled during the reign of Ahaz. Isaiah and Ahaz would have known this woman. This could be a woman at the time that had a child named Immanuel. This is to be a sign for Ahaz.

The immediate context is that a young woman would conceive and then bear a son. Before this baby passed through its younger years, the nations of Syria and the northern kingdom, Israel, would have gone into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians.

How would it be a sign for Ahaz if it were just referring to Christ coming into the world seven-hundred and fifty years later? Ahaz would be well gone, **Isaiah 8:15-17**. Who might this son be?

1. The son of a woman who both Ahaz and Isaiah knew. This child would not be very old before the land was in waist.
2. Hezekiah. This couldn’t be him because he was at least six years old at the time.
3. This is another son of Isaiah. His name is Immanuel.

The first fulfilment was in reference to Isaiah’s immediate historical context, and the second was in reference to the Messiah, Jesus, who was born of a virgin, **Matthew 1:22-23**. The difference between the two births was that the child that was born in Isaiah’s time was not of a virgin birth but Jesus’ birth was of the virgin Mary.

Notice that ‘Immanuel’ shall know to refuse the evil and choose the godly, **Isaiah 7:15**. He must eat ‘curds and honey’ to know to do this, **Isaiah 7:15**. Curds and honey refer to the thick milk the Nomad tribes ate in the desert, food of the wilderness. He ate curds and honey when he fled to Egypt as a child with his parents. They speak of a time of famine or hardships.

Isaiah says there is going to be a child and before the child is old enough to know right from wrong, the land of the two kings will be wasted away, **Isaiah 7:16**. The land of the two kings refers to Syria, **Isaiah 7:16**, that is, Rezin and Israel, that is, Pekah. Ahaz would see the land forsaken, **Isaiah 7:17**, but there is no promise that he would see the child.

ASSYRIA, THE LORD’S INSTRUMENT

‘In that day, the LORD will whistle for flies from the Nile delta in Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. In that day, the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and private parts, and to cut off your beard also. In that day, a person will keep alive a young cow and two goats. And because of the abundance of the milk they give, there will be curds to eat. All who remain in the land will

eat curds and honey. In that day, in every place where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels, there will be only briers and thorns. Hunters will go there with bow and arrow, for the land will be covered with briers and thorns. As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe, you will no longer go there for fear of the briers and thorns; they will become places where cattle are turned loose and where sheep run.’ Isaiah 7:18-25

Here we read of certain judgment for Judah, 2 Kings 16 / 2 Chronicles 28. They went to Egypt for help and ended up being slaves themselves.

The flies, Isaiah 7:18 / Exodus 8:21-24, and bees, Isaiah 7:18 / Deuteronomy 1:44 / Deuteronomy 7:20 / Psalm 118:12, speak of the Egyptian gadfly and the Assyrian bumblebee and they would infest the hills and valleys of Judah, Isaiah 7:19. Those who we go to for help often will enslave us, Ahaz went to Assyria for help.

Notice that the LORD is also the LORD of Assyria and He will use a ‘hired razor’, Isaiah 7:20 / Isaiah 10:5-7, to shave His people’s heads, Isaiah 7:20 / Ezekiel 5:1, and beards, Isaiah 7:20 / Isaiah 50:6. To shave was to show utter contempt, 2 Samuel 10:4 / 1 Chronicles 19:4.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the shaving.

‘This does not mean that God will shave himself, but that he will shave the land of his rebellious people. Shaving the hair of the feet, the head, and the beard simply means that nothing will be left. Judah is to be completely stripped.’

Ahaz is paying the Assyrian king to fight against Israel but God is using the Assyrian king to bring about His people’s destruction.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It’s evident from 2 Kings 16:7, that the discourse of Isaiah made no impression on the mind of Ahaz. He sent messengers with valuable presents to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser professedly entered into the views of Ahaz and promised his aid.’

It used to be home to thousands of animals but now, there are only one or two, Isaiah 7:21. The land is also being desolated, there are not enough people left to take care of the land, and all they have to live on was curds and honey, Isaiah 7:22. The land at one time was filled with expensive vineyards but now there are only briers and thorns, Isaiah 7:23. Wild beasts would be in the thickets and one would have a bow and arrow to go pick berries, Isaiah 7:24-25.

The Assyrians would take the Northern Kingdom into captivity, 2 Kings 15:29, but the devastation of Judah should have been a warning to the Southern Kingdom, they should repent and return to God. Judah are going to suffer the consequences of Ahaz’s decision to trust in the Assyrians and not in God.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to me, “Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.” So I called in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah as reliable witnesses for me. Then I made love to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, “Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. For before the boy knows how to say, ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.” Isaiah 8:1-4

ISAIAH AND HIS CHILDREN AS SIGNS

This chapter is a prophecy of the Assyrian invasion. It begins with a renewal of the prediction of the overthrow of Syria and Israel in the form of a symbolic name, to be applied to Isaiah's own son whose infant life is made the measure of the event.

This prophecy was fulfilled about three years later when Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria went up against Damascus, killed Rezin and took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and carried them away to Assyria, 2 Kings 15:29 / 1 Chronicles 5:26.

We read of the sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, Isaiah 8:1, whose name means quick to plunder. Isaiah is to take a scroll or tablet, Isaiah 8:1 / Isaiah 30:8 / Habakkuk 2:2, and write on it in a language everyone could understand, Habakkuk 2:2, in front of two witnesses, Isaiah 8:2.

Zechariah, Isaiah 8:2, who is not known but possibly one of the Levites whose name is mentioned in 2 Kings 18:2 / 2 Chronicles 29:1, and Uriah, Isaiah 8:2 / 2 Kings 16:10-16. Two witnesses were to verify the prophecy with their signatures.

Isaiah's wife is called a prophetess, Isaiah 8:3, and nine months later Isaiah had another son and he was to write, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, Isaiah 8:3, that is, quick pickings, easy prey. Damascus and Samaria are two capitals which represented their nations, Isaiah 8:4.

The child's name would be prophetic of the downfall of Syria and Samaria by the Assyrians. The plundering would reach even to the walls of Jerusalem. Before the child could say my father or my mother the land would be destroyed. In other words, before the child could speak, Assyria, through its king, Tiglath-Pileser, would ravage both Syria and Israel.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'This was dramatically fulfilled in 732 B.C. when Damascus fell to Assyria and, even when Samaria fell ten years later, the child of this passage had not reached the age of accountability.'

'The LORD spoke to me again: "Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates—the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks, and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, Immanuel!" Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle and be shattered! Prepare for battle and be shattered! Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us.' Isaiah 8:5-10

Here we read that Judah will also be punished because of her trust in man, that is, Assyria. We read that the power of Assyria is under the power of God.

The 'waters of Shiloah', Isaiah 8:5-6, represent the monarchy in Zion through which the blessings of God flowed. Shiloah was a small fountain supplying a pool just outside the walls of Jerusalem, John 9:7 / John 9:11. Judah had refused God's blessings and turned to Assyria for strength. The 'mighty floodwaters', Isaiah 8:7, refer to the power of Assyria and the 'river' is contrasted with the water of Shiloah. One of them is being accepted and the other is rejected. There are two types of water in contrast here.

1. Gently flowing waters of Shiloah, in other words, they rejected the way of God.
2. Mighty floodwaters of the river, the Euphrates, in other words, God's going to send this.

The waters of Shiloah are used as a symbol of Davidic monarchy enthroned upon Zion, which had the promise of God, who was enthroned upon Moriah, in contrast with the imperial or world kingdom, which is compared to the overflowing waters of the Euphrates.

The power of Assyria would cover up Judah, [Isaiah 8:7](#), but the land belongs to ‘Immanuel’ or God, [Isaiah 8:8](#). This indicates who the Immanuel of [Isaiah 7:14](#) is, it is the One whose land Israel is, God. Therefore, ‘God with us’ is God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, [John 1:14](#).

Assyria was going to be God’s tool and the mighty floodwaters of Assyria almost destroyed them, it reached up to the neck, [Isaiah 8:8](#) / [Isaiah 30:28](#).

The nations coming against Judah would fail because God is in control. All those who would put on their armour and swords would be overcome by the invading Assyrians, [Isaiah 8:9](#). Judah must suffer because of her unbelief and Isaiah puts all the nations together who war against God’s people and pronounces a sentence of destruction upon them, [Isaiah 8:9](#).

Even if different countries prepare, [Isaiah 5:27](#), devise strategies and come together in order to muster their armies against the strength of the Assyrian army, they would be conquered, [Isaiah 8:10](#). God was using the Assyrian army as His tool of judgment on both Syria and Israel but no one would be able to stand against them. The reason they shall be destroyed is because God is with us, [Isaiah 8:10](#).

‘This is what the LORD says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people: “Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread. He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured.”’ [Isaiah 8:11-15](#)

Isaiah is to fear nobody except God, he is not to think like other people think, [Isaiah 8:11](#). God warns Isaiah not to sink down to the level of the people in calling it a conspiracy as the people do, [Isaiah 8:11](#). Today, as God’s people we must view world situations through God’s eyes. The people thought the prophets were using conspiracy when they warned the people. They also thought the kings were using conspiracy when they would back up.

When they cried out that this was all just a conspiracy against the nation, Isaiah wasn’t to be afraid and not to be filled with dread, [Isaiah 8:12](#) / [1 Peter 3:13-15](#), but he was to remember that what was about to happen was the work of God, [Isaiah 8:13](#).

God is behind whatever judgement His people are going to suffer. Israel are going to stumble over the rock of God’s will, [Isaiah 8:14-15](#) / [Ezekiel 11:16](#) / [Matthew 21:44](#) / [1 Peter 2:8](#). In other words, when the people turned from the true and living God and embraced idolatry, many terrible things happened to them.

‘Bind up this testimony of warning and seal up God’s instruction among my disciples. I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.’ [Isaiah 8:16-18](#)

This is another prophecy of Christ forming a prophetic type, [Hebrews 2:13](#). Isaiah is to bind up his words, [Daniel 8:26](#) / [Daniel 12:4](#), and he has students that he taught, [Isaiah 8:16](#). The Word of God was all that would protect them [Isaiah 8:16](#). Isaiah and his children are serving as a prophetic type of Christ and his children. He proclaimed the prophetic meaning of the names of his two sons as signs and then waited for God to bring to pass the fulfilment of the prophecy, [Isaiah 8:18](#). In a sense, Isaiah becomes salvation is of God.

THE DARKNESS TURNS TO LIGHT

‘When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Consult God’s instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.’ Isaiah 8:19-22

Here we have a picture of darkness and despair, which were the results of their unbelief, [Hosea 4:6](#). Isaiah was highly indignant with God’s children who had taken off after fortune-tellers, spiritualists, wizards, and others who deceived the people, [Isaiah 8:19](#) / [Leviticus 19:31](#) / [Leviticus 20:6](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:11](#) / [1 Samuel 28:7-19](#). Only those people who spoke according to the law of God had any light in them, [Isaiah 8:20](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Look how ridiculous it is that people would go to the dead in order to procure valid knowledge to help the living. It would be just like going to a pauper to learn how to handle money or going to a drunkard to learn how to handle liquor! The only absolute yardstick of spiritual truth is the Word of God and absolutely no human opinions, religions, philosophies, or systems of morality can be valid unless they are in harmony with the Word of God.’

We also see a picture of distress when judgement comes upon the land, [Isaiah 8:21](#). They search everywhere for relief but they are not looking to God, so they will not find relief, [Isaiah 8:21](#). Some look elsewhere for teaching except God and so they are living in spiritual darkness, [Isaiah 8:22](#). The good news is, that Isaiah isn’t to do this.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is a remarkable instance of the prophet Isaiah’s manner, of a rapid, impetuous, and bold style of utterance. He accumulates images, piles words on each other and deepens the anxiety by each additional word, until we almost feel that we are enveloped by the gloom and see objects of terror and alarm on every side.’

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

‘Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.’ Isaiah 9:1-7

This chapter informs us that the Messianic light will shine forth from the darkness, **Matthew 4:15-16**. The land of Zebulun, Naphtali, etc, **Isaiah 9:1**, were the principal sufferers in the first Assyrian invasion under Tiglath-Pileser, **2 Kings 15:29 / 1 Chronicles 5:26**.

They were the first to enjoy the blessing of Christ's teaching and to see His miraculous works. The land of Galilee, which is the land of the Gentiles will indeed be honoured, **Matthew 4:12-16 / Isaiah 42:6**. They were in the darkness, **John 1:46 / Matthew 26:69 / Mark 14:70**, but they will be in the light, a light has dawned, **Isaiah 9:2 / Isaiah 8:20 / Matthew 4:13-16**. During Isaiah's time, Galilee was a place of doom and gloom, **Isaiah 8:21-22**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Galilee.

1. The district in which these two tribes dwelt constituted the border-land toward the pagan nations.
2. The Galileans not only dwelt in the vicinity of the pagan, but a large number of them had actually remained in the country, and it had been found impossible to expel them from it, **Judges 1:30-35**.
3. The Phoenicians, with whom they held commercial contact, and with whom they dwelt intermingled, were among the most corrupt of the pagan nations.
4. They were far from Jerusalem, and, consequently, the influence of religion may be supposed to have been less felt among them than among the other Jews. The true religion was, in a great measure, lost upon them, and ignorance and superstition took its place. Hence, in the New Testament, they are spoken of as almost proverbially rude and ignorant.

We also see that this Messiah is to have a spiritual reign, **Isaiah 9:3-4**. The Midianites had oppressed Israel, **Judges 7:1-10 / Judges 8:1-10**, but the 'shattered yoke', **Isaiah 9:4**, refers to the relief of Israel from the Midianites, **1 Kings 12:4 / Isaiah 47:6 / Isaiah 58:6**. During those days, the war brought bloodshed and there was tumult, **Isaiah 9:5**.

The New Bible Commentary, says the following.

'The burning of military weapons, clothing, and equipment are spoken of here as being abolished so as to prepare our minds for the New Era under Messiah; but instead of the glorious New Age being foretold as the work of some new Joshua or Gideon, 'It is the Child already foretold as Immanuel in **Isaiah 7:14**, who suddenly appears as the hope of the whole world.'

The child who is born, **Isaiah 9:6**, is a clear reference to Immanuel, the Christ, **Isaiah 7:14**, who would come and solve all spiritual confusion. The 'government being upon His shoulders', **Isaiah 9:6**, refers to that which the king wore upon his shoulder, it was the sign of authority.

All these names, 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace', **Isaiah 9:6**, are all applied to the Lord Himself. Everything about Him was wonderful, His birth, His life, His teaching, His death, and His glorious resurrection from the tomb.

He is Counsellor **Isaiah 9:6**, that explains the law of God to us, **John 6:68 / John 12:48**. He is the mighty God, **Isaiah 9:6 / Isaiah 10:21 / John 1:1 / John 1:18 / John 20:28 / Acts 20:28 / Romans 9:5 / Titus 2:13**. He is the Father of all eternity, **Isaiah 9:6 / James 1:18 / Hebrews 12:2 / 1 Peter 2:3**, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth, **John 1:1**. He is the Prince of Peace, **Isaiah 9:6 / Isaiah 11:6-9 / Luke 2:14**, and so, Jesus is now reigning as the Prince of Peace over all things in heaven and on earth.

His kingdom is everlasting, **Isaiah 9:7**, this was established when Christ came to earth, **Matthew**

16:18 / Colossians 1:13 / Hebrews 12:28. Christ is a descendant of David and is now on the throne of David, **Isaiah 9:7 / 1 Kings 8:25 / 2 Samuel 7:12-13 / Psalms 132:11 / Acts 2:30-36**. Luke, in his Gospel, tells us that Jesus would reign on the throne of David, **Luke 1:32**. Matthew tells us that Heavenly authority was given to Jesus, **Matthew 28:18**, and it's with this authority that 'he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end', **Luke 1:33**.

The Hebrew writer quotes Psalm 45:6-7, in Hebrews 1:8, and writes, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.’ This was prophesied in Psalm 45, and fulfilled in Jesus as He sat upon the throne of David in the heavenly places when He ascended to the Father, Ephesians 1:20-23. The Hebrew writer also says in Hebrews 8:1 ‘Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.’

In other words, Jesus fulfilled all of these verses, He is now ruling as King of Kings and Lord of lords over all things, Matthew 28:18 / 1 Timothy 6:15.

THE LORD’S ANGER AGAINST ISRAEL

‘The Lord has sent a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel. All the people will know it—Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—who say with pride and arrogance of heart, “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the fig trees have been felled, but we will replace them with cedars.” But the LORD has strengthened Rezin’s foes against them and has spurred their enemies on. Arameans from the east and Philistines from the west have devoured Israel with open mouth. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.’ Isaiah 9:8-12

Isaiah now returns to the present situation and predicts the defeat of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Lord sent a message, Isaiah 9:8, and His Word travels quickly, however, Ephraim mockingly rejects the chastening of the Lord, boasting that things will be only better for them, no matter what God does Isaiah 9:9. The people are proud and boastful, a people who were self-efficient, a people who thought they didn’t need God. But their arrogance led them into sin and their sin led them to be judged by God.

Ephraim was the major tribe of the north who represented the entire Northern Kingdom. Despite the bricks having fallen down, in their arrogance, they believe they will rebuild, Isaiah 9:10. Sycamores are the cheap wood, 1 Kings 10:27 / 2 Chronicles 1:15 / 2 Chronicles 9:27, and cedars were the expensive wood, Isaiah 9:10 / Isaiah 2:18. In other words, they thought they could stand on their own strength rather than relying on God’s power.

They had no chance as God had strengthened Rezin’s foes against them Isaiah 9:11. Once the Assyrians conquered Syria, the Syrians were compelled to join with the Assyrians against the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And so, the Assyrians, along with the Syrians and Philistines, fought against Israel who were caught in between their foes, Isaiah 9:12. Notice the reference to God’s anger, Isaiah 9:12. This appears throughout this chapter, Isaiah 9:12 / Isaiah 9:17 / Isaiah 9:21.

‘But the people have not returned to him who struck them, nor have they sought the LORD Almighty. So the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm branch and reed in a single day; the elders and dignitaries are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail. Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are led astray. Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks folly. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.’ Isaiah 9:13-17

These words describe the second stage of God’s justice, this time it is God who is doing the destroying, Isaiah 9:13. The ‘branch’, Isaiah 9:14, refers to the highest of the people and the ‘reed’, Isaiah 9:14, refers to the lowest of the people, Isaiah 19:15.

The ‘heads’, Isaiah 9:14-15, are the chiefs or rulers of the cities, Deuteronomy 28:13-14, the ‘tails’, Isaiah 9:14-15, are the false prophets, Isaiah 3:12. The leaders were leading the people away, Isaiah 9:16. God is angry and is coming in judgment against Ephraim and no one would be spared, Isaiah 9:17.

‘Surely wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns, it sets the forest thickets ablaze, so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke. By the wrath of the LORD Almighty the land will be scorched and the people will be fuel for the fire; they will not spare one another. On the right they will devour but still be hungry; on the left they will eat but not be satisfied. Each will feed on the flesh of their own offspring: Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, and Ephraim on Manasseh; together they will turn against Judah. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.’ Isaiah 9:18-21

Even though there were repeated demonstrations of God’s displeasure, the nation was going to devour itself. Their wickedness is described as a forest fire which is totally out of control, **Isaiah 9:18 / Hosea 7:6**. Notice that the people were their own fuel for the fire, they turned on each other, **Isaiah 9:19**.

They devour each other but want to do more because they are never satisfied, **Isaiah 9:20**. In other words, in their strife, they were destroying their own brothers, **Isaiah 9:20 / Matthew 10:21 / Matthew 10:36 / Mark 13:12**. Manasseh devoured Ephraim, and Ephraim devoured Manasseh and together they turned upon Judah, **Isaiah 9:21**. Even though they weren’t friendly with each other, Manasseh and Ephraim would combine and turn against Judah, **Luke 23:12**. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were descendants of Joseph, **Genesis 46:20**, and both tribes set themselves against Judah. God remains angry with His people and everything will be gloomy and dark because of the judgement of God upon His people, **Isaiah 9:21**. God’s hand of judgment was upon His people.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

‘Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. What will you do on the day of reckoning when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.’ Isaiah 10:1-4

This chapter deals with the scourge of Assyria and begins by describing the nation’s sinful state. Those who write laws and decrees to defraud the weak and the poor are denounced, **Isaiah 10:1 / Isaiah 1:10 / Isaiah 1:23**. They were taking advantage of the poor, the widows, and orphans, **Isaiah 10:2**. There was no justice or righteousness being practised among them, **Isaiah 29:21 / Proverbs 27:5**.

When judgement comes ‘on the day of reckoning’, **Isaiah 10:3 / Job 31:14 / Job 35:15 / Isaiah 26:14 / Ezekiel 9:1**, they will be completely helpless. Because they had turned to the Assyrians, there is no place to go because the Assyrians, who were being used by God were coming upon them, **Isaiah 10:3**. Even their riches wouldn’t be able to help them, **Isaiah 10:3 / Psalm 49:17**. Notice the reference to God’s anger once again, **Isaiah 10:4 / Isaiah 9:12 / Isaiah 9:17 / Isaiah 9:21**.

GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

‘Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an

end to many nations. ‘Are not my commanders all kings?’ he says. ‘Has not Kalno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria—shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?’” Isaiah 10:5-11

Here we are introduced to the Assyrian, who is the rod which will be employed to execute God’s wrath, **Isaiah 10:5**. In other words, Assyria is God’s weapon, **Proverbs 21:1**. God used an ungodly nation to judge what was supposed to be a godly nation.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Back in **Isaiah 7:20**, Assyria was identified as God’s razor, other examples of the recurrence of this metaphor identify such wicked powers as God’s bows, **Isaiah 13:17**, God’s battle-axe, **Jeremiah 51:20**, and God’s arrows, **Jeremiah 51:11**.’

Notice that Assyria doesn’t realise this but boasts as though he should conquer all in his own strength. God is indignation against His people and this is expressed through Assyria, **Isaiah 10:6**. Assyria’s intention was different from the divine purpose, **Isaiah 10:7**. The boasting of the nation ignores the fact that God merely used Assyria to discipline the nations over whose downfall the people gloated, **Isaiah 10:8**.

The Assyrian king became arrogant in taking credit for his victories over Carchemish, **Isaiah 10:9 / 2 Kings 23:29**, Hamath, **2 Kings 17:24**, Arpad, **2 Kings 18:34**, Samaria, **Isaiah 28:1**, and Damascus, **Isaiah 17:1-14**. They were cities and capital cities to the north of Israel. Assyria took credit for what God had actually accomplished in making it possible for him to conquer these kingdoms.

Assyria thought of Jerusalem as just another city and Judah as just any other nation and notice they refer to God as just another idol, **Isaiah 10:11**. They destroy because they love to destroy things not because they loved God. All this stemmed from his pride. Assyria themselves, even though God is using them, will be judged. The Assyrians would eventually come to know that their idol gods weren’t able to deliver them from the Babylonians. The prophecy seems to have been delivered after the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser in the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah, possibly in the 14th year of Hezekiah’s reign, Judah was taken.

‘When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, “I will punish the king of Assyria for the wilful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as people gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing or opened its mouth to chirp.”” **Isaiah 10:12-14**

When God had made use of Assyria, He would throw it away, **Isaiah 10:12**. Assyria will be punished because of their pride, **Isaiah 10:12**. It was God who brought the Assyrian Empire into existence for the purpose of bringing judgment on Israel. Once the judgment was rendered, there was no more need for the Assyrians.

The Assyrian king foolishly thought that his own hands had gained the victory and he was boasting about it, **Isaiah 10:13**. Assyrians had been boasting but what right did they have to boast, after all, it was God who had done the work.

God took them out in order to raise up another nation, the Babylonian Empire, **Isaiah 10:14**, that would in time be used just as Assyria in order to bring judgment on Judah. Once again, we are reminded that God doesn’t create evil, **Isaiah 10:14**, but He will use evil people, even evil nations to bring about His purpose.

‘Does the ax raise itself above the person who swings it, or the saw boast against the one who uses it? As if a rod were to wield the person who lifts it up, or a club brandish the one who is not wood! Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame. The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his

thorns and his briers. The splendour of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick person wastes away. And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few that a child could write them down.’ Isaiah 10:15-19

The ax, Isaiah 10:15, that is, Assyria, is not greater than the woodman, Isaiah 10:15, that is, God, or the saw is not greater than the sawyer, Isaiah 10:16. The words ‘sturdy warriors’ Isaiah 10:16, refer to the Assyrians and the words ‘wasting disease’, Isaiah 10:16, refers to the consumption of the Assyrians. We read of the doom of the Assyrians under the figure of a forest that is burned and almost entirely consumed, Isaiah 10:16 / Isaiah 33:1. This isn’t a literal fire obviously, but language to describe the work of God.

The ‘Light of Israel’, Isaiah 10:17 / Ezekiel 5:2 / Isaiah 44:16 / Isaiah 47:14, will become a fire, Isaiah 10:17 / Deuteronomy 4:24 / Deuteronomy 9:3 / Hebrews 12:29, and the ‘Holy One’, Isaiah 10:17, indicates that the work would be of God. In a single day, Isaiah 10:17, one of God’s angels killed one-hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers, 2 Kings 19:35.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In these expressions, the army of Sennacherib is compared with a beautiful grove thick set with trees and as all the beauty of a grove which the fire overruns is destroyed, so, says the prophet, it will be with the army of the Assyrian under the judgments of God. If the ‘briers and thorns’, Isaiah 10:17, refer to the common soldiers of his army, then the glory of the forest, the tall, majestic trees, refer to the princes and nobles. But this mode of interpretation should not be pressed too far.’

The destruction of the nation would be so complete, that a child could count all that was left, Isaiah 10:19.

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

‘In that day, the remnant of Israel, the survivors of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people be like the sand by the sea, Israel, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land.’ Isaiah 10:20-23

Only a righteous remnant will escape God’s Judgement, Isaiah 10:20-21. Though the Israelites were many in number, only a remnant returned. There will be a remnant of Israel preserved from the Northern and Southern kingdoms, Psalm 119:18 / Genesis 22:17 / Genesis 41:49 / Joshua 11:4 / Judges 7:12 / 1 Samuel 13:5.

We must remember that God never intended that in His judgment of Israel He would wipe them out of existence, He still had promised to fulfil concerning the coming of the Messiah, Isaiah 10:22 / Genesis 12:1-3. In Romans 9:27, Paul quotes the words of Isaiah and in Romans 11:26, he writes, ‘and so all Israel shall be saved.’ The word, ‘so’ is an adverb of manner, meaning that a remnant of Israel will be saved in like manner as the Gentiles, that is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous and God Himself will carry out the destruction,’ Isaiah 10:23. Ahaz had made an alliance with Assyria in order to gain some protection from Israel and Syria to the north, however, when we think about the remnant that would eventually return after both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, the people would no longer trust in earthly kings, they would now trust God as their King.

‘Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: “My people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians, who beat you with a rod and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did. Very soon my anger against you will end and my wrath will be directed to their destruction.” The LORD Almighty will lash them with a whip, as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb; and he will raise his staff over the waters, as he did in Egypt. In that day,

their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat.’ Isaiah 10:24-27

God now encourages Jerusalem, He is encouraging His people to trust in Him and be comforted, Isaiah 10:24 / Hebrews 12:5-11. God would stir up His people up and give them courage, Isaiah 10:24-25, He will raise up the Babylonians to come and destroy the Assyrians, 2 Kings 19:35.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 10:24.

‘This is a promise that Jehovah will lift up his rod for the protection of his people and the destruction of their enemies, just like God through Moses had done so long ago when that action rescued Israel and destroyed Egypt at the Red Sea.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 10:26.

‘The Midianites were discomfited and punished. There is reference here, doubtless, to the discomfiture and slaughter of the Midianites by Gideon, as recorded in Judges 7:24-25.’

It was at the rock of Oreb Isaiah 10:26, that Gideon killed the two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, Judges 7:25, and from this circumstance, probably, the name was given to the rock, Leviticus 11:15 / Deuteronomy 14:14. It was on the east side of the Jordan.

The yoke and burden of Assyria will be broken, Isaiah 10:27 / Isaiah 9:4-6. Israel was a nation that was a part of God’s eternal scheme of redemption, however, when God’s plan was completed, Israel, if they obeyed Christ, would become a spiritual nation belonging to God, Galatians 3:26-29.

‘They enter Aiath; they pass through Migron; they store supplies at Mikdash. They go over the pass, and say, “We will camp overnight at Geba.” Ramah trembles: Gibeah of Saul flees. Cry out, Daughter Gallim! Listen, Laishah! Poor Anathoth! Madmenah is in flight; the people of Gebim take cover. This day they will halt at Nob; they will shake their fist at the mount of Daughter Zion, at the hill of Jerusalem. See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.’ Isaiah 10:28-34

Before the return of the remnant, Assyria will do a lot of damage and here we read of the advance of the Assyrians toward Jerusalem. The places mentioned here are all in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

After entering Aiath, Assyria passes through Migron, Isaiah 10:28, which is a place mentioned in 1 Samuel 14:2, it is at Mikdash, Ezra 2:27 / Nehemiah 7:31, they restore their supplies, 1 Samuel 17:22 / Acts 21:15. They then camp at Geba, Isaiah 10:29 / 1 Kings 15:22 / 2 Kings 23:8, and notice that Ramah, Matthew 2:18, trembles, Isaiah 10:29, that is, they are terrified.

Gibeah of Saul flee, Isaiah 10:29, Gibeah was the birthplace of Saul, 1 Samuel 11:4 / 1 Samuel 15:34 / 2 Samuel 21:6. Gallim, Isaiah 10:30, was a city of Benjamin, north of Jerusalem, 1 Samuel 25:44. Laish, Isaiah 10:30, was a city possibly in the northern part of Palestine, within the boundaries of the tribe of Dan, Judges 18:7 / Judges 18:29. Anathoth, Isaiah 10:30, was a city of Benjamin, Joshua 21:18, where Jeremiah was born, Jeremiah 1:1.

No one knows where Madmenah is located but here they are described as in flight, Isaiah 10:31, that is, running away for their lives. No one knows where Gebim is located, Isaiah 10:31, Nob, Isaiah 10:32, was a city of Benjamin inhabited by priests, Nehemiah 11:32 / 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

As the bough, a large branch of a tree is lopped off, Isaiah 10:33. In other words, God would lop off Assyria. Like a mighty cedar of Lebanon cut down, used and tossed aside, Isaiah 10:34 / Ezekiel 31:3, so one-hundred and eighty-five thousand troops fell under the plague.

Sennacherib returned in disgrace to Nineveh, Isaiah 36, where he was eventually assassinated by two of his sons, Isaiah 37:36-38 / 2 Kings 19:35-37. The army of the Assyrians are described as a thick, dense forest, Isaiah

10:18-19. The army was destroyed with the pestilence, 2 Kings 19:35, but it fell as certainly as a forest falls before the axe, Isaiah 10:34.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Lebanon.

‘This is a pledge that the deliverance will not come by an army, or by any human device, but that the deliverance shall be of God and him only. The mighty one who is depicted here as cutting down the forest of Lebanon, a metaphor for Assyria, is, of course, God himself.’

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

‘A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.’ Isaiah 11:1-5

THE BRANCH FROM JESSE

From the apparently dried up, that is, destroyed the house of David, [Isaiah 10:33-34](#), shall arise One whose kingdom will be different from any kingdom before it. A shoot will spring up, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord will come, [Isaiah 11:1](#). In other words, blessings will come under the Messiah.

Isaiah shifts from physical Israel to spiritual Israel, speaking of Christ, the Branch, [Isaiah 11:1](#) / [Revelation 5:5](#) / [Revelation 22:16](#) / [Zechariah 6:12](#). Israel is cut off as a stump but out of the stump would come to the Messiah, [Revelation 5:5](#) / [Revelation 22:16](#).

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The time indicated for this prophecy came, ‘When the house of David had fallen into such a state of dishonour and disrepute, [Amos 9:11](#), that the prophet did not refer to it by David’s name but by the name of David’s father Jesse.’ The New Layman’s Bible Commentary, says the following.

‘The reference here to the coming Messiah as being from the stock of Jesse should not compromise the truth that the Messiah is the Second David. Christ is called the ‘Root of David’ also in [Revelation 5:5](#) and [Revelation 22:16](#). ‘There is a resumption here of the theme of [Isaiah 9:6](#), namely, that of the Coming Messiah.’

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, [Isaiah 11:2](#), is an obvious reference to Christ’s baptism, [Matthew 3:16](#) / [John 1:32-34](#). With the ‘Spirit of wisdom’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), He will judge the earth with righteousness, those who gave false judgements are contrasted with true judgement, [1 Corinthians 1:30](#) / [Ephesians 1:17](#) / [Colossians 2:3](#). And His would be all-powerful and the means of saving the righteous and destroying the wicked.

With the ‘Spirit of understanding’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), He would be able to distinguish what was true and right in all matters of life, regardless of whether someone was rich or poor, [Hebrews 4:15-16](#). With the ‘Spirit of counsel’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), He would make impartial judgments by freeing those who were oppressed, [Isaiah 9:6](#).

With the ‘Spirit of might’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), His destiny would be established, from which destiny He would not detour because of His strong character. With the ‘Spirit of knowledge’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), He would come with the knowledge of God for mankind, [Matthew 11:27](#). With the ‘Spirit of the fear of the Lord’, [Isaiah 11:2](#), He would come doing the Father’s will, from which He wouldn’t turn away, [John 4:34](#).

He would be obedient in all things, [Isaiah 11:3](#) / [Job 28:28](#) / [Psalms 19:9](#) / [Psalms 111:10](#) / [Proverbs 1:7](#) / [Proverbs 3:13](#) / [Proverbs 15:33](#) / [Proverbs 19:23](#). The very words of Jesus have the power to judge the wicked, He only has to announce a judgment and it is done, [2 Thessalonians 2:8](#).

He will judge justly, [Isaiah 11:3](#) / [Deuteronomy 1:16-17](#), giving decisions for the poor, [Isaiah 11:4](#) / [Matthew 5:3](#). He will judge with righteousness, [Isaiah 11:4](#) / [John 7:24](#). In other words, when the Branch reigns all will be equal regardless of who they were or their status in society, [Isaiah 11:5](#) / [John 2:24-25](#) / [John 6:64](#) / [Revelation 2:28](#).

‘The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, the young child will put their hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.’ [Isaiah 11:6-9](#)

Here we read of the nature of those who submit to the government of the Branch. The wolf, leopard, lion, the bear, cobras, and vipers are all dangerous animals but now they are depicted as being safe animals, [Isaiah 11:6-8](#). They sit peacefully with the lamb, goat, calf, cow, and little children, [Isaiah 11:6](#).

This highly figurative language picturing wild beasts growing tame and animals which are natural enemies sleeping peacefully together represents the peace, harmony, and tranquillity which Christ would bring to those who submitted to and served Him, [Revelation 21](#).

We must note that peace depends upon two things, 1. The righteousness of the rulers, and 2. Knowledge of the Word of God by those under the rule of the rulers. Note that the peace, harmony, and tranquillity depicted here exist only in God’s holy mountain, [Isaiah 11:9](#), not all over the world.

This passage can no more be taken literally than the description of a sprout coming up out of Jesse, or of a rod or a sharp sword coming out of the mouth of Messiah. The prophet isn’t looking to a time when animals of the natural world will live without enmity but he is describing the peace of those in Jehovah’s holy mountain, the kingdom of God.

‘In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. In that day, the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish, and Judah’s enemies will be destroyed; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will subdue Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that anyone can cross over in sandals. There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt.’ [Isaiah 11:10-16](#)

These verses tell us that ‘in that day’, [Isaiah 11:10](#), that is, the day of Jesus, [John 8:56](#), He being the Branch is to be a universal ruler. Christ will be the ruler, the righteous ruler, the root of Jesse, Jesus, [Isaiah 11:10](#) / [Revelation 5:5](#) / [Revelation 22:16](#), would draw the Gentiles to Him through the preaching of the Gospel to all the Gentile ethnic

groups throughout the world, Isaiah 11:10 / Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15-16. The nations would rally to Him, Acts 2:5.

It will be a glorious day, Isaiah 11:10, a day when the Gentiles shall see the rest. Christ offers them spiritual rest and hope, Matthew 11:28-30 / Romans 15:12. It's also a time when Israel will be restored.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 11:11-16.

'The 'second' time God restores Israel is under the Messiah and the implied 'first' time is from Egypt, as can be seen by Isaiah 11:16, where the promises is reiterated. It is to be noticed that Israel and the Gentiles are not confounded here. They are viewed as distinct parties. They are not both spoken of under the term 'Israel'. The Messiah would be a standard to which both groups could look. Israel is to be 'restored' under the Messiah. Judah and Ephraim are reunited into one kingdom, Ezekiel 37:15-28, and enjoy victory over all their enemies. Jehovah is viewed once more as drying up seas and rivers as He did of old in the days of Moses and Joshua. The 'River', of course. Speaks of the Euphrates, which in turn speaks of the power of Assyria, Isaiah 7:7, and is later used by John as a symbol of armed might, Revelation 9:13 / Revelation 16:12. And, as Egypt is often used as a representative of all the enemies of God's people, so also is Assyria, Revelation 16:12.'

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

'In that day you will say: "I will praise you, LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation." With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you." Isaiah 12:1-6

SONGS OF PRAISE

Here we read a record of the thanksgiving for salvation the Branch, that is, the Christ, offered.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

'This short chapter gives two songs of deliverance which were to be sung when Israel came home from Babylonian captivity. This chapter centres around the theme 'God in the midst', God is great a Creator, Redeemer, and Conqueror. God is in the midst of His people, always and everywhere. Their strength and salvation.'

God asked Israel that they testify to the fact that it was Him who had actually brought about their return, Isaiah 12:1. The Jews rejoiced when God brought them home from captivity just as the Christian rejoices over their deliverance from sin, Luke 8:39 / 2 Corinthians 4:15. We need to have joy in our salvation, Psalms 51:12-13.

Under the Old Covenant, sins were remembered over and over again year by year, not absolutely forgiven until the Cross of Jesus Christ, Jeremiah 31:31-35. If the people will trust God they will be fine but they don't, they trust

Assyria, [Isaiah 12:2](#). We all have our Assyrians, those things we trust, whether it be money, family, friends etc, things that we think will take care of us or help us etc.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 12:3](#).

‘A fountain, or a well, in the sacred writings, is an emblem of that which produces joy and refreshment, which sustains and cheers. The figure is often employed to denote that which supports and refreshes the soul, which sustains man when sinking from exhaustion, as the babbling, fountain or well refreshes the weary and fainting pilgrim, [John 4:14](#). It is thus applied to God as an overflowing fountain, suited to supply the needs of all his creatures, [Jeremiah 2:13](#) / [Jeremiah 17:13](#) / [Psalms 36:9](#) / [Proverbs 14:27](#), and to his plan of salvation, the sources of comfort which he has opened in the scheme of redeeming mercy to satisfy the needs of the souls of people, [Zechariah 13:1](#) / [Isaiah 41:18](#) / [Revelation 7:17](#). The word ‘rivers’ is used in the same sense as ‘fountains’ in the above places, [Isaiah 42:15](#) / [Isaiah 43:19-20](#).’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 12:4](#).

‘Make him your Mediator or call the people in his name. Preach him who is the Root of Jesse, and who stands as an ensign for the nations. Call on the people to believe in him, as in him alone salvation is to be found.’

Those who have received salvation not only want to praise God but they also want to tell others of him and all that he has done, [Isaiah 12:4-6](#).

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 12:4-6](#).

‘The last three verses here carry repeated instructions to God’s people of all ages’.

1. Give thanks to Jehovah.
2. Call upon his name.
3. Declare his doings among the people.
4. Make mention that his name is exalted.
5. Sing unto Jehovah.
6. God hath done excellent things; let this be known in all the earth.
7. Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.’

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The hymn ends with the Divine Name which is characteristic of Isaiah. The presence of the Holy One was to be a joy and blessing to the remnant who were worthy of their calling. With this hymn the whole of what has been called the Immanuel volume of Isaiah’s prophecies comes to its close.’

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw: Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles. I have commanded those I prepared for battle; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath—those who rejoice in my triumph. Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great

multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens—the LORD and the weapons of his wrath—to destroy the whole country.’ Isaiah 13:1-5

A PROPHECY AGAINST BABYLON

Beginning here and carrying on through to [Isaiah 23](#), we read about Israel and the foreign nations. They contain prophecies concerning the nations whose destinies affect Israel beginning here with the fall of Babylon. Some translations begin this chapter with the words burden, respecting, or concerning Babylon, [Isaiah 13:1](#).

Up until now, the Assyrians had been promised power and in prophecy Isaiah begins to see Babylon, [Isaiah 13:1](#). We read that the coming destruction is from God. God commanded and then summoned, which suggests it was urgent, [Isaiah 13:2](#) / [Jeremiah 50:2](#) / [Jeremiah 51:25](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the banner’, [Isaiah 13:2](#).

‘It was customary for military leaders to plant a standard on a tower, a fortress, a city, a high mountain, or any elevated spot, in order that it might be seen afar, and be the rallying point for the people to collect together, [Isaiah 11:10](#). Here, the prophet does not refer to any particular ‘mountain,’ but means simply, that a standard should be raised, around which the hosts should be assembled to march to Babylon.’

The ones which God prepared for battle are ‘those He prepared for battle’, [Isaiah 13:3](#), the ‘sanctified ones’ as the KJV renders it.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning. the ‘sanctified ones’.

‘Nothing can be plainer than that the verb kadash, ‘to make holy,’ signifies also to consecrate or appoint to a particular purpose.’

They are the ones who are set apart to come against Babylon, that is, the Medes and Persians and they are described as being a mighty and great army, [Isaiah 13:4-5](#) / [Isaiah 10:5](#). After God used the Babylonians to judge Judah, He then used the Medo-Persians to judge Babylon, [Jeremiah 50:9](#) / [Jeremiah 51:27-28](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Note the type of signals employed to bring together this vast host, a flag on a bare hill, a vocal call, and the wave of a hand. It was no trouble at all for Almighty God to muster whatever was needed against Babylon.’

‘Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every heart will melt with fear. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labour. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make people scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.

Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger. Like a hunted gazelle, like sheep without a shepherd, they will all return to their own people, they will flee to their native land. Whoever is captured will be thrust through; all who are caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be looted and their wives violated.’ Isaiah 13:6-16

In these verses, we read of the horror of the day of the destruction of Babylon, [Isaiah 13:6](#). The strength of Babylon will completely be gone, [Isaiah 13:7](#) / [Jeremiah 50:43](#) / [Ezekiel 7:17](#) / [Zephaniah 3:16](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The fact was, that the destruction of Babylon took place in the night. It came suddenly upon the city, while Belshazzar was at his impious feast; and the alarm was so unexpected and produced such consternation, that no defence was attempted, Daniel 5:30 / Isaiah 45:1.’

It will be a great deal of embarrassment on the part of the Babylonians, Isaiah 13:8 / Jeremiah 6:24 / Jeremiah 13:21 / Jeremiah 22:23 / Jeremiah 49:24 / Jeremiah 50:43. The day of God’s wrath is coming upon Babylon, Isaiah 13:9. This was a time of judgment upon those people and nations that God was judging, it was a time of destruction from the Lord. When Babylon fell suddenly by a clever, surprise attack by Cyrus, the people of the city were completely shocked, Daniel 5.

Even the stars withhold their lights, Isaiah 13:10, that is, it’s going to be a day of misery and gloom, a day of helplessness and hopelessness. Isaiah is speaking about judgment on the high officials of the government. They would no longer have influence over the people of the kingdom they ruled. Because of their arrogance, Isaiah 13:11 / Isaiah 14:1-10 / Isaiah 47:1-7 / Daniel 4:22 / Daniel 4:30, they would be punished for their evil, Isaiah 13:11. The word ‘world’, Isaiah 13:11, represents the Babylonian empire. The figure in Isaiah is a strong one to denote the terror of the anger of God against Babylon, Revelation 20:11. Destruction was coming and the slaughter so great that men shall be as scarce as fine gold, Isaiah 13:12. It was a day of many violent acts and many deaths.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Medes and Persians will not be satisfied with the spoils of the Babylonians. They seek either to destroy or enslave them and they will accept no ransom for any man-either for enosh, the poor man, or for adam, the more honourable person. All must fall by the sword, or go into captivity together; for the Medes, Isaiah 13:17, regard not silver, and delight not in gold.’

Haggai 2:6, and Hebrews 12:25-28, also speak about the heavens being shaken, Isaiah 13:13. Please remember that this isn’t literal, it’s figurative language, Jeremiah 4:1-26 / Isaiah 34:1-17 / Nahum 1:3-5 / Micah 1:1-2 / Micah 1:5 / Psalms 18:7-15 / Joel 2:28-32. Like a stampede of wild animals, Isaiah 13:14, those who were refugees in Babylon would flee Babylon to their home countries, Isaiah 13:14, in order to escape the fall of the empire, Jeremiah 50:28.

Anyone who was caught would be killed, Isaiah 13:15, their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes their houses will be looted and their wives violated, Isaiah 13:16. The Psalmist implies that it would be done in Babylon, in exact accordance with this prediction of Isaiah, Psalms 137:8-9.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These verses recount the atrocities that were common in the fall of ancient cities. Horrible as such cruelties were, they were the common procedures when any enemy of that ancient era overcame a city they attacked. Isaiah 13:14, here speaks of a time when, ‘the forces of the king of Babylon, destitute of their leader and all of his auxiliaries, collected from Asia Minor and other distant countries, shall disperse and flee to their respective homes.’ Exactly the same things were prophesied of Nineveh, Nahum 1-3, especially, Nahum 2:8.’

‘See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. Their bows will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants, nor will they look with compassion on children. Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the pride and glory of the Babylonians, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; there no nomads will pitch their tents, there no shepherds will rest their flocks. But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will inhabit her strongholds, jackals her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.’ Isaiah 13:17-22

Notice the Medes, Isaiah 13:17 / Isaiah 21:2 / Jeremiah 51:11. God’s sanctified ones, are named as the ones who will bring total destruction, Isaiah 44:28 / Isaiah 45:1. The Medes were so intent on destroying the Babylonians that they

would not take ransoms of gold and silver, [Isaiah 13:17](#). They are not coming for gold. The Medo-Persian army had no mercy in bringing down the Babylonian Empire, [Isaiah 13:18](#), and they were famous for their archers, [Isaiah 22:6](#) / [Jeremiah 49:35](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The mention of ‘bows’, [Isaiah 13:18](#), designates the chief weapon of the Medo-Persian conquest. This weapon continued to dominate ancient warfare until the deployment of the Macedonian phalanx by Alexander the Great, the chief weapon of which was the spear.’

The destruction will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, [Isaiah 13:19-20](#) / [Genesis 19:24](#), and Babylon became the dwelling place of wild animals, birds, and howling beasts [Isaiah 13:21-22](#). We only have to visit and study the ruins of the city of Babylon today, to see that this remarkable prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Foreigners will join them and unite with the descendants of Jacob. Nations will take them and bring them to their own place. And Israel will take possession of the nations and make them male and female servants in the LORD’s land. They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors.’ [Isaiah 14:1-2](#)

These verses tell us about the fall of Babylon which will affect the release of God’s children from captivity. Though God gave them up to their enemies and scattered them among the nations, Judah remained His chosen people, [Isaiah 14:1](#). God will have mercy on His people and so, restore them to the land of their possession, [Isaiah 14:2](#) / [Ezra 1:1-11](#). Their former taskmasters now became their servants, [Isaiah 14:2](#).

A decree was written by Cyrus to allow the Jewish captives to return to the land, [Ezra 1:1-4](#). When they prepared for their journey back, those of the old Babylonian nation were to aid them in whatever way possible. The Jews were exalted over the Babylonians because of the decrees of the Medo-Persian King Cyrus. Their captors were now their captives [Isaiah 14:2](#).

‘On the day the LORD gives you relief from your suffering and turmoil and the harsh labour forced on you, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression. All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing. Even the junipers and the cedars of Lebanon gloat over you and say, “Now that you have been laid low, no one comes to cut us down.” The realm of the dead below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you—all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones—all those who were kings over the nations. They will all respond, they will say to you, “You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us.” All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.’ [Isaiah 14:3-11](#)

This is the song of judgement on the king of Babylon. The sorrow, fear, and bondage of Babylon will be replaced by singing a song of triumph, [Isaiah 14:3](#). It’s a song of peace. The tyrant and his golden city are no more [Isaiah 14:4](#), and his staff of wickedness and his sceptre of authority is broken [Isaiah 14:5-6](#). The earth is at rest, [Isaiah 14:7](#) / [Ezekiel 28:25-26](#), and her people are singing, even the trees rejoiced, [Isaiah 14:7-8](#) / [Psalms 96:11-13](#).

The Assyrian kings made it a practice to cut down the forest of the lands which they conquered. Here, even the trees rejoiced that since the tyrant has fallen there is relief from the woodsman's axe, **Isaiah 14:7-8**. The personification of the tree means that the invading Babylonian army would no longer cut down trees in order to conquer cities, **Isaiah 14:8**.

We have a picture of the 'realm of the dead', **Isaiah 14:9**, that is, the grave, **Amos 9:2**, as it were, arising to meet the fallen Babylonian king, **Isaiah 14:9**. Those who have already passed to the grave taunted the arrogant Babylonian leaders who also had now been brought down to the grave, **Isaiah 14:9**. Death puts all on the same level, **Isaiah 14:10**. All the wealth, pomp, and glory of the king of Babylon led but to the graves, **Isaiah 14:11**. The proud man is eaten of worms at the end of earth's journey, **Isaiah 14:11 / Job 21:26**.

The Babylonian Empire represented an era of empires that conquered in order to plunder. The Medo-Persian Empire was conquered in order to rule and bring peace among conflicting nations. The nations are at peace because the Empire has fallen.

'How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?" All the kings of the nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will not join them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people. Let the offspring of the wicked never be mentioned again. Prepare a place to slaughter his children for the sins of their ancestors; they are not to rise to inherit the land and cover the earth with their cities.'

Isaiah 14:12-21

Some translations use the name 'Lucifer' here, **Isaiah 14:12**, implying this is speaking about the devil, **Luke 10:18 / Ezekiel 28**, but we must note that Satan doesn't enter into this passage as a subject at all. Nebuchadnezzar had demonstrated some of the characteristics of the devil but he's not the devil.

He has 'fallen from heaven', **Isaiah 14:12**, that is, he has fallen from his exalted position, **2 Thessalonians 2:4 / Revelation 17:4-5**. The name, 'morning star', **Isaiah 14:12**, refers to the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The true meaning of the passage is that 'the king of Babylon did not intend to acknowledge any superior either in heaven or earth but designed that himself and his laws should be regarded as supreme.'

He was a morning star that brought light by his power and influence but he was quickly brought down to darkness by God, **Isaiah 14:12**. The pride, arrogance and fall of Nebuchadnezzar are described, **Isaiah 14:13-14**. He must tremble in 'depths of the pit', **Isaiah 14:15**, that is, the grave. He made the nations of the world tremble, **Isaiah 14:16-17**, but he will not receive an honourable burial.

Kings have honourable burials **Isaiah 14:18**, but Nebuchadnezzar didn't receive an honourable burial, **Isaiah 14:19 / Isaiah 34:3 / Ezekiel 29:5 / Jeremiah 22:19**. He had destroyed his land and destroyed the people but he will be trodden under foot by men. He had been so cruel, but now he is cut off and forgotten, **Isaiah 14:20**.

The children won't bear the guilt of their wicked fathers but they will suffer the consequences of their sinful actions **Isaiah 14:21**. Even all of Nebuchadnezzar's children would be destroyed and suffer the consequences of their wicked father, **Isaiah 14:21**.

‘I will rise up against them,’ declares the LORD Almighty. “I will wipe out Babylon’s name and survivors, her offspring and descendants,” declares the LORD. “I will turn her into a place for owls and into swampland; I will sweep her with the broom of destruction,” declares the LORD Almighty.’ Isaiah 14:22-23

God’s judgment is just because those who are judged with condemnation have brought condemnation on themselves by their wicked deeds.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The circumstances which it was said would exist in regard to the king of Babylon here spoken of, are the following.

1. That he would be a proud, haughty, and oppressive prince, **Isaiah 14:17**, and throughout the prophecy.
2. That when he died he would be cast out with the common dead, and denied the common honours of the sepulchre, especially the honours which all other monarchs have in their burial, **Isaiah 14:18-20**.
3. That his posterity would be cut off, and that he would have no one to succeed him on his throne or that the dynasty and the kingdom would terminate in him, **Isaiah 14:21-22**.

The ‘broom of destruction’ **Isaiah 14:23**, is a figure of speech meaning complete destruction. The city would be completely swept away.

‘The LORD Almighty has sworn, “Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen. I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders.” This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?’ **Isaiah 14:24-27**

Here we read of the fall of Assyria. This is not a disjointed prophecy but shows that if Assyria is thrown down, certainly Babylon could be, **Isaiah 14:24**. Assyria would take the northern kingdom captive and Babylon would later take the southern kingdom. Both Assyria and Babylon would be judged for arrogantly laying their hands on God’s people, **Isaiah 14:25**.

If God plans and purposes anything, then it will be done, **Isaiah 14:26-27**. Nothing was going to hinder the coming judgment upon Assyria. God knew that they would not repent of their wickedness. The purpose of the Lord of hosts is the utter destruction of the Assyrians.

A PROPHECY AGAINST THE PHILISTINES

‘This prophecy came in the year King Ahaz died: Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent. The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors. Wail, you gate! Howl, you city! Melt away, all you Philistines! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks. What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? “The LORD has established Zion, and in her his afflicted people will find refuge.” **Isaiah 14:28-32**

The prophecy came in the year Ahaz died, **Isaiah 14:28 / 2 Chronicles 28:18-27**, but the exact date isn’t known, possibly 725 B.C. The Philistines are told not to rejoice, **Isaiah 14:29**.

Gill in his commentary, says the following, concerning **Isaiah 14:29**.

‘The inhabitants of Palestine are meant, who rejoiced at the death of Uzziah, who was too powerful for them, and during the reign of Ahaz, of whom they had the better and, now he was dead, they hoped things would still be more favourable to them, since a young prince, Hezekiah, succeeded him, but they would find, by sad experience, that they had no occasion to rejoice in these changes.’

Henry, in his commentary, says the following, concerning **Isaiah 14:29**.

‘Isaiah delivers this prophecy, threatening them with the destruction that Hezekiah, his son, and great-grandson of Uzziah, should bring upon them, which he effected, for ‘he smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof,’ **2 Kings 18:8**. Uzziah, therefore, must be meant by the rod that smote them, and by the serpent from whom should spring the flying fiery serpent, **Isaiah 14:29**, that is, Hezekiah, a much more terrible enemy than even Uzziah had been.’

The poorest of the poor will find pasture and the needy will lie down in safety, **Isaiah 14:30**, means there will be safety in those parts of Judah which have long been exposed to the invasions of the Philistines.

A cloud of smoke comes from the north, **Isaiah 14:31**. This is a reference to a cloud of dust which was raised by the march of Hezekiah’s army against Philistia, which lay to the south-west of Jerusalem.

The envoys, **Isaiah 14:32**, that is, the messengers of the neighbouring nations were sent to congratulate Hezekiah on his success, which in his answer, he will ascribe to the protection of God, **2 Chronicles 32:23**. Jerusalem, **Isaiah 14:32**, that is, Zion was the city God founded, **Psalms 102:16**, and within it, his afflicted people will find refuge, **Isaiah 14:32**.

Kidner, in his commentary, says the following, concerning **Isaiah 14:29-31**.

‘The background of this prophecy, lay during the period immediately after the death of Ahaz and in the early years of Hezekiah, and in the atmosphere created by an embassy from Philistia to Hezekiah proposing a rebellion against Assyria, an idea always attractive to Hezekiah. God’s reply to Hezekiah, through the prophet Isaiah, was threefold.’

1. There are worse things to come from Assyria.

‘The viper and the venomous serpent’, **Isaiah 14:29**, are symbols of worse and worse oppressors.

2. Philistia is a doomed people, **Isaiah 14:30-31**.

3. True help and support can come only from the Lord, spoken of here as the founder of Zion and the true refuge of God’s people.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against Moab: Ar in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Kir in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping. Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint. My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the hill to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. The waters of Dimon are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon—a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land.’ **Isaiah 15:1-9**

A PROPHECY AGAINST MOAB

Here we read of a prophecy against Moab, [Isaiah 15:1](#). The Moabites were descendants of Lot by an incestuous union with his elder daughter, [Genesis 19:37](#). They refused the Israelites' permission to pass through their land while marching toward the promised land, [Judges 11:17](#). Because, doubtless, of the kinship between the Moabites and Israelites, Moses was forbidden to attack them, [Deuteronomy 2:9](#).

However, the king of Moab, alarmed when the Israelites encamped in his vicinity, sent for Balaam to curse them, [Numbers 22-24](#) / [Joshua 24:9](#). For this hostile attitude, the Israelites were commanded to exclude them from the congregation to the tenth generation, and to maintain a coldness and indifference toward them forever, [Deuteronomy 23:3-6](#) / [Nehemiah 13:1](#).

The prophets often denounced the Moabites as types of the enemies of God's people, [Isaiah 15:16](#) / [Isaiah 25:10](#) / [Jeremiah 9:36](#) / [Jeremiah 25:21](#) / [Ezekiel 25:8-11](#). Some of the Jews, who fled from Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, took refuge in Moab but returned when Gedaliah was appointed governor, [Jeremiah 40:11-12](#).

Isaiah sees the weeping which shall come from the people, [Isaiah 15:2](#). The 'high places', [Isaiah 15:2](#), were the places where the people went to weep, that is, they would ascend to their idols on the high places but there would be no answer from their false gods.

Moab wails aloud with heads shaved and beards clipped, [Isaiah 15:2](#) / [Jeremiah 9:17](#). Even those who met in the streets wept over the woe and destruction whilst wearing sackcloth, [Isaiah 15:3](#) / [Genesis 37:34](#) / [2 Samuel 3:31](#) / [1 Kings 21:27](#) / [2 Kings 19:1](#) / [Job 16:15](#) / [Isaiah 3:24](#). Those who escaped from the land would be destroyed, [Isaiah 15:4-8](#).

We see a picture of the streams flowing with the blood of the slain, [Isaiah 15:9](#), while the destroyer pursued them like a lion after his prey, [Isaiah 15:9](#). The reference to the 'lion' [Isaiah 15:9](#), could be understood literally, [2 Kings 17:25](#), or it may stand metaphorically for invading foes, [Jeremiah 4:7](#) / [Jeremiah 5:6](#). Although some commentators suggest the lion here was such an invader as Nebuchadnezzar or Ashurbanipal.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following about the cities mentioned.

'Ar is the chief city of Moab, location unknown. Kir was a fortified city at an elevation of 3,370 feet, 11 miles east of the Dead Sea, and 15 miles north of the Arnon River. Dibon, the modern Dhiban east of the Dead Sea and 4 miles north of the Arnon River. Nebo is the mountain from which Moses saw the Holy Land, one of the Moabite gods, and a small city of Moab, perhaps a local shrine of Nebo. Heshbon was the capital of Sihon, king of the Ammonites, which fell to Moses, [Numbers 21:24](#), and was later allotted to Reuben, [Numbers 32:37](#). Elealeh was a small town east of Jordan, always mentioned in connection with Heshbon. It is identified as modern El-Al, 1 mile north of Heshbon. Zoar was a city near the Dead Sea, the southern extremity, from which Lot and his two daughters fled to a cave in the mountains, [Genesis 19](#). Luhith, Eusebius placed it between Zoar and Areopolis, but it has not yet been surely identified. Nimrim was a place in south Moab some ten miles from the southern tip of the Dead Sea.'

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

‘Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of Daughter Zion. Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. “Make up your mind,” Moab says. “Render a decision. Make your shadow like night—at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer.” The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. In love a throne will be established, in faithfulness a man will sit on it—one from the house of David—one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.’ Isaiah 16:1-5

This chapter begins with an exhortation to the Moabites to seek again allegiance with the house of David for deliverance, [Isaiah 16:1](#). Isaiah’s theme is hope for the righteous, not just to warn Moab but to encourage Judah. Throughout the Moabite’s early history, they weren’t hospitable to Israel in the days after Israel’s wilderness wandering when they were approaching the land of Canaan, [Deuteronomy 2:9](#) / [Deuteronomy 23:3-6](#) / [Judges 11:17](#) / [Numbers 22-24](#) / [Joshua 24:9](#) / [Nehemiah 13:1](#).

Now Moab, in her own wilderness wandering, they were fluttering birds pushed from a nest, [Isaiah 16:2](#) / [Isaiah 10:14](#) / [Proverbs 26:2](#) / [Proverbs 27:8](#), would plead for sanctuary from Israel. Their only hope is in submission to the house of David.

As they appeal to Zion in their pitiful state, [Isaiah 16:3](#), they place their state into the hands of Judah. Isaiah asked for Israel to be the forgiving relative, for the Moabites were also descendants of Abraham. If Judah shows mercy to her relatives, the Moabites, then she herself would receive mercy, [Isaiah 16:4](#) / [James 2:13](#).

The words, ‘in love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it, one from the house of David, one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness,’ [Isaiah 16:5](#), appears to refer to the rule of Christ, who could be described other than Christ?

Gill, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The throne of Hezekiah, and his government over Judah, which was more firmly settled and established after the overthrow of the Assyrian army, through the mercy of God vouchsafed to him, and on account of the mercy he exercised among his subjects, [Proverbs 20:28](#). Hezekiah was a type of Christ, and his throne typical of his, and the ultimate view of the prophecy may be to the stability of the kingdom of Christ.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Note the tragic picture of the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon, where they appear as confused and helpless as a nest of baby birds, scattered and destroyed by a predator. What a pitiful contrast with the hundreds of ‘the daughters of Moab’ who participated in the shameful orgy of [Numbers 25](#)!’

‘We have heard of Moab’s pride—how great is her arrogance!—of her conceit, her pride, and her insolence; but her boasts are empty. Therefore the Moabites wail, they wail together for Moab. Lament and grieve for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth. ‘The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea. So I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah. Heshbon and Elealeh, I drench you with tears! The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled. Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards; no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting. My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth. When Moab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail.’ Isaiah 16:6-12

These verses show us that Moab will be made desolate because of her pride, [Isaiah 16:6-7](#) / [Jeremiah 48:29](#).

Sibmah, [Isaiah 16:8](#), was known for wine grapes and it was on the tables of kings throughout the earth.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sibmah was a city of Reuben, [Numbers 32:38](#) / [Joshua 13:19](#). Jeremiah, in the parallel place, [Jeremiah 48:32](#), speaks of the vine of Sibmah also. He also says that the enemies of Moab had taken Sibmah, and that the vine and wine had been destroyed, [Jeremiah 48:33](#).’

The vineyards were broken up and destroyed, [Isaiah 16:8](#), and tears will be shed, [Isaiah 16:9](#) / [Jeremiah 48:32](#), because the harvest cry to be heard no more, [Isaiah 16:9](#) / [Jeremiah 48:32](#). There will be no joy or gladness because they will be removed from the orchards and now one will sing our shout in the vineyards and no one will tread out wine at the presses because god has brought it all to an end, [Isaiah 16:10](#). My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth, [Isaiah 16:11](#).

Her prayers would avail nothing [Isaiah 16:12](#), because she hadn't served God, [Proverbs 28:9](#). The Moabite people prayed at the high place of Chemosh, [1 Kings 11:7](#), the place of their false god but their prayers were futile. I'm sure for Isaiah, this must have been a very sad sight indeed, seeing men cry out to a god who simply didn't exist.

'This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. But now the LORD says: "Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab's splendour and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble." [Isaiah 16:13-14](#)

Here we read of the time which would be involved in the destruction of Moab's glory. Before the LORD had already spoken, [Isaiah 16:13](#) / [Numbers 24:17](#) / [Deuteronomy 23:3-4](#), but now He says, 'within three years,' [Isaiah 16:14](#), which is a reference to the year of Ahaz's death, [Isaiah 14:28](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'There had been a course of predictions declaring in general that Moab should be destroyed, and the prophet says here that he had expressed their general sense or that 'his' predictions accorded with them all, for they all predicted the complete overthrow of Moab. He now says, [Isaiah 16:14](#), that these general prophecies respecting Moab which had been of so long standing were now to be speedily accomplished. The prophecies respecting Moab, foretelling its future ruin, may be seen in [Exodus 15:15](#) / [Numbers 21:29](#) / [Numbers 24:17](#) / [Psalm 60:8](#) / [Psalm 108:9](#) / [Amos 2:2](#) / [Zephaniah 2:9](#).'

As a servant counts the days of his contract in order to fulfil the exact number of days of labour, [Isaiah 16:13](#), so the proclamation made concerning Moab would be for a definite period of time.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

'Three years may seem only a short time, but it is long to one who is hired into the service of another.'

Gill, in his commentary, says the following.

'Some think this prophecy bears date with the former, concerning the Philistines, which was the year King Ahaz died, [Isaiah 14:28](#), and so had its accomplishment in the fourth year of Hezekiah, when Shalmaneser came up against Samaria, and took Moab in his way, [2 Kings 18:9](#). Others, that it was given out in the fourth year of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian besieged Samaria, and after three years took it, and then returned and fell upon the Moabites. Others place it in the eleventh year of Hezekiah, and suppose it to be fulfilled in his fourteenth by Sennacherib, about the same time he came up and took the fenced cities of Judah, and besieged Jerusalem, [2 Kings 18:13](#).'

There will be few cities, few people, and very little wealth that will escape the desolation, [Isaiah 16:14](#) / [Isaiah 10:25](#) / [Isaiah 24:6](#).

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against Damascus: “See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites,” declares the LORD Almighty.’ Isaiah 17:1-3

A PROPHECY AGAINST DAMASCUS

In this chapter, we read of a prophecy against Damascus, the capital of Syria and Ephraim, [Isaiah 17:1](#). The destruction of Damascus and Ephraim is coming, [Isaiah 17:1](#). Aroer, [Isaiah 17:2](#), the land east of Jordan was where two and one-half tribes settled, [Numbers 34:15](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘By ‘Aroer’ here seems to be meant a tract or region of country pertaining to Damascus, in which were situated several cities.’

Syria had made an alliance with Israel, the northern kingdom, in order to bring Judah in with them to defend themselves against the Assyrians. Damascus will be destroyed to such an extent that it would become an open range for the grazing of deserted flocks, [Isaiah 17:2](#) / [Isaiah 5:17](#).

Ephraim’s defences were destroyed and her glory departed, [Isaiah 17:3](#), however, there would still be a remnant that would be restored in the future from the ten tribes of the north, [Isaiah 17:3](#). Isaiah says both Syria and Israel would fall, which happened in 734 B.C. This took place under the kings of Assyria, and particularly under Tiglath-Pileser in the fourth year of Ahaz, [2 Kings 16:9](#).

‘In that day, the glory of Jacob will fade; the fat of his body will waste away. It will be as when reapers harvest the standing grain, gathering the grain in their arms—as when someone gleanes heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs,” declares the LORD, the God of Israel.’ Isaiah 17:4-6

These verses deal with Ephraim’s destruction, although it appears to have more reference to Israel, that is, Jacob, than Damascus, [Isaiah 17:4](#). Jacob, the northern kingdom would be reaped by the Assyrians and their sins had made them ripe for God’s judgment, [Isaiah 17:5](#). Those left will be like a few olives left on the top after the tree has been shaken, [Isaiah 17:6](#). In other words, very few will escape judgement.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The mention here of a few olives that were left and the gleanings from a harvest field indicate the oft-repeated promise of the Lord that ‘a remnant shall return’ or a remnant shall survive, as symbolized and memorialized in the name of Isaiah’s first son Shear-Jashub.’

This prophecy against Damascus and Ephraim, that is, Israel, serves to point out the doom of the enemies of God’s purpose. Those who would frustrate God’s purpose on this earth should beware.

‘In that day people will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. They will not look to the altars, the work of their hands, and they will have no regard for the Asherah poles and the incense altars their fingers have made.’ Isaiah 17:7-8

God’s judgment on the northern kingdom, and Israel as a whole, accomplished the purpose for which He allowed them to go into captivity. The people will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel, [Isaiah 17:7](#).

They had forsaken God by following after their own desires and were heavily involved in idolatry, [2 Kings 16:10-13](#) / [2 Kings 21:3-5](#) / [Hosea 8:11](#). However, here we read that they will no longer practice idolatry, [Isaiah 17:8](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Ahaz fancied an altar which he saw at Damascus when on a visit to Tiglath-Pileser and ordered Urijah the priest to construct one like it in Samaria, on which he subsequently offered sacrifice [2 Kings 16:10-13](#).’

These verses also indicate that some of Ephraim shall return. The good news is when God’s people returned from Babylonian captivity they never again committed idolatry.

‘In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation. You have forgotten God your Saviour; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud, yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain.’ [Isaiah 17:9-11](#)

The prophet now describes further the judgement and sets forth the reason for it, [Isaiah 17:9](#). Basically, they had abandoned God, [Isaiah 17:10](#), and so, God turned them over to the Assyrians. God had delivered them in the past, that is, Egyptian captivity, but now they had forsaken the Rock, [Isaiah 17:10](#), that is, God’s protection, [Deuteronomy 32:4](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:15](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:37](#) / [1 Samuel 2:2](#) / [2 Samuel 22:2-3](#) / [2 Samuel 22:32](#) / [Psalms 18:31](#) / [Psalms 18:46](#) / [Psalms 19:14](#).

The cities of Ephraim would be destroyed because they had forgotten, they had catered to the world, which was to be a fatal mistake. The fruits of their fields would be for others, while their homeland would be left unoccupied [Isaiah 17:10](#). They had planted in hope in their homeland but reaped grief and sorrow because of their apostasy, [Isaiah 17:11](#) / [Job 34:6](#) / [Jeremiah 17:16](#) / [Jeremiah 30:12](#) / [Jeremiah 30:15](#). All they had done would be dissolved before their eyes.

‘Woe to the many nations that rage—they rage like the raging sea! Woe to the peoples who roar—they roar like the roaring of great waters! Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them they flee far away, driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale. In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us.’ [Isaiah 17:12-14](#)

These verse refer to the destruction of Sennacherib’s army. The enemies of God’s people will gather together but God will disperse them. Up until now, Isaiah referred to Assyria and the great smoke they would bring, [Isaiah 14:31](#). Now he predicts the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, that is, Assyria, when he was at the height of his power.

The Assyrians might sound like the noise of the waves of the sea, [Isaiah 17:12-13](#), or the rushing wind of a storm, [Isaiah 17:13](#) / [Jeremiah 6:23](#) / [Psalms 65:7](#) / [Revelation 14:2](#) / [Revelation 19:6](#), but in one night they would come to silence, [Isaiah 17:13-14](#).

The consequence of Assyria’s strike against God’s people was that one-hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians died in one night outside the walls of Jerusalem, [2 Kings 19:35](#) / [Isaiah 37:36](#). The whole army of Sennacherib wasn’t destroyed, but a part, with himself, returned to Assyria, [2 Kings 19:36](#). The evening may see the wicked prevailing but in the morning he will be subdued and gone.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

‘Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush, which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers. All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it, and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it. This is what the LORD says to me: “I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place, like shimmering heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.” For, before the harvest, when the blossom is gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives and cut down and take away the spreading branches. They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter. At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers—the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty.’ Isaiah 18:1-7

A PROPHECY AGAINST CUSH

In this chapter we read of the prophecy against Cush, [Isaiah 18:1](#), that is, Ethiopia. The whirring of wings, [Isaiah 18:1](#), and the rivers of Cush, [Isaiah 18:1](#), describe Cush with special reference to the swarms of flies and the rivers, which are the Blue and White Nile.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The word ‘wings’ is applied in the Scriptures to the following things.

1. The wing of a fowl. This is the literal, and common signification.
2. The skirts, borders, or lower parts of a garment, from the resemblance to wings, [Numbers 15:38](#) / [1 Samuel 24:5](#) / [1 Samuel 24:11](#) / [Zechariah 8:13](#). Also a bed-covering, [Deuteronomy 33:1](#).
3. The extremities or borders of a country, or of the world, [Job 37:3](#) / [Isaiah 24:16](#) / [Ezekiel 17:3](#) / [Ezekiel 17:7](#).
4. The ‘wing’ or extremity of an army, as we use the word ‘wing’, [Isaiah 8:8](#) / [Jeremiah 48:40](#) / [Daniel 9:27](#).
5. The expanding rays of the morning, because the light ‘expands or spreads out’ like wings, [Psalms 139:9](#) / [Malachi 4:2](#).
6. The ‘wind’, resembling wings in rapid motion, [Psalms 18:10](#) / [Psalms 18:21](#) / [Psalms 104:3](#) / [Hosea 4:19](#).
7. The battlement or pinnacle of the temple or perhaps the porches extended on each side of the temple like wings, [Daniel 9:27](#) / [Matthew 4:5](#).
8. ‘Protection’, as wings are a protection to young birds in their nest, [Psalms 18:8](#) / [Psalms 36:7](#) / [Psalms 61:4](#) / [Psalms 91:4](#) / [Matthew 23:37](#). It has been proposed by some to apply this description to ‘ships’, or the sails of vessels as if a land was designated which was covered with ‘sails’, or the ‘wings’ of vessels.’

This prophecy seems to have been a response to the arrival in Jerusalem of messengers from Cush and Egypt to confer with Judah on the Assyrian threat, [Isaiah 18:2](#). The mention of the messengers coming by sea, [Isaiah 18:2](#), primarily refers to the Nile, which is called sea in [Nahum 3:8](#), and [Isaiah 19:5](#). The Ethiopians were a people of appealing physical features. They were a people who were smooth-skinned, [Jeremiah 13:23](#), tall in stature, aggressive and strange in their speech, [Isaiah 18:2](#).

It appears that the nation and all the world are informed of the impending catastrophe on Assyria, [Isaiah 18:3](#). Egypt and Cush were in great fear of invasion and Isaiah tells the messengers to return home and quietly watch the Lord thwart Assyria’s self-confident attempt to subdue Judah, [Isaiah 18:4](#).

The catastrophe itself is then described under the figure of a vine, ripe with fruit, and suddenly destroyed. It appears that the nation and all the world are informed of the impending catastrophe on Assyria, [Isaiah 18:5](#). In other words, Assyria, the great world power, is about to be broken.

The deliverance of the Lord by the sudden death of the one-hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians outside the walls of Jerusalem, [2 Kings 19:35-27](#) / [Isaiah 37:36](#), wasn't only a deliverance of Judah but also of Egypt and Cush [Isaiah 18:6](#). The rest of the nations clearly saw that the God of Israel was working for His people in order to deliver them, [Isaiah 18:6](#).

When Sennacherib's army was destroyed and God's people delivered, 'many brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD and valuable gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah. From then on he was highly regarded by all the nations,' [Isaiah 18:7](#) / [2 Chronicles 32:23](#). Even the Ethiopians and the Egyptians sent gifts to the victorious Hezekiah.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 18:7](#).

'In all probability, what is prophesied here is the conversion of many Ethiopians in the Messianic era, as frequently prophesied, not only here, but throughout the Bible, [Isaiah 2:3](#) / [Isaiah 11:10](#) / [Isaiah 60-62](#) / [Psalm 68:31](#) / [Psalm 87:4](#) / [Romans 15:16](#).'

CHAPTER 19

'A prophecy against Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt with fear. "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—brother will fight against brother, neighbour against neighbour, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.' [Isaiah 19:1-4](#)

A PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT

In this chapter, we read the prophecy against Egypt, [Isaiah 19:1](#). God is pictured as riding upon a swift cloud to bring judgement, [Isaiah 19:1](#), and we have a picture of a civil war in Egypt, which is often the result of a nation that believe in many different gods. Prior to 712 B.C., Egypt was in civil conflict because of the lack of any strong central government. Notice the 'idols of Egypt tremble', [Isaiah 19:1](#), this tells us that these man-made gods couldn't help them, they were shaken by the presence of God.

We read that the Egyptians are threatened with confusion, [Isaiah 19:2](#). They would consult their idols, the spirits of the dead, [Isaiah 8:19](#), mediums [Isaiah 8:19](#), and the spiritists, [Isaiah 19:3](#) / [Leviticus 19:31](#) / [Leviticus 20:6](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:11](#), but to no avail, [Isaiah 19:4](#). It was to no avail because all such things are the creation of man's own mind.

Those who continue in their ignorance of the true God will elect for themselves officials or misguided spiritual leaders who will be dictators over them. Shortly after the destruction of Sennacherib's army at Jerusalem which freed the Egyptians from the yoke of paying tribute to Assyria, Egypt became overconfident and Isaiah here tells the cause of her national ruin.

'The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry. The canals will stink; the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up. The reeds and rushes will wither, also the plants along the Nile, at the mouth of the river. Every sown field along the Nile will become parched, will blow away and be no more. The fishermen will

groan and lament, all who cast hooks into the Nile; those who throw nets on the water will pine away. Those who work with combed flax will despair, the weavers of fine linen will lose hope. The workers in cloth will be dejected, and all the wage earners will be sick at heart.’ Isaiah 19:5-10

These verses show the material depression which falls over all of Egypt. The Nile was the heart of Egypt, it was the source of life for Egypt and here the Nile river is pictured as dried up, Isaiah 19:5-6, and the fertility of the land disappears, Isaiah 19:7. What is pictured here is the total collapse of the Egyptian farming industry and businesses, Isaiah 19:8-10.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Egypt was celebrated anciently for producing flax in large quantities, and of a superior quality, Exodus 9:31 / 1 Kings 10:28. The fine linen of Egypt which was manufactured from this is celebrated in Scripture, Proverbs 7:16 / Ezekiel 27:7.’

‘The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools; the wise counsellors of Pharaoh give senseless advice. How can you say to Pharaoh, “I am one of the wise men, a disciple of the ancient kings”? Where are your wise men now? Let them show you and make known what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt. The officials of Zoan have become fools, the leaders of Memphis are deceived; the cornerstones of her peoples have led Egypt astray. The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit. There is nothing Egypt can do—head or tail, palm branch or reed.’ Isaiah 19:11-15

These verses show that all political counsel in Egypt is to fail. All of Pharaoh’s advisers claim to be wise counsellors, but their counselling failed. Isaiah 19:11. He challenged them to determine the judgment that God was proclaiming concerning their fate Isaiah 19:11-12. The counsellors were predicting a prosperous future for the nation but Isaiah was prophesying doom. Unemployment and famine stalked the land of Egypt.

The false prophets of the land deceived the leadership into thinking that there was a bright future for the country, Isaiah 19:13, hence, why the nation economically and morally staggered around like a drunkard, Isaiah 19:14 / Isaiah 10:5-6. A perverse spirit and the worship of idols made the Egyptians unable to accomplish anything, Isaiah 19:15. No nation can worship idols, drink, fight, and spend itself on economic security. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These three paragraphs give a terrible picture indeed of the disasters prophesied for the land of Egypt. It is the intelligence and competence of the central government itself that are mentioned here, designating it as a blundering, incompetent power led by fools and listening to the advice of fools! The proof of the foolishness of the government advisers is seen 1. in their ignorance of Jehovah and of his will, and their utter inability to see the disaster that lies at the end of their foolish plans, Isaiah 19:12, and also 2. in their blindness to the fact that their counsels have ended in disaster, Isaiah 19:13. ‘Palm branch and rush’ and ‘head or tail’ are expressions used figuratively for ‘all classes of society’.

‘In that day, the Egyptians will become weaklings. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them.’ Isaiah 19:16-17

Here we read of the beginning of the eventual turning to the Lord on the part of some of the Egyptians. Note Isaiah 19:16, in the KJV uses the words will become like women being afraid. Egypt will tremble as a woman who is afraid, Isaiah 19:16 / Jeremiah 51:30 / Nahum 3:13. As a woman who easily fears because she is weak, Isaiah 19:16, so will the nation of Egypt be when God brings judgment upon her. Since these words of judgment came from a prophet of Judah, the Egyptians would come to fear the God of Judah, Isaiah 19:17.

‘In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of the Sun. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a

monument to the LORD at its border. It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a saviour and defender, and he will rescue them. So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.” Isaiah 19:18-25

‘In that day’, [Isaiah 19:18](#), is the day that Egypt is brought low.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘That is, the event recorded in this verse would occur in the series of events that the prophet saw respecting Egypt, [Isaiah 4:1](#). The sense is that somewhere in the general time here designated, [Isaiah 19:4-17](#), the event here described would take place. There would be an extensive fear of Yahweh, and an extensive embracing of the true religion, in the land of Egypt.’

The altar, [Isaiah 19:18](#), was a sign that God had proven Himself to be the God of their salvation that is to be supreme over them, [Isaiah 19:19-20](#).

Archer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There would even be an altar erected unto Jehovah, [Isaiah 19:19](#), in Egypt. Such an altar was erected by a Jewish high priest named Onias in the reign of Ptolemy VI, and this was an earnest of the later conversion of Egyptians to Christianity. And God here promised to send them a saviour, [Isaiah 19:20](#). Historically, this was first fulfilled when Alexander the Great freed the oppressed peoples from their yoke of Persian submission but in the higher dimension, it stands for the coming of the divine Saviour who would free them from their sins.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 19:18-25](#).

‘What is envisioned here is the uniting of once hostile peoples in the service of God through Jesus Christ in the age of Messiah. This vision of a highway, in Isaiah’s prophecy, is a reference to ‘the way of truth’, [Isaiah 11:16](#) / [Isaiah 35:8](#) / [Isaiah 40:3](#) / [Isaiah 62:10](#). Thus, ‘the highway’ appears as a favourite metaphor in Isaiah and it should also be noted that it appears repeatedly through all sections of the prophecy, witnessing for the unity and integrity of Isaiah.’ Many commentators understand [Isaiah 19:18-25](#), as Messianic, referring to the conversion of some of the Egyptians. They understand these verses to be pointing to mean the universal nature of the Gospel blessings. In other words, many of the Egyptians would be converted to the Jewish religion there can be no doubt. This was the result in all countries where the Jews had a residence, [Acts 2:9-11](#).

Under the latter kings of Persia and Alexander the Great, Egypt, Judea, and Assyria lived peaceable and much commerce was carried on between Assyria and Egypt. Egypt, Assyria, and Israel are equated together, [Isaiah 19:23-25](#), describing the universal conduct of religion and this only happened in the dispensation of Christ. If not, then when was it fulfilled? Paul said, ‘all are one in Christ Jesus’, [Galatians 3:28](#).

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

‘In the year that the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it—at that time, the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said to him, “Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet.” And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot. Then the LORD said, “Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt’s shame. Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be dismayed and put to shame. In that day, the people who live on this coast will say, ‘See what has happened to those we relied on, those we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of Assyria! How then can we escape?’” Isaiah 20:1-6

A PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT AND CUSH

In this chapter, we read the symbol of Assyrian victory over Egypt and Cush. The NIV says, ‘In the year that the supreme commander,’ Isaiah 20:1. Note the KJV uses the words ‘In the year that Tartan.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Tartan was one of the generals of Sennacherib. Ashdod, called by the Greeks Azotus, was a seaport on the Mediterranean, between Askelon and Ekron, and not far from Gaza.’

Ashdod, Isaiah 20:1, was one of the five main cities of the Philistines, the others being Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gath. Ashdod is called Azotas in Acts 8:40. It was a stronghold, a kind of key to the capture of Egypt and it was the site of a temple of Dagon, which was destroyed by Samson.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the ‘supreme commander’.

‘Sargon founded the last and greatest of the Assyrian dynasties, he was the successor to Shalmaneser and the father of Sennacherib. In the Bible, Shalmaneser is apparently the conqueror but it seems that the final phase of the conquest was completed by Sargon in 722 B.C., a fact confirmed in 2 Kings 18:10, in the statement, not that ‘He took it’, but that ‘They took it’. Sargon succeeded Shalmaneser just before the siege of Samaria was completed in 722 B.C., and reigned till 705 B.C., when he was succeeded by Sennacherib. It is possible to date this passage very precisely. Isaiah 20:1 makes mention of the fact that Isaiah’s symbolic act, going naked and barefoot, was interpreted to the people in the year that Ashdod fell to Sargon’s commander-in-chief. Sargon’s inscriptions date that event in 711 B.C. Since Isaiah had already been walking naked and barefoot for a period of three years, that symbolical protest actually began in 714 B.C.’

Isaiah walked naked and barefoot to indicate what would be the condition of the Egyptians and Cush, Isaiah 20:2. Please note that this doesn’t mean he was without clothes, it means that he took off his outer garment or covering because it was shameful for a man to go without this outer garment, 1 Samuel 19:24. This indicated a very low and poor estate.

Notice that God calls Isaiah ‘my servant’, Isaiah 20:3. What a blessing and honour it is to be called His servant. A few people in the Scriptures have had the honour of being spoken of as His servant, 1. Abraham, Genesis 26:24, 2. Moses, Numbers 12:7, 3. Caleb, Numbers 14:24, 4. Job, Job 1:8 / Job 42:7-8, 5. Eliakim, Isaiah 22:20, and 6. Zerubbabel, Haggai 2:23.

Notice that Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years, Isaiah 20:3.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is not probable that the prophet walked uncovered and barefoot for three years; his appearing in that manner was a sign that within three years the Egyptians and Cushites should be in the same condition, being conquered and made captives by the king of Assyria. The time was denoted as well as the event; but his appearing in that manner for three

whole years could give no premonition of the time at all. It is probable, therefore, that the prophet was ordered to walk so for three days to denote the accomplishment of the event in three years; a day for a year, according to the prophetic rule, Numbers 14:34 / Ezekiel 4:6.’

We read of the humility that will take place in Egypt and Cush, Isaiah 20:4, and we read of the treatment of prisoners on the march to captivity, Isaiah 20:4. The whole seaboard was unable to resist the conqueror, Isaiah 20:6. There were some in Jerusalem who thought that they could escape to Egypt. However, because this judgment was coming on Egypt, they couldn’t escape by fleeing to Egypt.

Isaiah preached that it is best to trust the Lord for deliverance, Isaiah 20:5. Captives can’t save others from captivity, Isaiah 20:5, hence, an alliance with Egypt is of no value to Judah. Judah had trusted in Egypt and Assyria had come to make war upon Egypt again. Egypt was subjected to the dominion of Assyria and when Assyria took care of Egypt she then turned on Judah and came right up to Jerusalem.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Even in Nahum’s account of the fall of Egypt in the siege of No-Amon, the alliance with Ethiopia was mentioned as one of the bulwarks upon which the doomed nation relied in vain for victory, Nahum 3:9.’

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against the Desert by the Sea: Like whirlwinds sweeping through the southland, an invader comes from the desert, from a land of terror. A dire vision has been shown to me: The traitor betrays, the looter takes loot. Elam, attack! Media, lay siege! I will bring to an end all the groaning she caused. At this my body is racked with pain, pangs seize me, like those of a woman in labour; I am staggered by what I hear, I am bewildered by what I see. My heart falters, fear makes me tremble; the twilight I longed for has become a horror to me. They set the tables, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink! Get up, you officers, oil the shields! This is what the Lord says to me: “Go, post a lookout and have him report what he sees. When he sees chariots with teams of horses, riders on donkeys or riders on camels, let him be alert, fully alert.” And the lookout shouted, “Day after day, my lord, I stand on the watchtower; every night I stay at my post. Look, here comes a man in a chariot with a team of horses. And he gives back the answer: ‘Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!’” My people who are crushed on the threshing floor, I tell you what I have heard from the LORD Almighty, from the God of Israel.’ Isaiah

21:1-10

A PROPHECY AGAINST BABYLON

This chapter begins with a prophecy concerning the fall of the ‘Desert by the Sea’, Isaiah 21:1, that is, Babylon. We must note that some commentators suggest these verses are speaking about the Medes and the Persians, while others suggest they are speaking about the Assyrians.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The prophecy which commences this chapter occupies the first ten verses. That it relates to Babylon is apparent from Isaiah 21:2 / Isaiah 21:9. The object is to foretell the destruction of that city by the Medes and Persians, and the design is the same as in the more extended and minute description of the same event in Isaiah 13:1-10 / Isaiah 14:1-

10. Whether it was delivered at the same, or at another time, cannot be determined from the prophecy. The purpose, however, of the prophecy is the same as there, to give consolation to the Jews who should be carried captive to that city, to assure them that Babylon would be destroyed, and that they would be delivered from their long and severe bondage. This is indicated in a brief and graphic manner in Isaiah 21:10.’

Isaiah saw the destruction of Babylon like a whirlwind passing through, Isaiah 21:1 / Isaiah 8:8 / Job 37:9 / Habakkuk 1:11, that is, he saw the Medes and Persians passing through, possibly Cyrus or an army under him. The grim revelation that Isaiah saw was the Medes and Persians coming off the desert like a whirlwind, Isaiah 21:1.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon is clear from the express mention both of the Medes and Persians, by whom it should be, and of Babylon itself, and its fall, Isaiah 21:2, which though prophesied of before, it is here repeated, partly for the certainty of it, and partly for the comfort of the people of the Jews, who would be captives in it, and so break off and prevent their confidence in a nation that would be ruined and perhaps this prophecy might be delivered out about the time or on account of Merodach king of Babylon sending letters and a present to Hezekiah, who showed to his messengers all his treasures.’

As the plunderer of nations, Isaiah 21:2, she was still doing the same, she would see the plunder of Babylon. The vision which he saw filled him with pain, Isaiah 21:3, it was like a nightmare to Isaiah, Isaiah 21:4 / Daniel 5:6. When they ought to have been watching and preparing to do battle they were eating and drinking, Isaiah 21:5-7, hence, why many believe Isaiah is speaking about the Medes and the Persians, not the Assyrians, Daniel 5:1-30. The NIV has the words, ‘the lookout shouted’, Isaiah 21:8, but KJV uses the word ‘lion’. The lion is a figure of speech meaning we are in great danger, Revelation 10:3. The roar of a lion demands attention, Revelation 14:8 / Revelation 17:5, and so, the watchman didn’t leave his post. The sounds that were heard were those of a city that was fallen.

The words, ‘Babylon is fallen’, Isaiah 21:9, are repeated to show the certainty of it, Revelation 14:8. The word ‘threshing’, Isaiah 21:10, is also a figure of speech, Jeremiah 51:33, to indicate the crushing of Babylon that is taking place.

Clarkes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The image of threshing is frequently used by the Hebrew poets, with great elegance and force, to express the punishment of the wicked and the trial of the good, or the utter dispersion and destruction of God’s enemies. Of the different ways of threshing in use among the Hebrews, and the manner of performing them, Isaiah 28:27.’

A PROPHECY AGAINST EDOM

‘A prophecy against Dumah: Someone calls to me from Seir, “Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?” The watchman replies, “Morning is coming, but also the night. If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again.” Isaiah 21:11-12

Here we read of a prophecy concerning Dumah, that is, Edom, Isaiah 21:11. The word ‘Dumah’ means ‘silence’. Dumah was one of the twelve sons of Ishmael who settled in Arabia but he may have moved into Edom, Genesis 25:14.

We read of a series of questions addressed to Isaiah from someone in Seir, Isaiah 21:11 / Genesis 36:8. When the morning gets here, it will still be night, Isaiah 21:12. In other words, there will be morning and an end to the long night for Judah but for Edom, there will continue to be night and darkness. If Seir would really have relief, let them turn to the Lord, let them repent and return to the God of their fathers, Isaiah 21:12.

Isaiah basically says, when the night of the Assyrians had gone, there would come the Babylonians who would eventually succeed the Assyrians. After them would come the Medo-Persians and other world empires such as the Greeks and Romans. All the hope Edom had would disappear, Obadiah 8-21.

A PROPHECY AGAINST ARABIA

‘A prophecy against Arabia: You caravans of Dedanites, who camp in the thickets of Arabia, bring water for the thirsty; you who live in Tema, bring food for the fugitives. They flee from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow and from the heat of battle. This is what the Lord says to me: “Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the splendour of Kedar will come to an end. The survivors of the archers, the warriors of Kedar, will be few.” The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.’ Isaiah 21:13-17

Here we read the prophecy concerning the disruption of affairs in Arabia, Isaiah 21:13. The Dedanites, Isaiah 21:13, were an Arabian tribe who descended from Abraham and Keturah, Genesis 25:1-3. They were a trading people but they were forced to camp in the wilderness while on trading missions because of war going on the caravan road. The country Tema, Isaiah 21:14, had its name from Tema, one of the sons of Ishmael, Genesis 25:15. Isaiah sees the fugitives fleeing from the land-hungry and thirsty, Isaiah 21:15. ‘Kedar’, Isaiah 21:16, is a collective name of the Arabic tribe, Genesis 25:13-15.

Within the space of a year, the strength of ‘Kedar’ will all disappear, Isaiah 21:16-17. The prophecy is that the nomadic warriors of Arabia would be wiped out within the time that Isaiah revealed within a year, Isaiah 21:16-17.

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against the Valley of Vision: What troubles you now, that you have all gone up on the roofs, you town so full of commotion, you city of tumult and revelry? Your slain were not killed by the sword, nor did they die in battle. All your leaders have fled together; they have been captured without using the bow. All you who were caught were taken prisoner together, having fled while the enemy was still far away. Therefore I said, “Turn away from me; let me weep bitterly. Do not try to console me over the destruction of my people.” The Lord, the LORD Almighty, has a day of tumult and trampling and terror in the Valley of Vision, a day of battering down walls and of crying out to the mountains. Elam takes up the quiver, with her charioteers and horses; Kir uncovers the shield. Your choicest valleys are full of chariots, and horsemen are posted at the city gates.’ Isaiah 22:1-7

A PROPHECY ABOUT JERUSALEM

This chapter contains a prophecy, concerning the Valley of Vision, Isaiah 22:1, that is, Jerusalem and it depicts Jerusalem during a siege. It is difficult to say what siege is intended here.

Young, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the siege.

‘Possibly it applies to the capture of Jerusalem by the Assyrians during the days of Manasseh, or, more likely, it is a generic description, the details of which have been drawn from various sieges which the people had to endure.’

Other commentators suggest the background was when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, temporarily left his focus on Jerusalem and chased the remnant of the Egyptian army after he defeated them at Eltekeh. He sent part of his army to ravage the countryside of Judah and then threaten Jerusalem.

The people were joyous, [Zephaniah 2:15](#), celebrating on their roofs, [Isaiah 22:1](#) / [Deuteronomy 22:8](#), but they had deceived themselves into thinking they couldn’t be taken, [Isaiah 22:2](#). The rulers would flee in mass and be captured before the archers could even draw a bow, [Isaiah 22:3](#).

Isaiah wept bitterly over the destruction of the city, [Isaiah 22:4](#), just as Jeremiah did, [Jeremiah 13:17](#) / [Jeremiah 14:17](#) / [Lamentations 1:16](#) / [Lamentations 2:11](#). Isaiah knew that it wasn’t a time for rejoicing since Rabshakeh, Sennacherib’s commander of officers would be at the gates of Jerusalem, demanding a total surrender.

The ‘Valley of Vision’. [Isaiah 22:5](#), is Jerusalem and we see a picture of the coming siege of the city, [Isaiah 22:5](#) / [Psalm 44:6](#) / [Luke 21:24](#). Elam, [Isaiah 22:6](#), located in the southern part of Persia and Kir, [2 Kings 16:9](#) / [Amos 1:5](#) / [Amos 9:7](#), were the two armies of the Assyrians that would advance on Jerusalem and set themselves against the gates of the city.

Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib to besiege the city, took his station at the upper pool and was so near the city that he could converse with the people on the walls, [Isaiah 36:11-13](#). The chariots would be racing and their bows were drawn to shoot and they would set themselves in array at the very gates of the city [Isaiah 22:6-7](#).

‘The Lord stripped away the defences of Judah, and you looked in that day to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest. You saw that the walls of the City of David were broken through in many places; you stored up water in the Lower Pool. You counted the buildings in Jerusalem and tore down houses to strengthen the wall. You built a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the Old Pool, but you did not look to the One who made it or have regard for the One who planned it long ago.’ [Isaiah 22:8-11](#)

After being stripped of their defences, [Isaiah 22:8](#), they looked in the Palace of the Forest, [Isaiah 22:8](#) / [1 Kings 7:2-8](#), for weapons, the Palace of the Forest was a strong house that was built by Solomon. Solomon laid up large quantities of munitions of war, [1 Kings 10:16-17](#), and this vast storehouse was now the principal reliance of Hezekiah against the invading forces of Sennacherib.

They saw the walls of Jerusalem were broken, [Isaiah 22:9](#), and they had stored up water in the Lower Pool, [Isaiah 22:9](#) / [Isaiah 7:3](#). Hezekiah built one of these walls himself, [2 Chronicles 32:30](#) / [2 Kings 25:5](#) / [Jeremiah 39:4](#) and he also repaired the walls, [2 Chronicles 32:5](#), and dug a tunnel to bring the water from the outside of the walls into the city, [2 Chronicles 32:4](#).

Many other defensive preparations were made in order to prepare for an attack, [Isaiah 22:11](#). Despite all the preparations they had made, the people failed to trust God, [Isaiah 22:11](#), but turned to their own material weapons for strength but to no avail.

‘The Lord, the LORD Almighty, called you on that day to weep and to wail, to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth. But see, there is joy and revelry, slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep, eating of meat, and drinking of wine! “Let us eat and drink,” you say, “for tomorrow we die!” The LORD Almighty has revealed this in my hearing: “Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for,” says the Lord, the LORD Almighty.’ [Isaiah 22:12-14](#)

The day the Lord called was the day relating to the invasion of Sennacherib, [Isaiah 22:12](#). These verses tell us that the people felt no pain for their sins, [Isaiah 22:12](#). Isaiah is saying ‘when God calls for a fast, you stage a feast.’

In other words, it was a time when they should have been fasting and praying in repentance but they were feasting with joy, trusting in themselves, [Isaiah 22:13](#). Some who heard the prophet’s warning flippantly remarked that they were going to die anyway and so they might as well feast, [Isaiah 22:14](#).

‘This is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: “Go, say to this steward, to Shebna the palace administrator: What are you doing here and who gave you permission to cut out a grave for yourself here, hewing your grave on the height and chiselling your resting place in the rock? “Beware, the LORD is about to take firm hold of you and hurl you away, you mighty man. He will roll you up tightly like a ball and throw you into a large country. There you will die and there the chariots you were so proud of will become a disgrace to your master’s house. I will depose you from your office, and you will be ousted from your position. In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a seat of honour for the house of his father. All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars. “In that day,” declares the LORD Almighty, “the peg driven into the firm place will give way; it will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down.” The LORD has spoken.’ Isaiah 22:15-25

These verses through to the end of the chapter, form a prophecy against proud Shebna, the treasurer of the house of David, [Isaiah 22:15](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

The prophecy contains the following things.

1. A command to Isaiah to go to Shebna, and to reprove him for his self-confidence in his sin, [Isaiah 22:15-16](#).
2. A declaration that he should be carried captive to a foreign land, [Isaiah 22:17-18](#).
3. A declaration that he should be deposed and succeeded by Eliakim, [Isaiah 22:20](#).
4. A description of the character and honours of Eliakim, and his qualifications for the office, [Isaiah 22:21-24](#).
5. A confirmation of the whole prophecy, or a summing up the whole in a single declaration, [Isaiah 22:25](#).

This man who had brought shame and disgrace to the people wanted a conspicuous burial place so that he might attract attention after death, [Isaiah 22:16](#), but it would do him no good. He had cut out a grave for his own burial thinking that he would live out his life in peace in Jerusalem, however, Isaiah said that he was about to go into captivity and die in a foreign land, [Isaiah 22:17-18](#). He would go into captivity as a result of his sinful leadership of the people, [Isaiah 22:19](#).

We read that God would put another in the place of Shebna. Eliakim will bear the burden of the key, he would be the treasurer and he would be the benefactor to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, [Isaiah 22:20-22](#). The ‘key’ indicates the government or authority.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The reference here to the ‘key of David’ is of special interest. Many have pointed out that ‘opening and shutting’ represent the making of decisions that no one but the king could change. Here is the background of Jesus’ teaching in [Matthew 16:19](#). ‘Suggesting that Jesus was appointing Peter to be steward over the household of God in the messianic kingdom.’ While true enough as far as it goes, this statement is fundamentally altered to extend the ownership of the key of David to all of the apostles of Christ, [Matthew 18:18](#), and by no means restricting it merely to Peter. Besides that, ‘The ultimate authority is claimed in these very terms for Christ himself,’ [Revelation 3:7-8](#).’ It’s clear that Eliakim began as a good servant but became corrupt and so, he is brought down. Isaiah takes our minds back to the immediate historical context of Eliakim. His heritage would be nailed in a sure place [Isaiah 22:23](#). However, his worthless and incompetent descendants would cause his family to fall [Isaiah 22:24](#). They would disgrace his family and so, the family would be brought down because of their sin, [Isaiah 22:25](#).

In other words, the relationship between these verses and the preceding is that Shebna is to be regarded as a leader of the people and the prophecy, while directed against the nation generally, concentrates on Shebna, the leader specifically, [Isaiah 9:16](#). This is the only prophecy of Isaiah specifically directed against an individual.

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION

‘A prophecy against Tyre: Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For Tyre is destroyed and left without house or harbour. From the land of Cyprus word has come to them. Be silent, you people of the island and you merchants of Sidon, whom the seafarers have enriched. On the great waters came the grain of the Shihor; the harvest of the Nile was the revenue of Tyre, and she became the marketplace of the nations. Be ashamed, Sidon, and you fortress of the sea, for the sea has spoken: “I have neither been in labour nor given birth; I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters.” When word comes to Egypt, they will be in anguish at the report from Tyre. Cross over to Tarshish; wail, you people of the island. Is this your city of revelry, the old, old city, whose feet have taken her to settle in far-off lands?’ Isaiah 23:1-7

A PROPHECY AGAINST TYRE

The chapter begins with the announcement that Tyre will be destroyed. This chapter speaks of a prophecy concerning Tyre, [Isaiah 23:1](#). Tyre was an ancient, wealthy city situated upon the sea and celebrated for its trade and commerce, [Isaiah 23:1](#). It was seldom a dangerous enemy to Israel and usually a faithful ally as in the reigns of David and Solomon.

Trading cities maintained their grandeur not by the conquest of their neighbours but by commerce with them, [Ezekiel 27:9-23](#). King Hiram, who was contemporary with Solomon, made Tyre one of the best port cities in of all Palestine, and throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This prophecy was written one hundred twenty years before its fulfilment.’

The ‘ships of Tarshish’, [Isaiah 23:1](#) / [Isaiah 2:16](#), were Phoenician, sailing the Mediterranean and going as far west as Spain. As they docked at Cyprus on their eastward voyage, they learned that the harbour to which they were sailing had been laid waste, [Isaiah 23:1](#).

The Pulpit Commentary, says the following concerning Tarshish.

‘It is generally believed that Tarshish, as mentioned here must be identified with Tartessus, a colony of Tyre built upon the southwest coastline of Spain “beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which was the centre of an important and lucrative commerce.’

‘Sidon’, [Isaiah 23:2](#), was the older city or mother city of Phoenicia, located around twenty-five miles north of Tyre. The Nile river is here called ‘Shihor’, [Isaiah 23:3](#) / [Jeremiah 2:18](#) / [1 Chronicles 13:5](#). The fertility of the Nile Valley was controlled by the overflowing of the river, [Isaiah 23:3](#). A good corn crop in Egypt meant good trade for the people of Tyre, [Isaiah 23:3](#). Sidon, is told to be ashamed and their fortress of the sea because the sea says, I have neither been in labour nor given birth, I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters, [Isaiah 23:4](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Tyre was a colony of Sidon. Sidon is here addressed as the mother of Tyre and is called on to lament over her daughter that was destroyed. In [Isaiah 23:12](#), Tyre is called the ‘daughter of Sidon;’ and such appellations were commonly given to cities, [Isaiah 1:8](#). Sidon is here represented as ashamed, or grieved, as a mother is who is bereft of all her children.’

Great anguish would prevail in Egypt at the report of Tyre because of the great effect it would have on the shipping and sale of Egyptian goods, [Isaiah 23:5](#). In other words, Egypt would also mourn and everyone who profited from Tyre would also mourn.

Isaiah exhorted the inhabitants of the Phoenician coastlands to flee as far away as Tarshish, [Isaiah 23:6](#), which was the main colony of Tyre. From Tarshish, the Phoenicians imported silver, iron, tin, and lead, [Ezekiel 27:12](#). Tyre had been a joyous city and knew nothing about hard times, [Isaiah 23:7](#) / [Isaiah 22:2](#).

‘Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are renowned in the earth? The LORD Almighty planned it, to bring down her pride in all her splendour and to humble all who are renowned on the earth. Till your land as they do along the Nile, Daughter Tarshish, for you no longer have a harbour. The LORD has stretched out his hand over the sea and made its kingdoms tremble. He has given an order concerning Phoenicia that her fortresses be destroyed. He said, “No more of your revelling, Virgin Daughter Sidon, now crushed! “Up, cross over to Cyprus; even there you will find no rest.” Look at the land of the Babylonians, this people that is now of no account! The Assyrians have made it a place for desert creatures; they raised up their siege towers, they stripped its fortresses bare and turned it into a ruin. Wail, you ships of Tarshish; your fortress is destroyed!’ [Isaiah 23:8-14](#)

These verses show us that God purposed the destruction because of the pride of Tyre, [Isaiah 23:8](#) / [Amos 1:9-10](#). It was God who gave Tyre its beauty, [Isaiah 23:8](#), and He would take it away again, [Isaiah 23:9](#). They were proud but God will humble them, [Isaiah 23:9](#). The colonists of Tarshish are now called upon to exert their full independence of Tyre which no longer provided competition, [Isaiah 23:10](#).

Even the nations who depended upon Phoenicia to distribute the goods would be affected, [Isaiah 23:11-12](#). Unrest will go with them wherever they go, [Isaiah 23:12](#). The Babylonians are the ones who will carry out God’s purpose, [Isaiah 23:13](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:21](#). Babylon never existed so strong until the Assyrians produced circumstances for them to become the world power but as Babylon was brought to ruin, so will Tyre, [Isaiah 23:13-14](#) / [Ezekiel 26:16-21](#).

‘At that time Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king’s life. But at the end of these seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute: “Take up a harp, walk through the city, you forgotten prostitute; play the harp well, sing many a song, so that you will be remembered.” At the end of seventy years, the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her lucrative prostitution and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. Yet her profit and her earnings will be set apart for the LORD; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before the LORD, for abundant food and fine clothes.’ [Isaiah 23:15-18](#)

After seventy years, Tyre will be restored, [Isaiah 23:15](#), and her goods used to serve God.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Tyrians used their goods, as did all other people in areas adjacent to Israel, in subjection to the command of the Persian kings, to help the Jews rebuild the temple. Once proud Tyre who devoted her goods to her own selfish means and purposes will now humbly offer them to God’s people that they might abound to the glory of God.’

Lowth, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Nebuchadnezzar began his conquests in the first year of his reign, from thence to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus are seventy years, at which time the nations taken by Nebuchadnezzar were to be restored to liberty. Some of the nations were conquered sooner, some later but the end of the seventy years was the occasion for the deliverance of all of them.’

It’s as though the people would forget Tyre once it was destroyed, [Isaiah 23:16](#) / [Daniel 7:17](#) / [Daniel 8:20](#) / [Jeremiah 25:11](#), but after seventy years she will continue to be a prostitute, [Isaiah 23:17](#). This is indicating the seriousness of

Tyre's destruction. God declared that He would again visit Tyre only because what she had to offer might be used to His glory, [Isaiah 23:18](#) / [Psalm 45:12](#) / [Acts 11:19](#).

After it was rebuilt they helped the Israelites to rebuild Jerusalem. The words, 'she will return to her lucrative prostitution,' [Isaiah 23:17](#), literally means she will return to her hire as a fornicator and will continue her trade with other kingdoms. In other words, as a prostitute, she would rejoice in the restoration of her financial gain, so Tyre would be restored once again to prosper from her trade among the nations.

However, her trade would be restored only because God was working in the nations, [Isaiah 23:18](#). Tyre's merchandise shall be holy to the Lord, [Isaiah 23:18](#), in that they will help rebuild Jerusalem, [1 Corinthians 16:1](#). Tyre was visited by the Saviour, [Matthew 15:21](#), and Paul found many Christians in Tyre, [Acts 21:4](#), after the establishment of the church.

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION

'See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants—it will be the same for priest as for people, for the master as for his servant, for the mistress as for her servant, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.' [Isaiah 24:1-6](#)

THE LORD'S DEVASTATION OF THE EARTH

Beginning in this chapter through to [Isaiah 27](#), we read of God's judgment against various nations. This chapter begins with the judgement upon Judah. The particular destruction which Isaiah had in mind is difficult to tell. Young, in his commentary, says the following.

'To apply these chapters to a specific period in Isaiah's ministry is very difficult. In fact, they do not have references to specific events. Rather, the prophet here sets forth his philosophy of God's judgements. His purpose is to exalt God as Sovereign Ruler overall. Hence, he seeks to show that God can and will visit the earth in judgement. In this visitation, God's own people will suffer that they may ultimately be glorified, but the enemies of God will utterly perish.'

The chapter begins with the waves of approaching judgements, [Zephaniah 1:2-3](#). Isaiah envisions the calamity that would come upon the earth, [Isaiah 24:1](#) / [Matthew 24:6-8](#) / [2 Peter 3](#). The judgement involves all ranks of people, [Isaiah 24:2](#) / [Revelation 6:15](#), it is universal. These verses give us a picture of mankind trying to escape God's judgment but they can't, no one can escape. Whenever there is a national calamity, there are refugees and that calamity touches all citizens of a nation.

The earth will also be affected, [Isaiah 24:3-4](#). This is happening because they have defiled the earth, [Isaiah 24:5](#) / [Numbers 33:33](#) / [Psalms 106:38](#), they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant, [Isaiah 24:5](#) / [Genesis 9:6](#) / [Genesis 9:16](#).

Mankind in effect has cursed themselves with sin, [Isaiah 24:6](#), and they are going to reap what they have sown and sadly, everyone is going to pay the consequences. From [Isaiah 24:6](#), through to [Isaiah 24:15](#), picture the curse of [Deuteronomy 30:15-19](#), coming upon Israel. Only a remnant will be left because of the penalty of their sins, [Isaiah 24:6](#) / [2 Kings 24:14-16](#).

‘The new wine dries up and the vine withers, all the merry-makers groan. The joyful timbrels are stilled, the noise of the revellers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent. No longer do they drink wine with a song; the beer is bitter to its drinkers. The ruined city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred. In the streets they cry out for wine; all joy turns to gloom, all joyful sounds are banished from the earth. The city is left in ruins, its gate is battered to pieces. So will it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest.’ [Isaiah 24:7-13](#)

We get here a picture of that celebration, which was going well but now it has come to an end, [Isaiah 24:7-8](#). Wines waste away because there is no-one to cultivate them, [Revelation 16:19](#), and food and drink are no longer available, [Isaiah 24:9](#).

The cities became confused because of the attackers, there is chaos in the streets, [Isaiah 24:1-9](#) / [Isaiah 16:8-10](#), and the people barricade themselves in their homes, [Isaiah 24:10](#) / [Isaiah 24:12](#). The survivors hide themselves in fear of intruders. The joy the land once had is gone, [Isaiah 24:11](#), the olive tree being beaten and the very last gleanings of grapes, [Isaiah 24:13](#) / [Isaiah 17:5-6](#), both of which represent joy, is taken away.

‘They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the LORD’s majesty. Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; exalt the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we hear singing: “Glory to the Righteous One.” But I said, “I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!” Terror and pit and snare await you, people of the earth. Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare. The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is violently shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again.’ [Isaiah 24:14-20](#)

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This seems to describe the desolation brought on Judah by Assyria in the days of Hezekiah when all the people of Judah had to seek refuge in larger cities and more, especially in Jerusalem. In those days, the Assyrian army overran all the land of Judah and even came before the city of Jerusalem and threatened its very existence.’

Out of earth’s ruin and wreckage, comes the song of the righteous remnant, [Isaiah 24:14](#). The righteous remnant would come back to Jerusalem from the east out of Babylonian captivity [Isaiah 24:15](#). The songs of praises would again come to the city. Out of the destruction, the righteous remnant will emerge, with shouts of joy and the voices of singing, [Isaiah 24:16](#). Isaiah gives us a picture of the punishment and deliverance of Israel.

Those who dealt treacherously are those who took advantage of others, [Isaiah 24:16](#). They are thieves who were shamelessly going about stealing from others. Isaiah says when the hunted try to escape, they are themselves entrapped, [Isaiah 24:17-18](#) / [Isaiah 8:15](#) / [Jeremiah 48:43-44](#) / [Amos 5:19](#).

The earth is utterly broken, [Isaiah 24:19](#) / [Isaiah 2:19](#) / [Amos 1:1](#). This is a picture of an earthquake, which emotionally shakes people. The social chaos that prevails leaves people hopeless and confused. The earth reels like a drunkard, [Isaiah 24:20](#) / [Isaiah 29:9](#), it sways like a hut in the wind, [Isaiah 24:20](#) / [Psalms 107:27](#), are references to the destruction which had come upon the land. The words, ‘never to rise again’, [Isaiah 24:20](#), is a reference to the ten Northern Tribes.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These verses also entail the account of cosmic disturbances that shall mark the final judgment. The great earthquake that shall move every mountain and every island out of its place, Revelation 6:14, resulting, as Isaiah reveals here, in the ‘fall of the earth’, which shall ‘not rise again’, thus supporting Peter’s revelation that we shall indeed look for ‘a new heaven, and a new earth’, 2 Peter 3:13. To us, it appears absolutely mandatory to view this portion of Isaiah as applicable to the final judgment.’

‘In that day, the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders—with great glory.’ Isaiah 24:21-23

These apocalyptic words are similar to what we read in the New Testament, Isaiah 24:21 / Matthew 25:41 / 2 Peter 2:4 / Revelation 6:12. In the end, God will not only bring the wicked kings of this world into the judgment of condemnation but also Satan and his angels, Isaiah 24:22 / 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 / Jude 1:5.

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These ‘many days’ are the same as, the symbolic thousand years of Revelation 20:1-6. Amazingly, a number of the time designations in Revelation all have the same meaning, that being, all of the time between the first advent and the second advent of Christ, namely, the whole current dispensation of the grace of God. Note the following references from the Book of Revelation.

1. The souls of the martyrs were promised that before the judgment they would rest for a little time, Revelation 6:11.
2. Christ’s church will be nourished in the wilderness, her probation, for one thousand, two hundred and sixty days, Revelation 12:6.
3. Satan is wroth against God’s people because he knoweth that he hath but a short time, Revelation 12:12.
4. God’s church will be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, Revelation 12:14.
5. The beast had the authority to oppose the church for forty and two months, Revelation 13:5.
6. It is obvious that 42 months, 1,260 days, and time and times and half a time are all exactly the same amount of time, i.e., three and one-half years.

7. It is just as obvious that the thousand years of Revelation 20:1-6, refer to exactly the same time as indicated in the other symbolical expressions, namely, the whole dispensation of Christ.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 24:23.

‘The heavenly bodies are often employed in the sacred writings to denote the princes and kings of the earth. These expressions are not to be pressed as if the sun denoted one thing and the moon another but they are general poetic expressions designed to represent rulers, princes, and magistrates of all kinds, Ezekiel 32:7 / Joel 2:30-31.’

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION

‘LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago. You have made the city a heap of rubble, the fortified town a ruin, the foreigners’

stronghold a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will honour you; cities of ruthless nations will revere you. You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall and like the heat of the desert. You silence the uproar of foreigners; as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled.’ Isaiah 25:1-5

PRAISE TO THE LORD

In this chapter, we read that Judah rejoices over her deliverance. These verses are a hymn of thanksgiving for the deliverance spoken of. Because of whom God is and the things He did in the past, God is exalted, [Isaiah 25:1](#) / [Psalm 118:28](#) / [Psalm 145:1](#).

There is rejoicing over the fall of the city of the captors who brought them into captivity, [Isaiah 25:2](#). This would possibly be Nineveh, Babylon, Moab or any other strong fortress erected by the enemies of God’s people would become ruins when God gave the word, [Isaiah 13:19-22](#) / [1 Corinthians 2:8](#). Even the strong oppressors of God’s people were forced to recognise His power and might, [Isaiah 25:3](#).

God is a refuge and strength to the faithful, [Isaiah 25:4](#) / [Psalm 46:1](#). Because God is a protecting shelter for His people, He brings to silence those who have dealt ruthlessly with His people with whom He has a covenant relationship [Isaiah 25:5](#). Assyria came in a boastful and arrogant manner but her song was short-lived, [Isaiah 25:5](#).

‘On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.’ Isaiah 25:6-8

Here we read of the great rejoicing in Jerusalem, [Isaiah 25:6](#) / [Jeremiah 48:11](#). God is looking for fellowship with those upon the mountain. Mount Zion is the spiritual refuge of God’s people, [Isaiah 25:7](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the shroud’, [Isaiah 25:7](#), or the ‘veil’ as the KJV renders it.

‘That veil of the temple was a symbol’.

1. Of Christ himself, [Hebrews 10:19-22](#).
2. Of death, as indicated by its Location, symbolically, between the church, the sanctuary, and heaven, the Holy of Holies.
3. Of equality among God’s children, since it separated between the High Priest and the lesser priests.
4. Of the veil of darkness that prevents unbelievers from understanding the Old Testament.
5. Of the law of Moses, being actually the pivotal instrument in that whole system.

These are some of the symbolical connotations of the veil of the temple, the most significant fact about that veil being that it was ‘rent in twain’. It is in that second condition of the veil, that is, after it was rent, that it symbolized Christ’s entering in ‘through death’ into that which is beyond the veil, [Hebrews 6:19](#), it symbolized the opening of a new and living way for all men to be saved, [Hebrews 10:20](#), it symbolized the destruction of death as stated by Isaiah in this very chapter and it symbolized the opening up and clarification of countless passages in the Old Testament, which cannot ever be understood apart from their connection with Jesus Christ. Christ alone is indeed the ‘Key to the Scriptures’.

Having a banquet with God at the end of great turmoil is hope that is given to His people, [Isaiah 25:8](#) / [Psalm 36:8](#) / [Psalm 63:5](#) / [Matthew 8:11](#) / [Matthew 26:29](#) / [Revelation 19:7-9](#) / [Revelation 21:4](#). Jerusalem was saved from extinction and the deliverance provided relief for the people during that particular period. God destroyed death by destroying the Assyrian army, [Isaiah 25:8](#). It is a banquet celebrating deliverance from the fear of death, [1 Corinthians 15:54-55](#) / [Hebrews 2:14-15](#).

Clarkes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘From these three verses we learn the following.

1. That the Gospel is a plenteous provision: ‘I will make a feast for all people.’
2. That it is a source of light and salvation: ‘I will destroy the veil. I will abolish death. and bring life and immortality to light.’
3. That it is a source of comfort and happiness: ‘I will wipe away all tears from off all faces.’

‘In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.” The hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain; but Moab will be trampled in their land as straw is trampled down in the manure. They will stretch out their hands in it, as swimmers stretch out their hands to swim. God will bring down their pride despite the cleverness of their hands. He will bring down your high fortified walls and lay them low; he will bring them down to the ground, to the very dust.’
Isaiah 25:9-12

Judah rejoices because she trusted in God rather than men, [Isaiah 25:9](#). The Lord delivered on His promises and so, the delivered are overcome with a song of gratitude, [Isaiah 25:9](#).

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is a great gulf fixed between those who trust in the Lord and those who consider themselves self-sufficient without His word. The gulf may now be crossed in either direction but when we have gone into eternity the gulf is ‘fixed’, [Luke 16:26](#).’

The hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, [Isaiah 25:10](#), signifying protection, [Ezra 7:6](#) / [Ezra 7:28](#) / [Ezra 8:18](#) / [Ezra 8:22](#) / [Ezra 8:31](#) / [Nehemiah 2:8](#). Moab, the enemy of Israel will be cast down, [Isaiah 25:10](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the words, the ‘straw is trampled down in the manure’, [Isaiah 25:10](#).

‘As straw is suffered to lie in the yard where cattle lie, to be trodden down by them for the purpose of making manure. The image is one that is not of infrequent occurrence in the Scriptures, to denote the complete and disgraceful prostration of an enemy, [Psalms 83:10](#) / [2 Kings 9:37](#) / [Jeremiah 8:2](#) / [Jeremiah 9:22](#) / [Jeremiah 16:4](#) / [Jeremiah 25:33](#).’

God delivered Judah then, Christ, for whom we waited, delivers us from sin. Those who wait on God are never disappointed. The hand of the Lord brings judgement as well as mercy. The haughty and arrogant will be punished, [Isaiah 25:10-11](#), and the righteous will be rewarded. Moab, the nation who seduced the people of God into committing fornication, is gone, [Isaiah 25:12](#) / [Isaiah 15:1-9](#) / [Isaiah 16:1-14](#) / [Genesis 19:30-38](#) / [Numbers 25:1](#).

CHAPTER 26

‘In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith. You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the

LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust. Feet trample it down—the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor.’

Isaiah 26:1-6

A SONG OF PRAISE

This chapter is a song in which Judah is longing for God’s protection and His discipline. The song of Jerusalem is sung because of her deliverance, [Isaiah 26:1](#). In the first ten verses, we find an exhortation to trust in God because He blesses the faithful.

Reference is made to the ‘day’, [Isaiah 26:1](#), of great deliverance from Assyria, however, some think this referred to the deliverance which Christ would bring to the world. The ‘strong city’, [Isaiah 26:1](#), isn’t a city with physical walls, it’s spiritual, [Isaiah 60:18](#) / [Jeremiah 3:23](#) / [Zechariah 2:5](#). It is the spiritual protection that God provides for the spiritual city of righteousness.

The gates were to be open so that the righteous may enter, [Isaiah 26:2](#) / [Psalms 24:7](#) / [Psalms 24:9](#) / [Psalms 118:19](#), that is, the people are entering the salvation of God, they are entering God’s city, [Matthew 11:28-30](#). Notice that peace depended on their ‘keeping the truth’, [Isaiah 26:3](#), and they are steadfast because they trust in God, [Isaiah 26:3](#). Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 26:2-3](#).

‘The converted Gentiles shall have the gates opened, a full entrance into all the glories and privileges of the Gospel, being fellow heirs with the converted Jews. The Jewish peculiarity is destroyed, for the middle wall of partition is broken down. The Gospel itself as the fulfilment of all the ancient types, shadows, and ceremonies and therefore termed the truth, in opposition to all those shadowy rites and ceremonies, [John 1:17](#) / [John 1:17](#).’

The joy of this city consists in the blessings of salvation, [Isaiah 26:4](#), rather than the strength of material defences. God will bring low the high and mighty, the lofty city, [Isaiah 26:5](#), that is, those who are arrogant and proud, probably Babylon, [Isaiah 25:12](#). The contrast between the two cities emphasizes the principle that pride must be conquered in the life of the righteous, [Matthew 18:1-6](#) / [Matthew 23:12](#). The feet of the oppressed and the poor will trample this lofty city down, [Isaiah 26:6](#) / [James 2:1-7](#).

‘The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning, my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. But when grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and do not regard the majesty of the LORD. LORD, your hand is lifted high, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame; let the fire reserved for your enemies consume them.’ [Isaiah 26:7-11](#)

During the time of trial, the children of God waited for the deliverance and encouragement which only God can give. God’s will is the standard of right and wrong, [Isaiah 26:7-8](#), it is God who helps His people overcome obstacles in life, [Jeremiah 31:9](#) / [Proverbs 3:6](#). God works for those who want to be His people, and as a result, His name is glorified because of the way they behave, [Isaiah 26:8](#) / [John 12:28](#). He works for those whose spirit longs for Him, [Isaiah 26:9](#).

God’s judgements are calculated to bring sinners to repentance. The righteous often don’t receive justice, however, they wait for the final justice that God will render at the final judgment, [Isaiah 26:9-10](#) / [Matthew 25:46](#) / [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#). Since His judgments come with grace and mercy, those of this world, who are mistreated shouldn’t take revenge on those who persecute them. God’s grace should also be extended to them so that they have a chance to repent, [Isaiah 26:10](#).

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 26:11](#).

‘When wicked men prosper, instead of thinking that God has blessed them, they think their own strength has produced their good fortune. Evil men never learn until they put their trust in God.’

‘LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us. LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone do we honour. They are now dead, they live no more; their spirits do not rise. You punished them and brought them to ruin; you wiped out all memory of them. You have enlarged the nation, LORD; you have enlarged the nation. You have gained glory for yourself; you have extended all the borders of the land. LORD, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a pregnant woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, LORD. We were with child, we writhed in labour, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth, and the people of the world have not come to life. But your dead will live, LORD; their bodies will rise—let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy—your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.’ [Isaiah 26:12-19](#)

Here we read that God’s enemies are put to shame for the glory of God, [Isaiah 26:12](#). The enemies of God are blinded, they failed to see the righteousness and goodness of God. It was God’s original plan that they live in peace in the land of promise, however, because of their apostasy to other gods, God delivered them over to those who brought no peace, [Isaiah 26:12](#).

They confessed that they had submitted to other lords, but only Jehovah God was their supreme Lord, [Isaiah 26:13](#). Other gods were ruined because God’s wrath was poured out upon them, [Isaiah 26:14](#). Because of His actions on Assyria, other nations glorified God, that is, acknowledged His supremacy. Notice the words, ‘enlarged the nation’ are repeated, [Isaiah 26:15](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the enlarging of the nation.

‘This refers to the Jewish nation, [Isaiah 9:3](#). The nation was not only enlarged by its regular increase of population, but many converts attended them on their return from Babylon, and probably many came in from surrounding nations on the rebuilding of their capital.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Note the repetition, which, in the Hebrew always means extreme emphasis. This remarkable increase of God’s people points to the inclusion of the worldwide Gentile Church, hence also the enlargement of the borders of the kingdom.’

We also read of Judah’s cry and God’s reply. Judah waited until she got in trouble before she cried out to God, [Isaiah 26:16](#). When their captors were gone, Israel continued as the people of God. Judah was in pain like an expectant mother, [Isaiah 26:17](#) / [Psalms 48:6](#) / [Jeremiah 6:24](#) / [Jeremiah 13:21](#) / [Jeremiah 22:23](#) / [Jeremiah 49:24](#) / [Jeremiah 50:43](#) / [Micah 4:9-10](#), that is, their efforts to deliver themselves was as a false pregnancy, it was only a delivery of wind.

Many commentators believe that [Isaiah 26:19](#), is a reference to some future event, a spiritual resurrection, [Ezekiel 37:11-14](#). Other commentators believe that Isaiah is speaking of the final hope of all men on earth. There is a resurrection to come and it will be an event in which all who are in tombs will come forth, [John 5:28-29](#).

Hailey, in his commentary, gives three options, concerning the meaning of the resurrection but favoured the last option.

1. The figurative resurrection of the state of Israel, following their Babylonian captivity.
2. The final resurrection of the body at the end of time.
3. The spiritual resurrection that occurred in the Messianic age.

‘Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed on it; the earth will conceal its slain no longer.’ Isaiah 26:20-21

Here we have a picture of a cloud of indignation and an assurance for God’s people. God’s people are to hide for a moment, [Isaiah 26:20](#). Some commentators suggest they are to hide for seventy years in captivity and they would be brought forth after that punishment.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Although [Isaiah 26:16-21](#), could well harmonise with all the facts of the Assyrian siege and deliverance, therefore, it would seem best suited to the general context of the following chapter to refer to [Isaiah 26:16-21](#), to the Babylonian period. As has been pointed out before, one of the difficult features of Isaiah’s work is his custom of shifting without warning from one period to another.’

Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 26:21](#).

‘The many murders men have committed on earth. In the same place, he also wrote that Isaiah denounced murder in his very first chapter, [Isaiah 1:27](#). Manasseh’s murders were the main cause of the first destruction of Jerusalem, [2 Kings 24:4](#). The second destruction was equally a judgment for the innocent blood that had been shed upon the earth ‘from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Berekiah,’ [Matthew 23:35](#). Bloodshed cries to God for vengeance, [Genesis 4:10](#), and bloodshed will be one of the main causes of the world’s final destruction at the last day, [Revelation 16:6](#) / [Revelation 18:20](#).’

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION

‘In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword—his fierce, great, and powerful sword—Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea. In that day—“Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the LORD, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it. I am not angry. If only there were briars and thorns confronting me! I would march against them in battle; I would set them all on fire. Or else let them come to me for refuge; let them make peace with me, yes, let them make peace with me.” In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.’ Isaiah 27:1-6

DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL

In this chapter, we read that God punishes Israel’s enemies and blesses Israel. In that day God will smite Babylon, [Isaiah 27:1](#). The sword is tempered for strength and it’s grim because of the destruction it can do, [Isaiah 27:1](#). God’s sword is sweeping in that it cuts a wide strip, [Isaiah 27:1](#). The enemy or enemies are set forth under the figure of the sea-serpent, leviathan, [Isaiah 27:1](#). The Leviathan, [Job 3:8](#) / [Job 41:1](#), is probably like a crocodile, the Leviathan was the coiled serpent, [Job 26:13](#).

We read of God’s tender care in delivering His people. God has kept His holy people and protected them throughout the centuries. The prosperity of the Lord’s people is represented by the ‘fruitful vineyard’, [Isaiah 27:2](#), which brings forth a new song of praise. God kept His vineyard and watered it, [Isaiah 27:3](#) / [Matthew 28:18-20](#).

He has been the eternal gardener who has continually watered His vineyard. In other words, there is never a time when God doesn't watch over His children, [Isaiah 27:3](#) / [Psalm 121:3-5](#). He has consumed the briers and thorns, [Isaiah 27:4-5](#) / [Isaiah 9:17](#) / [Isaiah 10:17](#), in order that Jacob take root and bud forth throughout the world, [Isaiah 27:6](#) / [Psalm 92:13-14](#).

'Has the LORD struck her as he struck down those who struck her? Has she been killed as those were killed who killed her? By warfare and exile you contend with her—with his fierce blast he drives her out, as on a day the east wind blows. By this, then, will Jacob's guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones to be like limestone crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing. The fortified city stands desolate, an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the wilderness; there the calves graze, there they lie down; they strip its branches bare. When its twigs are dry, they are broken off and women come and make fires with them. For this is a people without understanding; so their Maker has no compassion on them, and their Creator shows them no favour.' [Isaiah 27:7-11](#)

Here we read of the punishment of Israel because of their sin and that God's people shall no more be idolaters. Israel, though captive, will not be smitten as their captors are smitten, [Isaiah 27:7-8](#) / [Ezekiel 16:47](#), and it appears that Israel's captivity destroyed their desire for idols, [Isaiah 27:9](#).

His punishment was to purge them of their sin and in doing so, His people had to purge themselves of idolatry, [Isaiah 27:9](#) / [Isaiah 1:25](#), as well as cut down the Asherah poles, [Isaiah 27:9](#) / [Isaiah 17:8](#), where they committed their spiritual adultery by bowing down to foreign gods. The stones of idolatrous altars were to be beaten as fine as chalkstones and idol groves were to be destroyed, [Isaiah 27:10](#). The overall purpose of the captivity was to cleanse Israel of idolatry.

Israel's captors received no compassion and the man who builds up his defences against God will finally come to destruction, [Isaiah 27:11](#). In other words, if His people tried to build a fortified city against God's chastisement, then they would have no understanding of His work, [Proverbs 6:32](#) / [Proverbs 18:2](#) / [Jeremiah 5:21](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'The scarcity of fuel, especially wood, in most parts of the east is so great, that they supply it with everything capable of burning; cow-dung dried, roots, parings of fruit, withered stalks of herbs and flowers, [Matthew 6:21-30](#). Vine twigs are particularly mentioned as used for fuel in dressing their food. Ezekiel says, in his parable of the vine, used figuratively for the people of God, as the vineyard is here, 'Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel,' [Ezekiel 15:3-4](#). 'If a man abide not in one,' saith our Lord, 'he is cast forth as a branch of the vine and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned', [John 15:6](#). They employed women and children to gather these things, and they laid them up in store for use. The dressing and pruning their vines afforded a good supply of the last sort of fuel but the prophet says that the vines themselves of the beloved vineyard shall be blasted, withered, and broken, and the women shall come and gather them up, and carry away the whole of them to make their fires for domestic uses.'

'In that day, the LORD will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, Israel, will be gathered up one by one. And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.' [Isaiah 27:12-13](#)

These verses speak of the restoration of Israel. God would thresh out the grain from the chaff and bring the devoted again into the land, [Isaiah 27:12](#). Cyrus issued a decree, [Ezra 1:1](#), allowing each Jew to go back but many stayed and didn't return.

God will call His people out of those places where they had been captive, [Isaiah 27:12](#). They will be 'gathered up one by one', [Isaiah 27:12](#), which implies it was up to the individual Jew whether he would stay or return. This is the same as in the Gospel system, some accept and some reject the Gospel.

From the dispersed children of the twelve tribes of Israel that were scattered throughout the former Assyrian Empire, and as far south as Egypt, [Jeremiah 41:17-18](#) / [Jeremiah 42:15-22](#), the remnant would be brought back into the land of promise, [Isaiah 27:13](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Their temple shall be rebuilt, their city shall be restored, and in the place where their fathers worshipped shall they also again adore the living God. This closes the prophecy which was commenced in [Isaiah 24](#), and the design of the whole is to comfort the Jews with the assurance, that though they were to be made captive in a distant land, yet they would be again restored to the land of their fathers, and again worship God there. It is almost needless to say that this prediction was completely fulfilled by the return of the Jews to their own country under the decree of Cyrus.’

CHAPTER 28

INTRODUCTION

‘Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim’s drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley—to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine! See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground. That wreath, the pride of Ephraim’s drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like figs ripe before harvest—as soon as people see them and take them in hand, they swallow them. In that day, the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.’ [Isaiah 28:1-6](#)

WOE TO THE LEADERS OF EPHRAIM AND JUDAH

In this chapter through to [Isaiah 35](#), we find a series of woes. Isaiah will make clear that Ephraim, [Isaiah 7:2](#), the Northern Kingdom, will be destroyed and so will Judah, although God wouldn’t let it happen. Jerusalem will be saved with no thanks to Egypt but thanks to God.

This chapter begins with a woe to the drunken sceptical rulers of the land and gives us a vivid description of the rulers of Ephraim, [Isaiah 28:1](#) / [Amos 6:4-5](#). The wreath of pride, [Isaiah 28:1](#), refers to the city of Samaria, which was built on a hill, [1 Kings 16:24](#). It was a beautiful place which was corrupted. No nation has ever built an enduring society by means of drunken dissipation.

God is going to destroy them with a storm, hail, destroying storm, and a devastating flood, [Isaiah 28:2](#), that is, God will use Assyria to destroy Israel, [2 Kings 17:3-6](#). God chose this nation to bring judgment upon the Northern Kingdom and so, the Assyrians would come to Samaria, to the leadership that had feasted itself into a drunken stupor, [Isaiah 28:3](#) / [2 Kings 18:9-10](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The practical interpretation of [Isaiah 28:3](#), means that when the king of Assyria sees Samaria he will immediately take it and eat it up. It also indicates the ease with which Samaria would be taken. Its siege lasted less than three

years, 2 Kings 18:9-10, whereas the siege of Ashdod, according to Herodotus lasted 29 years, and that of Tyre lasted 13 years.'

God had decreed that those who violate His laws will be punished. Samaria would be overthrown as fast as one eating fresh ripe figs, Isaiah 28:4, in other words, very fast.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 28:4.

'The image was very obvious to the inhabitants of Judea and the neighbouring countries and is frequently applied by the prophets to express a desirable object; by none more elegantly than by Hosea, Hosea 9:10.'

'In that day', Isaiah 28:5, seemingly points to the day when God would smite the enemies of Israel, however, some would receive the justice of God, Isaiah 28:6. It's this remnant, who see God as their true glory, they are the ones who stand up to fight for God, 2 Samuel 11:23.

'And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth. "Who is it he is trying to teach? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk to those just taken from the breast? For it is: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that; a little here, a little there." Isaiah 28:7-10

Now Isaiah passes from Ephraim to Judah. The prophets were drunk, even the priests, Isaiah 28:7. They gave wrong decisions because of strong drink, Isaiah 28:7 / Proverbs 20:1 / Isaiah 5:11, and every table was filled with filthy vomit, Isaiah 28:8 / Isaiah 5:11.

These hardened reprobates sneer at God's prophets, Isaiah 28:9. They said to Isaiah that they were grown and didn't need his advice, they scoffed and mocked the prophet, Isaiah 28:9 / Nehemiah 9:30 / 2 Chronicles 36:15. They scolded Isaiah for preaching the teachings of the law of God, Isaiah 28:10 / Isaiah 53:1. He shared God's law rule by rule, 2 Kings 21:13 / Ezekiel 47:13 / Isaiah 18:2, a little here and a little there, Isaiah 28:10 / Hebrews 5:12-14.

'Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues, God will speak to this people, to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and "This is the place of repose"—but they would not listen. So then, the word of the LORD to them will become: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that; a little here, a little there—so that as they go they will fall backward; they will be injured and snared and captured.' Isaiah 28:11-13

Here we read Isaiah's response to them. He tells them that their ungodliness will be punished. Those with foreign and strange lips were the Assyrians, Isaiah 28:11.

Kidner, in his commentary, says the following.

'Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11, here in 1 Corinthians 14:21, affirming that 'unknown tongues' are not God's greetings to a believing congregation but they are God's rebuke of an unbelieving and rebellious people.'

Speaking to 'this' people, Isaiah 28:11, that is, this sinful people, Isaiah says, if they won't listen to Isaiah, Isaiah 28:12, they will listen to the Assyrians, Isaiah 28:13 / 1 Corinthians 14:20-22. In other words, they would be given commands from the Assyrians and eventually from the Babylonians and since they wouldn't listen to the teachings of God, they would have to listen to the commands of their captors. This shows God's wrath and judgement upon the unbelieving Jews.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the 'strange lips'.

'Here it means in a foreign or barbarous tongue and the sense is, that the lessons which God wished to teach would be conveyed to them through the language of foreigners, the Chaldeans. They should be removed to a distant land and there, in hearing a strange speech, in living long among foreigners, they should learn the lesson which they refused to do when addressed by the prophets in their own land.'

God had directed them through the prophet but they refused to listen. God told them what he wanted but they won't listen. They regarded God's Word as babbling and childish but they would be broken because of it. God is going to make it simple, it will hurt.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'God here says that it should be as they said it was, they would be carried away to a distant land and long abide among strangers, they would have ample time there to acquire instruction, and all that they would receive would be lesson after lesson of the same kind, line upon line, one judgment following another until the lesson of their disobedience had been fully inculcated, and they had been brought to true repentance.'

'Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place." So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through." The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror.' Isaiah 28:14-19

Here we read of a woe upon the sceptical rulers of Jerusalem and there is a Messianic prophecy involved. Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are described as scoffers, [Isaiah 28:14](#). The 'covenant with death', [Isaiah 28:15](#), refers to their covenant or agreement with Egypt, [Job 5:23](#). They think they are clever because they had paid protection money, [Isaiah 28:15](#), they saw Egypt as their refuge and they had a lying alliance with Egypt and had secret dealings with them.

The stone was a costly and tested stone, [Isaiah 28:16](#). It is pictured as being laid by God and it will prevent Zion from following, [Isaiah 28:16](#). If they trusted in God and maintained the laws of the covenant that He had made with them, they would have a sure foundation upon which to stand, [Isaiah 28:16](#).

The stone represents the purpose of God, the promises of God to Israel. The Stone is the Christ and Jesus quotes it in reference to Himself, [Matthew 21:42](#). Peter quotes it in reference to Jesus, [Acts 4:11](#). Paul uses it in [Romans 9:33](#) / [Romans 10:11](#) / [Ephesians 2:20](#), in referring to Christ.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Isaiah had already revealed in [Isaiah 8:14](#), that this stone would also be 'a sanctuary, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.' Added to the three designations here, we have six adjectives for this Rock. They are 1. Elect, 2. Cornerstone, 3. Tried, 4. Sanctuary, 5. Stone of stumbling, and 6. Rock of offense. It might also be added that Christ is the stone 'from another world', and he is 'the living stone', [Zechariah 3:9](#), and the 'growing stone,' [Daniel 2:34-25](#).'

Only God's plan will stand, everything else will be swept away, [Isaiah 28:19](#). Justice is the line, righteousness is the plumb line, [Isaiah 28:17](#). In other words, God's will is the standard by which they were to be determined faithful. Assyria would be the hail and water, the overwhelming scourge, [Isaiah 28:17-18](#). Hail, hailstones, and floods of waters are frequent images of the divine vengeance and wrath, [Psalm 105:32](#) / [Isaiah 22:19](#) / [Isaiah 30:30](#) / [Ezekiel 13:13](#) / [Ezekiel 38:22](#) / [Revelation 8:7](#) / [Revelation 11:19](#) / [Revelation 16:21](#).

'The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you. The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon—to do his work, his strange work, and perform his task, his alien task. Now stop your mocking, or your chains will become heavier; the Lord, the LORD Almighty, has told me of the destruction decreed against the whole land. Isaiah 28:20-22

The Assyrian invasion demonstrates the folly of the Egyptian alliance. The alliance with Egypt would do them no good when the Assyrians overflow the land. The words the ‘bed is too short’ and the ‘blanket too narrow’, [Isaiah 28:20](#), speak about the defences and protections devised by men that are not able to provide the necessary peace and comfort for God’s people. In other words, ‘you have made your bed, now lie in it’.

The deliverance would be with Judah as with the Philistines at Gibeon, [Isaiah 28:21](#) / [1 Chronicles 14:16](#) / [Joshua 10](#), and at Mount Perazim, [Isaiah 28:21](#) / [2 Samuel 5:20](#) / [1 Chronicles 14:11](#). Notice the door of repentance is opened by God, he gives them an opportunity to stop what they are doing, [Isaiah 28:22](#). They had scoffed at God’s alliance, [Isaiah 28:22](#), that is, His covenant with them and so, He increased their bondage to those nations with whom they made alliances, [Isaiah 28:22](#). Their efforts to guard themselves against the threat of the Assyrians moved God to increase their calamity, [Isaiah 28:22](#). It is a wise man, who co-operates with God.

‘Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil? When he has levelled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it, but one does not use horses to grind grain. All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent.’ [Isaiah 28:23-29](#)

The door of repentance is opened further as God asks them to listen, hear and pay attention to what is being said, [Isaiah 28:23](#). In other words, God will do what is best, He will deal with them accordingly to their needs. The work of the farmer in farming the land comes in stages. They don’t plant while they are ploughing, [Isaiah 28:24](#). There is a designated time for each action of farming in order to bring about the desired crop, [Isaiah 28:25-28](#) / [Deuteronomy 25:4](#). Everything comes from God and in His time, His plans are wonderful and His wisdom is magnificent, [Isaiah 28:29](#).

God’s judgement is designed to produce fruit. God’s judgement on Judah isn’t forever and it’s done to bring forth fruits. As different harvesters reap different crops, so God’s judgement will produce different fruits. After the ploughing, there would eventually come the time to bring forth the repentant remnant. The remnant would be the seed in Israel from which the Messiah and Saviour of the world would eventually come, [Genesis 12:3](#). Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is a beautiful little parable drawn from the agricultural industry, the point being that such things as ploughing and threshing have their specific purposes, therefore God’s punishments of people, whether his own or his enemies is purposeful, always looking forward to the projected results.’

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION

‘Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled! Add year to year and let your cycle of festivals go on. Yet I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth. I will encamp against you on all sides; I will encircle you with towers and set up my siege works against you. Brought low, you will speak from the ground; your speech will mumble out of the dust. Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth; out of the dust your speech will whisper.’ [Isaiah 29:1-4](#)

WOE TO DAVID'S CITY

In this chapter, we read about the oppression and deliverance of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is warned of a man-made invasion but God will deliver them from complete destruction. The word 'Ariel', [Isaiah 29:1](#), means hearth of God. This is a symbolic name for Jerusalem, [Isaiah 29:1-2](#) / [Isaiah 29:7](#), as 'victorious under God', and in [Ezekiel 43:15-16](#), for the altar of burnt offerings, the secret of Israel's lion-like strength, [2 Samuel 23:20](#).

God says He will encamp against them, He will encircle them with cities, [Isaiah 29:3](#). In other words, God will cause an army to pitch their tents there for a siege and they are under His control, [Isaiah 10:5](#). As the altar was surrounded by its victims, [Isaiah 29:2-3](#), so Jerusalem would be surrounded by the dead bodies of those who had rebelled against God. Its ruins and dust would say that there was a great city here but now it is deserted, [Isaiah 29:4](#).

As one whispers a sound in the last moments before death, so Jerusalem would whisper its existence to mankind before being destroyed, [Isaiah 29:4](#). No one would hear and come to her rescue.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The fulfilment of this came in Sennacherib's insulting taunts of Hezekiah when his siege began, even offering Hezekiah two thousand horsemen, provided that Hezekiah would supply two thousand men who could ride them! [2 Kings 18:23](#). All of these Assyrian taunts were heard by the citizens and not by the king only. The humiliation must indeed have been acute.'

'But your many enemies will become like fine dust, the ruthless hordes like blown chaff. Suddenly, in an instant, the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night—as when a hungry person dreams of eating, but awakens hungry still; as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking, but awakens faint and thirsty still. So will it be with the hordes of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.' [Isaiah 29:5-8](#)

Here we read that a mighty deliverance is promised. Assyria won't succeed and God won't let them. This probably refers to the sudden disappearance of Sennacherib's army when 185,000 troops died in one night, [2 Kings 19:35-37](#) / [Isaiah 37:35-38](#). Assyria will be stopped suddenly, [Isaiah 29:5](#) / [Isaiah 17:14](#). God has plenty of time and unlimited power to do whatever He wants to do, [Isaiah 29:6](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 29:5-6](#).

'The image of thunder, earthquakes, and lightning, is an impressive representation of sudden and awful judgment in any manner. The sense is that they should be suddenly destroyed by the direct visitation of God, [Isaiah 9:5](#) / [Isaiah 26:11](#).'

Who is dreaming? [Isaiah 29:7-8](#). Could be Assyria as they think they have conquered Jerusalem but they haven't.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'The fifth, sixth, and seventh verses contain an admirable description of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, with a beautiful variety of the most expressive and sublime images, perhaps more adapted to show the greatness, the suddenness, and horror of the event, than the means and manner by which it was effected, [Isaiah 30:30-33](#).'

'Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from beer. The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers). For you, this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I don't know how to read." [Isaiah 29:9-12](#)

Isaiah's mission of hardening the hearts was being accomplished. They stagger from their own sins, [Isaiah 29:9](#), which is the cause of God's judgement upon them, [Isaiah 51:21](#) / [Habakkuk 1:5](#). They were blind as far as their

condition was concerned, [Isaiah 29:9](#). Because God made them fall into a deep sleep, He sealed the prophets eyes and covered the heads of the seers, [Isaiah 29:10](#). Their lack of understanding was like an illiterate man who could not read, [Isaiah 29:11-12](#).

What God would do to the Assyrians couldn't have been predicted. It could only have been prophesied by the inspiration of God's true prophet, [Deuteronomy 24:1](#) / [Deuteronomy 24:3](#) / [Jeremiah 32:11](#) / [Daniel 1:4](#). They were false prophets who couldn't read the signs of the times, for they were spiritually illiterate.

‘The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.” [Isaiah 29:13-14](#)

Their spiritual condition prevented them from believing and they were going through the procedures, and their hearts are far away from God, [Isaiah 29:13](#) / [Matthew 15:7-9](#) / [Mark 7:1-9](#). What God stated through Isaiah was contrary to what everyone expected, [Isaiah 29:14](#) / [Isaiah 28:21](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:58-59](#). It was an awesome event that was beyond the ability of men to predict, [Isaiah 29:14](#). Their false preachers and seers proclaimed to be able to foretell the future but what would happen would identify them to be fake prophets who preached only for gain.

‘Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, “Who sees us? Who will know?” You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, “You did not make me”? Can the pot say to the potter, “You know nothing”? In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest? In that day, the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—those who with a word make someone out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice. Therefore this is what the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the descendants of Jacob: “No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale. When they see among them their children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction.” [Isaiah 29:15-24](#)

The hypocritical leaders would be punished according to God's universal law, [Psalm 18:25-27](#) / [Galatians 6:7-8](#). God's judgement would soon come which would produce right in the land. These people thought that God hadn't noticed their thoughts couldn't be hidden from God, [Isaiah 29:15](#). They thought they were smarter than God. How can the clay know better than the Potter? [Isaiah 29:16](#) / [Isaiah 45:9](#) / [Isaiah 64:8](#) / [Romans 9:20](#).

The land of Lebanon that had been cultivated and cared for was turned into wilderness while land which had been barren became fruitful, [Isaiah 29:17-18](#) / [Matthew 21:43](#) / [Romans 11:30-31](#). This possibly has reference to the rejection of the Jews and the sending of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning ‘the humble’ [Isaiah 29:19](#).

‘The word ‘meek’ usually refers to those who are patient in the reception of injuries, but the Hebrew word used here means properly the oppressed, the afflicted, the unhappy, [Psalm 9:13](#) / [Psalm 10:12](#) / [Psalm 10:17](#) / [Proverbs 3:34](#) / [Isaiah 11:4](#). It involves usually the idea of humility or ‘virtuous suffering’, [Psalm 25:9](#) / [Psalm 37:11](#) / [Psalm 69:33](#). Here it may denote the pious of the land who were oppressed and subjected to trials.’

Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the ‘ensnaring the defender in court’, [Isaiah 29:21](#).

‘The gate was the place where assemblies were held and judgments were given. If one stood up and boldly accused the oppressor in the gate, they instantly set to work to lay a trap for him and to bring him to ruin.’

The righteous would have no cause to fear, [Isaiah 29:20-21](#). God redeemed, [Exodus 13:13](#) / [Exodus 34:20](#), Abraham, [Isaiah 29:22](#), that is, He brought him out of a land of idolaters and rescued him from the abominations of

idolatry. If God redeemed Abraham, He will also save Israel, [Isaiah 29:22](#), that is, the remnant. Abraham was separated when he responded to God's call, so with Israel, [Isaiah 29:22](#). Faith which doesn't lead to action has never secured any kind of blessing, [James 2:14-25](#).

When they see among them their children, the work of God's hands, they will keep His name holy, they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel, [Isaiah 29:23](#) / [Ephesians 2:10](#).

Bradman, Bible Commentary, says the following, concerning.

'[Isaiah 29:22-24](#), describe the inner transformation that will take place within the people of Israel in the age to come. The Lord's people, the meek and lowly, will find new joy in the Lord and the ruthless and arrogant on the other hand will cease to be.'

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning 'those who will gain understanding' [Isaiah 29:24](#).

'When this would occur the prophet does not state. It 'may' be intended to denote the times of Hezekiah or the times subsequent to the captivity or possibly it may refer to the times under the Messiah. All that the prophet teaches is, that at some future period in the history of the Jews, there would be such a reform that they should be regarded as the worthy descendants of the pious patriarch Jacob.'

CHAPTER 30

INTRODUCTION

'Woe to the obstinate children,' declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin; who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh's protection, to Egypt's shade for refuge. But Pharaoh's protection will be to your shame, Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace. Though they have officials in Zoan and their envoys have arrived in Hanes, everyone will be put to shame because of a people useless to them, who bring neither help nor advantage, but only shame and disgrace." [Isaiah 30:1-5](#)

WOE TO THE OBSTINATE NATION

In this chapter, we read of a woe against the pro-Egyptian party. Judah had an alliance but not with God, they went to Egypt in order to form an alliance against the Assyrians, [Isaiah 30:1](#). In doing so, they rebelled against God's protection of God and totally ignored the protection which God would have offered. They looked to Egypt for shade, [Isaiah 30:2](#), as a refuge, [Isaiah 30:3](#), a shade is a protection from the burning rays of the sun, [Isaiah 4:6](#). Even though they met with the officials in Zoan, [Isaiah 30:3](#) / [Isaiah 19:11](#) / [Isaiah 19:13](#), which was the residence of the kings in Lower Egypt and Hanes, [Isaiah 30:4](#), to make a treaty but they are of no use to them, [Isaiah 30:5](#). Egypt's protection was a poor exchange for Divine aid. In other words, they put Egypt before God. It was often the fault and folly of the Jews when they had trouble with their neighbours on one side to seek help from neighbours on the other side, instead of looking to God and putting confidence in Him, [Isaiah 30:5](#) / [Joshua 9:14](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When God prophesied the placement of a king over Israel, Deuteronomy 17:14-17, he specifically commanded that, 1. the king should not go back to Egypt for the purpose of procuring horses, and that, 2. ‘Henceforth ye shall return no more that way.’ And yet, despite all that, right here in this chapter, the princes of Judah are 1. again going right back through that terrible wilderness on their way to Egypt, and 2. boasting about the horses they shall ride, Isaiah 30:16!’

‘A prophecy concerning the animals of the Negev: Through a land of hardship and distress, of lions and lionesses, of adders and darting snakes, the envoys carry their riches on donkeys’ backs, their treasures on the humps of camels, to that unprofitable nation, to Egypt, whose help is utterly useless. Therefore I call her Rahab the Do-Nothing.’ Isaiah 30:6-7

Here we read that their journey to Egypt was a waste of time. Their alliance and the tribute they paid to Egypt wouldn’t help them against the Assyrians, in fact, the Judeans would be embarrassed and ashamed, Isaiah 30:6. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Isaiah, in vision, sees the caravan heavily laden with treasures pursuing a southern direction on its way to Egypt. The prophet sees the caravan, or the beasts of the ambassadors heavily laden with rich treasures, traveling southward toward Egypt, and cries out, ‘O the heavy burden, the load of treasures going to the south!’

The word, ‘Rahab’, Isaiah 30:7, indicates something which is powerful but can’t do anything, possibly relating to a hippopotamus or some kind of sea monster. In other words, Rahab, that is, Egypt, Psalms 87:4 / Psalms 89:10, is very slow to come to the aid of others, Isaiah 30:7.

‘Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the days to come it may be an everlasting witness. For these are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the LORD’s instruction. They say to the seers, “See no more visions!” and to the prophets, “Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!”’ Isaiah 30:8-11

Here we read of Judah’s rebellious attitude. God instructs Isaiah to write down everything he has been told so that it might be a witness forever, Isaiah 30:8, that is, in order to prove the accuracy of the prophecy after history had vindicated it. Notice, however, that the people don’t want to hear about God, Isaiah 30:9. They are described as a rebellious people, deceitful children, and children unwilling to listen to the LORD’s instruction, Isaiah 30:9. They wanted the prophets to speak smooth things, Isaiah 30:10 / 2 Timothy 4:3-4. In other words, they were so far removed from God, that they looked everywhere else for deliverance except Him, Isaiah 30:11.

‘Therefore this is what the Holy One of Israel says: “Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression, and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern.”’ Isaiah 30:12-14

Israel must pay for her desire to be free from God, they will be punished for their godliness. Because they put their trust in their alliance with another nation, Isaiah 30:12-13, they will soon learn the lesson not to do so when God takes them into captivity. God says the wall of Judah’s alliances will break, they will be destroyed and they will never be restored, Isaiah 30:14.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘To put confidence in human bulwarks was like depending on a bulging wall ready to fall with a sudden crash.’

‘This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ Therefore

you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift! A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill.” Isaiah 30:15-17

Here we find a picture of God’s children fleeing but they will not escape. It didn’t have to be this way but sadly they chose it. Isaiah pleads for a recall of the envoys to Egypt because it’s only by repenting, [Isaiah 30:15](#), that is, returning to God and trusting Him, would they be delivered from the Assyrians.

Those who opposed Isaiah replied by telling him they would rather trust in Egypt’s swift horses in order to escape, [Isaiah 30:16](#), but Isaiah tells them their enemies would ride on swifter horses and eventually overtake them, [Isaiah 30:16](#).

Notice that God turns their war slogans around, [Isaiah 30:17](#) / [Leviticus 26:8](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:30](#), and so, only a small remnant would be spared in order to be a flagstaff, [Isaiah 30:17](#), which is used on ships, [Isaiah 33:23](#) / [Ezekiel 27:5](#), or banner, [Isaiah 5:26](#) / [Isaiah 11:12](#), for the existence of Israel.

‘Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” Then you will desecrate your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, “Away with you!”’ Isaiah 30:18-22

In the midst of all this godliness, God still wants to bless His people, [Isaiah 30:18](#). God teaches and blesses them through the adversity of captivity. God is just, [Isaiah 30:18](#), and so, He is on His throne, awaiting the time when He will intervene for His people. Those who are blessed are those who lose the rebellious spirit and cast away the images they have served, [Isaiah 30:18](#) / [Deuteronomy 7:25](#) / [2 Kings 23:8](#) / [2 Kings 23:10](#) / [2 Kings 23:16](#).

While other cities were destroyed, Zion by itself was preserved, [Isaiah 30:19](#). God will be heard by His students, He will use His teachers, [Isaiah 30:20](#) / [Psalm 74:9](#) / [Isaiah 43:27](#) / [Daniel 12:3](#) / [Amos 8:11-12](#), and God will be heard simply because they will have been trimmed of their dull hearing. They will be instructed because they will listen, [Isaiah 30:20](#). God’s truth called for the people to turn neither to the right nor to the left but to walk on the straight path of truth, [Isaiah 30:21](#).

‘He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day, your cattle will graze in broad meadows. The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel. In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.’ Isaiah 30:23-26

Here God promises greater blessings than ever before to the faithful. In contrast to the famine that God brought on them so that they would repent, after they repented He would restore the prosperity of the land, [Isaiah 30:23-25](#). In other words, when Judah puts away their idols, and starts trusting God, then God will bless Judah materially. The moon would shine as the sun and the sun would shine with perfect brightness, [Isaiah 30:26](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 30:26](#).

‘By moon, sun, light, are to be understood the abundance of spiritual and temporal felicity, with which God should bless them in the days of the Messiah, which should be sevenfold, i.e. vastly exceed all that they had ever before possessed.’

‘See, the Name of the LORD comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; his lips are full of wrath, and his tongue is a consuming fire. His breath is like a rushing torrent, rising up to the neck. He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction; he places in the jaws of the peoples a bit that leads them astray. And you will sing

as on the night you celebrate a holy festival; your hearts will rejoice as when people playing pipes go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. The LORD will cause people to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm, and hail. The voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria; with his rod he will strike them down. Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing club will be to the music of timbrels and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm. Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulphur, sets it ablaze.’ Isaiah 30:27-33

Here we read that God blesses penitent Israel finally but we also read that after using Assyria, [Isaiah 10:5](#), God will now destroy them, [Isaiah 30:27](#). This shows that reliance upon human aid is unnecessary.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 30:28](#).

‘God curbs and restrains from doing mischief. With a word he guides his people into the right way, but with a bridle he turns his enemies upon their own ruin. Here, in threatening the ruin of Sennacherib’s army, the prophet points at the final and everlasting destruction of all impenitent sinners.’

When the Assyrians were destroyed at the gate of Jerusalem, this judgment would send a clear message to any other nation who would try and go against God and His people [Isaiah 30:28-29](#). After God shattered the enemies of Judah, the people would come in procession with the playing of the flute in order to praise God, [Isaiah 30:29](#) / [Exodus 12:42](#) / [Deuteronomy 16:1-6](#).

The word ‘Tophet’, [Isaiah 30:33](#), means ‘place of burning’, and is probably a reference to Israel’s cremation of the one-hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians whom God killed, [2 Kings 19:35-37](#) / [Isaiah 37:35-38](#). They were burned in the Valley of Hinnom, that is, Gehenna, which is located just outside the walls of Jerusalem, [Matthew 5:22](#) / [Matthew 5:29-30](#). The original application of Gehenna related to the fire that was used in sacrificing children to the pagan god Molech, [2 Chronicles 28:3](#) / [2 Chronicles 33:6](#).

We know that Jesus used visual aids in His lessons on many occasions and just outside Jerusalem there was a dumping ground, which was on the very site where the above events took place, people would burn their waste in this place and criminals after dying on the cross were taken there, this is probably where Lazarus was taken when he died at the same time as the Rich Man.

Jesus spoke of Gehenna several times in His ‘Sermon on the Mount.’ For example, the Lord condemns the use of offensive insults for the sake of venting one’s personal rage when He warns whoever addresses another, [Matthew 5:22](#). Christ stressed that it would be better to proceed through life with great loss, e.g. deprived of an eye or a limb, rather than having Gehenna as a final destiny. [Matthew 5:29-30](#) / [Matthew 18:9](#) / [Mark 9:43-47](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 30:33](#).

‘Brimstone, or sulphur, is used in the Scriptures to denote a fire of great intensity, and one that cannot be extinguished, [Genesis 19:24](#) / [Psalm 11:6](#) / [Ezekiel 38:22](#) / [Revelation 9:17-18](#). Hence, it is used to denote the eternal torments of the wicked in hell, [Revelation 14:10](#) / [Revelation 19:20](#) / [Revelation 21:8](#).’

CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION

‘Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or seek help from the LORD. Yet he

too is wise and can bring disaster; he does not take back his words. He will rise up against that wicked nation, against those who help evildoers. But the Egyptians are mere mortals and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, those who help will stumble, those who are helped will fall; all will perish together.’ Isaiah 31:1-3

WOE TO THOSE WHO RELY ON EGYPT

In this chapter and the first eight verses of the next chapter, we read of a woe to those who trust in false help and the new era. Judah are now being called to look at the spiritual because reality is to be found in the spiritual world, Psalm 127:1.

Judah sought to obtain horses and chariots from Egypt so that they could fight against the Assyrians, Isaiah 31:1. Both the Egyptians and Israelites will fall together, Isaiah 31:2, which would demonstrate the strength of God. We read of the stupidity of trusting in strength, Isaiah 31:3, that is, Judah’s reliance upon Egypt is foolish, for the Egyptians are mere men.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The whole narrative respecting the invasion of Sennacherib would lead to the conclusion that, at first, Hezekiah himself joined in the purpose of seeking that alliance with Egypt, but that afterwards he was led to abandon it and to use all his influence to induce his people to rely upon aid from God.’

‘This is what the LORD says to me: “As a lion growls, a great lion over its prey—and though a whole band of shepherds is called together against it, it is not frightened by their shouts or disturbed by their clamour—so the LORD Almighty will come down to do battle on Mount Zion and on its heights. Like birds hovering overhead, the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will ‘pass over’ it and will rescue it.” Return, you Israelites, to the One you have so greatly revolted against. For in that day every one of you will reject the idols of silver and gold your sinful hands have made. “Assyria will fall by no human sword; a sword, not of mortals, will devour them. They will flee before the sword and their young men will be put to forced labour. Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic,” declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.’ Isaiah 31:4-9

Here, God calls upon Judah to repent. If Judah will repent, God will stand over her and will allow no one to take her away from Him. The Lord is the lion who will not be disturbed by the Assyrians’ cry against the city of Jerusalem, Isaiah 31:4.

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The shepherds making the loud noise do not represent Assyria but represent the politicians of Judah and the Egyptians. The picture is clear, the lion is Jehovah, his prey is Jerusalem and the loud but ineffectual shepherds are the politicians and the Egyptians.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 31:5-6.

‘This is a renewal of God’s promise to protect and preserve Jerusalem from the Assyrians. ‘Just as the lion will not give up his prey, so Jehovah will not allow the Assyrians to rob him of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem would indeed be severely punished, but God had reserved Babylon as the rod he would use for that punishment, not Assyria, which would also be destroyed by Babylon.’

God makes an appeal for repentance, Isaiah 31:6, but the call to turn from sin to God is a continual call, Luke 13:3 / Acts 2:38. As proof of their repentance, they were to reject their idols, Isaiah 31:7 / Isaiah 2:20.

No human hero delivered God's people, [Isaiah 31:8](#), but the power of Assyria was broken by the intervention of God, [Isaiah 37:36](#). It's God's sword that brought down the Assyrians and only God can protect and deliver them, only God gives us our strength, [Isaiah 31:9](#).

The arrogance of Sennacherib led him to believe that he could take Jerusalem. Jerusalem thus became the occasion for God to bring judgment upon him. For Sennacherib, Jerusalem became a consuming fire that devoured his army, [Isaiah 31:9](#). We should trust God now and we shouldn't trust the physical because all will go in time anyway. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Perhaps the whole idea here is, that Yahweh had a home in Jerusalem, with the usual appendages of a house, that his fire and his oven were there, an expression descriptive of a dwelling-place. If so, then the meaning is, that he would defend his own home and that the Assyrian could not expect to prevail against it.'

CHAPTER 32

INTRODUCTION

'See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. The fearful heart will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear. No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected. For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: They practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD; the hungry they leave empty and from the thirsty they withhold water. Scoundrels use wicked methods, they make up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just.

But the noble make noble plans, and by noble deeds they stand.' [Isaiah 32:1-8](#)

THE KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

This chapter begins by telling us that in the Lord are great blessings for the king will reign in righteousness, [Isaiah 32:1](#). We have a picture of the blessed state of a people who have come through the fire.

Some commentators suggest that the king spoke of here is Hezekiah, [2 Kings 18:3](#) / [2 Kings 18:5-6](#), however, other commentators suggest the king is a reference to the Christ.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following, concerning 'the king', [Isaiah 32:1](#).

'Christ our righteous King, and his true disciples, are evidently here intended. The consolations and graces of his Spirit are as rivers of water in this dry land, and as the overhanging rock affords refreshing shade and shelter to the weary traveller in the desert, so his power, truth, and love, yield the believer the only real protection and refreshment in the weary land through which he journeys to heaven. Christ bore the storm himself, to keep it off from us. To him let the trembling sinner flee for refuge, for he alone can protect and refresh us in every trial. See what pains sinners take in sin, they labour at it, their hearts are intent upon it, and with art they work iniquity, but this is our comfort, that they can do no more mischief than God permits. Let us seek to have our hearts more freed from selfishness. The liberal soul devises liberal things concerning God, and desires that He will grant wisdom and prudence, the comforts of his presence, the influence of his Spirit, and in due time the enjoyment of his glory.'

The first fruit which is produced by judgement is righteous rule. Like a great rock in a weary land, [Isaiah 32:2](#), God provides refuge for His children. In other words, the character of the new citizens will be changed, they won't be oppressors anymore but individuals that would be a refuge, shield, and place of compassion and comfort for those seeking God, [Isaiah 32:2](#).

The second fruit is an opened understanding. The children of God will see, hear, and have regard for God's Word [Isaiah 32:3](#). Because they have obeyed the Lord, they will be able to distinguish the character of others according to God's will [Isaiah 32:4-5](#).

The third fruit is a proper evaluation of character. The fool who has no regard for God will continue to speak foolishly, [Isaiah 32:6](#). All of the designs and plans of wicked people are to destroy the poor and helpless with lying words, [Isaiah 32:7](#). The righteous person will determine noble plans and then not waver from their stand for righteousness, [Isaiah 32:8](#).

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

'You women who are so complacent, rise up and listen to me; you daughters who feel secure, hear what I have to say! In little more than a year you who feel secure will tremble; the grape harvest will fail, and the harvest of fruit will not come. Tremble, you complacent women; shudder, you daughters who feel secure! Strip off your fine clothes and wrap yourselves in rags. Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines and for the land of my people, a land overgrown with thorns and briers—yes, mourn for all houses of merriment and for this city of revelry. The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, till the Spirit is poured on us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest.' [Isaiah 32:9-15](#)

The rest of the chapter gives us a picture of the approaching judgement. These verses speak of a woe which is pronounced upon the women, [Isaiah 32:9](#). This is an appendage to the fourth woe and is directed against the proud women that Isaiah had described vividly in [Isaiah 3:16](#).

It appears that the women of Jerusalem were caught up in the luxury of their material living, [Isaiah 32:9](#), and in around one year from this prophecy, [Isaiah 32:10](#), troubles would begin for Jerusalem. The women were unconcerned with the peril which was before them.

There would be no second-year crop, [Isaiah 32:10](#) / [Nahum 2:7](#), and Isaiah tells them to strip off their luxurious garments and put on clothes that demonstrated mourning, [Isaiah 32:11](#) / [Genesis 37:34](#) / [Ezekiel 7:27](#). Not long from now in the future, their palaces would be empty and the land left to briers and thorns, [Isaiah 32:12-14](#). Notice the words, 'till the Spirit is poured on us from on high', [Isaiah 32:15](#). Some commentators suggest that these words go along with what Joel said, [Joel 2:28-32](#), and Peter, who quoted Joel's words, [Acts 2:16-21](#).

The commentators suggest that this implies that both Isaiah and Joel were speaking of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order to initiate the beginning of the church in A.D. 30. Isaiah appears to be implying that the restoration isn't a restoration of crops but a spiritual restoration, that is, the church.

'The LORD's justice will dwell in the desert, his righteousness lives in the fertile field. The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.' [Isaiah 32:16-](#)

When the land receives the people back, good days will return. There will be justice and righteousness and it will be a time of peace, quiet, and prosperity will return to the people of God, [Isaiah 32:16-17](#). When God's Spirit is poured out among His people, this is what it is like.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This seems to fit best a prophetic type, i.e., the near fulfilment would serve as a type of a greater and far superior fulfilment. The Gospel dispensation fulfils in the greater degree those things spoken of as being applicable to Judah.’

Although God would continue to bring judgments in the future on those who chose to be His people’s enemies, He would still provide security and protection for them, [Isaiah 32:18-19](#).

Gill, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 32:20](#).

‘In places well-watered and moistened, and so fit to receive the seed sown, which grows up, and brings forth much fruit, and amply rewards the pains of the sower, who on that account is happy. The ox and the ass, which were used in ploughing and tilling the earth, and in making it fit to sow the seed in it, and to eat off the heads of grain when it is grown thick and full, which some think is here meant, and the one might also be used to gather it in when ripe, and the other to tread and thresh it, there being a law given the Jews, that these two should not work together, [Deuteronomy 22:10](#), and from hence it may be concluded, that these words refer to a time when this law should be abolished, and the Jews themselves apply it to the times of the Messiah, and it undoubtedly points to Gospel times, and even to those times when the Jews shall be converted, and great numbers among the Gentiles also, who shall join together in spreading the Gospel, and in promoting the interest of Christ.’

CHAPTER 33

‘Woe to you, destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, betrayer, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed. LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress. At the uproar of your army, the peoples flee; when you rise up, the nations scatter. Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by young locusts; like a swarm of locusts people pounce on it. The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with his justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.’ [Isaiah 33:1-6](#)

DISTRESS AND HELP

This chapter speaks of the end of the invading Assyrians and the desolation will be followed by restoration. This is in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. The threats of the first year had been delayed by repentance on the part of the people but are now reiterated. The Assyrians are already in Judah, have laid the land waste, and are now threatening Jerusalem itself, [2 Kings 18](#).

The chapter begins with a series of woes upon the Assyrians. This is a prayer for deliverance and a prophecy about Assyria telling them they will be destroyed, [Isaiah 33:1](#). The prophet addresses himself to Sennacherib and the injustice of his ambitious plan to conquer the people, [Isaiah 33:1](#). In other words, Isaiah’s prayer is that God will rise up, [Isaiah 33:2](#), for when God rises up, other nations will flee and scatter, [Isaiah 33:3](#).

The one who came to spoil, shall find himself spoiled, [Isaiah 33:4](#) / [2 Kings 19:36-37](#) / [Isaiah 29:7-8](#) / [Isaiah 37:11](#). God gives His people assurance by telling them that He will be with them. This is seen in Zion being filled with justice and righteousness, [Isaiah 33:5](#) / [Isaiah 30:22-26](#) / [Isaiah 30:29](#) / [Isaiah 31:6](#). Since the treasure of Zion is righteousness, God will spare her, [Isaiah 33:6](#).

‘Look, their brave men cry aloud in the streets, the envoys of peace weep bitterly. The highways are deserted, no travellers are on the roads. The treaty is broken, its witnesses are despised, and no one is respected. The land dries up and wastes away, Lebanon is ashamed and withers; Sharon is like the Arabah, and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves. “Now will I arise,” says the LORD. “Now will I be exalted; now will I be lifted up. You conceive chaff, you give birth to straw; your breath is a fire that consumes you. The peoples will be burned to ashes; like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze.” You who are far away, hear what I have done; you who are near, acknowledge my power!’
Isaiah 33:7-13

Here we read of the pitiful condition brought on by false trusts, [Isaiah 33:7](#). Judah’s ambassadors of peace cried out in sorrow and disappointment because the Assyrians broke the covenant which they had made, [Isaiah 33:8](#). Sennacherib took their tribute and then demanded the surrender of the city, his army was spoiling cities and ravaging the countryside, [Isaiah 33:9](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When Sennacherib invaded the land, and had advanced as far as to Lachish, Hezekiah sent messengers to him with a rich present, having stripped the temple of its gold, and sent him all the silver which was in his treasury, for the purpose of propitiating his favour, and of inducing him to return to his own land, [2 Kings 18:14-16](#). But it was all in vain. Sennacherib sent his generals with a great host against Jerusalem and was unmoved by all the treasures which Hezekiah had sent to him, and by his solicitations for peace, [2 Kings 18:17](#). It was to the failure of this embassy that Isaiah refers in the passage before us.’

After Hezekiah and his officials had exhausted all their abilities to negotiate peace, it was time for God to take action, [Isaiah 33:10](#). God will not allow evil men to keep on oppressing His people. They will be brought to judgement. The Assyrians had ravaged the land, destroying one city after another but now it was time for them to reap what they had sown, [Isaiah 33:11-12](#). Distant nations would hear of the destruction of those who attacked Jerusalem, [Isaiah 33:13](#).

‘The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: “Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?” Those who walk righteously and speak what is right, who reject gain from extortion and keep their hands from accepting bribes, who stop their ears against plots of murder and shut their eyes against contemplating evil—they are the ones who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. Their bread will be supplied, and water will not fail them.’ Isaiah 33:14-16

The sinners in Jerusalem are petrified and two questions are asked, which basically means, who can stand? [Isaiah 33:14](#). Isaiah gives us the answer.

- a. He who walks uprightly, [Isaiah 33:15](#).
- b. He that speaks uprightly, [Isaiah 33:15](#).
- c. He who does not only participate in sin actively but he who inwardly hates sin, [Isaiah 33:15](#).
- d. He who diligently guards against moral pollution, [Isaiah 33:15](#).

Because the righteous had committed themselves to the fear of the Lord, their defence was the Lord, [Isaiah 33:16](#). Their food was guaranteed because they lived under the protection of the Lord, [Isaiah 33:16](#).

‘Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror: “Where is that chief officer? Where is the one who took the revenue? Where is the officer in charge of the towers?” You will see those arrogant people no more, people whose speech is obscure, whose language is strange and incomprehensible. Look on Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. There the LORD will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us. Your rigging hangs loose: The mast is not held secure, the sail is not spread. Then an abundance of spoils will be divided and even the lame will carry off plunder. No one living in Zion will say, “I am ill”; and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven.’ Isaiah 33:17-24

These verses picture a vanquished conqueror. The land was emptied of the Assyrians. Some commentators suggest that ‘the king in his beauty’, [Isaiah 33:27](#), refers to God, other suggest it refers to Hezekiah and others suggest it’s referring to the Messiah.

Coffman, in his commentary, gives the following reasons, concerning ‘the king in his beauty’, as to why he believes it is referring to the Messiah.

1. The Jerusalem of this passage is the capital of a worldwide land, [Isaiah 33:17](#), Palestine is not so.
2. She is a quiet habitation and inviolable, [Isaiah 33:20](#).
3. God is the acknowledged ruler there, not so of the literal Jerusalem who officially declared that ‘we have no king but Caesar’, [John 19:15](#).
4. The Jerusalem of this passage was situated in a land of broad rivers and streams, [Isaiah 33:21](#), which was never true of the literal Jerusalem.
5. The Jerusalem-Zion here spoken of was inviolable. Spoken of like a tent whose stakes could never be plucked up nor have any of its cords broken, the literal Jerusalem would last little more than a century before it would be utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and its peoples made captive for seventy years.
6. Finally, the citizens of the Jerusalem-Zion in view here would even have their sins forgiven, [Isaiah 33:24](#), a blessing which is limited, absolutely, to the New Covenant.

As the Assyrians insulted the people, those who had counted out tribute, three-hundred talents of silver and the thirty talents of gold, to the Assyrians had failed, [Isaiah 33:18](#). Those who depended on their defence by counting the towers of the wall would also fail, [Isaiah 33:18](#). The people were delivered from those who spoke a strange language, [Isaiah 33:19](#) / [Isaiah 36:11](#).

They are to forget the past, [Isaiah 33:18-19](#), and look to the future and God was the deliverer of the city, [Isaiah 33:20](#). This was a time to rejoice, it was a time of peace, [Isaiah 33:20](#). God swept through the Assyrian army, killing one-hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night, [Isaiah 33:21](#) / [2 Kings 19:35](#) / [Isaiah 37:36](#).

Notice a fourfold glory is given to God.

- a. Judge, [Isaiah 33:22](#).
- b. Lawgiver, [Isaiah 33:22](#).
- c. King, [Isaiah 33:22](#).
- d. Saviour, [Isaiah 33:22](#).

Judah’s present condition is pretty poor and Jerusalem was at one time like a broken ship but not so anymore, [Isaiah 33:23](#). No sailing boat, that is, no enemy of Judah will be allowed to launch against Jerusalem for the Lord is its ruler and king. Though old and ragged, there will be better days for Zion. Instead of being plundered, the lame Zion would eventually plunder from those who sought to plunder the city, [Isaiah 33:23](#).

Henry, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 33:24](#).

‘Sickness is taken away in mercy when the fruit of it is the taking away of sin. If iniquity is taken away, we have little reason to complain of outward affliction. This last verse leads our thoughts, not only to the most glorious state of the gospel church on earth but to heaven, where no sickness or trouble can enter. He that blots out our transgressions will heal our souls.’

CHAPTER 34

INTRODUCTION

‘Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is on all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will stink; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.’ Isaiah 34:1-4

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS

In this chapter, we see that God avenges His people. These verses speak of a warning to those, that is, the nations, who hate God’s people, [Isaiah 34:1](#). It’s possible that this prophecy had its fulfilment in the great desolations made by the Assyrian army at first and later, by Nebuchadnezzar’s army.

All nations should hearken to the voice of God in peace and tranquillity but they will hearken to that voice in judgement, [Isaiah 34:1](#). When the angel killed one-hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian army, [2 Kings 19:35-27](#) / [Isaiah 37:36](#), there would have been dead bodies lying around everywhere, [Isaiah 34:2](#).

Before the Jews had a chance to burn them, [Isaiah 14:19](#), the stink would have been awful, [Isaiah 34:3](#). When the burning of the bodies was completed, the result of their destruction would be forever, [Isaiah 34:4](#) / [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#).

The sun, moon, stars, and physical universe are transitory and temporary, [Isaiah 34:4](#) / [Isaiah 13:10](#) / [2 Peter 3:10-12](#) / [Revelation 6:13](#), when compared to God, their Creator, who is eternal. The heavenly bodies often represent kings and princes, [Isaiah 24:21](#).

‘My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed. The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat—the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves, and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat.’ Isaiah 34:5-7

Here we read that God’s tempered sword is used to judge, [Isaiah 34:5](#) / [Isaiah 27:1](#) / [Jeremiah 46:10](#) / [Revelation 19:21](#). All who ‘take the sword shall perish with the sword’, [Isaiah 34:5](#) / [Matthew 26:52](#). The Edomites, [Isaiah 34:5](#) first showed themselves enemies of Israel when they refused to allow the Israelites, under Moses to pass through their land, [Numbers 20:14-21](#). Notice that ‘the sword of the LORD is bathed in blood, with the blood of lambs and goats’, [Isaiah 34:6](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The idea here is taken from the notion of sacrifice, and is, that God would devote to sacrifice, or to destruction, the inhabitants of Idumea. With reference to that, he says, that his sword, the instrument of slaughter, would be satiated with blood. ‘It is made fat with fatness.’ The allusion here is to the sacrifices which were made for sin, in which the blood, and the fat were devoted to God as an offering, [Leviticus 7](#).’

Bozrah, [Isaiah 34:6](#), was the main stronghold of Edom in its north, bordering southern Palestine, [Isaiah 63:1](#). The wild oxen, bull calves and great bulls, [Isaiah 34:7](#), all represent the government officials of Edom, [Revelation 19:18](#), who will come down to judgment, along with the land itself, [Revelation 17:6](#). The KJV renders [Isaiah 34:7](#) as follows, ‘and the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the unicorn.

‘This was evidently an animal well known in Palestine, since it is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, [Numbers 23:22](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:17](#) / [Job 39:9-10](#) / [Psalms 22:21](#) / [Psalms 29:6](#) / [Psalms 92:10](#), in all which places it is translated unicorn. The derivation of the word is uncertain, and it has been regarded as doubtful what animal is intended.’

‘For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion’s cause. Edom’s streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulphur; her land will become blazing pitch! It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again. The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there. God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation. Her nobles will have nothing there to be called a kingdom, all her princes will vanish away. Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles, and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for owls. Desert creatures will meet with hyenas, and wild goats will bleat to each other; there the night creatures will also lie down and find for themselves places of rest. The owl will nest there and lay eggs, she will hatch them, and care for her young under the shadow of her wings; there also the falcons will gather, each with its mate.’ [Isaiah 34:8-15](#)

God avenges Zion because He is not to be mocked, [Galatians 6:7-8](#). The long-delayed retribution comes at last to those who refuse to obey God, [Isaiah 34:8-9](#). Notice ‘it will not be quenched’, [Isaiah 34:10](#). In other words, the judgment would simply intensify, not in reference to burning heat but in the fact that they would be destroyed from the presence of God, [Isaiah 34:9](#) / [Zephaniah 1:1-3](#) / [Matthew 25:41](#) / [2 Thessalians 1:6-9](#).

Judgement has come upon the people as the land is seared and burned, the smoke rises forever, [Isaiah 34:10](#) / [Revelation 14:11](#) / [Revelation 18:9](#) / [Revelation 18:18](#) / [Revelation 19:2-3](#). The nation and land of Edom become a wilderness and no longer has a king to rule over it, [Isaiah 34:10](#). Isaiah tells what kind of life now fills Edom, [Isaiah 34:11-15](#) / [Ezekiel 35:10](#). The destruction would be complete, with consequences that would not be changed.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The idea here is, that there would be a great and awful a destruction as if the streams everywhere should become pitch or resin, which would be set on fire, and which would fill the land with flame. This image is very striking, as we may see by supposing the rivers and streams in any land to flow not with water, but with heated pitch, turpentine, or tar, and that this was all suddenly kindled into a flame. It cannot be supposed that this is to be taken literally. The image is evidently taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, [Genesis 19:25-28](#), an image which is more fully used in reference to the same subject in [Jeremiah 49:17-18](#).’

‘Look in the scroll of the LORD and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together. He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure. They will possess it forever and dwell there from generation to generation.’ [Isaiah 34:16-17](#)

God’s scroll serves as a memorial as well as a warning. As every creature has his or her mate, so the mate of prophecy is fulfilled, [Isaiah 34:16](#). What Isaiah has written in the scroll will be fulfilled. One of the main purposes for the writing of prophecy is to allow readers to have the evidence to read for themselves that what was written was accurate and has been accurately fulfilled.

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Isaiah 34:17](#).

‘Jehovah himself has cast the lot determining that this land shall belong to the wild animals or demons. ‘They shall possess it forever, [Isaiah 34:17](#). For lo these two thousand years the land of Edom has been the possession of creatures that inhabit the desert and ruins left by man.’

CHAPTER 35

INTRODUCTION

‘The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendour of our God. Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.’ Isaiah 35:1-

10

JOY OF THE REDEEMED

This chapter deals with the glorious return of Israel. Because God’s people had left Him and His ways, God had destroyed the land of Palestine with drought and famine, [Isaiah 35:1](#), but now it’s time for the captives, His people to come home, [Isaiah 35:1-2](#). They would return to a land which had been restored, a land which has been transformed into a paradise, [Isaiah 35:2](#).

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Edom fell, never to rise again. However, Israel is not only restored to her land, but the very wilderness through which she must return is turned into a garden. Again we meet with what appears to be a prophetic type. The return of Israel is depicted in glowing terms to contrast with the destiny of Edom, but above that serves to typify the Gospel dispensation.’

Strong brethren will strengthen the weak brethren, [Isaiah 35:3](#) / [Hebrews 12:12](#), the downhearted will be lifted up, [Isaiah 35:4](#). The spiritually blind would see, [Isaiah 35:5](#) / [Matthew 9:27](#) / [Matthew 20:30](#) / [Mark 8:23](#) / [Mark 10:46](#) / [Luke 7:21](#), and their eyes will be opened to the whole picture of the past. The deaf would hear again, [Isaiah 35:5](#) / [Matthew 11:5](#) / [Mark 7:32](#) / [Mark 7:37](#) / [Mark 9:25](#).

The intimidated captives would sigh for joy and the lame would leap for joy, [Isaiah 35:6](#) / [Acts 14:10](#) / [Acts 3:8](#). The mute will shout for joy, [Isaiah 35:6](#) / [Matthew 9:32-33](#) / [Matthew 12:22](#) / [Matthew 15:30-31](#) / [Mark 9:17](#) / [Luke 11:14](#). The land that was given over to wild animals, [Isaiah 35:7](#) / [Isaiah 34:10-15](#), will again be pasture for their flocks and cattle.

Lowth, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The miraculous works wrought by our blessed Saviour are so clearly specified here, [Isaiah 35:5-6](#), that we cannot avoid making the application. And our Saviour himself has moreover plainly referred to this passage as speaking of him and his works in [Matthew 11:4-5](#). This passage is so accurate a description of what the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ did, that it doubtless refers to the miracles which he would perform.’

Isaiah looks to the way of redemption or period of redemption, [Isaiah 40:3-4](#). The ‘highway’, [Isaiah 35:8](#), that is, the edict of Cyrus provides the way for their return, [Ezra 1:1-3](#). The ‘Way of Holiness’, [Isaiah 35:8](#), is the roadway that led the captives back to the Promised Land.

It is called the ‘Way of Holiness’ because those who travelled on it had to be holy, [Malachi 2:8](#). The great antitype is Jesus and His church, [John 14:6](#) / [Acts 9:2](#) / [Acts 18:25-26](#) / [Acts 19:25](#) / [Acts 19:26](#) / [Ephesians 3:10-21](#). As the edict of Cyrus was plain, simple and easy to understand and obey, [Ezra 1:1-3](#), so are the Lord’s directions to the sinner today, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Acts 2:38-40](#) / [Acts 2:47](#).

The land is now cleared of wickedness, [Isaiah 35:9](#), and only those who wanted to believe in God would return, [Isaiah 35:10](#) / [Isaiah 53:1-12](#).

CHAPTER 36

INTRODUCTION

‘In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer’s Field, Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to him.’ [Isaiah 36:1-3](#)

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

This chapter through to [Isaiah 39](#), are prophecies which belong to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign and the time shortly thereafter. In chapters 36-39, three very important events are recorded.

1. Two attempts of Sennacherib to take Jerusalem, [Isaiah 36-37](#).
2. Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery, [Isaiah 38](#).
3. Ambassadors of Babylon, [Isaiah 39](#).

These chapters are also duplicated in [2 Kings 18:13-20:19](#). Hezekiah became king at the age of twenty-five, [Isaiah 36:1](#). He led a political and religious reformation. He was a great king, a great organiser, a great leader, and, above all, a great servant of God, [2 Kings 18:1-8](#). When he had reigned for fourteen years, [Isaiah 36:1](#), Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked Judah, [Isaiah 36:2](#) / [2 Kings 18:13-20:18](#) / [2 Chronicles 32](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Lachish, [Isaiah 36:2](#).

‘Lachish was a city in the south of the tribe of Judah and was southwest of Jerusalem, [Joshua 10:23](#) / [Joshua 15:39](#). It was situated on a plain and was the seat of an ancient Canaanite king. It was rebuilt and fortified by Rehoboam, [2 Chronicles 11:9](#). It was in some respects a border town and was a defence against the incursions of the Philistines. It was therefore situated between Jerusalem and Egypt and was in the direct way of Sennacherib in his going to Egypt, and on his return.’

Rabshakeh was sent to Jerusalem by Sennacherib, [Isaiah 36:2-3](#) / [2 Kings 18:17](#). In this chapter, through [Isaiah 36:7](#) of the next, we read of Assyria’s first attempt to capture Jerusalem.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sennacherib had three reasons for his attack on Judah’.

1. King Hezekiah had refused to pay tribute which had been customary since the days of his father Ahaz.
2. He had opened renegotiation with Babylon and Egypt attempting to form an alliance against Assyria.
3. He had helped the Philistines of Ekron in rebellion against their king who supported Assyria.

‘The field commander said to them, “Tell Hezekiah: ““This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? You say you have counsel and might for war—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? Look, I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. But if you say to me, “We are depending on the LORD our God”—isn’t he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship before this altar”? ““Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! How then can you repulse one officer of the least of my master’s officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this land without the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.”” Isaiah 36:4-10

These verses tell us of Rabshakeh’s message. Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh to taunt the Jews who were held up in Jerusalem and he calls upon Hezekiah to surrender. He tried to undermine the confidence of the Jews, [Isaiah 36:4](#), in reference to their trust in Egypt, [Isaiah 36:6](#). He also tries to undermine their confidence by mocking the gods of the nations who had already been defeated by the Assyrians, [Isaiah 36:7](#). In other words, he believed that the God of the Jews wouldn’t be able to deliver them because Hezekiah had banished them from the land.

The Assyrian officer wrongly interpreted Hezekiah’s reformation, [Isaiah 36:8-9](#) / [2 Chronicles 30:14](#), as being against Jehovah rather than purging God’s worship of idolatry. However, there was only one God in Israel, and Rabshakeh would witness the power of this God with the death of his army, [Isaiah 36:10](#).

‘Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.” But the commander replied, “Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall—who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?”” Isaiah 36:11-12

Here we read of the plea to Rabshakeh. Hezekiah’s committee urged the Assyrians to use a language not familiar to the common people, [Isaiah 36:11](#), that is, Aramaic. We must note that the Assyrians spoke Aramean not Syrian. Rabshakeh used the language of the common people because he was urging them to rebel against Hezekiah. He not only spoke in plain Hebrew but in vulgar terms in an effort to insult Hezekiah, [Isaiah 36:11](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 36:12](#).

‘The purpose of Hezekiah’s envoys here is plain enough. They did not want the men on the wall to understand the arrogant intimidation in the terrible words of Rabshakeh and therefore they requested that the message be delivered in the Syrian language. Rabshakeh, fully aware of their purpose, addressed his next taunt to the men on the wall themselves, promising them that, when Sennacherib took over the siege of the city, they would be compelled to eat their own dung and drink their own urine! What a horrible and revolting promise!’

‘Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, “Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you! Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, ‘The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ ““Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. “Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, ‘The LORD will deliver us.’ Have the gods of any nations ever delivered their lands from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of

Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries have been able to save their lands from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?” Isaiah 36:13-20

Rabshakeh rants at Hezekiah before the people, [Isaiah 36:13](#). He was urging the people to rebel against Hezekiah, [Isaiah 36:14-15](#) / [2 Kings 18:29](#). Rabshakeh’s enticement to the people was to make an agreement. His plea was that they would enjoy food and drink and then go into a land that was as their homeland [Isaiah 36:16-17](#). Those who oppose God are always urging His children to compromise and make an agreement with evil men. The people now have a clear choice before them.

Rabshakeh blasphemes God by placing Him on the same level as the false gods, [Isaiah 36:18-19](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sennacherib had defeated the gods of Hamath, Arpad and Sepharvaim, along with those of Samaria but it was not Sennacherib who had won those victories. They belonged to Shalmaneser or Sargon, or Tiglath-Pileser III.’

Since Assyria had taken all the cities of Judah, he reasoned that even Jerusalem would fall, [Isaiah 36:20](#).

‘But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, “Do not answer him.” Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.’ Isaiah 36:21-22

Here, we read of the effect of Rabshakeh’s word. The people remained loyal to Hezekiah who was supported by Isaiah, [Isaiah 36:21](#). Hezekiah’s trusted advisors came in great sorrow and with torn clothes to deliver the message to the king, [Isaiah 36:22](#) / [2 Samuel 3:21](#) / [1 Kings 21:27](#) / [Ezra 9:3](#) / [Job 1:20](#) / [Job 2:12](#) / [Jeremiah 36:24](#) / [Matthew 26:65](#) / [Acts 14:14](#).

Though the threats of Rabshakeh shook Eliakim, Shebna and Joah, [Isaiah 36:23](#), they remained faithful to the words of Hezekiah and Isaiah.

CHAPTER 37

INTRODUCTION

‘When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They told him, “This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives.” Isaiah 37:1-4

JERUSALEM’S DELIVERANCE FORETOLD

This chapter begins by telling us about Hezekiah’s appeal to Isaiah for help. When Hezekiah heard the report of what Rabshakeh had said, [Isaiah 36:22](#), he was humbled, he humbled himself in garments of mourning, [Isaiah 37:1](#), and sought the place of prayer, [Isaiah 37:2](#).

The reference to ‘children who come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them’, [Isaiah 37:3](#), was a well-known proverb used by people when they are desperate and in an almost hopeless situation, [Hosea 13:13](#). Hezekiah acknowledged that all human resources had failed. He had failed in all his plans to make alliances with Egypt and Babylon and so, as a last resort, he went to God, [Isaiah 37:3](#). Although Judah had failed to put God first in their initial defence against the Assyrians, God was delivering Jerusalem for a greater purpose, [Isaiah 36:4](#). It wasn’t in His plan at this time to take Judah into captivity.

‘When King Hezekiah’s officials came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, “Tell your master, ‘This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.’” [Isaiah 37:5-7](#)

Here we read Isaiah’s reply. Isaiah counselled courage and promised Sennacherib’s retreat, [Isaiah 37:5-6](#). He was anxious that God take note of the blasphemous words of Rabshakeh, [Isaiah 37:6](#) / [Isaiah 36:18-19](#). The answer is quick and straight to the point. God will destroy Sennacherib, [Isaiah 36:18](#), by causing him to retreat to his own land where he would die by the sword, [Isaiah 37:7](#) / [Isaiah 37:38](#).

Douglas, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There were no less than four things which God promised would thwart and prevent Sennacherib’s purpose toward Jerusalem. First, God would put a spirit into him, secondly, he would hear a rumour, thirdly, he would return to his own land and fourthly, in that land, he would fall by the sword.’

‘When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah. Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: “Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’ Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?” [Isaiah 37:8-13](#)

From these verses through to [Isaiah 37:38](#), we read of God’s deliverance of Jerusalem. They record a second attempt by the Assyrians to force the surrender of Jerusalem and its deliverance by God. When Rabshakeh returns to Sennacherib, he moved the Assyrian army from Lachish to Libnah, [Isaiah 37:8](#). Sennacherib found it impractical to go immediately to Jerusalem because he feared immediate war with Ethiopia and so, he sent his messengers to deliver another ultimatum to Hezekiah, [Isaiah 37:9-10](#).

Sennacherib blasphemes Hezekiah and his God, [Isaiah 37:10](#). Rabshakeh’s ultimatum was directed to Hezekiah, reminding him that Assyria had already conquered many major cities, [Isaiah 37:11](#). Sennacherib one again, blasphemes Hezekiah and his God, [Isaiah 37:12-13](#). In other words, Sennacherib is stating that his god was greater than the Holy One of Israel.

HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER

‘Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: “LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God. “It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. They have

thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are the only God.’ Isaiah 37:14-20

Hezekiah receives Sennacherib’s letter, [Isaiah 37:14](#), and proceeds to humble himself before God in prayer, [Isaiah 37:15](#). Hezekiah prays to God for help, he prays to the LORD Almighty, the One enthroned between the cherubim, [Isaiah 37:16](#) / [Exodus 25:21-22](#), etc, and it’s here, Hezekiah’s faith is in sharp contrast to the polytheism of the Assyrians.

He call God the living God, [Isaiah 37:17](#), and the true God, [Isaiah 37:18](#). If Jerusalem were delivered, then the nations who had been defeated by the Assyrians, would know that the God of Israel was the only true and living God, [Isaiah 37:18](#) / [Isaiah 42:8](#) / [Isaiah 43:10](#) / [Isaiah 43:13](#) / [Isaiah 43:25](#) / [Nehemiah 9:6](#) / [Daniel 9:18-19](#).

The gods made by men’s hands had perished, the great God of the universe cannot be destroyed by any fires which man may kindle, [Isaiah 37:20](#). He is the Eternal Spirit.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Hezekiah’s prayer.

‘It acknowledged that Jehovah is over all nations and all men, the creator of heaven and earth and that in him only is salvation. The basis of his petition, moreover, is directed toward the benefit of all the nations of the earth, that they might know the one true God, and it is not marked by the narrow object of what would benefit Israel only.’

SENNACHERIB’S FALL

‘Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word the LORD has spoken against him: “Virgin Daughter Zion despises and mocks you. Daughter Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee. Who is it you have ridiculed and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel! By your messengers you have ridiculed the Lord. And you have said, ‘With my many chariots I have ascended the heights of the mountains, the utmost heights of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars, the choicest of its junipers. I have reached its remotest heights, the finest of its forests. I have dug wells in foreign lands and drunk the water there. With the soles of my feet I have dried up all the streams of Egypt.’ “Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone. Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up. “But I know where you are and when you come and go and how you rage against me. Because you rage against me and because your insolence has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came.’
Isaiah 37:21-29

Here we read Isaiah’s reply as a prophecy against Assyria. [2 Kings 19:20](#). God’s answer came through Isaiah, God’s prophet, [Isaiah 37:21](#). God would remind Sennacherib that he was not fighting against human beings but the eternal God, [Isaiah 37:22-23](#).

He reminds Sennacherib that all his boasted powers would fail, [Isaiah 37:24-25](#), he couldn’t have done any of the things over which he boasted if God hadn’t been working for him, [Isaiah 37:26](#). God tells Assyria that He gave her power over the nations and He would control Assyria [Isaiah 37:26-28](#). Because Sennacherib had acted so arrogantly, God is going to send him back to the place from which he came, [Isaiah 37:29](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Isaiah 37:29](#).

‘Assyrian sculptures represent both captives and beasts as being led in this manner. Some of these ancient sculptures may be seen at a place called, Khorsabad, where captives are led before the king by a cord attached to a hook or ring passing through the underlip, the upper lip, or the nose. The ear was also used for such purposes.’

Archer, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 37:29](#).

‘Animals, especially bulls, were led in this manner and God here promised to humiliate Assyria by treating her like a wild beast and compelling her to return home with her objectives unrealized.’

‘This will be the sign for you, Hezekiah: “This year you will eat what grows by itself, and the second year what springs from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Once more a remnant of the kingdom of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above. For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. “Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria: “He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city,” declares the LORD. “I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant!”

Isaiah 37:30-35

Here we read of God’s sign and promise to Judah, [Isaiah 37:30](#). In around one year from now, the Assyrians would be gone from Judah, [Isaiah 37:30](#). Farmers would be back in their fields, cultivating their land, [Isaiah 37:30](#). After they had reaped the volunteer harvests, they would plant their own fields and harvest their crops, [Isaiah 37:30-31](#). The promise was made definite for two reasons.

1. For God’s sake [Isaiah 37:32-24](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God had been reproached and blasphemed by Sennacherib. As his name and power had been thus blasphemed, he says that he would vindicate himself and for the honour of his own insulted majesty would save the city.’

2. For David’s sake, [Isaiah 37:35](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘On account of the promise which he had made to him that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne and that the city and nation should not be destroyed until the Messiah should appear, [Psalms 132:10-18](#).’

‘Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.’ [Isaiah 37:36-38](#)

Here we read the account of God’s act. Who is this angel of the LORD? [Isaiah 37:36](#). This is a Christophany, which suggests that this is a preincarnate appearance of Christ, [Genesis 12:7](#). Remember the word ‘angel’ in Hebrew is ‘malak’ and it simply means messenger. Christ is God not an angel which become clearer in [Genesis 16:13](#).

Haynes Jr, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A study of these passages reveals that the Angel of the Lord appeared in human form, [Genesis 18:2](#) / [Genesis 22:1-18](#) / [Hebrews 13:2](#), and performed normal human functions, [Genesis 32:24](#) / [Numbers 22:23](#) / [Numbers 22:31](#), yet he was an awe-inspiring figure, [Genesis 32:30](#) / [Judges 6:22](#) / [Judges 13:22](#), exhibiting divine attributes and prerogatives including predicting the future, [Genesis 16:10-12](#), forgiving sin, [Exodus 23:21](#), and receiving worship, [Exodus 3:5](#) / [Judges 13:9-20](#).’

In a single night, God’s angel smote the army of Sennacherib and one-hundred and eighty-five thousand of his soldiers died, [Isaiah 37:36](#) / [2 Kings 19:35-27](#). Sennacherib departed, [Isaiah 37:37](#) / [2 Chronicles 32:21](#), as all those who oppose God will eventually depart. Their pomp and power will pass into history and only the cause of the Great Eternal God will triumph.

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 37:38](#).

‘It is not impossible for Isaiah himself to have added this historical section. If he began his prophetic work at age 30, he could have lived unto the murder of Sennacherib, which was about sixty years from the beginning of Isaiah’s ministry. The account was probably added as Isaiah edited his book before his death. Two facts stand out clearly, 1. Through Isaiah, God declared what he would do, and 2. he did it, but how quickly was this remarkable deliverance forgotten by Manasseh, Hezekiah’s son, who was one of the most wicked kings of Judah!’

CHAPTER 38

INTRODUCTION

‘In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.” Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.’ Isaiah 38:1-3

HEZEKIAH’S ILLNESS

This chapter tells us of Hezekiah’s illness, Isaiah 38:1. It is within the year of the Assyrian invasion of Isaiah 36:1, that the event described by Isaiah falls, 2 Kings 20:1-21 / 2 Chronicles 32:24-33. Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years and fifteen of them are promised here, the invasion began in the fourteenth year of his reign. Hezekiah was probably thirty-eight years old when Isaiah told him to put his house in order, Isaiah 38:1. At this time he had no children, and so, the Davidic seedline was in danger.

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘How often do our wishes when gratified prove curses! Hezekiah lived to have a son, Manasseh, 2 Kings 21:1, by all standards the most wicked and evil of all the kings of Judah, whose reign ended with the overthrow of the kingdom and the deportation of the people to Babylon.’

Despite all the wonderful restoration works which Hezekiah did, that didn’t mean he could avoid death. We read that Hezekiah ‘turned his face to the wall’, Isaiah 38:2 / Daniel 6:10, and prayed for his life. He humbled himself before God because he believed the pronouncement of Isaiah concerning his death, Isaiah 38:3. Notice Hezekiah wept bitterly, Isaiah 38:3.

‘Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city. “‘This is the LORD’s sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.”’ So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.’ Isaiah 38:4-8

Here we read of God's promise to Hezekiah, [Isaiah 38:4](#). He is promised an additional fifteen years of life, [Isaiah 38:5](#) / [James 5:13-18](#), and he is promised that God would defend the city against the attack of Sennacherib, [Isaiah 38:6](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The parallel account in [2 Kings 20:4](#), reveals that Isaiah left Hezekiah and was on the way to departing from the palace, being as far as the middle court, when the Word of God came to Isaiah again, instructing him to reveal that the Lord had heard his prayers and was extending his life by some fifteen years. So swiftly does God answer the prayer of faith! From this, we may conclude that God approves of our prayers for health, for life and for strength.' The promise was that Hezekiah will be permitted to go to the temple in three days, [2 Kings 20:5](#). The process of healing would take time as God assisted the natural body processes to bring health to Hezekiah. Until he was healed, God knew that Hezekiah needed reassurance that he wouldn't die, [Isaiah 38:7](#) / [Isaiah 38:4](#). God made the sun's shadow go back tens steps or degrees, [Isaiah 38:8](#) / [2 Kings 20:9-11](#) / [Joshua 10:12-15](#).

'A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery: I said, "In the prime of my life must I go through the gates of death and be robbed of the rest of my years?" I said, "I will not again see the LORD himself in the land of the living; no longer will I look on my fellow man or be with those who now dwell in this world. Like a shepherd's tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, and he has cut me off from the loom; day and night you made an end of me. I waited patiently till dawn, but like a lion he broke all my bones; day and night you made an end of me. I cried like a swift or thrush, I moaned like a mourning dove. My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens. I am being threatened; Lord, come to my aid!" But what can I say? He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul. Lord, by such things people live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; parents tell their children about your faithfulness. The LORD will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the temple of the LORD.' [Isaiah 38:9-20](#)

Here we read Hezekiah's psalm which is a deep lamentation. If Hezekiah had died under the age of forty, he would have been cut off in his prime, [Isaiah 38:9-11](#). Life for him would thus be rolled up like a shepherd's tent, [Isaiah 38:12](#). A cry of anguish went up from the king's sleepless soul when he cried to God for deliverance. In other words, he was in anguish, feeling that his life was cut off before he could accomplish his destiny in life, [Isaiah 38:12-16](#).

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

'He tells us what his thoughts were of himself when he was at the worst and these he keeps in remembrance.'

1. As blaming himself for his despondency, and that he gave up himself for gone, whereas while there is life there is hope, and room for our prayer and God's mercy. Though it is good to consider sickness as a summons to the grave, so as thereby to be quickened in our preparations for another world, yet we ought not to make the worse of our case, nor to think that every sick man must needs be a dead man presently. He that brings low can raise up. Or,

2. As reminding himself of the apprehensions he had of death approaching, that he might always know and consider his own frailty and mortality, and that, though he had a reprieve for fifteen years, it was but a reprieve, and the fatal stroke he had now such a dread of would certainly come at last. Or,

3. As magnifying the power of God in restoring him when his case was desperate, and his goodness in being so much better to him than his own fears. Thus David sometimes, when he was delivered out of trouble, reflected upon the black and melancholy conclusions he had made upon his own case when he was in trouble, and what he had then said in his haste, as [Psalm 31:22](#) / [Psalm 77:7-9](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning 'the pit of destruction', [Isaiah 38:17](#).

‘The grave, or the place for the dead, is often represented as a pit, deep and dark, to which the living descend, [Job 17:16](#) / [Job 33:18](#) / [Job 33:24-25](#) / [Job 33:30](#) / [Psalm 28:1](#) / [Psalm 30:3](#) / [Psalm 55:23](#) / [Psalm 69:15](#) / [Psalm 88:4](#)’. He believed that if God were to be the foundation of his life and mission, then God would give him a longer life, [Isaiah 38:18](#). Hezekiah is filled with joy and makes a promise to God. Only by living and obeying God could Hezekiah praise God, [Isaiah 38:19](#). God knew that His people needed Hezekiah’s leadership in a time of national crisis that was brought on by the Assyrian threat, [Isaiah 38:20-21](#).

‘Isaiah had said, “Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover.” Hezekiah had asked, “What will be the sign that I will go up to the temple of the LORD?”’ [Isaiah 38:21-22](#)

Some commentators believe that these two verses were somehow removed from their proper place following [Isaiah 38:6](#), and are misplaced here. This would cause them to follow immediately after [Isaiah 38:6](#), and come before [Isaiah 38:7](#). The parallel passage is found in [2 Kings 20:7-8](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In the parallel place in Kings the statement in these two verses is introduced before the account of the miracle on the sun-dial, and before the account of his recovery, [2 Kings 20:7-8](#). The order in which it is introduced, however, is not material.’

We aren’t told if the ‘poultice of figs’, [Isaiah 38:21](#), was simply a sign of accepting the healing of God or that it was believed that the poultice of figs had some medicinal power, [1 Samuel 25:18](#). We’re also not told what kind of sickness the boil implies, [Isaiah 38:21](#) / [Exodus 9:9](#) / [Exodus 9:11](#) / [Leviticus 13:18-20](#), but we do see in these verses that all that could be done medically, was done.

The point here is, that the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick does not reject the God-given means for recovery made known to medical science. The true healing, however, was accomplished by God, [James 5:13-15](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Isaiah 38:22](#).

‘The remedy for the king’s disease was suggested by Isaiah, and the sign was given at the king’s request.’

CHAPTER 39

INTRODUCTION

‘At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift because he had heard of his illness and recovery. Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine olive oil—his entire armoury and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.’ [Isaiah 39:1-2](#)

ENVOYS FROM BABYLON

This chapter speaks of the foretelling of the Babylonian captivity and parallels with [2 Kings 20:12-19](#), and [2 Chronicles 32:24-31](#). It begins by telling us of Hezekiah’s weakness, and it’s here that we are introduced to the ambassadors of Babylon to prepare us for what will come later.

When the king of Babylon sent a gift to him, [Isaiah 39:1](#), he allowed his pride in the riches of Judah to cloud his judgment. He revealed to the messengers of Marduk-Baladan the national treasures of Judah, [Isaiah 39:2](#) / [2 Chronicles 32:31](#).

Marduk-Baladan wanted to know about Hezekiah's recovery and the great wonder that had occurred concerning the turning back of the shadow of the sun, [Isaiah 38:4-8](#). However, his hidden motives were possibly in reference to spying out the land. Apparently, Marduk-Baladan sent his ambassadors for two obvious reasons.

1. To congratulate Hezekiah on his miraculous recovery.
2. To see where the 'sign' occurred and learn more about it.

The ambassadors appear to have at least two hidden purposes.

1. To spy out the wealth of the land with the view of one day taking it.
2. To secretly make an agreement with Hezekiah to help throw off the Assyrian yoke.

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following.

'Hezekiah's ancestor, David, had yielded to the lust of the flesh and Solomon had yielded to vanity and pomp and now Hezekiah, one of Judah's most admired kings, had yielded to flattery and pride. The flesh is terribly weak.'

'Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?" "From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came to me from Babylon." The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?" "They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them." Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." "The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my lifetime." Isaiah 39:3-8

God now rebukes Hezekiah and this intimate disclosure to strangers indicates vanity and pride on the part of Hezekiah, [Isaiah 39:3-4](#). Isaiah suspected that the king was considering a foreign alliance, Hezekiah had done this with Egypt, and now he was doing it with Babylon, [Isaiah 39:5-6](#). Hezekiah's folly had mortgaged the future of his people and so, not only would Hezekiah have to pay for his pride but his descendants must also pay, [Isaiah 39:7](#). Hezekiah no doubt was sad because of this but he recognised that the judgements of God are always good, [Isaiah 39:8](#) / [2 Chronicles 32:25-26](#) / [2 Chronicles 32:30-31](#). The real reason the Babylonians were coming was because God will be using Babylon to bring judgment upon Jerusalem for her apostasy, [Deuteronomy 28:63-64](#) / [1 Kings 14:15](#) / [Amos 5:27](#). The captivity of the Jews in Babylon commenced about one hundred and twenty years after this prediction, [Jeremiah 20:5](#).

Kidner, in his commentary, says the following.

'To Hezekiah there was comfort in the postponement of the disaster awaiting Israel, but not to Isaiah. Evidently, he took this burden home with him, and so lived under its weight that when God spoke to him again it was to one who in spirit had already lived long years in Babylon, [Isaiah 40:2](#), and who could speak 'to the heart' of a generation of exiles yet to be born.'

CHAPTER 40

INTRODUCTION

Before we get into the text, I think it would be useful to note from this chapter, through to [Isaiah 66](#), deal with the restoration of Israel from Babylonian exile. The theme of this whole section is the deliverance from the captivity threatened in [Isaiah 39](#). Judah was to be comforted if she repented. The prophecies of this section have the Babylonian captivity as their viewpoint.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here begins the latter part of the prophecy of Isaiah. This last section is divided from the first by the historical chapters that come between. The distress which the people of God were in by the Assyrians is here spoken of as a thing past, [Isaiah 40:4](#). The captivity in Babylon and the deliverance of God’s people are foretold. Before God allowed His people to go into captivity He furnished them concerning Christ and His church. This last part of Isaiah is a prophetic summary of the New Testament. It begins as do the Gospel with ‘the voice of him that cried in the wilderness’, [Isaiah 40:3](#), and concludes as does the book of Revelation with ‘the new heavens and the new earth’, [Isaiah 66:22](#). The prophet speaks of the shoes being brought home from Babylon, but he also refers to a more glorious deliverance unto Christ, our deliverance from sin.’

These chapters deal with deliverance for Israel at the hand of Israel’s God. Throughout them, there is a captivity assumed, the Babylonian, reasons for it given, assurance of deliverance and an insistence that the rescue is the work of Jehovah.

A BRIEF LOOK AT ISAIAH 40-66

[Isaiah 40](#) speaks of God manifesting himself in a new work of Rescue. Israel may have her doubts about it but the redemption is certain. [Isaiah 41](#) speaks of the instrument of God’s redeeming work, Cyrus, may strike fear into the nations but Israel has nothing to fear since they have God and the nations have only idols. [Isaiah 42](#) says that God’s Servant will bring the message of redemption to foreign nations. Though beaten and captive they will be owned by God because the chastisement is due, not to God’s weakness but, to his abhorrence of sin. God’s dealing with Israel will manifest his care for all who sin.

[Isaiah 43](#) says, essentially, that the same God who rescued them from Egypt will rescue them from Babylon, and any other oppression. And this is not because Israel is ‘worthy’ of rescue. [Isaiah 44](#) tells us despite their unworthiness, God made his choice of them long ago and will live up to his covenanted loyalty. And he is capable of taking care of them in contrast to idols who are powerless.

[Isaiah 45](#) speaks about the choice of Cyrus and his success is the work of an omnipotent God who is dedicated to Israel. When Israel calls on God she is heard and vindicated. Foreigners are urged to look away from their idols and look to Jehovah for salvation.

[Isaiah 46-47](#) speak about the idols of Babylon are satirized and Babylon is assured of her destruction. [Isaiah 48](#) tells us how Israel is verbally chastised for open wickedness. And God, knowing how easily they fall into treachery, explains why he has used prediction and captivity in dealing with them.

[Isaiah 49](#) is addressed to both Israel and foreigners because neither of them can understand Israel’s chastisement as to its significance. The captivity and the subsequent redemption are to teach everyone about sin’s need for punishment and God’s pardoning mercy.

Isaiah 50-52 are words of comfort from God's enlightened messenger who has been much maligned and mistreated, Isaiah 50 we read of God's dealings with Abraham and Israel when in Egypt are the basis for future optimism concerning deliverance and ultimate victory, Isaiah 51. Isaiah 52 further speaks of Zion's coming glory and their redemption from exile. Isaiah 53, along with Isaiah 52:13-15, we have an explanation of the sufferings of the servant and the announcement of blessing through that suffering.

Isaiah 54-55 we read about restored Israel will find more glory after the pain of exile than she had before and the city which had been razed is to be built with inexpressible splendour, Isaiah 54. And all who are interested can share in the sure mercies of David at the hand of a God who is, unlike Israel or the nations, quick to pardon and pardon abundantly, Isaiah 55.

Isaiah 56 speaks about assurances which are given to the foreigners who throw in their lot with rescued Israel, as happened in the deliverance from Egypt, that they would be received by the Lord with favour. Isaiah 57-59, along with Isaiah 56:9-12, speak of the wickedness of the nation, Isaiah 57, the self-righteousness of the religious, Isaiah 58, and God's explaining one more time that their pain is due to their wickedness and not his weakness, Isaiah 58:13-59.

Isaiah 60-62, along with Isaiah 59:15-21, speak of the glory of the redeemed nation. Of the restoration of her children by the foreigners, Isaiah 60:4-22, of the rebuilding of a glorious city with the help of foreigners, Isaiah 60:10-22, who will render their services to Israel. And this is the message, one of deliverance, that is put into the heart of God's servant, Isaiah 61:1-11, who tells of Zion's glorious future. Zion's deliverer will give her new names to suit her coming glory, Isaiah 62.

Isaiah 63 stresses that God alone redeems Israel from her enemies, Isaiah 63:1-6, and the prophet insists that graciousness and rescue are no new thing with God, Isaiah 63:7-14. Isaiah 64, along with Isaiah 63:15-19, registers the nation's confession of guilt. But it also registers their blaming God, in part, for the terrible state they are in.

Isaiah 65-66 contain God's response to Israel's half-hearted confession and their promise to build him a glorious house if only he will restore them from trouble. Israel says he is hard to find, Isaiah 64:1-7. He says Gentiles who aren't even looking for him are finding him. They offer him a rebuilt house, implied in Isaiah 64:10-11, and he replies that heaven and earth aren't sufficiently impressive to him so how could their building be, Isaiah 66:1-2. What God is after and what God will bless is a penitent and upright people, Isaiah 65-66. Before God is through Gentiles will pay homage to the God of Israel.

COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.' Isaiah 40:1-2

This chapter speaks words of comfort and the God of comfort. Comfort, comfort my people, Jerusalem is to be comforted, Isaiah 40:1. The expression 'my people', Isaiah 40:1, recalls the covenant relationship God had with Israel, Exodus 19:5-6 / Leviticus 20:26 / Deuteronomy 7:6 / Deuteronomy 14:2.

Isaiah uses words which speak of punishment for Jerusalem. They will be doubly punished but they will be doubly blessed. She has suffered and now she will be rewarded, Isaiah 40:2. They were once rejected as God's people but now they are again claimed because of His covenant relationship with them, Hosea 1:9.

'A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the

rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Isaiah 40:3-5

These verses speak of the time when real comfort would come. Not restoration from the captivity but a greater restoration of which the restoration from exile was but a prophetic type, that which Christ would effect.

Matthew 3:3, is the New Testament interpretation and it says that this of which Isaiah was speaking is the person and work of John the Baptist, Isaiah 40:3 / John 1:23. John was a spiritual roadbuilder who did a work appointed to him by God. The word ‘desert’, Isaiah 40:3, has reference to people who are dried up, people dead spiritually. John was preparing the way for the coming of the Lord, Isaiah 40:3-4. The real fulfilment of Isaiah 40-66, is the Christian age. The Babylonian captivity was a foreshadow or type of that which was to come.

In place of Jerusalem’s period of misery will be the revelation of the glory of the Lord, Isaiah 40:5. The way was to be made easy for them to return. The revealing of the glory of the Lord meant the salvation of His people. God’s glory to be revealed to all flesh, Isaiah 40:5, was done by Jesus whose way John had prepared, John 1:14-18 / Hebrews 1:3 / John 17:4.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘One must keep in mind that this entire last half of the book of Isaiah is intensely Messianic. There were many Messianic prophecies in the first half, but the latter half is almost entirely filled with them.’

‘A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” Isaiah 40:6-8

Here we read of the enduring Word of God. Isaiah is to cry out, Isaiah 40:6, people won’t last forever, Isaiah 40:7-8, but the Word of the Lord will, Isaiah 40:8. All that constitutes the glory of man can be compared only with the flower in the field, which exists but a short time and then perishes, Isaiah 40:7-8 / Psalms 103:15-16 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 / 1 Peter 1:24-25. Israel must have hope because her oppressors would pass out of the picture. God’s promise will stand forever, Isaiah 40:8, this would strengthen the hope of Israel.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Both Peter and James quoted from this passage, 1 Peter 1:24-25 / James 1:10-11, bringing to six the New Testament authors who quoted from this chapter, four of them ascribing the passage to Isaiah. No Christian should dare to ascribe it to anyone else!’

‘You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!” See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.’ Isaiah 40:9-11

Isaiah shifts from the promise to the fulfilment which we saw in Isaiah 2:3. Zion and Jerusalem are identified as the messengers of peace who announce the coming of the Lord, Isaiah 40:9. Here we read that God will rule by His arm, Isaiah 40:10, that is, the Christ, Isaiah 5:25 / Isaiah 9:12 / Isaiah 10:4 / Isaiah 11:11 / Isaiah 31:3 / Isaiah 51:9 / Isaiah 53:1 / Isaiah 62:3. God always stands ready to reward his faithful servants and to encourage those who trust in Him, Isaiah 40:10.

Notice that God is pictured as a good shepherd, Isaiah 40:11 / John 10:11-16. This is a picture of Jesus Himself, a coming King as a shepherd, to God, a king is a shepherd, Psalms 23 / Ezekiel 34 / Ezekiel 37. He would protect and nurture the obedient, for they would be His sheep, Isaiah 40:11.

‘Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counsellor? Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him, all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.’
Isaiah 40:12-17

Israel are made to see that God alone possesses absolute might and wisdom, [Isaiah 40:12](#). God possesses absolute knowledge and wisdom, [Isaiah 40:13](#) / [Job 33:4](#). This passage is quoted by Paul in [Romans 11:34](#), and referred to by him in [1 Corinthians 2:16](#). Jehovah is a matchless Being, [Isaiah 40:14](#).

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The language of [Isaiah 12-14](#), reflects upon the vastness and majesty of the creation and suggests the care with which creation was accomplished.’

Nations of the earth are nothing when compared to the greatness of God, [Isaiah 40:15](#). They are no weightier than one grain of sand on the scale, [Isaiah 40:15](#). Even the isles are like a speck of dust, [Isaiah 40:15](#). With all its mighty forests and its wild beasts, Lebanon couldn’t provide an appropriate offering to God, [Isaiah 40:16](#) / [Romans 11:34](#). All the cedars of Lebanon couldn’t build a fire large enough to offer all the animals of the country for a sufficient burnt offering to the Lord, [Isaiah 40:16](#). Compared to God they are nothing. God is pictured as the great arranger of all history. He controls all of the universe. All the glory associated with man in contrast with God is nothing. The conclusion of [Isaiah 40:17](#), forms the question of [Isaiah 40:18](#).

‘With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot; they look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple.’ [Isaiah 40:18-20](#)

Here we are given an ironic description of the making of an idol, [Isaiah 40:18-19](#). Even the material used in the manufacture of an idol was created by God Himself. Deity cannot be represented by the works of human hands, [Isaiah 40:20](#) / [John 4:24](#) / [Acts 17:29](#). We can only compare God with our own experiences but He is greater than any of them. We can’t compare God to an idol.

‘Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.’ [Isaiah 40:21-24](#)

Here we read four questions directed to those who look upon the idols about them with desire. The first two, [Isaiah 40:21](#), indicate that Israel had been taught, [Romans 3:1-2](#). The last two, [Isaiah 40:21](#), indicate that all with any teaching of God should be able to recognise God from the evidence of the universe, [Isaiah 40:22](#) / [Psalm 8](#) / [Psalm 19:1](#) / [Romans 1:20](#). Israel had closed her eyes to evidence and reason.

God is revealed through His words and works proclaimed, [Isaiah 40:22](#). God is all supreme, all-knowing and all-powerful, etc, [Job 12:21](#) / [Psalm 107:40](#). God inhabits eternity and all the inhabitants of the earth are stretched out before Him as grasshoppers, [Isaiah 40:22](#). Little gods of men could be carried in men’s pockets but God covers the earth, [Isaiah 40:23](#). There is nothing so high in the world that God can’t bring down, [Isaiah 40:24](#).

‘To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.’ Isaiah 40:25-26

Here we read of the incomparable nature of God, [Isaiah 40:25](#). The greatness of God is seen in that He leads all the army of the stars and planets as a general leads his army out on the battlefield, [Isaiah 40:26](#). Secondly, His great power is seen in that all this array of the heavenly host is called by name, we can’t even count the stars, [Isaiah 40:26](#). Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Direct your eyes toward heaven, and in the contemplation of the wonders of the starry world and God’s power there, learn the evidence of his ability to destroy his foes and to save his friends.’

‘Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.’ Isaiah 40:27-31

Israel felt that God had turned away from them, [Isaiah 40:27](#). Such despondent disbelief has no basis and a double question is asked to emphasise that, [Isaiah 40:28](#). Not only does God not faint but He strengthens those who wait on Him, [Isaiah 40:28](#). God is pictured as gathering the lambs in His arms.

He won’t fail in giving strength to those who are tired and weak, [Isaiah 40:29](#) / [2 Corinthians 12:9](#). Although we may get tired and weak, [Isaiah 40:30](#), God’s sustenance always abounds. Those who wait for God to work in their lives won’t be disappointed, [Isaiah 40:31](#) / [Lamentations 3:25](#).

Kelley, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The basic word from which ‘wait’ is derived means ‘to wind’ or ‘to twist’, the word ‘rope’ being a noun that comes from this term. The meaning here is that the believer should let the Lord be his lifeline, his cord of escape.’

They will be able to accomplish things beyond their dreams because God is able to work in the lives of those who walk by faith, [Ephesians 3:20-21](#). Faith is needed to receive strength from God. People who have every fleshly reason to be strong will fail if they believe not, [Galatians 6:9](#).

CHAPTER 41

INTRODUCTION

‘Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment. “Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not travelled before. Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.” Isaiah 41:1-4

THE HELPER OF ISRAEL

In this chapter, we read that people are saved because of the Majesty of God. It begins with God challenging the nations to contend with Him so that He may show them that He alone is God. The whole heathen world, that is, ‘the islands’, [Isaiah 41:1](#), are challenged to speak after hearing the evidence. God is showing the people that He is God and cannot be contended with.

Note that [Isaiah 41:2](#), is an indication that Cyrus who is later mentioned in [Isaiah 44:28](#), and [Isaiah 45:1](#), would be successful in all of his efforts. Of the great conquest of Cyrus, none could boast because it was the working of God, [Isaiah 41:2-3](#). It was God who had raised Cyrus and accomplished all these things through him, God had the power to deliver His people.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, as to why he believes the text is speaking about Cyrus.

‘This refers to Cyrus, the Persian monarch, by whom Babylon was taken, and by whom the Jews were restored to their own land. In support of this interpretation, a few considerations may be adverted to.’

1. It agrees with the fact in regard to the country from which Cyrus came for purposes of conquest. He came from the land which is everywhere in the Scriptures called the East.
2. It agrees with the specifications which Isaiah elsewhere makes, where Cyrus is mentioned by name, and where there can be no danger of error in regard to the interpretation, [Isaiah 44:28](#) / [Isaiah 45:1-4](#) / [Isaiah 45:13](#). Thus in [Isaiah 46:11](#), it is said of Cyrus, ‘Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my commandments from a far country’.
3. The entire description here is one that applies in a remarkable manner to Cyrus, as will be shown more fully in the notes at the particular expressions which occur.
4. This supposition accords with the design of the prophet.

We must also note that some believe that [Isaiah 41:2-3](#), refers to Abraham.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, as to why the text isn’t speaking about Abraham.

‘This is the interpretation of the Chaldee Paraphrast, who renders it, ‘Who has publicly led from the east Abraham, the chosen of the just’ and this interpretation has been adopted by Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbanel, and by the Jewish writers generally. They say that it means that God had called Abraham from the east, that he conducted him to the land of Canaan, and enabled him to vanquish the people who resided there, and particularly that he vanquished the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and delivered Lot from their hands [Genesis 14](#), and that this is designed by God to show them that he who had thus raised up Abraham would raise up them also in the east. There are, however, objections to this interpretation which seem to be insuperable, a few of which may be referred to.’

1. The country from which Abraham came, the land of Chaldea or Mesopotamia, is not commonly in the Scriptures called ‘the east’, but the north, [Jeremiah 1:13-15](#) / [Jeremiah 4:6](#) / [Jeremiah 6:1](#) / [Jeremiah 23:8](#) / [Jeremiah 25:9](#) / [Jeremiah 25:26](#) / [Jeremiah 31:8](#) / [Jeremiah 46:10](#) / [Jeremiah 50:3](#) / [Daniel 11:6](#) / [Daniel 11:8](#) / [Daniel 11:11](#). This country was situated to the northeast of Palestine, and it is believed is nowhere in the Scriptures called the country of the east.

2. The description which is here given of what was accomplished by him who was raised up from the east, is not one that applies to Abraham. It supposes more important achievements than any that signalized the father of the faithful.

There were no acts in the life of Abraham that can be regarded as subduing the ‘nations’ before him, as ruling over ‘kings’ or as scattering them like the dust or the stubble. Indeed, he appears to have been engaged but in one military adventure, the rescue of Lot, and that was of so slight and unimportant a character as not to form the peculiarity of his

public life. Had Abraham been referred to here, it would have been for some other trait than that of a conqueror or military chieftain.

It was to be an assurance to them not only that God would raise up such a man, but that they should be delivered; and as this was intended to comfort them in Babylon, it was intended that when they were apprised of the conquests of Cyrus, they were to be assured of the fact that God was their protector and those conquests, therefore, were to be regarded by them as a proof that God would deliver them.

It was God who called forth the generations from the beginning, [Isaiah 41:4](#), that is, all the nations that live on the earth in every place owed their origin to God, [Acts 17:26](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 4:4](#).

‘God here gives of himself as ‘the first and the last,’ is one that is often applied to him in the Scriptures, and is one that properly expresses eternity, [Isaiah 44:6](#) / [Isaiah 48:12](#). It is remarkable also that this expression, which so obviously implies proper eternity, is applied to the Lord Jesus in [Revelation 1:17](#) / [Revelation 22:13](#).’

‘The islands have seen it and fear; the ends of the earth tremble. They approach and come forward; they help each other and say to their companions, “Be strong!” The metalworker encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer spurs on the one who strikes the anvil. One says of the welding, “It is good.” The other nails down the idol so it will not topple.’ [Isaiah 41:5-7](#)

Here we read that the idolatrous nations have come from all directions to help meet the Persian army but all is confusion and fear reigned among them, [Isaiah 41:5](#). The gods by which they expect deliverance are not made until now, such a god, made with the hands of men, couldn’t help man, [Isaiah 41:6-7](#).

‘But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. “All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.’ [Isaiah 41:8-13](#)

God, who has offered proof of His Deity, now turns His attention to Israel. Abraham was God’s friend, [Isaiah 41:8](#) / [2 Chronicles 20:7](#) / [James 2:23](#), and chosen by God when he was called in Ur of the Chaldees so that he would come to the land that God would later give to his descendants. The assurance was that as He had cared for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, [Genesis 12:1-4](#), He would care for Israel, [Isaiah 41:8-9](#).

The eyes of Israel are pointing towards the future and so, because of what God had done in the past, Israel was to be encouraged because God would continue to work through them until He had completed the destiny of Israel, [Isaiah 41:8-9](#).

The nations, trusting in their idols were thrown into confusion but Israel trusting in God might take comfort, [Isaiah 41:10](#). All of her enemies would be overcome because God was her protector, [Isaiah 41:11](#). Anyone who would make war in order to bring God’s covenanted people to destruction wouldn’t be successful because God is going to fight for His people, [Isaiah 41:12-13](#).

‘Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob, little Israel, do not fear, for I myself will help you,” declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. “See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them and reduce the hills to chaff. You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel. “The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the

cedar and the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir, and the cypress together, so that people may see and know, may consider, and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.' Isaiah 41:14-20

Notice the consoling words, 'do not fear', Isaiah 41:14, are repeated. They are repeated for the purpose of again adding the promise that Israel will not succumb to her foes but will rise above all of her enemies. The words 'you worm Jacob', Isaiah 41:14, are used to paint a picture of their helpless condition without God, Job 25:6.

The use of the 'sharp threshing sledge with many teeth', Isaiah 41:15, implies a crushing victory, Isaiah 28:27-28. Instead of being cut down by the nations, God's people are strong and invincible, Isaiah 41:16. They are the ones who will thresh the nations as a large stone grinds the grain.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

'Restored to Divine favour, Israel became a terrible instrument of the judgement of the heathen nations.'

The land will go from a wasteland where they suffered drought and famine, to a fertile land of rejoicing, Isaiah 41:17 / Isaiah 35:7. Palestine would again become the land of milk and honey for the people of God, Isaiah 41:18-19. When they considered the transformation in their lives and land, they would understand that it was the work of God who accomplished this awesome deed, Isaiah 41:20. In other words, at the present time, the state of his people is helpless but their cry wasn't in vain and when deliverance came they would know that it was from God.

'Present your case,' says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. "Tell us, you idols, what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; whoever chooses you is detestable.' Isaiah 41:21-24

God now returns to the legal process to which He has challenged all contenders, Isaiah 41:21. God stated the fact that it was He who had called the oppressor of the nations into being, Isaiah 41:22. He appeals to the fact that He alone can know the future, Isaiah 41:23. If any of the idol gods can produce knowledge of the future, God says in effect, let him step forth, Isaiah 41:23. It was time for the false prophets of the false gods to prove themselves.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

'This fact of divine foreknowledge, predictive prophecy, is one of the strongest evidences available to prove that God is, and that he alone is God. There are those today who scoff at fulfilled prophecy as proof of the deity of God and of his existence. These people might as well scoff at God. God himself uses this fact to demonstrate his sole deity. If God used it, why can man today not use it with validity and force?'

Isaiah not only called the false prophets worthless but He also pronounced condemnation of those who believed their senseless predictions, Isaiah 41:24. Those who reject the Word of God in order to follow after false prophets are detestable to the Lord, Isaiah 41:24.

'I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes—one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay. Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good news. I look but there is no one—no one among the gods to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them. See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.' Isaiah 41:25-29

Here we read of the stark contrast between the idol who cannot speak and God who not only speaks but moulds history, makes the future and keeps all things in subjection unto Himself. The calling upon the name by Cyrus, Isaiah 41:25 / Isaiah 45:1, probably refers to the edict Cyrus issued which allowed the Jews to return to their homeland, Ezra 1:1-3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the one who is ‘stirred up from the north’, [Isaiah 41:25](#). ‘In [Isaiah 41:2](#), he is said to have been raised up ‘from the east’. Both were true. Cyrus was born in Persia, in the country called in the Scriptures ‘the east’, but he early went to Media and came from Media under the direction of his uncle, Cyaxares, when he attacked and subdued Babylon. Media was situated on the north and northeast of Babylon.’ God points back to the second charge against the heathen, [Isaiah 40:21-23](#). In raising up Cyrus, God demonstrates Himself as a universal God and omniscient ruler, [Isaiah 41:26](#). No heathen god had ever foretold the appearance of Cyrus but only Jehovah God, Himself could, [Isaiah 41:27](#).

Isaiah was the present messenger of good news to Jerusalem and Jerusalem would eventually be restored, [Isaiah 41:27](#). The declaration closes with words of contempt and wrath, [Isaiah 41:28](#). No good words come from these idols, they are vain and their makers are confused, [Isaiah 41:29](#). Their idols were nothing!

CHAPTER 42

INTRODUCTION

‘Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice, he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.’ [Isaiah 42:1-4](#)

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

This chapter and the next, speak of the mediator of Israel and the Saviour of the Gentiles. In this chapter, Isaiah introduces a servant, [Isaiah 42:1](#), that is different from his servant Jacob and cannot refer to his shepherd Cyrus of [Isaiah 45:1](#) / [Isaiah 44:28](#).

The New Testament finds the fulfilment of this prophecy in Jesus Christ. The coming Saviour is embodied in the idea of Israel. The first seven verses of [Isaiah 42](#) are purely Messianic. These verses indicate how the Messiah brings to the Gentiles, God’s right judgement in a peaceful way, [Luke 4:18-21](#), for the New Testament fulfilment. Jesus certainly had the Spirit on Him, [Isaiah 42:1](#) / [John 3:34](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘my Spirit’.

‘The Lord Jesus was divine, yet as Mediator he is everywhere represented as ‘the anointed’ of God, or as endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit, [Isaiah 11:2](#). Also, [Isaiah 61:1](#), where the Messiah says of himself, ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me’, [Luke 4:18](#). Before he entered upon his public ministry, the Spirit of God descended on him at his baptism, [Matthew 3:17](#), and in all his work he showed that he was endowed abundantly with that Spirit.’

Isaiah tells how the Messiah will manifest Himself in the world as a quiet, gentle, and humble individual, [Isaiah 42:2](#), the opposite of self-seeking, [Matthew 6:1-7](#). He will draw all men to Himself and He will bring justice to the downtrodden, [Isaiah 42:3](#). His mission is not to destroy but to seek and to save, [Luke 19:10](#). The Messiah will not be

broken nor His strength diminished until He brings the redemption, [Isaiah 42:4](#). In other words, He will accomplish His mission. Jesus was the fulfilment of all that Israel was supposed to be, [Isaiah 36:6](#) / [Ezekiel 29:6](#). In the New Testament, Matthew quoted this whole passage in [Matthew 12:18-21](#), stating that the prophet Isaiah had written this and applying every word of it to Jesus Christ.

‘This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”’ [Isaiah 42:5-9](#)

God now addresses His servant, the Messiah. The Messiah has an exalted mission answering to the exaltation of Him who called Him, [Isaiah 42:5](#). The Messiah will not lack the power to fulfil His mission, [Isaiah 42:5](#). By the Messiah, God makes a new covenant with His people, [Isaiah 42:6](#) / [Jeremiah 31:31-32](#) / [Micah 5:5](#).

He would be a light to the Gentiles, [Isaiah 42:6](#) / [Acts 26:18](#), and in being a light to those in bondage, He would give freedom, [Isaiah 42:7](#) / [John 8:32-36](#). The ‘prisoners’ [Isaiah 42:7](#), are spiritual prisoners, [Ephesians 4:8](#) / [Hebrews 2:14](#). ‘To open the blind eyes’, [Isaiah 42:7](#) / [Isaiah 42:17](#), refers not to a physical act but a figurative one, [Isaiah 35:5](#) / [John 9:39-41](#) / [Luke 4:18-19](#).

God pledges His Name and honour to the accomplishment of the Messiah’s work and there will be restoration blessings of the return from the Babylonian captivity, [Isaiah 42:8](#), and secondly, the redemption offered, this is predicted before it happened, [Isaiah 42:9](#).

SONG OF PRAISE TO THE LORD

‘Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands. The LORD will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.’ [Isaiah 42:10-13](#)

The prediction of new things is manifestly the works of God. These new things will be an occasion for all the earth to sing a new song because they are set free, [Isaiah 42:10](#) / [Isaiah 12:1-6](#) / [Isaiah 25:1-12](#) / [Isaiah 26:1-10](#). Even the plundering Arabs of Kedar will sing in jubilation, [Isaiah 42:11](#), the people of Sela will be shouting the praises of God from the highest mountains, [Isaiah 42:11](#).

The people of Sela are called the ‘rock’ in the KJV, which is a reference to Petra, the capital of the Edomites. They will give glory to God and praise Him in the islands, [Isaiah 42:12](#). It’s God who marches out like a champion and will triumph over His enemies, [Isaiah 42:13](#).

Archer, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 42:1-13](#).

‘These represent the Gentiles as singing praises to God for their deliverance and conversion and rejoicing with Israel over God’s conquest over all his foes.’

‘For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do;

I will not forsake them. But those who trust in idols, who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’ will be turned back in utter shame.’ Isaiah 42:14-17

God would overcome His enemies after He held His peace long enough. He had restrained His speech but now He will break forth as a woman suddenly giving birth to a child, [Isaiah 42:14](#). In order for this deliverance to take place, a great change must come. The land of captivity is turned from a garden land into a wasteland, [Isaiah 42:15](#). This is indicative of the destruction that is going to come upon the captors of Israel.

The redemption of God’s people is to furnish them a deliverance which they knew not, [Isaiah 42:16](#), that is, the decree of Cyrus. Those who were spiritually blind will see His grace and those who trusted in idols will be shamed, [Isaiah 42:16](#). God’s work is twofold, salvation for His own people, [Isaiah 42:16](#), and judgement for idolaters, [Isaiah 42:17](#).

ISRAEL BLIND AND DEAF

‘Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one in covenant with me, blind like the servant of the LORD? You have seen many things, but you pay no attention; your ears are open, but you do not listen.’ Isaiah 42:18-20

The blind are told to free themselves from their blindness and deafness, [Isaiah 42:18](#) / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [Romans 11:25](#). They are completely blind and completely deaf, [Isaiah 42:18](#) / [John 9:40-41](#) / [John 15:22](#). Israel was the blinded servant, [Isaiah 42:19](#), she was blinded because of the great things that God had done for her throughout her history, [Isaiah 42:20](#). She had all the opportunity to witness the direct work of God in the life of the nation but she turned away to be her own master, [Isaiah 42:20](#).

‘It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, “Send them back.” Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come? Who handed Jacob over to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways, they did not obey his law. So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand; it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart.’ Isaiah 42:21-25

These verses form a reproof toward Israel in a severe tone because so much has been committed unto her. Despite the glory given to Israel, [Isaiah 42:21](#), when she fell into captivity no one could deliver her [Isaiah 42:22-23](#), but God, [Isaiah 42:24](#).

Burned children usually shun the fire but the nation of Israel didn’t learn, [Isaiah 42:25](#) / [Hosea 4:6](#). Until Israel was willing to see her condition she would remain in this condition. The fury of God kindled the flame of war all around the Jewish nation and spread desolation everywhere, [Isaiah 42:25](#). Israel must remain in her afflicted condition until she changes.

Clarkes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘So thoroughly hardened are the Jewish people as a whole, that they are represented here as being trapped in a house on fire and even being scorched by the flames but still unwilling to see their danger or to admit that they were hurt. What a picture of hardening! And this is their state to the present day!’

CHAPTER 43

INTRODUCTION

‘But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush, and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” Isaiah 43:1-7

ISRAEL’S ONLY SAVIOUR

This chapter begins with some encouragement for Israel and it’s here we read of a sudden shift from reproach, [Isaiah 42](#), to consolation. This is to help them to understand that not their merit warranted their deliverance but because she was God’s, [Isaiah 43:1](#), He would preserve her, [Isaiah 43:2](#). No water or river or fire, [Isaiah 43:2](#), that is, no natural dangers would hinder them from returning from captivity. This is the first reason for encouragement.

As He delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, [Isaiah 43:3](#), so He will gather them home from Babylonian captivity. Instead of Israel having been given up, three nations have been offered in its place. God gave Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba as a ransom for the salvation of Jerusalem, [Isaiah 43:3](#). Sennacherib focused his military energies on these nations while sending a part of his army to Jerusalem. The second reason which ensures them against complete destruction is the free love of God, [Isaiah 43:4](#).

The third reason for encouragement is God was with Israel and would restore her from every quarter of the earth, [Isaiah 43:5](#) / [Jeremiah 9:16](#) / [Ezekiel 5:12](#) / [Ezekiel 17:21](#) / [Amos 9:9](#) / [Zechariah 2:6](#). All who worship the true God and are obedient to His law will be blessed, [Isaiah 43:6](#) / [Genesis 12:1-3](#). God is the only One who can save them and will do so, [Isaiah 43:7](#).

Kidner, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These seven verses eloquently detail the assurance that Christ gave his Church, i.e., that the Gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Fire, water, distances, peoples etc. can take no toll. Everyone will prevail whom God calls ‘mine’.’

‘Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf. All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of their gods foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, “It is true.” “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me, no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no saviour. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?” Isaiah 43:8-13

The summons is now addressed to someone to bring Israel forth while all the nations are to assemble for the purpose of justifying themselves for their treatment of Israel, [Isaiah 43:8](#) / [Romans 1:20](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘One of the big things in this paragraph is that the fleshly Israel, the deaf and blind Israel, are here commissioned as God’s witness, whether or not they were willing; and this tremendous predictive prophecy is this very day being

fulfilled all over the earth. The very existence of Israel is a witness for every single line of the Old Testament and ‘These are they that testify of me,’ as Jesus stated it. Note that the imaginary court scene is again used as a device for emphasizing these significant facts.’

The thought of [Isaiah 43:9](#), seems to be that nations are now given an opportunity to justify themselves in their past conduct. If the nations cannot produce their own witnesses, let them hear what God is saying and let them acknowledge that God’s witness is true.

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If they have any witness who can testify that they have declared the work of God and the former things, they may now present those witnesses, that they may be seen to be justified in their assertions.’

In [Isaiah 43:10](#), the prophet turns to Israel and says that not only are they witnesses of God’s power but that they were God’s servants as well, therefore they ought to acknowledge him for what he is. God proves Himself by His works and Israel is overwhelming evidence of what He claims.

God is Creator, God is one, [Isaiah 43:11-12](#) / [Isaiah 44:6](#) / [Isaiah 44:8](#) / [Isaiah 44:24](#) / [Isaiah 45:4-5](#) / [Isaiah 45:14](#) / [Isaiah 45:18](#) / [Isaiah 45:21-22](#), none can prevail against Him. Therefore, salvation for Israel is certain, God alone is able to save them, [Isaiah 43:13](#). In other words, they could never have come back from captivity unless God had released them.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

1. That God is from everlasting, for if he was before time, he must have been eternal.
2. That he is unchangeably the same – a doctrine which is, as it is here designed to be used, the only sure foundation for the security of his people – for who can trust a being who is fickle, changing, vacillating?
3. That he can deliver his people always, no matter what are their circumstances.
4. That he will accomplish all his plans; no matter whether to save his people, or to destroy his foes.
5. That no one, man or devil, can hinder him. How can the feeble arm of a creature resist God?
6. That opposition to him is as fruitless as it is wicked. If people wish for happiness, they must fall in with his plans, and aid in the furtherance of his designs.

GOD’S MERCY AND ISRAEL’S UNFAITHFULNESS

‘This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride. I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King.” [Isaiah 43:14-15](#)

From these verses through to [Isaiah 44:5](#), we read of God’s vengeance and deliverance. God promises to overthrow Babylon for the sake of Israel, [Isaiah 43:14](#). God brought down the Babylonian Empire in order that the Medo-Persian Empire, through King Cyrus, allow Israel to be restored to the Promised Land. God is the LORD, their Holy One, Israel’s Creator, their King, [Isaiah 43:15](#) / [Isaiah 43:1](#).

‘This is what the LORD says—he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army, and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild

animals honour me, the jackals, and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.' Isaiah 43:16-21

Here we find another picture of redemption, it is a reminder of what happened to Egypt at the Red Sea, [Isaiah 43:16-17](#). God dried up the waters, [Isaiah 43:16](#), in order that they be delivered from Egypt. Now He will supply water in order that they are able to cross the desert from the captivity of Babylon to the freedom of their Promised Land.

It was God who parted the Red Sea and then closed it upon Pharaoh's army when Israel were delivered from Egyptian captivity, [Isaiah 43:17](#) / [Exodus 14:4](#) / [Exodus 15:5](#) / [Exodus 15:10](#), and God will again work to bring Israel out of Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Just as God snuffed out the power of Pharaoh, [Isaiah 43:17](#), so He will snuff out the power of these two empires who had taken His people into captivity.

Israel are encouraged to look forward, not backward, [Isaiah 43:18](#) / [Philippians 3:13](#). The new things, [Isaiah 43:19](#), which God would do for His people is a deliverance that the old deliverance from Egypt only served to typify. In this 'new thing,' there seems to be a Messianic reference, a spiritual deliverance, [Isaiah 43:20](#) / [Isaiah 41:17-19](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The sense of this passage is plain, and the image is highly poetical and beautiful. God would pour such copious floods of waters through the waste sandy deserts to supply his people, that even the wild beasts would be sensible of his abundant goodness and would break forth into thanksgiving and praise for the unusual supply.'

The nation of Israel were created with God's purpose of bringing the incarnation of Himself into the world through Jesus, [Isaiah 43:21](#) / [Isaiah 43:1](#).

'Yet you have not called on me, Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, Israel. You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honoured me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense. You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offenses.' Isaiah 43:22-24

God had blessed His people but the people rebelled against God, [Isaiah 43:22](#). In other words, the people were religious but they weren't godly, [Isaiah 43:23-24](#) / [Amos 8:5-6](#) / [Malachi 1:13](#). It would be the goodness of God and not their own faithfulness or works which they must remember because the only thing they had to offer was their own grievous sins.

'I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together; state the case for your innocence. Your first father sinned; those I sent to teach you rebelled against me. So I disgraced the dignitaries of your temple; I consigned Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn.' Isaiah 43:25-28

The promise is brought to a close, with God blotting out Israel's sins. Notice the double 'I', makes it emphatic, [Isaiah 43:25](#) / [Isaiah 43:11](#). God will forgive and forget their sins, [Isaiah 43:25](#) / [Isaiah 38:17](#). It was by the grace of God that He would blot Israel's sins but only for the sake of Jehovah, [Isaiah 43:25](#). In order that they continue throughout history for the coming of the Messiah, their restoration to the land after the captivities was a sign that God had forgiven them.

God calls upon Israel to show Him some merit, [Isaiah 43:26](#). This is done in order to impress the grace and love of God more deeply. Israel had no good work to show, merely a string of sins to offer, [Isaiah 43:27](#) / [Isaiah 9:15](#) / [Isaiah 28:7](#) / [Isaiah 29:10](#) / [Jeremiah 5:31](#), and it was because of this sinful state that God had turned her over to the captor, [Isaiah 43:28](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Alas! What a curse does the old Israel still bear, and what reproach do they still suffer? No national crimes have ever equalled those of the Jewish nation; for no nation ever had such privileges to neglect, despise, and sin against. When shall the severity of God toward this people have an end? Answer: Whenever, with one heart, they turn to him and receive the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ and not till then.’

CHAPTER 44

INTRODUCTION

‘But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the LORD says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. Some will say, ‘I belong to the LORD’; others will call themselves by the name of Jacob; still others will write on their hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and will take the name Israel.’ Isaiah 44:1-5

ISRAEL THE CHOSEN

This chapter begins by telling us that the outpouring of God’s blessings contrasted with the barren state of captivity and God’s Spirit is the very highpoint of blessings. God chose Israel, He made Israel, formed Israel, and will help Israel, [Isaiah 44:1](#). God had given His people over for judgment in order to move them to repentance. He now comforts them by reminding them that He will bring them back because of their repentance.

They mustn’t fear [Isaiah 44:2](#), because the results would be the bringing forth of fruits, restoration to the land which is but a type of the greater era to come, the Lord’s church, [Joel 2:28](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Acts 2:16-17](#) / [Acts 2:41](#).

The word, ‘Jeshurun’, [Isaiah 44:2](#), is used as a diminutive word of endearment, [Deuteronomy 32:15](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:5](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:26](#), which means ‘upright one’, and here it literally means, ‘dear little Israel’. We also read when God’s Spirit is poured out, [Isaiah 44:3-4](#), there will be a willingness of the Gentiles to be proselyted, [Isaiah 44:5](#) / [Matthew 23:15](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning, [Isaiah 44:3-5](#).

‘The outpouring of the Spirit, [Isaiah 44:3](#), is a glimpse of the new covenant as in [Jeremiah 31:31-33](#) / [Ezekiel 36:26](#) / [Joel 2:28](#) / [Acts 2](#). [Isaiah 44:5](#), is a foretaste of Gentile conversion. These verses promise redemption and the reception of the Spirit through the success of the Gospel of Christ. Here God explicitly predicts that future Israel who was to receive the Living Water and the Holy Spirit poured out upon them pre-eminently on Pentecost, [Acts 2](#). Mention of Israel’s ‘seed’ in [Isaiah 44:3](#), refers primarily to Israel after the Spirit, the true ‘Israel of God’, [Galatians 6:16](#).’

THE LORD, NOT IDOLS

‘This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let them foretell what will come. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” [Isaiah 45:6-8](#)

From these verses through to [Isaiah 45:23](#), we read of the absurdity of idols and the rejoicing of God’s people. God begins by proving that He alone is God, [Isaiah 45:6](#). Notice the words, ‘I am the first and I am the last, apart from me there is no God, [Isaiah 45:6](#). These are the very words which Christ claimed for Himself, proving His Deity, [Revelation 1:17-18](#) / [Revelation 22:13](#).

Two things which demonstrate His Deity.

1. He rules over nature in history showing that he alone is without equal and is God, [Isaiah 45:7](#).
2. His deity is further declared by the fact that he alone can foretell the future [Isaiah 45:7](#).

No other god could answer the challenge, which alone should assure Israel, [Isaiah 45:8](#). These verses form a new pledge of redemption and a fresh exhortation to trust in Jehovah. God points out the wretchedness of idols and that of their worshippers in contrast with Jehovah, the only God, [Isaiah 45:8](#).

‘All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing? People who do that will be put to shame; such craftsmen are only human beings. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and shame. The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in human form, human form in all its glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. He cut down cedars or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. It is used as fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, “Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.” From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, “Save me! You are my god!” [Isaiah 44:9-17](#)

The heathen gods are so far from being a ground of trust that all who trust in them will discover with alarm how they had deceived themselves and will be put to shame, [Isaiah 44:9](#). The wretched folly and stupidity of idolatry are seen by its origin, they are manmade, [Isaiah 44:9](#) / [Isaiah 44:11](#).

Isaiah gives us a description of the making of an idol. There is no profit in shaping or casting an idol, [Isaiah 44:10](#). The idol make will be put to shame, [Isaiah 44:11](#). The blacksmith uses his own tools and strength to make an idol but his idol can’t feed him or give him something to drink, [Isaiah 44:12](#).

The carpenter takes the time to measure and shape his idol in a human image so that it will sit in a shrine somewhere, [Isaiah 44:13](#), he cuts down a tree, plants it in a forest and hopes the rain will make it grow, [Isaiah 44:14](#). Half the wood is used for fuel for a fire in order to cook on, [Isaiah 44:15](#), while the other half is used make an idol which he bows to, [Isaiah 44:15](#). He makes an idol that he prays to and says save me! You are my god! [Isaiah 44:17](#). This description is intended to show the foolishness of putting trust in the product of man’s labours. The irony of it all is seen in their existence is from the residue of what man did not use for his physical needs. It is folly to bow down to that which man makes with his own hands.

‘They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, “Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?” Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, “Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?” [Isaiah 44:18-20](#)

Here Isaiah sets forth idolatry as irrational, [Exodus 20:4-5](#), yet idolatry hardens the heart so much that men cannot see or understand what is so obvious, [Isaiah 44:18](#) / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [Luke 12:15](#) / [Romans 1:20-28](#) / [Colossians 3:5](#) / [1 Timothy 6:8-10](#).

Wooden idols are good only for cooking food and keeping one warm, [Isaiah 44:19](#). It appears that God will allow people to believe a lie but condemn them for their desire to believe the lie, [Isaiah 44:20](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:11-12](#). Because the deceived had no desire to believe the truth, they will be condemned for their desire to follow after their own deceptions.

‘Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.’ Sing for joy, you heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, you earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel.’ [Isaiah 44:21-23](#)

Here we read that idolatry so deceived the heart that it had turned Israel so far from the truth and salvation that she couldn’t even think of salvation, [Isaiah 44:21](#). God would not forget His people, [Isaiah 44:21](#). He has swept away their offences like a cloud and their sins like the morning mist, [Isaiah 44:22](#). In other words, the assurance that God wouldn’t forget His servant, that is Cyrus, [Isaiah 44:28](#), is followed with an announcement of an act of love manifested by redemption.

There is already good ground to rejoice, [Isaiah 44:23](#), and the reply of God is that He has accomplished what He has purposed, the redemption of His people, [Isaiah 44:23](#). All those who realise their forgiveness in Jesus, work in thanksgiving and rejoice because of the grace of God, [2 Corinthians 4:15](#).

JERUSALEM TO BE INHABITED

‘This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself, who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of his servants and fulfils the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’ [Isaiah 44:24-28](#)

From these verses through to [Isaiah 45:25](#), we read of Cyrus, the anointed one. The promise of redemption of Israel becomes more specific. God will deliver them from the captivity from which they couldn’t deliver themselves. God first gave existence to Israel, [Isaiah 44:24](#), and He refuses to let Israel be completely destroyed, [Isaiah 44:25](#). He would rebuild Jerusalem and use His shepherd to perform it, [Isaiah 44:26](#). Against the background of the destruction by Sennacherib, and eventually by the Babylonians, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, [Isaiah 44:26](#). Just as God dried up the Red Sea in order to free Israel from Egyptian captivity, [Isaiah 44:27](#), He will certainly deliver Israel from Assyrian and Babylonian captivity.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Isaiah 44:27](#).

‘This remarkable circumstance, in which the event so exactly corresponded with the prophecy, was also noted by Jeremiah, [Jeremiah 50:38](#) / [Jeremiah 51:36](#).’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Cyrus took the city of Babylon after having besieged it a long time in vain, by turning the waters of the river into a vast lake, forty miles square, which had been constructed to carry off the superfluous waters in times of a flood. By doing this, he laid the channel of the Euphrates almost dry, enabling him to enter the city and take it by surprise.’

This is the first mention of Cyrus by name, [Isaiah 44:28](#) / [Isaiah 45:21](#), and he is mentioned about one-hundred and fifty years before Cyrus was born and about one-hundred and seventy years before he issued the decree for releasing the Jews, [Ezra 1:1-4](#) / [2 Chronicles 36:22-23](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The title ‘My Shepherd’ was one that God used of the Davidic kings, [2 Samuel 5:2](#) / [1 Kings 22:17](#) / [Ezekiel 34:23](#). The fact that He used it here of a pagan monarch shows that God would use pagans to fulfil His wishes-since the Davidic kings had proved unreliable, [Isaiah 7:13](#) / [Isaiah 39:7](#). This was indeed a new thing that God had not done before, [Isaiah 43:19](#).’

CHAPTER 45

INTRODUCTION

‘This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things. “You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it; I, the LORD, have created it.’ [Isaiah 45:1-8](#)

This chapter tells us that Cyrus will be successful because God is with him. God has ‘anointed’, [Isaiah 45:1](#), that is, assigned, a specific task for Cyrus to accomplish because Cyrus was willing to serve God’s purpose. He is God’s shepherd, [Isaiah 44:28](#). God called Cyrus by name, [Isaiah 45:1](#) / [Isaiah 44:28](#), and distinguished him for Israel’s sake, not for the sake of Cyrus.

The gates were the most fortified part of the city, [Isaiah 45:2](#), for it was the entrance into all ancient cities. They were built of wood and often overlaid with brass, [Isaiah 45:2](#). When the gates were broken, the city fell.

Herodotus, the Egyptian historian, said the following.

‘There were a hundred gates of brass protecting the city but all of these did not avail against the forces of Cyrus.’

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The victorious march of the Persian king is not to be attributed to his own wisdom and power but to the working of the Lord.’

God will bless him with so much, that he would know that it was God who had called his name, [Isaiah 45:3](#) / [Ezra 1:2](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The treasures which kings have amassed, and which they have laid up in dark and secure places. The word ‘darkness,’ here, means that which was hidden, unknown, secret, Job 12:22.’

The career of Cyrus, because of his victories, will cause the heathen to recognise God, Isaiah 45:3 / Ezra 1:2. This is still further evidence that fulfilled prophecy is one of the most convincing evidence of God’s existence, Ezra 1:1-3. This honour was given to Cyrus, even though Cyrus did not ‘know’ Jehovah, in order that all the nations might recognise the supremacy of Jehovah, Isaiah 45:4-5.

Notice that evil is contrasted with peace and light is contrasted with darkness, Isaiah 45:6-7, thus indicating a physical condition. Evil represents chaos and ruin brought about as a punishment. Peace represents rest and quiet as a blessing. God declares Himself responsible for the affairs of all nations as they are related to Israel. Evil, as an act or condition of sinfulness or sin, cannot be attributed to God, James 1:13 / 1 Peter 1:15-16. In view of the saving mission of Cyrus, the redemption of Israel, heaven and earth are summoned by God to pour out their blessings upon his way, Isaiah 45:8 / Psalms 85:11-12.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The very special favour shown to Cyrus here on God’s part was apparently motivated by three considerations’.

1. That Cyrus, the most powerful monarch on earth, might acknowledge the true God.
2. That Israel might be benefited and continued as a separate nation by the termination of their captivity.
3. That the attention of all the world might be attracted, and that the unity of God might be manifested to all the earth.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The purpose of all this arrangement was, to secure the acknowledgment of the truth that Yahweh was the only true God, as extensively as possible. Nothing could be better adapted to this than the actual course of events. For,

1. The conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was an event which would be extensively known throughout all nations.
2. Babylon was then the magnificent capital of the pagan world, and the kingdom of which it was the centre was the most mighty kingdom of the earth.
3. The fact of the conquest of Babylon, and the manner in which it was done, would be known all over that empire, and would attract universal attention. Nothing had ever occurred more remarkable; nothing more fitted to excite the wonder of mankind.
4. The hand of Yahweh was so manifest in this, and the prophecies which had been uttered were so distinctly fulfilled, that Cyrus himself acknowledged that it was of Yahweh. The existence, the name, and the truth of Yahweh became known as far as the name and exploits of Cyrus and there was a public recognition of the true God by him who had conquered the most mighty capital of the world, and whose opinions and laws were to enter into the constitution of the Medo-Persian empire that was to succeed.

‘Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ Does your work say, ‘The potter has no hands’? Woe to the one who says to a father, ‘What have you begotten?’ or to a mother, ‘What have you brought to birth?’ Isaiah 45:9-10

The promise of deliverance assumes more distinct terms. There is a reproof of the murmurer who rebels against God, and since God has made all things why should anyone, heathen, or Jew, complain against Him? Isaiah 45:9. Both man and clay vessels are but earthen works which owe everything to the Creator, Isaiah 45:9.

We have an example of a son who complains against his father and mother because of his existence, [Isaiah 45:10](#). This is used to show how revolting Israel's complaint is to God. The apostle Paul quoted these words from Isaiah in [Romans 9:20-21](#), and applied the passage there to the incredible folly of God's creatures complaining and murmuring against the doings of their Maker.

‘This is what the LORD says—the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts. I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty.’ [Isaiah 45:11-13](#)

The faultfinders in Israel were to leave things in God's hands, [Isaiah 45:11](#). The one who created and arranged history was the one who had the sole right of guidance, [Isaiah 45:12](#). God, who created all things had also raised up Cyrus, [Isaiah 45:13](#) / [Isaiah 41:2](#), whose ways he would prosper because Cyrus was designated to restore Israel, [Isaiah 45:13](#) / [Ezra 1:2](#) / [Ezra 1:7-11](#).

When Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to Palestine, it wasn't for the purpose of reaping tribute from them. Allowing the Israelites to relocate within the Medo-Persian Empire wasn't an economic plan to profit the empire.

‘This is what the LORD says: “The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans—they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to you in chains. They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, ‘Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god.’” Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself, the God, and Saviour of Israel. All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting.’ [Isaiah 45:14-17](#)

Here, Isaiah associates the release of Israel with an expanse of influence on the Gentiles, [Isaiah 45:14](#) / [Psalms 68:31](#). Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Since the voluntary ‘coming over’ is pointed out, this appears to be a type of that which was to come, [Matthew 11:28](#).’

Israel was shamed and disgraced when they blasphemed God through idolatry and the nations accused that the God of Israel was no greater than the gods of their nations, [Isaiah 45:15-16](#). But when Israel was allowed to resettle Palestine, the nations took notice, they will be ashamed and disgraced, [Isaiah 45:16](#) / [Isaiah 1:29](#) / [Isaiah 20:5](#) / [Isaiah 30:5](#) / [Isaiah 43:17](#). Israel stands amazed at the power of God and the way in which God is revealed as the God of salvation, He makes the idols perish among His people forever, [Isaiah 45:17](#).

‘For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.”’ [Isaiah 45:18-19](#)

These verses indicate why Israel must be restored to her land. God did not create the land of Palestine to be a desolation or an uninhabitable place but to be inhabited, [Isaiah 45:18](#). God didn't speak in secret, [Isaiah 45:19](#). He had spoken plainly and clearly. He did not speak out of both sides of his mouth. What He says can be clearly understood, His prophecies can be clearly understood to be fulfilled, [Isaiah 45:19](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These two verses set forth the two great witnesses of God's love and concern for fallen mankind. The very manner in which the earth itself has been created, and made so wonderfully suitable for human habitation, in [Isaiah 45:18](#), are exactly the very same grounds of Paul's appeal in Antioch of Pisidia, [Acts 14:17](#), to the effect that the fruitful seasons of the earth were evidence that “God has not left himself without witness.”’

‘Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save. Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God, and a Saviour; there is none but me. “Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me, every knee will bow; by me, every tongue will swear. They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’” All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the LORD and will make their boast in him.’ Isaiah 45:20-25

God declares that those who burden themselves with idols have no knowledge [Isaiah 45:20](#). If they knew anything at all, they would know that he who foretold the future was God above all, [Isaiah 45:21](#).

We read that God desires man’s salvation, [Isaiah 45:22](#) / [Isaiah 55:7](#) / [2 Peter 3:9](#), and notice the bending of the knee and confession, [Isaiah 45:23](#) / [Philippians 2:5-11](#), was to be forced from no one. The revelation of God through the Messiah would bring the opportunity that every knee bow.

Only in God could Israel become righteous and the same is true today, [Romans 3:24-25](#) / [Galatians 3:26-29](#). Because all who come into spiritual Israel will be justified from sin, they will give glory to God, [Isaiah 45:24-25](#) / [Romans 5:1-5](#).

CHAPTER 46

INTRODUCTION

‘Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low; their idols are borne by beasts of burden. The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary. They stoop and bow down together; unable to rescue the burden, they themselves go off into captivity.’ Isaiah 46:1-2

GODS OF BABYLON

This chapter, through to [Isaiah 47:15](#), speaks of the fall of Babylon with her gods. Isaiah begins by describing the nothingness of the Babylonian gods. Bel, [Isaiah 46:1](#), was the name of the Babylonian god, originally as the city patron of Nippur but then as a second name for the high god, Merodach of Babylon. Similarly, Jeremiah prophesied shame coming on Bel, [Jeremiah 50:2](#). Bel would have to spit out the nations he had swallowed up, [Jeremiah 51:44](#). Nebo, [Isaiah 46:1](#), was a place and divine name meaning, ‘height’. He was the Babylonian god of speech, writing, and water. The worship of Nebo was popular during the Neo-Babylonian era 612-539 B.C. Isaiah mocked parades featuring the idol of Nebo.

The idols of Babylon are contrasted with the eternal God. Idolaters must carry their idols, [Isaiah 46:1](#), whereas the eternal God carries and delivers those who are His people. Isaiah mocked Babylon by describing their gods burdening down donkeys in procession out of the city into captivity, [Isaiah 46:2](#).

People did not bow before them. The idols bowed down to get out of the city gates. Isaiah says that their idols were nothing but a burden to the people, [Isaiah 46:2](#). The idol gods couldn’t prevent themselves from going into captivity, much less save their worshipers from bondage.

‘Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.’ Isaiah 46:3-4

God carried Israel from the very beginning, He will carry them and save them. Israel was born out of Egyptian captivity, [Isaiah 46:3](#), and carried by God throughout her history, [Isaiah 46:3](#) / [Numbers 11:12](#). Even when the nation became old, God was still with her through her apostasy and restoration, [Isaiah 46:4](#).

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Like an indulgent father caring for his people from the day they were born, God watched over and led His people while false gods of heathen people had to be carried about by their worshippers.’

‘With whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer; it cannot save them from their troubles.’ Isaiah 46:5-7

The negative answer to the question, [Isaiah 46:5](#), is the direct result of what precedes. Further proof is given that the idols are nothing but the further proof is offered that idols are as follows.

1. Made from lifeless material, [Isaiah 46:6](#).
2. Made by man who then subjects himself to it, [Isaiah 46:6](#).
3. Carried about by man, [Isaiah 46:7](#).
4. Unable to move self, [Isaiah 46:7](#).
5. Unable to speak, [Isaiah 46:7](#).
6. Unable to help, [Isaiah 46:7](#).

In view of these things, who would dare to compare an idol with God, [Isaiah 46:5](#), it’s foolish, [Isaiah 40:18-20](#) / [Isaiah 44:9-20](#) / [41:5-7](#) / [Isaiah 46:1-2](#).

‘Remember this, keep it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfil my purpose. What I have said that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do. Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are now far from my righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendour to Israel.’ Isaiah 46:8-13

Another admonition is given to those who would imitate the heathen, [Isaiah 46:8](#). These are the apostate Jews who have not yet gone all the way. They are wavering between God and idols. Man is made in the image of God and has the ability to think, [Isaiah 46:9](#) / [Genesis 1:27](#). If he will use this ability, he will know that it is foolishness to worship an idol when he could be worshipping the true God.

Idols cannot predict the future, [Isaiah 46:10](#), and so, Israel was called upon to remember the great works which God had done in the past, [Isaiah 46:10](#). The ‘bird of prey from the east’, [Isaiah 46:11](#), is the symbol of the golden eagle adorned the flags of Persia. A fitting emblem for Cyrus the Great. Another admonition is given to the hard-hearted who are not interested in righteousness, [Isaiah 46:12](#). God warns them that salvation is at the door, [Isaiah 46:13](#) / [Romans 10:6-9](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are three reasons visible in these verses which are designed to inspire trust in the chosen people’.

1. They should recall the many wonders God has already performed on their behalf.

2. They should especially remember his power and ability to prophecy events before they occur.
3. They should dwell upon the fact that God has promised to deliver them from captivity.

CHAPTER 47

INTRODUCTION

‘Go down, sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, queen city of the Babylonians. No more will you be called tender or delicate. Take millstones and grind flour; take off your veil. Lift up your skirts, bare your legs, and wade through the streams. Your nakedness will be exposed and your shame uncovered. I will take vengeance; I will spare no one.’ Our Redeemer—the LORD Almighty is his name—is the Holy One of Israel. “Sit in silence, go into darkness, queen city of the Babylonians; no more will you be called queen of kingdoms. I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a very heavy yoke. You said, ‘I am forever—the eternal queen!’

But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen.’ Isaiah 47:1-7

THE FALL OF BABYLON

This chapter continues from the previous chapter, by telling us that Babylon will fall, Babylon will be destroyed, [Isaiah 47:1](#). The proclamation of judgement passes from the gods of Babylon to Babylon itself. From sitting on a throne, Babylon would sit in the dust, [Isaiah 47:1](#).

The shame of Babylon is her shameful conduct, [Isaiah 14:4-21](#). The luxury-loving lady is degraded to the status of the meanest harlot, [Isaiah 47:2-3](#). Babylon will be seen for what she truly is, [Isaiah 47:3](#), and He who possesses the sovereign power to destroy the world empire also has the power and will to redeem His people, [Isaiah 47:4](#).

This was a degrading humiliation for one who had been a queen, [Isaiah 47:5](#) / [Nahum 3:5](#). God shows that when Babylon was conquered, they would be disgraced in the eyes of men. God had used Babylon to punish His people, [Isaiah 47:6](#), but Babylon had given them ill-treatment because she thought she would remain in power forever [Isaiah 47:7](#).

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Modern nations should take this to heart and have due regard for the latter end of their destiny. Those who are lifted up with pride will be brought low and this is true of nations as well as individuals.’

‘Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.’ Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells. You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, ‘No one sees me.’ Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’ Disaster will come upon you, and you will not know how to conjure it away. A calamity will fall upon you that you cannot ward off with a ransom; a catastrophe you cannot foresee will suddenly come upon you. “Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have laboured at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror. All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely

they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. These are not coals for warmth; this is not a fire to sit by. That is all they are to you—these you have dealt with and laboured with since childhood. All of them go on in their error; there is not one that can save you.’ Isaiah 47:8-15

The punishment is based upon the ground of Babylon’s conduct, [Isaiah 47:8](#) / [James 2:13](#). Babylon was virtually claiming to be a deity, [Isaiah 47:8](#) / [Isaiah 47:10](#) / [Zephaniah 2:15](#). Babylon was surrounded by false security and she would be destroyed suddenly without warning because of her pride and the trust in her wickedness, [Isaiah 47:9](#). They beat up the already beaten down nations, they were arrogant and went too far, [Isaiah 47:9](#). Belshazzar was slain and the city became a widow, [Isaiah 47:9](#) / [Psalms 127:1](#).

They acquired wisdom for themselves through their sorcerers and mediums, [Isaiah 47:9](#). Notice again, Babylon was virtually claiming to be a deity, [Isaiah 47:10](#) / [Isaiah 47:8](#) / [Zephaniah 2:15](#). God challenged them to consult their normal mediums for wisdom in order that they gain an understanding of the national calamity that was coming upon them, [Isaiah 47:11-12](#). But the source of their supposed knowledge, that is, their magicians, astrologers, mediums etc, will be destroyed, [Isaiah 47:11-12](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The various sins of Babylon are listed here.’

1. Her egotistical boasting.
2. Her reliance upon the black arts of sorcery and enchantments.
3. Her having given herself wholly to lustful, sinful pleasures.
4. Her trusting in her wickedness.
5. Her over-confident sense of security.
6. Her reliance upon her own wisdom and knowledge.
7. Most importantly of all the attitude that is mentioned twice, in [Isaiah 47:8](#) / [Isaiah 47:10](#), her self-deification is visible in her thoughts that, I am, and there is none else besides me! What is glaringly plain in such an attitude is that there is no consciousness of God or belief in Him whatsoever. This was the greatest and the worst of Babylon’s sins. There is no hope for Babylon and they would benefit nothing from her wise men, nothing could save her, [Isaiah 47:13](#). When the day of trouble came, all of those with whom Babylon had laboured retreated to their own quarters, leaving her abandoned to her fate, [Isaiah 47:14-15](#). The Medes and Persians took the city and slew many of its inhabitants, [Daniel 5:30-31](#). She was as friendless as the prodigal son in the foreign country when his money was gone, [Luke 15:11-32](#).

Barnes in his commentary, says the following.

‘This chapter contains some very particular statements about the manner in which Babylon was to be destroyed, statements which were fulfilled with remarkable accuracy. They are statements that could not have been the result of conjecture, nor of mere political sagacity and it should be borne in remembrance that this prophecy was uttered one hundred fifty years before its fulfilment.’

CHAPTER 48

INTRODUCTION

‘Listen to this, you descendants of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel and come from the line of Judah, you who take oaths in the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel—but not in truth or righteousness—you who call yourselves citizens of the holy city and claim to rely on the God of Israel—the LORD Almighty is his name: I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. For I knew how stubborn you were; your neck muscles were iron, your forehead was bronze. Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, ‘My images brought them about; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.’ You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not admit them? “From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you. They are created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, ‘Yes, I knew of them.’ You have neither heard nor understood; from of old your ears have not been open. Well do I know how treacherous you are; you were called a rebel from birth. For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely. See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.’ Isaiah 48:1-11

STUBBORN ISRAEL

God now turns to the captives with an admonition to hear and He reproves their hypocritical lives. God pleads with them, that is, for Israel to open their eyes to the destiny which He had planned for them, to recognise His hand in their history and to believe that He had great blessings in store for them in the future.

God summons them to hear, [Isaiah 48:1](#), and reminds them that he had foretold their captivity because he knew the condition of their hearts that they would bring it to pass, [Isaiah 48:1-2](#). Israel must acknowledge that God’s prophecy was now fulfilled, [Isaiah 48:3](#) / [Joshua 21:45](#). God knew they were stubborn, their neck muscles were iron and their forehead was bronze, [Isaiah 48:4](#).

God made this matter known so that they would not say that their idols had done it, [Isaiah 48:5](#). The object of these predictions was to guard Israel against giving credit to idols. Israel must acknowledge that God foretold, [Isaiah 48:6-7](#), and that Isaiah had given predictions which could only come from God, [Isaiah 48:8](#), yet Israel had refused to obey. God didn’t give Israel the punishment which she deserved, [Isaiah 48:9](#). He tempered justice with mercy and waited patiently for the people to repent, [Isaiah 48:10](#). It is only by God’s grace that He had saved Israel from complete destruction, it was for His sake, [Isaiah 48:11](#), and not theirs, [Romans 15:4](#) / [1 Corinthians 10:11](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

1. God acts with reference to his own glory, in order to manifest his own perfections and to secure his praise.
2. The reason why the wicked are not cut off sooner in their transgressions is, that He may show his forbearance and secure praise by long-suffering.
3. The reason why the righteous are kept amidst their frequent failures in duty, their unfaithfulness, and their many imperfections, is, that God may get glory by showing his covenant fidelity.
4. It is one evidence of piety, and one that is indispensable, that there should be a willingness that God should secure his own glory in his own way, and that there should be a constant desire that his praise should be promoted, whatever may befall his creatures.

ISRAEL FREED

‘Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together. “Come together, all of you, and listen: Which of the idols has foretold these things? The LORD’s chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon; his arm will be against the Babylonians. I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him. I will bring him, and he will succeed in his mission. “Come near me and listen to this: “From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there.” And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, endowed with his Spirit.’ Isaiah 48:12-16

God alone is God, He is the Creator, shaper of history, He is the God of prophecy and the God of its fulfilment. Israel was obligated to hear God for the following reasons.

1. She was called to be His servant, [Isaiah 48:12](#).
2. God is the absolute, unchangeable, eternal one, [Isaiah 48:12](#).

Notice the words, ‘I am the first and I am the last’, [Isaiah 48:12](#). These are the very words which Christ claimed for Himself, proving His Deity, [Revelation 1:17-18](#) / [Revelation 22:13](#).

Gill, in his commentary, says the following.

‘I am he, I am the first, and I also am the last, the everlasting I AM, the immutable Jehovah, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first cause and last end of all things, phrases expressive of the self-existence, supremacy, eternity, and immutability of Christ, [Revelation 1:8](#), and what is it that such a sovereign, eternal and unchangeable Being cannot do?’

3. God is the creator of all, [Isaiah 48:13](#).
4. God is unique because of His prophecy, [Isaiah 48:14](#).

God had raised up Cyprus, [Isaiah 48:15](#), and His Spirit had sent him, [Isaiah 48:16](#), that is, Cyrus, upon Babylon. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God’s designation of Cyrus in these chapters is amazing. He is referred to as God’s ‘called’, as God’s ‘anointed’, as God’s ‘arm’ upon Babylon and as God’s ‘beloved’, [Isaiah 48:14](#). Note the promise that Cyrus’ way shall be ‘prosperous’, [Isaiah 48:15](#).’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘None of the astrologers, soothsayers, or diviners of Babylon had been able to foretell the expedition of Cyrus and his capture of Babylon, for, if they had been able to foresee the danger, they might have guarded against it, and the city might have been saved. But God had predicted it a hundred fifty years before it happened, thus demonstrating that he alone is God.’

The Pulpit Commentary, says the following.

‘God, ‘from the beginning’, i.e. from his first dealings with Israel, had raised up a succession of prophets, who had declared his will, not ‘in secret’, or ambiguously, but openly and plainly, so that all who heard might understand, [Isaiah 45:19](#). From the time that it was, there am I, i.e. ‘from the time that the earth was, there, in the succession of my prophetic messengers, was I. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, like most of the other great and mysterious doctrines of true religion, was gradually revealed to mankind. In one sense we may call it an exclusively Christian doctrine, but in another, we must assign it an antiquity far higher than that of the Christian era. God, in his several revelations to mankind, gradually paved the way for its acceptance. In the revelations which he made to Noah and Abraham, [Genesis 9:6](#) / [Genesis 9:16](#) / [Genesis 17:7](#) / [Genesis 17:8](#), God announced himself as Elohim, a word of plural form. In the revelation which he caused to be put forth by his servant Moses, he distinguished between ‘God’,

Elohim, and ‘the Spirit of God’, ruwach Elohim, which moved, or brooded, upon the face of the primeval chaos, Genesis 1:2. Isaiah, in the present passage, proclaims that he is sent ‘by the Lord Jehovah’.

‘This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be blotted out nor destroyed from before me.” Isaiah 48:17-19

Here we read that the future of Israel, depends upon her attitude toward God’s commandments, Isaiah 48:17. They would have been helped by His precepts. If they had been obedient, they would have had peace and well-being throughout their history, Isaiah 48:18.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God taught them, as he does his people now, by his Providence, his revealed word, and his Spirit, the way in which they ought to go. It is one of his characteristics that he is the guide and director of his people.’

Their descendants would have been countless and their name would never be blotted out nor destroyed, Isaiah 48:19.

‘Leave Babylon, flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth; say, “The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob.” They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out. “There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.” Isaiah 48:20-22

Loyalty and faith are demanded of Israel if she is to be restored. They must leave Babylon and announce it with joy and proclaim it, Isaiah 48:20. The promise to those who believe and were true to God is held out for redemption, Isaiah 48:20.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 48:21.

‘This is a part of that for which they would be called to celebrate his name. It was not merely that he had redeemed them, but that he had abundantly provided for their needs in the desert and guided them safe through the pathless wilderness to their own land, Isaiah 35:6-7 / Isaiah 41:17-18. The allusion here is undoubtedly to the fact that God caused the waters to flow out of the rock that Moses smote in the wilderness, Exodus 17:6 / Numbers 20:11.’

To the unbelievers, there was no peace or escape, Isaiah 48:22 / Isaiah 57:21 / Isaiah 57:20. The mention of Cyrus by name does not occur from now on to the end of Isaiah nor does the name Babylon.

Archer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This prophecy was written 150 years beforehand to Jews who would be captives in the year 539 B.C. not to tarry on the pagan soil of Babylon, but to take advantage of Cyrus’ permissive edict to return to Jerusalem. They were to bear triumphant testimony before the Gentiles as they celebrated deliverance and recalled Jehovah’s mercies to their fathers.’

CHAPTER 49

INTRODUCTION

‘Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother’s womb he has spoken my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendour.” But I said, “I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD’s hand, and my reward is with my God.” Isaiah 49:1-4

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

This chapter speaks of God’s servant of salvation, He speaks and reproves the despondence of Zion. In these verses, God’s servant will restore Israel to God. God tell the islands and distant nations to listen, [Isaiah 49:1](#).

What is said of this servant is unique and can apply only to Christ, [Isaiah 49:1](#) / [Luke 2:31-32](#), Jesus is the seed of [Genesis 3:15](#) / [Luke 1:31](#) / [Galatians 4:4](#).

1. The whole world is called upon to hear what the Messiah has to say about His mission and destiny, [Isaiah 49:1](#) / [John 14:6](#).

2. Out of His mouth issues the words of life, [Isaiah 49:2](#) / [John 6:68](#) / [John 12:48](#) / [Hebrews 4:12-13](#).

God kept his Servant close in His quiver, He was kept close until it was His time for ministry, [Isaiah 49:2](#).

3. It is in Jesus that God was and is glorified, [Isaiah 49:3](#) / [John 12:28](#) / [John 13:31-32](#) / [John 14:13](#) / [John 16:14](#) / [John 17:1-5](#) / [Hebrews 1:13](#) / [John 15:1-8](#).

Though His mission seems to bear no fruit, God will make sure of His reward, [Isaiah 49:4](#). The servant meets the words of the divine calling with a complaint which immediately silences itself, [Isaiah 49:4](#). This would be understood in a prophetic sense that after all his earthly labours, one of the closest disciples betrayed Him and the others scattered.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘After his resurrection, they even spent part of the time fishing and later they watched him ascend to heaven with a wrong conception of the kingdom still in their hearts.’

The main thrust of this is that it has failed to draw the nation of Israel back to God.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It will be noted that in his prophecies Isaiah makes mention of himself as God’s spokesman, of Cyrus who was raised up to bless God’s people and of the Messiah coming to usher in the last great age of the world. All of these things must be kept in mind as we read his prophecy.’

‘And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honoured in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength—he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Isaiah 49:5-6

The mission God has given this servant isn’t restricted to Israel but is worldwide, the Gentiles, [Luke 2:32](#). All of Israel would not be gathered, therefore, Jesus didn’t fail in His mission but was glorified by God because he accomplished his work, [John 17:4-5](#) / [Philippians 2:9](#).

‘This is what the LORD says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: “Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.” Isaiah 49:7

God replies and indicates the nature of the mission of Jesus.

1. His mission isn't to be served but to be a servant, [Isaiah 49:7](#) / [Matthew 20:25-28](#) / [Isaiah 53](#).
2. Christ was despised and rejected by His own people when He came to them, [Isaiah 49:7](#). He was executed as a common criminal, [Luke 23:18-23](#).
Jesus was despised and rejected, but upon His resurrection, He was manifested to be for millions the King of kings and Lord of lords, [1 Timothy 6:15](#).
3. But God is faithful to keep His promises and has chosen this very Servant and through Him provided salvation, [Isaiah 49:7](#) / [Acts 4:12](#).

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

‘This is what the LORD says: “In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, ‘Come out,’ and to those in darkness, ‘Be free!’ “They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. See, they will come from afar—some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan.” Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.’ [Isaiah 49:8-13](#)

Here we read of the glory of the vocation of this servant is seen. Here, pardon is promised through the travail of the soul of the Servant whom God prepared as a Mediator for His people [Isaiah 49:8](#). The Messiah now begins to fall into the background and the return of the redeemed is about to be described.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The imagery of the lands is to the Jew in captivity but is in such close connection with Jesus that it must be understood in that connection.’

The Messiah has brought all, Jew and Gentile, to God, [Isaiah 49:9](#), and God is seen as blessing them, [Isaiah 49:10](#), and the land, [Isaiah 49:11](#). No matter how far His people were scattered throughout the world, they will be restored to God in their land, [Isaiah 49:12](#). Heaven and earth respond with praise because he has saved its people, [Isaiah 49:13](#), and the joy of Israel becomes the joy of all the earth, [Isaiah 49:13](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A song of praise in view of the glorious results of the work of Messiah. The appearance of this outburst of praise in the midst of a long list of prophecies is similar to the appearance of the proleptic songs interspersed throughout the prophecy of Revelation, thus exhibiting the same characteristic found in other authentic portions of God’s Word.’

‘But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.” “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Your children hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you. As surely as I live,” declares the LORD, “you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride. Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, ‘This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these—where have they come from?’” [Isaiah 49:14-21](#)

Israel, in her captivity now complains that God has forgotten her suffering, Isaiah 49:14, but God says, it would be as easy for a woman to refuse compassion toward her infant son as it was for God to forget Israel, Isaiah 49:15. In other words, the thought of Israel was constantly upon God's mind.

Jerusalem's walls are engraved on the palm of His hands, Isaiah 49:16. Because God will not forget her, Israel can look forward to renewed glorification among the nations, Isaiah 49:17. The population Zion recovered will be to her as a woman's ornaments, Isaiah 49:18.

The national restoration would produce such an amount of population that Zion would marvel in disbelief as she remembered her desolation in captivity, Isaiah 49:19. Zion will once again shine forth with a multitude of people so that she would need to enlarge her borders, Isaiah 49:20. Because of such blessings, Israel would ask where did all such blessings come from? Isaiah 49:21.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The New Testament applies such promises not to 'the present Jerusalem', but to 'the Jerusalem which is above', Galatians 4:25-27 / Isaiah 54:1, i.e., to the universal church in heaven and on earth. The ruins of the city, the literal Jerusalem, were indeed rebuilt in the 6th and 5th centuries but these prophecies transcend the modest scale of those events.'

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed." Isaiah 49:22-23

The prophecy now looks backwards a step from the future of Isaiah 49:21, and describes the way the people are restored. Those who held them captive will be their nursing fathers and mothers as they allow them to return to the land, Isaiah 49:22-23. God, through Cyrus, provided the material means for their return.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the bowing down and licking the dust at their feet, Isaiah 49:23.

'It is well known that expressions of submission, homage, and reverence always have been and are still carried to a great degree of extravagance in the eastern countries. When Joseph's brethren were introduced to him, 'they bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth,' Genesis 42:6.'

These verses indicate the extent of material help given to Israel and all of this served to enlarge their faith in God. The fact that they returned would be evidence that God was true to His people and so, the true God among all the nations of the world, Isaiah 49:23.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'This paragraph is a prophecy of the great prosperity throughout history of the holy Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the New Israel of God, which replaced the Old Israel without any reservation whatever, and which is identified with the True Israel who is Christ, the head (in heaven) of the New Israel (his spiritual body). The kings and queens of the civilized world shall accept Christianity, Revelation 21:14, and that promise about the peoples coming and bowing clown to Israel and licking the dust of their feet probably did nothing more for the Old Blind and Deaf Israel than to feed their arrogant egotism; but what the promise meant was that the bowing down to Israel referred exclusively not to Old Israel at all, but to the world as a whole worshipping the True Israel, Jesus Christ.'

'Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives be rescued from the fierce? But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save. I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their

own blood, as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” Isaiah 49:24-26

A question now arises from Israel’s weak faith while they are in captivity, [Isaiah 49:24](#). They are so weak and Babylon is so strong that deliverance looks impossible, [Isaiah 49:24](#).

Isaiah describes the condition of his day, [Isaiah 49:25](#), but he continually keeps before the people the promise that the blessed Messiah will come and provide deliverance for all mankind, [Isaiah 49:25](#). The prophecy closes with God’s answer that He would ‘curse or contend those who had cursed her’, [Isaiah 49:25](#) / [Genesis 12:3](#), in such a manner that all flesh, Jew and Gentile, would know that He was God, [Isaiah 49:26](#). This is both a stern rebuke and a strong promise to Israel.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These last two verses contain a glorious promise of deliverance to the persecuted Church of Christ from the ‘terrible one,’ Satan, and all his representatives and vicegerents, and persecuting anti-Christian rulers. They shall, at last, cease from persecuting the Church of God, and destroy one another.’

CHAPTER 50

INTRODUCTION

‘This is what the LORD says: “Where is your mother’s certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away. When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to deliver you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with darkness and make sackcloth its covering.” Isaiah 50:1-3

ISRAEL’S SIN AND THE SERVANT’S OBEDIENCE

This chapter speaks of the connection between the sin of Israel and the suffering of God’s servant.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here, we have God vindicating Himself by asking questions of those Israelites who supposed either that God had formally divorced their mother, Zion, according to the law, [Deuteronomy 24:1](#), or had sold them to some creditor in payment of debt. Neither supposition is correct. God takes up the question of their estrangement and lets it be known that only sin separates men from God.’

God addresses Israel showing that it was not He, but she who had broken the covenant relationship, [Isaiah 50:1](#) / [Malachi 2:16](#). God didn’t sell her into captivity but she sold herself into exile by her sins, [Isaiah 50:1](#).

Husbands often divorced their wives, sometimes for very trivial matters. Fathers, being oppressed with debt, sometimes sold their children, [Exodus 21:7](#) / [2 Kings 4:1](#) / [Matthew 18:25](#). But God had done neither of these things to Israel, their sins had separated them from God, [Isaiah 50:1](#) / [Isaiah 59:1-2](#).

Neither was the reason for Israel's captivity due to a lack of strength on God's part, [Isaiah 50:2](#). God sent His servants but they were mocked, [2 Chronicles 36:16-17](#), He sent His own Son but He was rejected. So it isn't a lack of power that keeps God from helping His people, [Isaiah 50:2-3](#), but the fact that the people were unwilling to receive this help.

'The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.' [Isaiah 50:4-6](#)

This prophecy can only fit Jesus who came to speak to Israel and the world, God's Word, [Isaiah 50:4](#) / [John 12:48-50](#). The Messiah submits completely to God, [John 8:29](#) / [John 5:19](#). God knows how to speak in a way that is helpful to those who sin, [Isaiah 50:4](#). He knows how to listen to those who are repentant and seek to be obedient, [Isaiah 50:4-5](#). Jesus didn't draw back from persecution, [Isaiah 50:5](#) / [Matthew 26:67-68](#) / [Matthew 27:27-31](#) / [1 Peter 2:21-24](#). Christ was the greatest servant of God who ever lived on earth. He suffered this persecution from people whom He sought to help, [Isaiah 50:6](#). The manifestation of the Son of God was God's answer to the prayers of the obedient who sought deliverance.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'[Luke 18:31-32](#), records Jesus' quotation of things mentioned in [Isaiah 50:6](#), declaring that all these things would be accomplished unto the Son of Man, and the gospels faithfully relate how practically all of the things mentioned here were actually done unto Jesus.'

'Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.' [Isaiah 50:7-9](#)

Here we read that the shame and humiliation did not cause Him to be fainthearted because He trusted in God, [Isaiah 50:7](#). Christ was determined to carry out the will of God regardless of what happened to Him, [Isaiah 50:7](#) / [Luke 9:51](#). Such determination is needed in the hearts of Christians today. In the midst of His sufferings, he was certain of victory and because God is working through Him, [Isaiah 50:7](#) / [Romans 8:31](#), He has no reason to be ashamed of what He is doing, [Isaiah 50:7](#) / [Romans 1:16](#). He was exalted above every accusation, [Isaiah 50:8](#), and He knew that God would acknowledge Him, [Isaiah 50:9](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The idea here is that Messiah would survive all their attacks; his cause, his truth, and his reputation would live, while all the power, influence and reputation of his adversaries would vanish just like a garment that is worn out and thrown away.'

'Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God. But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.' [Isaiah 50:10-11](#)

God now addresses those who fear Him and will hear the voice of His servant, this invitation is to all, [Isaiah 50:10](#). God addresses those who despise His word, of which His servant is better, [Isaiah 50:10](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'There may be a sincere penitent, walking in darkness, having no light of salvation; for this is the case of all when they first begin to turn to God. What should such do? They should trust, believe on, the Lord Jesus, who died for

them, and lean upon his all-sufficient merits for the light of salvation which God has promised. Thus acting, they will soon have a sure trust and confidence that God for Christ's sake has forgiven them their sin, and thus they shall have the light of life.'

The destruction they had prepared becomes their own, [Isaiah 50:11](#) / [Galatians 6:7](#). Those who stir up strife and persecution for God's people will be punished, [Isaiah 50:11](#) / [Matthew 25:41](#) / [Matthew 25:46](#) / [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#) / [1 Peter 4:19](#).

CHAPTER 51

INTRODUCTION

'Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many. The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving, and the sound of singing.' [Isaiah 51:1-3](#)

EVERLASTING SALVATION FOR ZION

This chapter speaks of the salvation of God will come and His wrath is turned away. The righteous are exhorted to follow in the steps of Abraham. Those who are running after righteousness are instructed to look to Abraham and Sarah, the rock and pit in which the house of Israel was formed, [Isaiah 51:1-2](#). Abraham answered the call of God with obedience, [Isaiah 51:2](#), his seed was multiplied and he was the father of the multitude, [Isaiah 51:2](#) / [Genesis 17:4-5](#).

Israel in captivity, her strength and number gone are to remember this. As Sarah, after a long period of barrenness gave birth to Isaac, the son of promise, so will Zion again be fruitful after a long period of desolation, [Isaiah 51:3](#). Israel was born from the womb of Sarah but the church was born from the faith of Abraham.

Kelley, in his commentary, says the following.

'The fact that the prophet addressed these words to them in the very land in which Abraham and Sarah had indeed received their first call gave added meaning to what is said here.'

'Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies.

But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.' [Isaiah 51:4-6](#)

Here we read that the certainty of the Lord's salvation is assured and the enemies of the righteous will perish. The promise goes beyond the physical restoration of Israel, just as the promise to Abraham went beyond the material.

The world will be enlightened by the Word of God, [Hebrews 1:11](#), and the light would be a new law that would be applicable to all the world, [Isaiah 51:4](#) / [Jeremiah 31:31-33](#) / [Mathew 28:19-20](#). This salvation extends to all, [Isaiah 51:5](#), but before the universal salvation can be offered its type must arrive.

Israel is summoned to look above, [Isaiah 51:6](#), because of the destruction that will befall their captors, [Isaiah 51:6](#) / [Isaiah 13:6-16](#). The emphasis here is on the fact that God will do what He has promised to do, [Isaiah 51:6](#).

‘Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have taken my instruction to heart: Do not fear the reproach of mere mortals or be terrified by their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations.’ [Isaiah 51:7-8](#)

Upon the promise of safety in the midst of destruction, Israel is instructed not to be afraid of men, [Isaiah 51:7](#). Like the heavens and the earth, [Psalms 102:26](#) / [Isaiah 34:4](#) / [Hebrews 1:11-12](#) / [2 Peter 3:10-12](#), men would be quickly carried away but God’s righteousness shall not be abolished, [Isaiah 51:8](#).

‘Awake, awake, arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength! Awake, as in days gone by, as in generations of old. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over? Those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.’ [Isaiah 51:9-11](#)

Here we read Israel’s response. The exhortation of [Isaiah 51:7-8](#), arouses a longing for salvation which brings forth this response, [Isaiah 51:9](#). The word ‘Rahab’, [Isaiah 51:9](#), here means Egypt, [Psalms 88:8](#) / [Psalms 89:10](#) / [Isaiah 30:7](#). The king of Egypt is the monster or crocodile, as some translations render the word, which was pierced, [Isaiah 51:9](#) / [Psalms 34:13-14](#) / [Ezekiel 29:3](#) / [Ezekiel 32:2](#).

The deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea, [Isaiah 51:10](#) / [Exodus 14:21](#), is the literal and historical definition for these two metaphors in reference to the salvation of the saints. God’s people were ransomed from captivity [Isaiah 51:10](#). Many Egyptians died in the Sea when they were redeemed, they were redeemed from captivity from which they couldn’t deliver themselves. Knowing that God would keep His promise, His people sing the promise, [Isaiah 51:11](#) / [Isaiah 35:10](#).

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As surely as God redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He will redeem them from Babylon, both from the literal Babylon in the age following Isaiah, and from the mystical Babylon revealed in [Revelation 18:20-21](#), which is the last enemy of Israel and the Church, from which they have long suffered, but from which they are to be gloriously delivered.’

‘I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mere mortals, human beings who are but grass, that you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretches out the heavens and who lays the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction? For where is the wrath of the oppressor? The cowering prisoners will soon be set free; they will not die in their dungeon, nor will they lack bread. For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD Almighty is his name. I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand—I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’” [Isaiah 51:12-16](#)

God now encourages Israel to believe, [Isaiah 51:12](#). The more we understand the greatness of God, the less we will fear those who seek to oppress us, [Isaiah 51:13](#). They are to trust in God and upon his all-sufficiency to release Israel from captivity. Cyrus loosed the people from the captivity of Babylon, [Isaiah 51:14](#), just as the Lord Jesus Christ releases us from the captivity of sin.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Cyrus, if understood of the temporal redemption from the captivity of Babylon, in the spiritual sense, the Messiah, who comes to open the prison to them that are bound.’

God has pledged his absolute power to fulfil the promise, [Isaiah 51:15](#), and now this promise reaches new glory for Israel, [Isaiah 51:16](#).

THE CUP OF THE LORD'S WRATH

‘Awake, awake! Rise up, Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes people stagger. Among all the children she bore there was none to guide her; among all the children she reared there was none to take her by the hand. These double calamities have come upon you—who can comfort you?—ruin and destruction, famine, and sword—who can console you? Your children have fainted; they lie at every street corner, like antelope caught in a net. They are filled with the wrath of the LORD, with the rebuke of your God.’ [Isaiah 51:17-20](#)

God now cries for Israel to awake, they need to be confident because God is their help, [Isaiah 51:17](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The common view taken of the passage is, that it means that the cup had been drunk to the dregs. All the intoxicating liquor had been poured off. They had entirely exhausted the cup of the wrath of God. Similar language occurs in [Revelation 14:10](#).’

Jerusalem had become a drunken, [Isaiah 51:17](#), and desperate castaway. She was completely ruined and there was none to help her, [Isaiah 51:18](#). When they found themselves without mercy in captivity, God came for them, [Isaiah 51:19](#).

Lowth, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword, taking the terms alternately, of which there are other examples in the Bible.’

Their children fainted and lay in the street corner, absolutely helpless like antelope caught in a net, [Isaiah 51:20](#). The antelope is among the swiftest and most graceful of animals and the spectacle of one entangled in a net is tragic and pitiful indeed. Such was the status of the Old Israel as described here. They are filled with the wrath of the LORD, with the rebuke of their God, [Isaiah 51:20](#).

‘Therefore hear this, you afflicted one, made drunk, but not with wine. This is what your Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people: “See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again. I will put it into the hands of your tormentors, who said to you, ‘Fall prostrate that we may walk on you.’ And you made your back like the ground, like a street to be walked on.” [Isaiah 51:21-23](#)

Now God’s wrath was fulfilled, [Isaiah 51:21](#), He would take it away from Israel, [Isaiah 51:22](#), and pour it upon her captors, [Isaiah 51:23](#), thus, the situation is reversed. The cup was the cup of God’s wrath, [Isaiah 51:22](#) / [Jeremiah 25:15](#) / [Jeremiah 49:12](#) / [Jeremiah 51:7](#) / [Lamentations 4:21](#) / [Habakkuk 2:16](#) / [Ezekiel 23:31-33](#). It was first poured out on Israel, [Isaiah 51:22](#), now it was going to be poured out on those who persecuted His people [Isaiah 51:23](#).

CHAPTER 52

INTRODUCTION

‘Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendour, Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive.’ Isaiah 52:1-2

This chapter tells us that Jerusalem exchanges her bondage for freedom.

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here is set forth the future glory of God’s people in comparison with their past state, a captivity, from which they are commanded to flee.’

Israel’s call in **Isaiah 51:9**, which is addressed to God’s arm as though it were a sleeping state, is now turned upon itself, **Isaiah 52:1**. Israel is pictured as awaking and putting on beautiful new garments, **Isaiah 52:1**. The unbelievers will never again strip Israel naked and humiliate her before the nations, **Isaiah 52:1**. The captives will now be seated for honour, **Isaiah 52:2**.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘She is pictured in **Isaiah 51**, as lying on the ground stupefied by God’s wrath and exhausted with her grief. She is now told to clothe herself and arise from her degraded captivity.’

‘For this is what the LORD says: “You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed.” For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. “And now what do I have here?” declares the LORD. “For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,” declares the LORD. “And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.” Isaiah 52:3-6

Here we read of a promise that is filled with reflection on the treatment given God’s people. Notice they were sold for nothing and they will be redeemed for nothing, **Isaiah 52:3**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is no way that Babylon could have been induced to surrender Israel, therefore God designed to raise up Cyrus, a mild, just, and equitable prince and to induce him to let the exiles depart, and to aid them in their return to their own land. Thus they were rescued without money and without price.’

God’s people had suffered many things at the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians, **Isaiah 52:4**. But, just as surely as God predicted their captivity, **Isaiah 52:5**, so He promised their return, **Isaiah 52:5**. Therefore, He would give His people deliverance and they would know that it was God who spoke, **Isaiah 52:6**.

‘How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.’ Isaiah 52:7-10

The salvation which is being carried into effect is exalted. Isaiah sees the tidings of redemption carried over the mountains of Judah to Jerusalem, **Isaiah 52:7**. The apostle Paul applies this passage to the preaching of the Gospel in **Romans 10:14-15**. The Gospel age is the body of which Israel’s restoration was but a shadow.

The watchmen will rejoice when they see with the natural eye what they have seen in the vision, **Isaiah 52:8**. Zion is restored when God delivers His people, **Isaiah 52:8**, and the city rises out of her ruins with jubilant shouting, **Isaiah 52:9**.

God's hand in Israel's salvation is seen by the whole world, **Isaiah 52:10**. What all the nations thought was impossible, that Israel would again become a nation, God was able to do, **Isaiah 52:10 / Daniel 4:25**.

‘Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the articles of the LORD's house. But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.’ **Isaiah 52:11-12**

Israel was to sanctify herself and go back in an orderly and courageous fashion, **Isaiah 52:11**. They would go forth from captivity in peace in order to establish again the nationhood of the people. The call was for them to come out of captivity, **Isaiah 52:11**. The scattered Jews would be the evangelism medium through whom the Gospel would go into all the world, **Isaiah 2:1-4 / Acts 2**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the articles of the Lord's house’.

‘From this, we must understand those vessels which Nebuchadnezzar carried off from the temple, **2 Kings 25:14-16 / Daniel 5:1-4**, and which the Jews received upon their return from Babylon when the vessels were restored to them by Cyrus.’

Israel was to sanctify herself and go back in an orderly and courageous fashion, **Isaiah 52:11**, because God would still be with her, **Isaiah 52:12**.

THE SUFFERING AND GLORY OF THE SERVANT

‘See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.’ **Isaiah 52:13-15**

From these verses through to **Isaiah 53:12**, we read that the Messiah is exalted out of deep humiliation.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Isaiah reaches the peak of his prophecy in this Messianic prophecy and presents what could well be termed some of the most profound ideas to be found in the Bible. This prophecy poses a grave difficulty to the Jew and all others who reject the Messiahship of Jesus. As the eunuch of **Acts 8** asks, ‘Who is the servant? Was Isaiah speaking of himself or did he speak of another?’ Of course, for Christians, the New Testament interpretation is sufficient, **Acts 8** and numerous other passages elucidate this prophecy.’

The words describing the exaltation of the Messiah all stem from His action, He shall act wisely, **Isaiah 52:13**. It was because of this in every New Testament reference that he was exalted, **Isaiah 52:13 / Philippians 2:5-11**.

Kelley, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This Servant Song has been described as the most influential poem in any literature, the highest peak of Old Testament revelation, and the heart of the Old Testament. If it were to be taken out of the Old Testament, it could be almost completely reconstructed from the quotations taken from it in the New Testament.’

The humiliation which the Messiah suffers is so deep that none have ever witnessed the like before, [Isaiah 52:14](#). The antithesis of [Isaiah 52:15](#), shows the state of glory into which the state of humiliation has passed. Some commentators suggest that the word ‘sprinkle’, [Isaiah 52:15](#), is used here in the sense of ‘startle’.

Others see the word as a reference to the sprinkling of blood in reference to atonement, and water as a sign of purification, [Leviticus 14:7](#), so here the Servant would sprinkle nations in reference to expiation and sanctification. Reference is to the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, the conversion of the Gentiles and both Jew and Gentile becoming one new man in Christ, [Galatians 3:17](#) / [Galatians 3:28](#) / [Hebrews 9:22](#).

The social impact the wounded Servant will have on the history of mankind will astound even those who are in high offices, that is, kings, [Isaiah 52:15](#). As many were astonished at His humiliation, now all nations literally gaze in amazement at his glory and the kings of the earth all are struck dumb, [Isaiah 52:15](#).

CHAPTER 53

INTRODUCTION

‘Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.’ [Isaiah 53:1-3](#)

3

This chapter begins by describing the extreme humiliation of the Messiah. The Messiah is so despised and humiliated that none believe the prophecy of his future, [Isaiah 53:1](#), not even the apostles and close disciples at first, [Luke 24:1-11](#) / [Luke 24:15-27](#). The ‘arm of the Lord’, [Isaiah 53:1](#), means that God strongly intervened in history in order to bring about the fulfilment of this prophecy.

The first verse refers to fleshly Israel and is quoted by Paul, [Romans 10:16](#), to show that few were obedient to the Gospel of Christ, [John 1:11](#) / [John 12:38](#). He is a ‘shoot’ growing up in dry ground or in unlikely places, [Isaiah 53:2](#) / [Isaiah 11:10](#) / [John 1:46](#). God’s leaders have often come from out of the way and insignificant places. Jesus was the opposite of what the Jews expected.

The Messiah is a ‘shoot’ from the root of Jesse, [Isaiah 11:1](#). There is nothing about the person of Jesus that attracted the Jews who were looking for an earthly king and kingdom, [Isaiah 53:2](#) / [John 18:36](#). His appearance to the Jews caused them to despise Him, [Isaiah 53:3](#), because they used a worldly standard to measure Him, [Psalm 22](#). Many of those to whom He came didn’t accept Him as the Messiah and Son of God, [Isaiah 53:3](#) / [John 1:10-11](#). He was well acquainted with the sorrows of the earth, [Isaiah 53:3](#) / [Hebrews 2:18](#) / [Hebrews 4:15](#).

‘Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ [Isaiah 53:4-6](#)

Those who were with Him during His ministry wouldn’t stand with Him during His trials and crucifixion. Nevertheless, God accomplished His work through Him. Here we read that the former despisers of the Messiah now confess Him.

Those who formerly despised the Messiah because of His sufferings, now confess that those sufferings were for a different purpose than they had supposed. Whereas they had supposed the sufferings to be a just reward of a pretender, they now see the real meaning of the cross, Romans 4:25 / 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. Those who rejected Jesus accused Him of being from Beelzebul, and so, stricken by God for assuming to be the Son of God, Mark 14:61-64 / Luke 22:37.

All of our burdens, sorrows, and sins are borne by the Messiah, Isaiah 53:4 / Matthew 8:17. Isaiah 53:5, continues the true state of the case as contrasted with their false judgement. Peter quotes this passage in 1 Peter 2:24, He was bruised through crucifixion but in being bruised, He crushed the head of Satan, Genesis 3:15.

His sinless person died as the perfect sin offering, Isaiah 53:5 / Hebrews 9:28 / 2 Corinthians 5:21. All the redeemed body confessed with penitence that he whom they so grossly misunderstood was made a sin offering for them, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Notice the text says they 'have gone astray', Isaiah 53:6, it doesn't say they were 'born astray'! It means the world had wandered off into sin, Numbers 27:17 / 1 Kings 22:17 / Psalms 119:176 / Ezekiel 34:5 / Zechariah 10:2 / Matthew 9:36.

The cross, therefore, was by grace, for there was no one who was righteous, and so, deserving of the forgiveness of God, Romans 3:9-10 / Romans 3:23. He seeks to do only that which is right in his own eyes. The full weight of sin which belonged to the whole mass of mankind rested upon Jesus, Isaiah 53:6. He suffered on behalf of the wicked, Mark 10:45.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Note here that the prophecy states that Jehovah laid the sins of all men upon Jesus. This corresponds with Paul's statement that 'God set forth his Son to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood', Romans 3:25. Thus the initiative lay with God in the sufferings of Jesus upon the Cross.'

1. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God was not the only one, however, who had a part in Jesus' sacrifice upon the Cross.
2. Satan did indeed bruise the heel of the Seed of Woman.
3. Christ Himself engineered His death upon Calvary, Luke 9:31.
4. The Jews crucified Him.
5. The Romans crucified Him.
6. The human race crucified Him.
7. Every man crucified Him.

'He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.' Isaiah 53:7-9

Here we read of the prophecy of the suffering, death, and burial of Jesus. He was harshly treated and mishandled, yet He opened not his mouth, Isaiah 53:7. Peter holds this forth as our perfect example, 1 Peter 2:21-24. He humbled Himself to be mistreated by those whom He had created, Colossians 1:16 / Philippians 2:5-8.

In the ill-treatment He received, He offered no retaliation, 1 Peter 2:23, but accepted it in humble obedience, John 10:17-18 / Matthew 26:63 / Hebrews 5:8-9. Jesus came specifically into the world to be the sacrificial Lamb of God, Isaiah 53:7 / John 1:29.

Isaiah now speaks of the closing portion of the life of Jesus. It was by a judicial crime that our Lord was condemned [Isaiah 53:8](#). The judgement of Pilate declared Christ to be innocent, but this judgement was taken away [Isaiah 53:8](#). He had done nothing by which He deserved the treatment He received. He was the sacrificial lamb of God, [John 1:36](#) / [Revelation 5:12](#). He was literally snatched from the land of the living for the transgression of His people, [Isaiah 53:8](#) / [Galatians 3:13-14](#).

In having seen the patience with which He suffered and the manner of His death, there is now offered a brief glance at his burial, [Isaiah 53:9](#). The antithesis is in what the Jews would have done in His burial and in what was actually done by Joseph of Arimathea, [Matthew 27:57-61](#) / [John 19:38-42](#).

‘Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.’ [Isaiah 53:10-12](#)

Here we read that God extended the life of the Messiah, [Revelation 1:18](#). God allowed Christ to suffer in our place, [Isaiah 53:10](#). He became an offering for our sin, [Isaiah 53:10](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:21](#). When He was made an offering, His life was thus extended, [Isaiah 53:10](#) / [Hebrews 9:14](#) / [Hebrews 10:5-7](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

1. Because the Messiah had voluntarily submitted himself to those sorrows which were necessary to show the evil of sin; and in view of the great object to be gained, the eternal redemption of his people, he was pleased that he would subject himself to so great sorrows to save them. He was pleased with the end in view, and with all that was necessary in order that the end might be secured.
2. Because these sufferings would tend to illustrate the divine perfections, and show the justice and mercy of God. The gift of a Saviour, such as he was, evinced boundless benevolence; his sufferings in behalf of the guilty showed the holiness of his nature and law; and all demonstrated that he was at the same time disposed to save, and yet resolved that no one should be saved by dishonouring his law, or without expiation for the evil which had been done by sin.
3. Because these sorrows would result in the pardon and recovery of an innumerable multitude of lost sinners, and in their eternal happiness and salvation. The whole work was one of benevolence, and Yahweh was pleased with it as a work of pure and disinterested love.

We also read of the blessings given the Messiah for His self-sacrifice. The suffering of Christ was not in vain, [Isaiah 53:11](#). The work of salvation as accomplished by Christ is the great object of His calling and continues victoriously through His mediation, [Isaiah 53:11](#).

He now reaps the fruit of his self-sacrifice in a continuous priestly course, [Hebrews 1:3](#) / [Hebrews 8:1](#) / [1 John 2:1](#). The last reward of His offering self for sin, for the sin of man, is His full dominion over His kingdom, [Isaiah 53:12](#) / [Matthew 28:18](#) / [Acts 2:36](#) / [Hebrews 1:4-8](#). This promise stands between the humiliation and His exaltation. Jesus receives it because of His sacrifice but people rally around Him because He was exalted above every name, [Philippians 2:9-11](#).

Jesus was worthy to receive the blessing of the church because He gave Himself for all those who have obeyed His death, burial, and resurrection, [Isaiah 53:12](#) / [Romans 6:3-6](#). Jesus was worthy to receive glory, honour and power because He was crucified for transgressors, [Isaiah 53:12](#) / [Luke 23:34](#) / [Revelation 4:11](#).

CHAPTER 54

INTRODUCTION

‘Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,’ says the LORD. “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.’ Isaiah 54:1-3

THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION

In this chapter, we read of Jerusalem and the servants of God glorified. Here we read of the new Jerusalem, the church of the Lord. Jerusalem was barren, living apart from her husband while Israel was captive, [Isaiah 54:1](#), but now she was to rejoice because she would produce more children than the wife living with her husband, [Isaiah 54:1](#). Paul used these opening words in [Galatians 4:26-27](#), and applied them to the church but it had its root in physical Jerusalem and here we have to look to get the proper understanding.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The church is often in the Bible compared to a female, and the connection between God and his people is often compared with that between husband and wife, [Isaiah 62:5](#) / [Ezekiel 16](#) / [Revelation 21:2-9](#) / [Revelation 22:17](#).’ Jerusalem would need to be enlarged, [Isaiah 54:2](#), and she finds her antitype in the church, which is universal in scope, [Matthew 28:19-20](#). Her seed, spiritual Israel, [Romans 2:28-29](#), would be through all the nations and cities, [Isaiah 54:3](#).

‘Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,’ says your God. “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer.’ Isaiah 54:4-8

Here, Jerusalem is pictured as a widow. The encouraging promise is continued but is applied to Jerusalem while she is in captivity. She was a widow, with no husband, at that time, [Isaiah 54:4](#). It was no real widowhood but only an apparent one, [Jeremiah 51:5](#), because God was still alive.

If we take a closer look at the words ‘Creator’, [Ecclesiastes 12:1](#), ‘Maker’, [Isaiah 54:5](#) / [Job 35:10](#), and Husband, [Isaiah 54:5](#), in the Hebrew you will find that they are actually plural. If we take a closer look into the Old Testament, we find that the Hebrew word for ‘Presence’, [Exodus 33:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 4:37](#), and ‘Person’, [Job 13:8](#), are actually plural. In relation to the Trinity we see that this refers to multi-Personal Being. Israel must never forget that God isn’t the God of Israel alone, He is God of the whole earth, [Isaiah 54:5](#).

God now renews His relationship with Jerusalem. Israel was God’s ‘wife of youth’, [Isaiah 54:6](#), until the bride, the church, was brought forth. God’s displeasure toward Jerusalem passed quickly and the love which manifested itself later was more intense and lasting, [Isaiah 54:7](#). God had not divorced Zion, though He allowed her to be punished

with temporary captivity. Though for a short time God hid His face from her while she was in captivity, Isaiah 54:8, that time would pass and she would remember it no longer, 2 Corinthians 4:17.

‘To me this is like the days of Noah when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,’ says the LORD, who has compassion on you.’ Isaiah 54:9-10

Here we read the reason for God’s kindness to Israel. The present turning point resembles in God’s mind the days of Noah, Isaiah 54:9.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God appeals to this not only because the oath and promise had been made but because it had been kept, Genesis 8:21-22.’

As the flood left a small remnant, so did the exile, Isaiah 54:9. As the righteous were saved by the flood from sin, so were the righteous Jews saved from idolatry by the exile, Isaiah 54:9. As Noah was saved by grace and mercy, so was Jerusalem, Isaiah 54:9. He promised redeemed Israel that He would never again allow her to be taken into captivity, Genesis 9:12-17. God’s love is more enduring than the hills and mountains, Isaiah 54:10.

Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Much as the Christian Church has suffered from the world, it has never been with them like it was with captive Jews in Babylon. Here the prophet views the Jewish Church as absorbed and continued in the Christian Church, into which all the better and more spiritual members passed at the first preaching of the Gospel.’

‘Afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will rebuild you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with lapis lazuli. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace. In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. “See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc; no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD.’ Isaiah 54:11-17

We read here of the restoration of Israel is to be glorious. In exile, Jerusalem is desolate and afflicted, Isaiah 54:11, but the restoration will be glorious for her, Isaiah 54:11-12. The outward glory of the city is only the manifestation of the spiritual glory of those who dwell within. The final application is the Gospel age, John 6:44-45.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘One cannot become a child of God unless the Gospel is preached to him. He is informed, reformed, and made conformable to the death of our blessed Lord. Then all of his life he is transformed as he treasures the truth of God’s Word in his heart and in his everyday life.’

The children will be taught by God and there will have great peace, Isaiah 54:13. Jerusalem will stand against all enemies, Isaiah 54:15, which finds its final application in the church, Daniel 2:44 / Matthew 16:18 / Hebrews 12:28. In the new Jerusalem, the church, God would always be present wherever the church existed. His presence wouldn’t be identified by a physical structure, John 4:19-24.

His presence would be identified by those with whom He dwelt, Isaiah 54:16 / Luke 17:20-21. The church will be kept so long as she remains pure. Those who fight against the servants of God will not prosper, Isaiah 54:17. God’s servants may be exposed to the attacks and false accusations of evil men, Isaiah 54:17, but as someone once said, ‘In the end, everything will be alright’. Safety is the heritage of God’s servants.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 54:17](#).

‘This is the righteousness, or the justification which they obtain of me, this is that which I impart to them as their justification.’ The idea is not that their righteousness is of him but that this justification or vindication from him is a part of their inheritance and their portion.’

Isaiah himself surely didn’t understand what he was saying and writing, [1 Peter 1:10-12](#).

CHAPTER 55

INTRODUCTION

‘Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour.” [Isaiah 55:1-5](#)

INVITATION TO THE THIRSTY

This chapter speaks of God’s salvation and it begins with the invitation of God. All things are ready, the guest is invited, the only requirement is to come, [Isaiah 55:1-2](#) / [Matthew 5:6](#). This finds fulfilment in Jesus, [John 7:37-39](#). Salvation cannot be purchased, the invitation to freely eat and drink of that which the Lord offers is to all, [Isaiah 55:1](#) / [John 3:16](#).

‘Come to me’, [Isaiah 55:1-2](#), is the way of obedience by which the blessings may be obtained. God makes an everlasting covenant, [Isaiah 55:3](#) / [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#), and all blessings may be received through obedience, [2 Samuel 6:16](#).

David is given to the people as a witness, [Isaiah 55:3-4](#) / [Hosea 3:5](#). David said that he would proclaim the name of Jehovah among the heathen, [Isaiah 55:5](#), and this he did in his seed, Jesus, [2 Samuel 7:4-17](#) / [Psalm 18:50](#) / [Psalm 57:9-10](#) / [Psalm 89:34-35](#). Therefore, it was a prophecy of Jesus.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This unequivocally identifies the kingdom and covenant of the Suffering Servant with the Davidic, Kingly Messiah, the great fact which Peter stressed on the day of Pentecost when he spoke of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the enthronement of the Son of David (Christ) upon David’s throne in heaven!’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 55:5](#).

‘This covenant would be made with all who would come to God. That New Covenant would not be identified with any race or nation but it would be between Almighty God and all mankind!’

‘Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.’ Isaiah 55:6-7

God’s gracious promises extended to all the world. It is now possible to seek the Lord and find Him, [Isaiah 55:6](#) / [Jeremiah 35:31-35](#) / [2 Peter 2:20-22](#). If the wicked would be saved, they must forsake their wickedness and return to God, [Isaiah 55:7](#). There is urgency in repentance, not because God will leave us but because we may lose our opportunity to repent.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

1. Men are by nature ignorant of God, otherwise they should not have been commanded to ‘seek’.
2. If men will obtain God’s favour, they must seek it.
3. The invitation to seek God is open to all men.
4. The knowledge of God is of inestimable value.

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD’s renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever.” Isaiah 55:8-13

Here we read of God’s appeal to the unrighteous. There is a vast difference between the ways and thoughts of God and those of men, [Isaiah 55:8-9](#) / [Jeremiah 10:23](#) / [2 Corinthians 2:15-17](#). God has chosen the foolish and simple things of the earth to confound the wise, [Isaiah 55:10](#) / [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#). We think of Naaman, [2 Kings 5](#), and the walls of Jericho, [Joshua 6](#), the plan of salvation.

We also read that God’s Word accomplished its purpose, [Isaiah 55:11](#). This personification of the word presupposed that it is not a mere sound or letter. As it goes forth from God it has divine life and power. It goes, with life, from God and does not return until it has done the work God designed it to do.

The word of God is a part of God Himself and must not be regarded as a ‘mere word’. God’s Word is indeed the seed of the kingdom, [Luke 8:11](#). It is the Word of God that changes the hearts of men, [Hebrews 4:12](#).

We also read that the Word realises its fulfilment. In joy and peace, the people will return to the land, [Isaiah 55:12](#) / [Isaiah 5:5-6](#), and their condition in that land will be reversed, [Isaiah 55:13](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:15](#). This return serves to testify to God’s faithfulness.

CHAPTER 56

INTRODUCTION

‘This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.” Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry

tree.” For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever. And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” The Sovereign LORD declares—he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.” Isaiah 56:1-8

SALVATION FOR OTHERS

This chapter begins by telling us about God’s righteousness in the new age, [Isaiah 56:1](#) / [Matthew 23:23](#). The sabbath, so long neglected by Israel, receives special emphasis from God. Those who keep the sabbath in the way taught by God would be blessed, [Isaiah 56:2](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Sabbath was one of the special rites of the Jewish religion, and one of the most important of their institutions. Its observance entered essentially into the idea of their worship, and was designed to be the standing memorial or sign between God and the Jewish nation, [Exodus 31:13-17](#).’

The blessedness is extended to those who might think that they had no right to console themselves with the promises, the proselytes, and the eunuchs, [Isaiah 56:3-4](#). The keeping of the Sabbath day, under the Old Testament law, showed respect for God while refraining from doing evil showed respect for man. True religion consists of two things, our attitude toward God and our attitude toward man.

We read of the full realisation of this promise was to be for the Gospel age. God would richly bless those in the restoration who kept His covenant, [Isaiah 56:4](#). However, the promise finds its fulfilment in the church in the name given.

Notice the following.

1. The name was to be given by God, [Isaiah 56:5](#).
2. It was to be given in His house, [Isaiah 56:5](#).
3. It was to be better than that of sons and daughters, [Isaiah 56:5](#).
4. It was to be everlasting, [Isaiah 56:5](#).
5. It was to be given to the obedient, [Isaiah 56:6](#).

The New Testament application of this is as follows.

1. The name Christian was given by God, [Acts 11:26](#).
2. The name was given in God’s house, [1 Timothy 3:14-15](#).
3. It is better than son or daughter, [James 2:7](#).
4. It is to last unto the end, [1 Peter 4:16](#).
5. It is bestowed upon obedient children, [John 14:15](#).

Jew and Gentile alike are gathered into God’s house, [Isaiah 56:6](#) / [Ephesians 2:14-16](#), and God will not restrict salvation to the Jews but will extend it to all, [Isaiah 56:7](#) / [John 10:16](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Revelation 22:17](#). It is circumcision of the heart that identifies the people of God today, [Colossians 2:11-14](#).

Discipleship has changed from focusing on one day to every day, [Romans 12:1-2](#), and God’s people today no longer look to a physical temple in order to pray, [Isaiah 56:7-8](#), but pray directly to God wherever they are, [Matthew 21:13](#) / [Mark 11:17](#) / [John 10:16](#) / [Ephesians 2:17](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#).

GOD'S ACCUSATION AGAINST THE WICKED

‘Come, all you beasts of the field, come and devour, all you beasts of the forest! Israel’s watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep. They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain. “Come,” each one cries, “let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.” Isaiah 56:9-12

From these verses through to [Isaiah 57:21](#), we read of the negligence of Israel’s leaders and the errors of His people. Here we read of the conduct of the greedy rulers. The comparison of invaders to wild beasts is used frequently within the Scriptures, [Isaiah 56:9](#) / [Jeremiah 12:9](#) / [Jeremiah 50:17](#) / [Isaiah 9:11](#). The prophet reproves the wicked and the unbelievers who had worshipped idols and had failed to teach God’s Word to their children, [Isaiah 56:10](#). They are ‘greedy dogs’, [Isaiah 56:11](#), feeding themselves while the flock is scattered and starved. The full-time prophets were more concerned for their own well-being than the safety of the nation. The words, ‘let me get wine’, [Isaiah 56:12](#), means they had the spirit which said, ‘let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die’, [Isaiah 22:13](#).

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are always people who indulge themselves thinking only of the present and caring nothing for the future of themselves or their children.’

CHAPTER 57

INTRODUCTION

The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.’ Isaiah 57:1-2

This chapter begins by telling us about the ruler’s unconcern over the injustice in the land. How terrible the condition of a nation when the few righteous people left in it are taken by death, [Isaiah 57:1](#) / [1 Kings 14:10-14](#) / [2 Kings 21:16](#), and no one cares. It is ‘far better’ to depart and be with Christ, [Isaiah 57:2](#) / [Philippians 1:21-24](#).

‘But you—come here, you children of a sorceress, you offspring of adulterers and prostitutes! Who are you mocking? At whom do you sneer and stick out your tongue? Are you not a brood of rebels, the offspring of liars? You burn with lust among the oaks and under every spreading tree; you sacrifice your children in the ravines and under the overhanging crags. The idols among the smooth stones of the ravines are your portion; indeed, they are your lot. Yes, to them you have poured out drink offerings and offered grain offerings. In view of all this, should I relent? You have made your bed on a high and lofty hill; there you went up to offer your sacrifices. Behind your doors and your doorposts you have put your pagan symbols. Forsaking me, you uncovered your bed, you climbed into it and opened it wide; you made a pact with those whose beds you love, and you looked with lust on their naked bodies. You went to Molek with olive oil and increased your perfumes. You sent your ambassadors far away; you descended to the very realm of the dead! You wearied yourself by such going about, but you would not say, ‘It is hopeless.’ You found renewal of your strength, and so you did not faint.’ Isaiah 57:3-10

Here we read of the hopeless state of God’s people is condemned. These people were indeed the children of apostasy. They are described as sorcerers, adulterers, and prostitutes, [Isaiah 57:3](#). They were children of lawbreakers and

liars, **Isaiah 57:4**. The society morally degraded to the point of sacrificing the children to false gods they imagined in their minds, **Isaiah 57:5-6 / 2 Chronicles 33:6 / Psalm 106:37-38 / Jeremiah 7:31 / Jeremiah 19:5**.

Hailey, in his commentary, paraphrases these lines as follows.

‘The citizens of Judah are children of idolatry, the offspring of people who forsook Jehovah for the witchcraft of the heathen and they are the posterity of spiritual adulterers who went ‘whoring’ after false gods. The rejection of Jehovah had resulted in apostasy and excessive wickedness.’

Their sexual passions were unleashed behind closed doors where they practised orgies and fornication, **Isaiah 57:7**. They believed in an assortment of gods who would condone their wicked behaviour and as a result, they sacrificed to gods which they believed were in the valleys, on mountains, in their houses, and wherever they would satisfy their lusts with immoral behaviour, **Isaiah 57:7-8**.

They adored the genital organs and they worshipped Molek with its perfumed debauchery, **Isaiah 57:9**, which was characteristic of the Ammonites. Their situation was ‘hopeless’, **Isaiah 57:10**, that is, they didn’t have the moral sense of realising that they were on a road to no moral return. Their lifestyle of debauchery would be the end of them, **Isaiah 57:10**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These verses stress two things, 1. The debasing of the people even unto Sheol by their shameless worship of pagan gods, and 2. Their seeking foreign aid, instead of relying upon Jehovah. Also, **Isaiah 57:10**, indicates that they went far beyond their ordinary strength in such shameful activities.’

‘Whom have you so dreaded and feared that you have not been true to me, and have neither remembered me nor taken this to heart? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me? I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you. When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away. But whoever takes refuge in me will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.” **Isaiah 57:11-13**

Here we read that the sin of God’s people will finally destroy them. Divine forbearance must give way to intervention and punishment. They feared man more than God, **Isaiah 57:11**, and so, followed after the social pressures to live according to the degraded morals of the day but now it was time for judgment.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Israel’s original possession of the land was unconditional. It was given to them in fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, **Genesis 12:7**, and it was intended to be theirs permanently, ‘forever’, **Exodus 32:13**, but the retaining of the land was conditional, **Leviticus 26:14-15**.’

God sarcastically refers to their self-righteousness, **Isaiah 57:12**. They claimed to be righteous but their righteousness was according to the religion that they had created after their own desires. The destiny of idol gods and their worshipers is destruction, for when the worshipers are taken away, so are the gods that they created in their minds, **Isaiah 57:13**.

COMFORT FOR THE CONTRITE

‘And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.” For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. I will not accuse them forever, nor will I always be angry, for then they would faint away because of me—the very people I have created. I was enraged by their sinful greed; I punished them, and hid my face in anger,

yet they kept on in their wilful ways. I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners, creating praise on their lips. Peace, peace, to those far and near," says the LORD. "And I will heal them." But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isaiah 57:14-21

All who repent will be delivered and only the penitent have the promise of blessings. To those who persist in wickedness and impenitence, there will be no peace or forgiveness. The way to build up was prepared for restoration by removing the wickedness of the people that was defined in the preceding verses, Isaiah 57:14 / Isaiah 40:3 / Isaiah 62:10. Although God is exalted above the heavens, Isaiah 57:15, at the same time the omnipresent God lives in the hearts of the humble and contrite.

While living in the hearts of the contrite, God judges those who live in sinful rebellion, Isaiah 57:15. God judged His people for their rebellion, Isaiah 57:16, and then hid Himself from them while they were in captivity, Isaiah 57:17. Once they repented, He revealed Himself in order to heal them of their sinful ways, Isaiah 57:18. He tore them down through captivity and He built them up through restoration to their homeland, Isaiah 57:18.

When they return their will be praise, peace, and healing, Isaiah 57:19. Although the wicked will have no peace in this life, Isaiah 57:20-21 / 2 Peter 2:22 / James 1:6 / Jude 1:13, the repentant enjoys the peace of God that passes all understanding, Philippians 4:7.

CHAPTER 58

INTRODUCTION

'Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?" Isaiah 58:1-5

TRUE FASTING

This chapter deals with the national wickedness of the people.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

'This chapter contains a severe reproof of the Jews on account of their vices, particularly their hypocrisy in relying on outward ceremonies such as fasting and bodily humiliation while refusing to repent of their sins and obey God's commandments.'

Here we read that Israel is hypocritical in her religion. Isaiah must be bold and lift up his voice like a trumpet, [Isaiah 58:1](#). The preacher of repentance is not to speak ‘smooth things’ but unceasingly and without restraint, he must call for the people to repent, [Isaiah 58:2](#).

They fast and there is no response from God, [Isaiah 58:3](#), they offer their sacrifices but there is no one there to accept them. In many cases, these fasts were turned into feasts and days of pleasure for the master while the servants were required to engage in hard labour, [Isaiah 58:3](#) / [Malachi 3:13-15](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Fast days are generally called holidays, and holidays are days of idleness and pleasure. In numberless cases the fast is turned into a feast.’

Worship was turned into quarrelling and quibbling, [Isaiah 58:4](#), because they deceived themselves into believing that if they performed religious ordinances, God would respond to their needs, [Isaiah 58:4](#) / [Philippians 1:15](#). God asks three questions concerning their fasting, [Isaiah 58:5](#), to which the obvious answer is no.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This was not the type of fasting God approved, [Isaiah 1:11](#) / [Psalms 51:16-17](#) / [Luke 18:9-14](#). It consisted only in His people bowing their heads, not their hearts. Bowing the head like a reed expresses formal worship, like a reed automatically bending in response to wind. The people sat in sackcloth and ashes, but they did not really mourn over their disobedience to the Lord. They thought their outward fasting, bowing, dressing, and adorning were more important than their attitudes and behavior, though they probably did not realize it and certainly did not admit it, [James 1:27](#) / [James 4:8](#).’

‘Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.’ [Isaiah 58:6-12](#)

Here we read of an explanation of the kind of fast and service God demanded, [Isaiah 58:6](#). It was inconsistent to legally fast and at the same time be hard on their labourers, [Isaiah 58:6](#), refusing to feed the poor, and even refusing to care for one’s own family, [Isaiah 58:7](#) / [Matthew 25:35](#) / [Luke 3:11](#) / [Luke 10:31-32](#) / [Hebrews 13:2](#).

Archer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘No religious observance has value for Jehovah that is not supported by a godly, law-abiding life, and compassion towards those in need.’

To obtain the blessings of God, Israel must repent and turn back to him, [Isaiah 58:8](#). If they would correct their behaviour in their relationships with their fellow man, then their pleas to the Lord would bring a response [Isaiah 58:9](#). If they would respond to God’s will, God would respond with His presence, [Isaiah 58:9](#).

If they repent of their yoke of oppression, finger pointing and malicious talk, [Isaiah 58:9](#), and repent of their selfishness, then their light will rise in the darkness and their night will become like the noonday, [Isaiah 58:10](#). If they repent, God will guide them and satisfy their every needs and they will be a well-watered garden, like a spring whose

waters never fail, [Isaiah 58:11](#). Their people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations and they will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings, [Isaiah 58:12](#).

‘If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’ For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’ [Isaiah 58:13-14](#)

They had made the Sabbath a time to speak of business deals or seeking pleasures of this world, [Isaiah 58:13](#). Instead of focusing on the Lord on the Sabbath rest, they took the opportunity to carry on with business arrangements, [Isaiah 58:13](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Again, notice that all-important IF standing at the head of [Isaiah 58:13](#). The multiple requirements are as follows.’

1. That Israel must stop doing ‘their own thing’ on the sabbath day.
2. They must stop teaching and parroting the words of men, their own words, and begin honouring God’s Word.
3. They are commanded to call the sabbath day honourable, and a delight.
4. They must actually honour the sabbath, not merely refer to it as honourable.
5. They must actually do the things God commanded on that day.

If they would turn from such worldly-mindedness on a day that was to be devoted to spiritual thinking, God would turn to them with blessings, [Isaiah 58:14](#).

SHOULD CHRISTIANS FAST?

Our Lord begins by saying ‘when you fast’, not ‘if you fast’, [Matthew 6:16](#). He implies that His disciples will practice fasting, i.e., abstaining from food and perhaps fluids for an extended period of time. The hypocrites in Jesus’ day made sure they looked like they were fasting by purposely neglecting to wash their faces and anoint their heads, [Matthew 6:17-18](#). They wanted to appear miserable so everyone would know what they were ‘enduring’. Those who fast in this manner are not pleasing the Lord, and they won’t derive any spiritual blessings from such, [Matthew 6:16](#). It is best to conceal our fasting, [Matthew 6:17-18](#), if possible since the act is intended for self-abasement, not the cultivation of pride. Much can be learned about fasting by analysing Bible examples of it. There appear to be both physical and spiritual reasons for fasting. Please reflect upon the following reasons.

1. When a friend or loved one is sick, fasting is appropriate.

David ended up fasting for a week in that context for his child who was ill, [2 Samuel 12:15-16](#) / [Psalm 35:13](#).

2. When a friend or loved one has died, fasting is appropriate.

At the death of King Saul and his sons, the people fasted, [1 Samuel 31:13](#).

3. When we desire to seek the Lord and His blessings, fasting is appropriate.

The first reference to fasting is in the Book of Judges, [Judges 20:26](#). The last reference to fasting in the Book of the prophet Zechariah and devout Jews fasted, [Zechariah 8:19](#).

Most of the fasting was undertaken voluntarily and was not undertaken at the command of God but devout Jews undertook to fast for at least two reasons. Not for health reasons, but,

1. Because they believed it was a way of attracting the attention of God. If they fasted, they thought that God noticed them.
2. Because they thought that, if they fasted, God would be prepared to do something about the situation that had caused them to fast.

If you think about this second reason, you will see that if a man thought his fasting had influenced God to act, it was very easy for him to imagine that he, personally, was someone special!

The reality, although, through the centuries, the Jew, especially after the Babylonian Captivity, introduced fasts for a whole range of reasons, but only one fast was specifically commanded by God, and that was the fast associated with the Day of Atonement, the most important and solemn Day in their religious Year, Leviticus 16:29. In Leviticus 16:29, the expression, ‘deny yourselves’ or ‘afflict your souls’ is the expression for fasting, and this was the only fast that the Jews observed faithfully every year.

When we examine the New Testament, it surprises some people to find that the Lord only mentioned fasting twice, Matthew 6:16-18 / Mark 2:18-22. Notice that both passages above, record Jesus’ response to the practice of that time. But also, notice, although about 16 times He says, ‘it was said by those of old time.... but I say to you’, Jesus doesn’t use these words because this kind of fasting about which He was speaking wasn’t covered by the Mosaic Law, but because it was something that the people had taken on themselves in the old law.

In Acts 13:1-3, Luke records that the church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul on the First Missionary Journey, with prayer and fasting, they fasted in connection with the appointment of Elders, in the congregations that they established during that journey. Please note that the whole church didn’t fast, it was only those mentioned in Acts 13:1 ‘Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen and Saul.’

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, Paul mentions sexual fasting but neither here nor anywhere else, does he impose it as a command. In 2 Corinthians 6:5, and 2 Corinthians 11:27, he refers to what he suffered for the sake of the Gospel and speaks of times when he went without food. But this wasn’t because he was ‘fasting’, but because he had no food to eat!

There are times in life when we are in need of spiritual renewal or special help and guidance. Such times require a deeper focus that fasting can help provide. For example, consider the following, 2 Chronicles 20:1-3 / Esther 4:3 / Esther 4:16 / Acts 10:30 / Acts 13:1-3.

4. When we are grieving over some calamity, fasting is appropriate.

In Ezra 10:6 it is recorded that Ezra ‘ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those in captivity.’ Nehemiah 1:2-7 / Daniel 6:18-28.

5. When we are repenting of sin, fasting is appropriate.

Jonah records the penitence of the Ninevites after Jonah preached to them, Jonah 3:5 / Jonah 3:10 / Acts 9:9.

I don’t claim that the items on this list are exhaustive or mutually exclusive, though I do believe they cover the primary reasons why those of old fasted. All of these reasons are still relevant for us today and those seeking to do God’s will should still fast at appropriate times, Matthew 9:14-15. Fasting should be considered an aid to meditation and prayer, Matthew 17:21 / 1 Corinthians 7:5.

However, since the New Testament doesn’t regulate the frequency or duration of fasting, such must be left up to each individual. We have no right to bind or create laws where the Lord has not, but we most certainly should stress the importance of fasting for those who are physically able to participate in such.

The answer to the question, should a Christian fast? is, therefore, ‘yes! If they want to!’ but remember that fasting, like ‘bodily exercise’ may do a little good, but ‘godliness is profitable for all things!’ 1 Timothy 4:8.

CHAPTER 59

INTRODUCTION

‘Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads a case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider’s web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched. Their cobwebs are useless for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. They pursue evil schemes; acts of violence mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks along them will know peace.’ Isaiah 59:1-8

SIN, CONFESSION AND REDEMPTION

This chapter tells us that the Redeemer is sent. The arm of the LORD is never too short to save and His ears are never too dull to hear, Isaiah 59:1. In other words, God is always willing to save and He is always willing to listen. When in sin, we cease our communication with and dependence on God. Israel’s sins had separated her from God, Isaiah 59:2. The face of God is toward us to help but when we turn our back on Him, we walk in the darkness of our own shadow of sin, Isaiah 59:2. Their sin involved the use of their hands, fingers, lips, and tongue, Isaiah 59:3, the barriers which they had erected. The judicial system was corrupted and they trusted in the chaos of society, Isaiah 59:4, and as a result, no justice could come to the righteous, Isaiah 59:4.

What they hatch, viper eggs are deadly and what they do is futile, Isaiah 59:5. In other words, what they produced was spiritually dead. Like spider webs, they did their works in order to entrap others, Isaiah 59:5-6 / Mark 7:14-23, and they were swift to shed innocent blood, Isaiah 59:7 / Hebrews 11:32-38. Society had digressed to the point that innocent people were being killed because of the crime of others, Isaiah 59:8.

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They think and act swiftly to do evil. The innocent seems to be their special target. They have crooked minds, practice crooked actions on crooked roads of their own crooked making and anyone foolish enough to walk with them on that crooked path finds only restlessness and destruction, Isaiah 59:7-8. The apostle Paul’s description of the same people at that same period agrees perfectly with this, Romans 2:17-29 / Romans 3:1:19, the topic sentence of that entire portion of Romans is the declaration that ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you ‘the Jews’, Romans 2:24.’

‘So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead. We all growl like bears; we moan

mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away. For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, inciting revolt and oppression, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.’ Isaiah 59:9-14

Here we read that no one, among men, could deliver Israel from her sins, [Hosea 4:6](#). The righteous had no hope that their injustices would be righted, [Isaiah 59:9](#). They looked for a gleam of light but there was no hope in sight, [Isaiah 59:9](#). They had become so perverse that the righteous groped for direction and could find none, [Isaiah 59:10](#).

They growled like bears and moaned mournfully like doves, [Isaiah 59:11](#), that is, their complaints to God didn’t bring them relief from social injustice because they wouldn’t enact God’s law in their lives. They scoffed at the law and prophets of the law as Isaiah.

Their offences are many in God’s sight, [Isaiah 59:12](#), and their sins testify against them, [Isaiah 59:12](#), that is, their behaviour was the evidence that they had forsaken God, [Isaiah 59:12](#) / [Ezekiel 8:6-15](#) /

[Daniel 9:5-15](#). When a society gives up truth and equity, it is destined for self-destruction, [Isaiah 59:13-14](#).

‘Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm achieved salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak. According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due. From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.’ Isaiah 59:15-19

Because there was no truth, evil prevailed, [Isaiah 59:15](#), but when God sees evil, He takes action, [Isaiah 59:15](#). When God saw the moral mess of their wicked society, He was shocked that no one stood up for the righteous against the oppression of the day, [Isaiah 59:16](#). He could find no one who was concerned by the state of moral degradation and injustice into which they had fallen, [Isaiah 59:16](#).

However, God intervened on behalf of the righteous remnant in order to save them from total destruction. Notice ‘He put on righteousness as a breastplate’, [Isaiah 59:17](#), righteousness protects the heart. The helmet of salvation is on His head, [Isaiah 59:17](#), in other words, when we think right, we do what is right. Isaiah looks into the future, to the time when the Saviour would come into the world for the spiritual salvation of God’s people, [Ephesians 6:14-17](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:8](#).

The garments, [Isaiah 59:17](#), are a reference to clothing ourselves in the Word of God. The cloak, [Isaiah 59:17](#), represents the zeal to accomplish the will of God that would characterize the ministry of the Servant who was to come.

Jamieson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Christian’s armour is like that of God’s, except that, ‘we do not possess any ‘garments of vengeance or cloak of zeal’. Vengeance belongs to God, [Romans 12:19](#).’

Repentance will only come if people truly fear God. When the enemy attacks the righteous, [Isaiah 59:18](#), the Holy Spirit will lift up a pent-up flood of defence for the righteous and against the wicked, [Isaiah 59:19](#).

‘The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,’ declares the LORD. “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD. “My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever,” says the LORD.’ Isaiah 59:20-21

The only hope for sinful man was the coming of the Redeemer, [Isaiah 59:20](#), that is, the Lord Jesus Christ and the covenant is a reference to the covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the New Covenant, [Isaiah](#)

59:21 / Jeremiah 31:31-33. Isaiah ends with hope, the hope that is given is in the spiritual salvation of the repentant that would carry on throughout eternity, Isaiah 59:21.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Note the passages here which apply to Jesus Christ.’

1. He is the one who is the covenant, Isaiah 35, prophesies the Christ who is the New Covenant, but the word ‘covenant’ is not used.

2. The Spirit of God is upon Him, Matthew 3:16-17.

3. God put His words in Jesus’ mouth, John 12:49-50.

4. Heaven and earth shall pass away but Jesus’ words shall not pass away, 1 Peter 1:24-25. These very things have already been stated many times in Isaiah, as in Isaiah 55:3 / Isaiah 42:6 / Isaiah 49:8 / Isaiah 54:10 / Isaiah 42:1 / Isaiah 61:1.

‘The tremendous meaning here is that ‘there will always be a seed, a remnant, holding faithfully to God’s Word, passing it on from one generation to the next. This promise has been fulfilled in the Christ who received his words from the Father, in the Gospel, and the true church of Christ.’

CHAPTER 60

INTRODUCTION

‘Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.’ Isaiah 60:1-3

THE GLORY OF ZION

This chapter tells us that Zion will be glorified in her New state, that is, the church.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The glory of the church of our Blessed Lord is outlined in this chapter. The picture is of the city of Zion radiant in the glory of the Palestinian morning with the sun bursting over the highlands while darkness still lingers in the deep valleys. The golden city of Jerusalem is high on the hill for all to see. This highly poetic language pictures to the Jew the glory of the rebuilt Jerusalem and, to all mankind, the glory of the New Testament church’.

It begins by telling that Zion shall be the light for the world, Isaiah 60:1. The light that comes first to Jerusalem, will then go into the world for the salvation of all men, John 8:12. The light first breaks upon the tops of the mountains, but it will go into all the world, Isaiah 60:2.

Darkness may be upon other nations and may rest in the valley but the dawn has now come, Isaiah 60:3 / Galatians 4:26. The light will go from Israel and spread to all humanity, Matthew 28:19-20 / Mark 16:15-16. The Gospel is now preached to both Jew and Gentile.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The birth of Christ did indeed occur at a time of universal spiritual darkness of the human race.’

1. The Gentile nations were sunk in the grossest and most shameful idolatry.
2. The Jewish nation was in no better position, despite their possession of God’s Law, which they had formalized and perverted and by their transgression of it dishonoured God, leading to the blasphemy of God on their account by the whole Gentile world, Romans 2:23-24.
3. The vain philosophy of the Greeks and Romans provided no relief from the awful darkness of that era.

‘Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. All Kedar’s flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple. “Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your children from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honour of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour.’ Isaiah 60:4-9

Here we read that all blessings shall be found in Zion, Isaiah 60:4 / Hebrews 10:1. The Gospel is sent out across the land and from the entire world, those that dwell in darkness shall come to Zion, Isaiah 60:4 / Isaiah 2:1-4.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 60:5.

‘The riches of the Western isles, with which the new Jerusalem was to be filled, as Tyre and Sidon had been of old, Ezekiel 27:1-25.’

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 60:6-7.

‘The nations are pictured as coming in a long train, to bring their riches for the service of the sanctuary. Ephah, a Midianite tribe, Genesis 25:4. Sheba, Psalms 72:10. Kedar, Isaiah 21:17. Nebaioth a tribe allied to Kedar, descended from Ishmael, Genesis 25:13.’

The ships with sails spread speed over the waters, like doves to their nest, Isaiah 60:8.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 60:8.

‘The vision of the prophet brings before him the cloud-like sails of the ships that are bringing back the exiles over the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, hastening to their home like doves to their dove-cote, Hosea 11:11.’

The ‘ships of Tarshish’, Isaiah 60:9 / Isaiah 2:16 / 1 Kings 10:22 / 1 Kings 22:48, were deep sea ships which eventually used to carry the Gospel of Christ to distant lands.

‘Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favour I will show you compassion. Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations—their kings led in triumphal procession. For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined. “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir, and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet. The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.’ Isaiah 60:10-14

Here we read that the government of Zion is universal. As the Old Testament temple was the house of God, the New Testament church is now the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following, concerning Isaiah 60:10.

‘Either as willing proselytes or as being brought into subjection, Zechariah 6:15. To build the temples or palaces of conquerors was, as in the case of the Egyptian and Babylonian bondage, the almost inevitable lot of the conquered.’

Mercy will replace wrath, [Isaiah 60:10](#), and the gates of the city will continually be opened, [Isaiah 60:11](#) / [Revelation 3:7](#) / [Revelation 21:25-26](#), to receive others, to receive trade and to receive the homage of every nation, [Isaiah 60:11](#). Anyone who doesn't serve will perish and be destroyed, [Isaiah 60:12](#).

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 60:13](#).

'The prophet sees in the new Jerusalem a revival of the glories of the days of Solomon. The cedars of Lebanon, and other trees of the forest, are to furnish timber for its buildings, or even to be planted in the courts of the Temple, or in its open places and streets, [Psalms 52:8](#) / [Psalms 92:12-13](#) / [Isaiah 35:2](#).'

Those who once despised Israel would pay homage to her, [Isaiah 60:14](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'People represented here as bowing down to the soles of the feet of the Old Israel is fulfilled in the person of the Ideal Israel, who is Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the New Israel, all of his followers being 'in him' and part of him, all who worship Christ are, in that act, bowing down to Israel, not to the old, wicked Israel, of course, but to Christ the True Israel. The Biblical confirmation of this principle is seen in [Revelation 3:9](#).'

'Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one travelling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.' [Isaiah 60:15-16](#)

The new Zion will be glorified beyond imagination, [Isaiah 60:15](#). The city that was once rejected by the nations becomes the focal point of their spiritual interest, [Isaiah 60:16](#). When God does this, then they will know that God is Saviour, their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob, [Isaiah 60:16](#).

'Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and well-being your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.'
[Isaiah 60:17-18](#)

Here we read that wealth would replace poverty, [Isaiah 60:17](#) / [Matthew 5:1-9](#). Justice would be restored, [Isaiah 60:17](#), peace would administrate between the citizens of the city, [Isaiah 60:17](#), and righteousness would oversee all relationships. Injustice would cease between citizens, [Isaiah 60:18](#). The defence of the city would be its salvation and its strength would be the praise of God, [Isaiah 60:18](#).

'The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendour. The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly.'" [Isaiah 60:19-22](#)

The Lord is the bright and shining light, [Isaiah 60:19](#), none other is needed, [Isaiah 60:20](#) / [Revelation 21:23](#). Righteousness will dwell within the city, [Isaiah 60:21](#), for all those who are citizens will have submitted to the will of God, [Revelation 21:27](#). In the future, one is spiritually born into the city, [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) / [John 3:1-21](#). The 'land', [Isaiah 60:21](#), is metaphorical of the eternal possession that the righteous receive upon their obedience to the Gospel. The least of them will become a thousand, [Isaiah 60:22](#), that is, spiritual Israel by faith, the church, would grow far beyond physical Israel. The church will be a strong nation, [Isaiah 60:22](#), and was reminded that God will always keep His promises.

CHAPTER 61

INTRODUCTION

‘The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour.’ Isaiah 61:1-3

THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOUR

This chapter tells us of the cause for a great change. It begins by telling us the mission of the servant, that is, the Messiah, [Luke 4:18-19](#). Christ applied this verse to Himself, [Luke 4:20-21](#), thus, Christ is pictured as the speaker in this chapter. Christ alone possessed the Spirit of God without limitation, [John 3:34](#).

Christ, the Anointed One comes to preach the good news of deliverance and judgment, [Isaiah 61:1](#) / [Mark 1:1](#) / [Mark 1:14](#). He comes with a message of hope for the humble, comfort for the broken-hearted, [Matthew 5:3-5](#), and freedom for those in bondage, [Isaiah 61:1](#) / [Matthew 11:3-4](#). In place of these ashes of mourning, Christ brings the gladness of salvation [Isaiah 61:2-3](#) / [Matthew 5:4](#).

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘naming’ of them as ‘trees of righteousness’ indicates a new beginning. A new name was regularly given to depict a new beginning, [Genesis 17:5-6](#) / [Genesis 32:27-28](#). The ‘large trees of righteousness’ are probably to be contrasted with the large trees in the gardens of idolatry, [Isaiah 1:29](#) / [Isaiah 57:5](#), the latter replaced by those of God’s planting. The world will finally not look to false religion but to His people.’

‘They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.’ Isaiah 61:4-7

Here we read of the many blessings which come as a result of the work of the servants. When the Israelites returned from captivity, the cities of Judah, which had been laid waste by the Assyrians, were rebuilt, [Isaiah 61:4](#). This is but a faint picture of the blessings which Christ would bring to all mankind, [Acts 15:16](#).

The ‘strangers will shepherd your flocks’, [Isaiah 61:5](#), is probably a reference to the fact that the salvation of Christ was preached to the Jews by Gentiles.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The idea is that it would be a time of signal spiritual prosperity and that it would be so great and glorious as if foreigners were to come in among the people and take over the whole labour of attending their flocks and cultivating their fields.’

God originally established Israel as a nation of priests, though there was within Israel the Levitical priesthood that ministered to the nation of priests, [Isaiah 61:6](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If there had been any doubt of this chapter’s application to the reign of Messiah, the question would have been settled here. Only the members of the Church of the firstborn were ever designated collectively as ‘priests of God’, [1 Peter 2:5](#) / [1 Peter 2:9](#) / [Revelation 5:10](#). Neither will there be a clergy distinct from the laity, for all will be called the ministers of our God.’

Instead of shame, they will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace, they will rejoice in their inheritance and so, they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs, [Isaiah 61:7](#).

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They had experienced shame and confusion. But in the future those who are His true people will, instead of shame, have a double portion of blessing. Instead of confusion they will rejoice in what God has allotted to them, [Isaiah 45:7](#). Yes, in the land of their inheritance they will have ‘double’ what was theirs before, that is an abundant excess and they will have everlasting joy (a constant theme of Isaiah, [Isaiah 35:10](#) / [Isaiah 51:11](#)). The idea is one of a perfect future arising out of their suffering when God will triumph.’

‘For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.’ [Isaiah 61:8-9](#)

God loves justice but hates robbery and wrongdoing, [Isaiah 61:8](#) / [Proverbs 6:16-19](#). In His faithfulness, He blesses His people and both Jews and Gentiles are to be one new man under Christ, [Isaiah 61:8-9](#) / [Galatians 3:28](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘We need to bear in mind that this is all a description of the glory of the Jew. In fairness, we do not know exactly what was meant by this but it should be remembered that in the Dispensation of the Love of Christ, ‘there is no distinction’ between Jew and Gentile, none whatever. If, by the Jew, one means racial Jews, nothing could be further from the truth. Race has no bearing whatever upon salvation, neither guaranteeing it to anyone whomsoever, or denying it to anyone whomsoever!’

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God’s promise to His own continues. With those who come in truth He will make His everlasting covenant which will guarantee their recognition as the people of God in the eyes of the nations. Their seed will be known among the nations as the seed which Yahweh has blessed, [Isaiah 59:21](#) / [Isaiah 54:10](#) / [Isaiah 55:3](#). In the end all will see their quality of life and being and have to recognise them for what they are and admit that they are truly God’s people. Note the emphasis on seed and compare [Isaiah 41:8](#) / [Isaiah 53:10](#). These described are the true seed of Abraham and the seed of the true Servant.’

‘I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.’ [Isaiah 61:10-11](#)

These words are the words of those who have been converted, whether Jew or Gentile, [Isaiah 61:10](#) / [Matthew 28:19-20](#). The attractiveness of a faithful people is described, they will be adorned in their salvation, [Isaiah 61:10](#) / [Revelation 19:7-9](#) / [Revelation 21:2](#). The fruit of the Gospel is seen in the pure and happy lives of

Christians, Isaiah 61:11. God's people, the church, would attract those of the world who are seeking the salvation of God, Isaiah 61:11.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'These verses also must be identified with the New Covenant in Christ. Only 'in him' is there salvation. The only true righteousness this world ever knew is 'in Christ' and those who wish to share in it must do so in the way God has directed. For any who hope to be clothed with the garments of righteousness mentioned here, there is one way for it to happen, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ', and 'putting on Christ' is equivalent to putting on the righteousness of Christ. The righteous life pledged in the ceremony is also required.'

CHAPTER 62

INTRODUCTION

'For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.' Isaiah 62:1-5

ZION'S NEW NAME

This chapter speaks of the new glory of Jerusalem, which is universal in scope. God will speak concerning the events predicted in the preceding chapter. The Servant of God, the Messiah, would not rest until He had accomplished His mission, Isaiah 62:1.

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

'Once again salvation and righteousness are paramount. Both go together. There can be no salvation until they are accounted righteous, and that can only be through that salvation. Both go forward hand in hand. Then once righteousness has been imputed, Isaiah 53:11 / Isaiah 4:3, and imparted it will be like a shining brightness, a vivid brightness before them. They will be a fit witness to the glory of Yahweh. Their lights will shine out before men who will see their good works and glorify their Father Who is in Heaven, Matthew 5:16.'

Jerusalem will receive a new name, Isaiah 62:2, after God's righteousness and glory were seen by all nations and kings, Isaiah 62:2-3. A desolate land is represented as a widow, while an inhabited land is represented as a married woman with children, Isaiah 62:4.

The word 'Hephzibah', Isaiah 62:4, literally means, 'My delight in her', and the word 'Beulah', Isaiah 62:4, literally means 'married'. In other words, God would delight in the new Jerusalem and the land would be cultivated and productive. As the faithful wife wears the name of her husband, Isaiah 62:5, so Christians, married to Christ, rejoice to wear His Name, Acts 11:26 / Acts 26:28 / 1 Peter 4:16. In other words, the church will be pure.

‘I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth. The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: “Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled; but those who harvest it will eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.” Isaiah 62:6-9

Here we read that the new Jerusalem is to be established forever. The watchmen were to guard the city and to warn when the enemy was coming, [Isaiah 62:6](#) / [Isaiah 56:10](#). We need faithful watchmen, that is, preachers and elders, in the church today to guard against the enemy, false teachers, [Ephesians 4:11-12](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) / [Luke 18:7-8](#). The walls of this New Jerusalem are called Salvation and Praise, [Isaiah 62:6-7](#) / [Isaiah 26:1](#) / [Isaiah 49:16](#) / [Isaiah 60:18](#).

The hand, [Isaiah 62:8](#), is a symbol of power and the arm of greatness. Based on His greatness and power to fulfil, God is about to commit Himself to a promise that He will fulfil, [Isaiah 62:8](#) / [Jeremiah 18:7-10](#) / [Hebrews 6:14-20](#). They had suffered from the results of their sins, [Isaiah 62:8-9](#), which suffering God had foretold, [Deuteronomy 28:33](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:51](#) / [Judges 6:4](#) / [Judges 6:11](#) / [2 Chronicles 28:18](#) / [Isaiah 16:9](#).

‘Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your Saviour comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.’” They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.’ Isaiah 62:10-12

Here we read that the salvation of God makes new Jerusalem a much-sought place, [Isaiah 62:10](#). The road must be prepared, obstacles must be removed, [Isaiah 62:10](#), and people must be called to come to the Lord, [Isaiah 62:11](#). This is all about being spiritual prepared. Just as the exiles were saved from bondage, the new spiritual Jerusalem was saved from the bondage of sin by the coming of the Redeemer, [Isaiah 62:12](#).

Christ has now come and is ready, willing and able to do all that is to be done to save both Jew and Gentile, [Romans 10:11-13](#) / [Romans 3:21-23](#) / [Acts 15:7-9](#) / [Acts 11:12](#). The citizens of the new Jerusalem will be made holy, [Isaiah 62:12](#) / [Revelation 2:24](#). They will be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and so, they would never again be forsaken by God, [Isaiah 62:12](#). The redeemed church of the Lord would be composed of people from all nations, [Revelation 7:9](#).

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Pictured in terms of one huge return from exile of a believing people, something which as far as we know only marginally occurred after the Exile, and never since, we have rather a picture of what would be the result of the coming of Salvation in Jesus, and the spread of the Gospel, with those responding coming to the heavenly equivalent of Zion, the truly free Zion, [Galatians 4:26](#) / [Hebrews 12:22](#), and there being made holy as the redeemed of Yahweh. They will have come home to Zion, [Galatians 4:26](#) / [Hebrews 12:22](#).’

CHAPTER 63

INTRODUCTION

‘Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendour, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save.” Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come. I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm achieved salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground.” Isaiah 63:1-6

GOD’S DAY OF VENGEANCE AND REDEMPTION

This chapter speaks of Jerusalem in her desolate state.

De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In this chapter, in highly figurative speech we have a picture of the warrior returning from the conflict with Edom, Israel’s perpetual foe. He returns as a conqueror with the battle over and the victory won. This poem briefly pictures the dream of divine vengeance.’

Edom, [Isaiah 63:1](#), is used figuratively because the ancient enemies of Israel dwelt there, [Isaiah 45:19-24](#) / [Hebrews 12:16](#). Bozrah, [Isaiah 63:1](#), is Edom’s capital. The destruction of Zion’s enemies, [Isaiah 63:1](#), is the work of the Messiah, [Isaiah 63:1](#). The words, ‘red garments’, [Isaiah 63:2](#), suggest one who had trod the winepress, [Isaiah 63:2](#), would have his garments stained with the juice of grapes, [Isaiah 51:17](#) / [Psalm 75:8](#) / [Jeremiah 25:15](#) / [Revelation 14:18-20](#). Here, Christ is pictured as having overcome His enemies but shedding His blood in the process, [Isaiah 63:3](#). The ‘year’ of redemption, [Isaiah 63:4](#), shows the purpose of the bloodstained garments.

Pett, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 63:4](#).

‘We can compare this with the acceptable year of Yahweh and the day of vengeance of our God in [Isaiah 61:2](#). The Anointed One and the Bloodstained One are one and the same and He is involved in both those scenarios. The ‘year of my redeemed’ confirms that we are dealing with the Redeemer as well as the Judge, [Isaiah 59:20](#).’

No man had a part in making atonement for our sins, [Isaiah 63:5](#). Christ fought this battle alone but those who refuse to repent will be punished, [Isaiah 63:6](#). The trampling of Edom was representative of all those nations who had fought against Israel throughout her history, [Isaiah 63:6](#). Jesus, the King over all things, has trampled down the nations for the sake of the church, [John 16:11](#) / [Revelation 19:11-16](#).

Archer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Divine judgment will be executed upon the world-power. Edom here, as in [Isaiah 34:5-15](#), typifies the rebellious world as implacably hostile to God’s people. Christ’s garments stained with blood are red by the blood of God’s enemies to be slain at Armageddon, [Revelation 19:13](#). The scene here is the same as in [Revelation 14:18-19](#). A Christ-rejecting, Gospel-spurning world leaves the Lord no other alternative but to send terrible and fearful destruction when the time of his long suffering is past.’

PRAISE AND PRAYER

‘I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He

said, “Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me”; and so he became their Saviour. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.’ [Isaiah 63:7-10](#)

God has been faithful to His people despite their unfaithfulness. Isaiah pictures the great love which God has for those people whom He had blessed so much in the past, [Isaiah 63:7-8](#) / [Exodus 6:7](#). When God’s people are distressed, so is God Himself, [Isaiah 63:9](#) / [Genesis 15:13](#) / [Exodus 1:8](#).

Notice that the angel of his presence saved them, [Isaiah 63:9](#). The Hebrew word for presence is literally face, which pictures the entire Person. This same Hebrew word is used in a parallel passage, [Exodus 33:14-15](#). Remember the word ‘angel’ in Hebrew is ‘malak’ and it simply means messenger. Who is this angel?

Oswalt, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Most commentators recognize that the understanding of the Holy Spirit here and in [Isaiah 63:11](#), is close to the fully developed NT concept of the third person of the Trinity. Here he is clearly a person who is capable of being hurt by human behavior, and in [Isaiah 63:11](#), he is the empowering and enabling presence in the human spirit. As Delitzsch says, ‘He is the Spirit who is both holy in himself and capable of producing holiness.’ In [Isaiah 63:12](#), although the adjective ‘holy’ is not used, the same Spirit is the one who guides and provides for the people of God.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the angel, [Isaiah 63:9](#).

‘Inasmuch as Christ accompanied Israel in the wilderness, [1 Corinthians 10:4](#), and is the ‘image of God’, [2 Corinthians 4:4](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:6](#) / [Colossians 1:15](#), and ‘the effulgence of his glory’, [Hebrews 1:3](#), the angel of God’s presence here is probably the Word of God that became flesh, [John 1:1](#).’

God is the enemy of those who work against His work, [Lamentations 2:3-5](#) / [Hebrews 10:31](#). It also discusses the lovingkindness of the Lord in the past, [Isaiah 63:9](#), as proof that He will extend such mercy in the future if sinners will repent, [Deuteronomy 6:3](#) / [Jeremiah 7:23](#) / [Ezekiel 11:20](#). Notice they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit, [Isaiah 63:10](#) / [Numbers 14:43-45](#) / [Judges 3:8](#) / [Judges 3:12](#) / [Judges 4:2](#) / [Ephesians 4:30](#).

Pett, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the Holy Spirit.

‘The holy Spirit’ refers to the Spirit of God in His holiness, where God had worked regularly through chosen men in distinctive power so that what they accomplished was seen to be of God. But God could be grieved within His Spirit, and then His powerful effects were withdrawn, Saul, [1 Samuel 16:14](#). The thought is of times when there were no Spirit-empowered leaders to lead Israel. We note that in these references to Yahweh, to the Angel of Yahweh and to His holy Spirit there is already a hint of distinctiveness and Threeness within the Godhead, yet a working of total unity.’

The Bible clearly teaches that wicked people will be punished. Israel rebelled and was punished, [Isaiah 63:10](#). God worked against them with discipline, [Isaiah 63:10](#), in order to preserve a remnant that would remain in the land until the coming of the Messiah.

‘Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses’ right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble; like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.’ [Isaiah 63:11-14](#)

God, who led Moses out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, will lend aid to all who trust Him, [Isaiah 63:11](#). When people remember what God has done in the past, it makes it easier to repent.

Moses and Aaron were Israel's shepherds, [Isaiah 63:11](#) / [Psalms 77:19-20](#) / [Micah 6:4](#), and when God delivered Israel by bringing them out of the Red Sea and He sustained them by the Holy Spirit who worked within them, [Isaiah 63:11](#) / [Numbers 11:17](#) / [Numbers 11:25](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In these chapters, we have the angel of God's presence, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and God Himself, the three persons of the Godhead, all working on behalf of Israel, their rebellion, therefore, was against the total Godhead.’

He defended them by bringing the waters of the Red Sea upon the Egyptian army, [Isaiah 63:12](#). He did all this in order to give evidence to the world that He was the only God and that Israel was His people, [Exodus 9:16](#). God led Israel safely through the wilderness for forty years in order to bring them to the land of promise, [Isaiah 63:13](#). Israel was to be His glory, [Isaiah 63:14](#) / [Isaiah 46:13](#).

Pett, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When they arrived in Canaan, it was He Who had caused them to be able to rest and graze like cattle loosed into a fertile valley, quiet and content, granted such rest because of the Spirit of Yahweh at work as their protecting herdsman. Canaan is seen as being like a lush valley where the Spirit's activity gave them rest, [Exodus 33:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 3:20](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:9-10](#) / [Deuteronomy 25:19](#) / [Joshua 1:13](#) / [Joshua 21:44](#) / [Joshua 23:1](#).’

‘Look down from heaven and see, from your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us. But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. Why, LORD, do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance. For a little while your people possessed your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary. We are yours from of old; but you have not ruled over them, they have not been called by your name.’ [Isaiah 63:15-19](#)

Here read of a call for God's mercy. The call is for God to behold the condition of His children, [Isaiah 63:15](#) / [Psalm 33:13-14](#). As in the days when God with a strong arm delivered Israel out of Egyptian captivity, he asked that God deliver them again out of the danger in which they were at the time these words were written.

As fathers, we may forget our children, especially those who go off the rails but God won't forget His children of Israel, [Isaiah 63:16](#). God redeemed Israel out of Egyptian captivity, He was their Father, and so, the closest relative who would have the responsibility to redeem them, or purchase them out of slavery, [Isaiah 63:16](#) / [Job 19:25](#) / [Psalm 19:14](#) / [Psalm 73:35](#).

The words, ‘why do you make us wander from your ways’, [Isaiah 63:17](#), literally means, ‘why did you permit us to wander from your ways’, [Psalm 119:10](#). Man hardens their own heart when they rebel against the will of God, [Isaiah 63:17](#).

Garner and Howes, in their commentary, say the following, concerning [Isaiah 63:18-19](#).

‘The holy people possessed the land of inheritance but a very short time, their enemies treading down the sanctuary of the Most High, [Isaiah 64:10-11](#) / [Psalms 74:6-8](#). Since the adversary has never accepted the Lord's rule, or been called by His holy name, the holy remnant ask Him to recognize them as His own, and to come to their deliverance! [Deuteronomy 4:20](#) / [Deuteronomy 9:26](#) / [Deuteronomy 9:29](#) / [Psalms 2:8](#) / [Isaiah 65:9](#) / [Psalms 94:14](#), etc. When the Lord answers they will heartily proclaim: ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!’ [Matthew 23:39](#).’

CHAPTER 64

INTRODUCTION

‘Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.’ Isaiah 64:1-7

In this chapter, we read of a plea for mercy on the part of God’s children who felt they had been abandoned. Notice that confidence is expressed in the mighty power of God, [Isaiah 64:1](#) / [Hebrews 1:3](#).

As God manifested Himself upon Mount Sinai, here is a plea for some divine manifestation, [Isaiah 64:1-3](#). The people hope that the mountain would quake at the presence of God and that enemy nations would tremble, [Isaiah 64:1-3](#) / [Deuteronomy 10:21](#) / [2 Samuel 7:23](#) / [Psalm 106:22](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 64:4](#).

‘Isaiah was saying that ‘eye had not seen’, etc. and the things God had already done for Israel. Paul was speaking of the wonderful things that ‘eye had not seen’, etc, [1 Corinthians 2:9](#). The wonderful things that God had laid up in the future for them that love him.’

Douglas, in his commentary, says the following.

‘[Isaiah 64:4](#), is like [Isaiah 8:17](#) / [Isaiah 30:18](#). [Isaiah 64:6](#) is like [Isaiah 30:22](#) / [Isaiah 28:1](#) / [Isaiah 27:8](#). [Isaiah 64:7](#) is like [Isaiah 27:5](#) / [Isaiah 8:17](#) / [Isaiah 29:16](#) / [Isaiah 19:25](#), etc.’

God is so great and mighty that men cannot even perceive what He will do for those who love Him, [Isaiah 64:5](#). They continued in their rebellion for so long that their culture became the rebellion, [Isaiah 64:5](#) / [Hosea 13:2](#). Their ‘righteous acts’ had become like filthy rags to God, [Isaiah 64:6](#). Their spiritual vibrancy faded away, it withered like an autumn leaf, [Isaiah 64:6](#).

In other words, just as the filthy rag was to be discarded, so their behaviour that was contrary to the will of God was to be discarded, [Leviticus 15:19-24](#). They had fallen so far away from God that they no longer cried out to Him for help, [Isaiah 64:7](#), as a result, God hid His face from them and has given them over to their sins, [Isaiah 64:7](#).

‘Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people. Your sacred cities have become a wasteland; even Zion is a wasteland, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and glorious temple, where our ancestors praised you, has been burned with fire, and all that we treasured lies in ruins. After all this, LORD, will you hold yourself back? Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?’ Isaiah 64:8-

12

God is the potter, [Isaiah 64:8](#) / [Job 10:9](#), man is the clay, [Isaiah 64:8](#), and God will make from every lump of clay the very best which can be made from that kind of clay, [Isaiah 64:8](#). Every man determines what kind of clay he will be, [Jeremiah 18](#).

Israel is unworthy, God had created them as a nation, and now the plea was that He preserves His creation, [Isaiah 64:9](#). He would surely not destroy the work of His hands. The prophet knew that if God’s anger was unleashed, the nation would suffer total destruction and so, Isaiah pleads for God’s forgiveness on behalf of the nation, [Isaiah 64:9](#). Zion is a wilderness, [Isaiah 64:10](#), but God will not cast off His own.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the ‘sacred cities’, [Isaiah 64:10](#).

‘Only Jerusalem was ordinarily honoured with the title of Holy City, but here the term is extended to include all the cities of Judah. This is not out of keeping with the rest of the Old Testament, because in Zechariah 2:12, the whole land of Judah is called the Holy Land.’

Hailey, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the temple’, Isaiah 64:11.

‘Isaiah authored hundreds of prophecies that are even far more wonderful than foretelling the burning of the temple, centuries, and even millennia before they happened and some of those events have not even happened yet! The Bible abounds in declaring events long before they occur, speaking of them as though they had already taken place. The burnt temple in this passage is an example of this.’

The prayer closes with three questions, Isaiah 64:12, which require a negative answer. The answers will be revealed in the next chapter by God Himself.

CHAPTER 65

INTRODUCTION

‘I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations—a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of impure meat; who say, ‘Keep away; don’t come near me, for I am too sacred for you!’ Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day. “See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps—both your sins and the sins of your ancestors,” says the LORD. “Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.”

Isaiah 65:1-7

JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

This chapter describes the new state of religion inaugurated by the Redeemer. In this chapter, God answers the plea made in Isaiah 64:12. God declared that He had called and had rejected the Jews only because the Jews had first rejected Him, Isaiah 65:1. Yet those Jews who repent may now be saved on the same terms as the Gentiles.

The Gentiles seek God, while rebellious Israel turns away. They searched for God but they were searching in the wrong places, John 5:39-40. Like a father pleading with his children, so God pleads with His people even when they are in rebellion, Matthew 11:28-30.

They provoked God by offering sacrifices to gods they had made up in their own minds, Isaiah 65:2. This is most likely a reference to the idolatrous practices common in Judah in the days of Ahaz. Their gods were supposedly located in gardens, places to which they went to offer sacrifices, Isaiah 65:3 / Isaiah 1:29 / Isaiah 57:5 / Ezekiel 20:38. In seeking to communicate with the dead, they were in places where Jews were not to be, Isaiah 65:4. They did those things that were an abomination to the Lord.

The eating of swine was forbidden in the law of Moses, Isaiah 65:4 / Leviticus 11:7. Some exalted themselves as holier than others Isaiah 65:5, because they were supposedly more in touch with the spirit world. They were an

irritating stench of smoke in the nose of God, [Isaiah 65:5](#). God will punish the evildoers, [Isaiah 65:6-7](#), that is, rebellious Israel, [Jeremiah 16:18](#).

‘This is what the LORD says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ so will I do in behalf of my servants; I will not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will my servants live. Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me. “But as for you who forsake the LORD and forget my holy mountain, who spread a table for Fortune and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny, I will destine you for the sword, and all of you will fall in the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.” [Isaiah 65:8-12](#)

Here we read that not all of Israel is rejected, only those who refuse God’s Word. He needed only a remnant in order to continue the seedline promise that was made to Abraham, [Genesis 12:1-3](#). Therefore, God would preserve the good grapes from which to make new wine [Isaiah 65:8](#). The Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah, [Isaiah 65:9](#). ‘Sharon’ and ‘Anchor’, [Isaiah 65:10](#), are named here as symbols representing the whole land from west to east. They worship the false gods of Destiny and Fortune, [Isaiah 65:10](#), but they were given over by God to destruction by the sword of the enemies of Judah, [Isaiah 65:11-12](#). God has faithful servants in the midst of an unfaithful nation.

‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “My servants will eat, but you will go hungry; my servants will drink, but you will go thirsty; my servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of spirit. You will leave your name for my chosen ones to use in their curses; the Sovereign LORD will put you to death, but to his servants he will give another name. Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the one true God; whoever takes an oath in the land will swear by the one true God. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.’ [Isaiah 65:13-16](#)

Here we read that the new servants of God, called by a new name would enjoy superior blessings. God says that the faithful would be spared but the disloyal apostate would suffer calamity, [Isaiah 65:13-14](#). The new name was ‘Christian’, [Isaiah 65:15](#) / [Isaiah 62:2](#) / [Acts 11:26](#).

The words, ‘you will leave your name for my chosen ones to use in their curses’, [Isaiah 65:15](#), imply that the Jews became a representative example of the penalty of divine wrath, [Numbers 5:21](#) / [Jeremiah 29:22](#) / [Zechariah 8:13](#). God blesses those who are a blessing to Him in this world, [Isaiah 65:16](#).

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

‘See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labour in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.’ [Isaiah 65:17-25](#)

We'll discuss the meaning behind the new heavens and earth, [Isaiah 65:17](#), at the end of this chapter. Here we read of the nature of the new Jerusalem, that is, the church is altogether different from the old. Old things will pass away and all things will become new, [Isaiah 65:17](#), just as he has constantly promised.

'I create', [Isaiah 65:17-18](#), is the very word which appears in [Genesis 1:21](#) / [Genesis 1:27](#), to specify the divine act of bringing into existence. A radical change is effected in the work. A peaceful disposition reigns over the church, a sharp contrast with the previous disruption within the kingdom. God is going to rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in His people and there will be no weeping or crying, [Isaiah 65:19](#) / [Isaiah 25:7-8](#) / [Revelation 21:4](#). His people will have ceaseless cause of praise and thanksgiving.

Motyer, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 65:20](#).

'This verse, as some others, had been easy, had not commentators made it so knotty. There shall be no more thence, that is, from Jerusalem, [Isaiah 65:19](#), an infant of days, or a child for days, that shall so die by an untimely death, for longevity is the blessing here promised.'

God's people are seen as being freed from the curse of the law, [Deuteronomy 28:30-68](#), because they will build houses and dwell in them and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit, [Isaiah 65:21](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 65:22](#).

'The reverse of the curse denounced on the disobedient, [Deuteronomy 28:30](#). It is commonly supposed that the oak, one of the most long-lived of the trees, lasts about a thousand years; being five hundred years growing to full perfection, and as many decaying, which seems to be a moderate and probable computation. The prophet's idea seems to be, that they shall live to the age of the antediluvians, which seems to be very justly expressed by the days of a tree, according to our notions.'

God's people will be so blessed that God give them all they crave for and more than they can desire, [Isaiah 65:23-24](#) / [Leviticus 26:14-20](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:15-68](#) / [Haggai 1:6](#).

Trapp, in his commentary, says the following.

'The prayers of the saints do sooner pierce from their hearts to heaven, than they can find way from their hearts to their mouths. So David found it, [Psalms 32:5](#), and Daniel, [Daniel 10:12](#), and that prodigal, [Luke 15:18](#) / [Luke 15:20](#). Our Saviour, who came out of the bosom of the Father, gives two reasons 1. 'The Father himself loveth you,' [John 16:27](#), and love is liberal, 2. 'The Father knoweth before ye ask, that ye have need of all these things,' [Matthew 6:32](#).'

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning [Isaiah 65:25](#).

'It is within that sacred fellowship that the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together, as stated in Isaiah's earlier reference to the Messianic Age, [Isaiah 11:6-9](#). Of course, what is meant is that the changes in men's lives, due to their obedience to the Gospel, will be 'As great as if,' the nature of fierce animals should be so changed.'

This reference to the lion and the wolf, along with its counterpart, has several utilities.

1. Again we have an instance of 'here a little and there a little', so often seen in Isaiah.
2. It identifies this passage as pertaining to the age of the Messiah, as is the case in [Isaiah 11:6-9](#).
3. And it serves to illustrate the unity of the prophecy and its authorship by Isaiah.

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

There are many theories about the phrase, ‘new heavens and a new earth’ but probably the most common theory is that the phrase means that the present Earth is going to undergo some kind of renovation, some kind of cleaning process using fire, so that it becomes like it was in the beginning when God created it and so, it will become our new heaven.

The problem is that this theory doesn’t correspond with what the Scriptures actually teach. This present earth is to pass away. Notice the following Scriptures, Matthew 24:35 / Hebrews 1:10-12 / 2 Peter 3:10-12. Our eternal dwelling place is heaven, 1 Peter 1:3-4.

CONTEXT! CONTEXT! CONTEXT!

When it comes to understanding any Scripture, we must always keep the text in its context. With this in mind, let’s go to the Scriptures where we first find the phrase, ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ Isaiah 65:17. The apostle Peter declared by inspiration that all the Old Testament prophecies pertaining to Christ are fulfilled in the present age, Acts 3:19-26, which is the last days, Acts 2:16-17, or last age, 1 Corinthians 10:11, that is the age when God speaks through His Son, Hebrews 1:1-2.

Some people object to these truths by pointing to Isaiah’s prophecy of ‘new heavens and a new earth’ and arguing that these prophecies haven’t been fulfilled. I guess we need to ask the question, what is this ‘new heavens and a new earth’? Has this prophecy of Isaiah been fulfilled or not? Notice that Isaiah twice foretold the ‘new heavens and a new earth’. Isaiah 65:17 / Isaiah 66:22, the apostle Peter did so too, 2 Peter 3:13, and so did the apostle John, Revelation 21:1.

But what do they mean when they use this phrase? Let’s take a moment to go through each one whilst keeping each one in its context, Isaiah 65:1-2. The apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1-2, the beginning of the context and applies them to the present age, Romans 10:20-21. Notice how Isaiah’s prophecy ends, Isaiah 65:25.

The words, ‘my holy mountain’ Isaiah 65:25, are a clue that identifies the time and nature of the fulfilment. The prophecy of the Lord’s ‘holy mountain’ relates to the first coming of Christ, Isaiah 11:1-2 / Isaiah 11:9 / Isaiah 61:1-2 / Luke 4:16-21, and is a figurative term for the rule of Christ in His church, His kingdom, Isaiah 2:1-4 / Hebrews 12:22-23 / Hebrews 12:28. The nature of this kingdom is spiritual rather than material, John 18:36 / Romans 14:17. In other words, ‘the new heavens and a new earth’ of Isaiah 65:17, is the present divine order under the rule of Christ and the spiritual dwelling place for the people of God, the church. In this chapter Isaiah refers to this same ‘new heavens and the new earth’ Isaiah 65:22. The context of Isaiah 66:22, is a prophecy of Christ coming into the world and establishing His church, Isaiah 66:7-9 / Micah 5:2-3 / Revelation 12:1-11. In other words, Isaiah 66:22, is a continuation of the promise of Isaiah 65:17, and likewise relates to the present rule of Christ over His kingdom, the church.

2 Peter 3:13, is in a totally different context, Peter is warning against scoffers who deny that Christ will come again, 2 Peter 3:1-4. And so, he assures us that the promise of the Lord’s return will be fulfilled, 2 Peter 3:5-9, at which time ‘the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up,’ 2 Peter 3:10.

Notice there is nothing in the passage or even the context for that matter which indicates Peter is speaking figuratively, therefore we should take the warning literally. This present universe is destined for sudden, fiery, divine destruction. This shouldn’t worry the Christians because Peter says, ‘we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells’, 2 Peter 3:13.

In other words, in harmony with the meaning of the phrase ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ we await a new order of things and a new dwelling place. This is a home in heaven, 1 Peter 1:3-5, in which we will have glorious, immortal, spiritual bodies like that of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 / 1 John 3:2.

John likewise saw in a vision this new order of things, Revelation 21:1, after the return of the Lord in which the death, sickness, pain, suffering, and sorrow of this present age shall have passed away and God once more dwells with His people and this for all eternity, Revelation 21:2-5.

CONCLUSION

Common sense tells us that if the Christian is promised ‘heaven’ which is our final dwelling place, and yet we’re also promised a ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ this tells us that the ‘new heavens and new earth’ represent the same state as heaven.

All the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ, most of which were both figurative and spiritual, are indeed fulfilled in the New Testament age. The ‘new heavens and a new earth’ of Isaiah are the rule of Christ over His spiritual kingdom, His church.

So, what does the phrase mean in the New Testament? It simply means, its symbolic of heaven itself, nothing more, nothing less. There are yet ‘new heavens and a new earth’ in store for Christians at the Lord’s return, it will be a wonderful home in heaven where everlasting joy awaits. No wonder John writes, ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.’ Revelation 22:20.

CHAPTER 66

INTRODUCTION

‘This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. “These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.” Isaiah 66:1-2

JUDGMENT AND HOPE

The final chapter speaks of a change of heart among the people and the effects produced.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The idea of Israel’s return is associated with that of erecting a new temple. This section deals with the spiritual Jerusalem, the kingdom that we saw in Isaiah 2:2-5. Isaiah 66, deals with Israel’s restoration and its antitype, the church of our Lord.’

If God has so high a throne and so high a footstool, man would not be able to build a house to contain Him, [Isaiah 66:1](#) / [Acts 7:50-51](#) / [Hebrews 1:3](#). He begins by asking ‘how can He whom heaven serves as a throne dwell in a house made by hands,’ [Isaiah 66:1](#) / [1 Kings 8:27](#) / [2 Chronicles 6:18](#) / [Acts 17:22-29](#) / [John 4:22-24](#). God hates the very thought of having those of the rebellious captives build a house for Him.

This is the kind of man who has a contrite heart, [Isaiah 66:2](#), those are the people which God seeks, [Matthew 5:1-12](#). All these earthly things were made by God so the man whom God regards is not one who erects an earthly tabernacle, but the one who is humble and fears God and trembles at His Word, [Isaiah 66:2](#).

‘But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a person, and whoever offers a lamb is like one who breaks a dog’s neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig’s blood, and whoever burns memorial incense is like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and they delight in their abominations; so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring on them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.’ [Isaiah 66:3-4](#)

The sinner who would offer an ox to God, might as well kill a man, so far as God is concerned, [Isaiah 66:3](#) / [Mark 7:1-9](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:9-12](#). Whoever offers a lamb, is like one who breaks a dog’s neck, [Isaiah 66:3](#). Whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig’s blood, [Isaiah 66:3](#). Whoever burns memorial incense is like one who worships an idol, [Isaiah 66:3](#).

Even though God called they did not answer because they were caught up in their own religiosity that they had made up in their own minds. For evil men to continue offering sacrifices to God is repulsive, [Isaiah 66:3-4](#), they are like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, [Matthew 23:14](#).

‘Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: “Your own people who hate you, and exclude you because of my name, have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy!’ Yet they will be put to shame. Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the LORD repaying his enemies all they deserve.’ [Isaiah 66:5-6](#)

Here we have two groups mentioned, those who tremble at the Word of the Lord, and so, God will now bring joy to their hearts, [Isaiah 66:5](#), and those who mock that Word and so, God will now bring shame upon them, [Isaiah 66:5](#) / [John 3:20](#) / [John 7:7](#) / [John 15:18-19](#).

The city and temple to which they desired to go, are esteemed by them as places from which just judgement will issue upon God’s enemies, [Isaiah 66:6](#). The noise came from the temple, [Isaiah 66:6](#), because it was there that they were busy with their sacrifices, mixing pagan beliefs with sacrifices to God.

Kelley, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The voice of Jehovah coming from the temple emphasized that those being judged were the Israelites.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This prophecy, without any doubt, applies to the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple by the Romans in 70 A.D., whether or not there might have been earlier applications. The mention of the temple, however, points strongly to the Roman destruction.’

‘Before she goes into labour, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labour than she gives birth to her children. Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?’ says the LORD. “Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?” says your God.’ [Isaiah 66:7-9](#)

Here we have a picture of a child born without struggle and pain, [Isaiah 66:7](#). The increase of Zion will be sudden and unexpected, [Isaiah 66:8-9](#).

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Thus, the old order passes away, the ancient nation will perish and the Zion of Old Testament times disappears but from that old Zion there will suddenly come forth a seed, the Gentiles who will enter the household of faith.’

The birth of the church was without pain. God had started the birth of the Messiah into the world when the Gospel was first preached to Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3 / Galatians 3:8. These words are intended to strengthen the faith of the captives.

‘Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.’ For this is what the LORD says: “I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.” When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD will be made known to his servants, but his fury will be shown to his foes.’ Isaiah 66:10-14

In an anticipation of such a future, those who love Jerusalem are to rejoice beforehand in the change of their suffering to glory and their afflictions to consolations, Isaiah 66:10-11 / Isaiah 2:1-4. The reason for their keen anticipation was that peace and glory would flow to her like a river, Isaiah 66:12. God will comfort His servants, the faithful, Isaiah 66:13, and punish His enemies, Isaiah 66:14.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is a reference to the custom of mothers to carry their little ones upon the hip. All of the scenes described here are intimate and tender references to motherhood. Direct fellowship with God and full involvement in His church are depicted here.’

‘See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment on all people, and many will be those slain by the LORD. “Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one who is among those who eat the flesh of pigs, rats and other unclean things—they will meet their end together with the one they follow,” declares the LORD.’ Isaiah 66:15-17

Here we read that the redemption from all the nations is enjoyed. God’s judgement upon His enemies prepares a way for deliverance. God appears with warlike terror because He has come for great judgement, Isaiah 66:15-16. Those who rebelled against God’s Word and worshipped after the pagan rites of the old Canaanite fertility cults followed one who was amongst them, Isaiah 66:17. Judgement falls not only upon the heathen but also upon the Jews who become like the heathen, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Wardle, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This means that they followed the actions of ‘one in the midst’, probably a leader of the ceremonies, Ezekiel 8:11, and in the mystic meals, they ate food regarded by the Law as unclean.’

‘And I, because of what they have planned and done, am about to come and gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory. “I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.

And they will bring all your people, from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says the LORD. “They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites,” says the LORD.’ Isaiah 66:18-21

Here we read that the deeds and devices of the wicked were known to God, Isaiah 66:18.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following, concerning ‘the sign’, [Isaiah 66:19](#).

‘The only sign that our Lord ever gave to the unbelieving Jews was The sign of the prophet Jonah, that like as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, [Matthew 12:39-40](#), in short, the Resurrection of Christ!’

Those who escaped, the righteous remnant, would go forth proclaiming God’s greatness and saving power among those nations which had never heard His name nor seen His glory, [Isaiah 66:18-19](#) / [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#). Those who come will see the glory of God through Jesus Christ, [John 11:4](#) / [John 11:40](#) / [John 11:55](#).

Those who are delivered from their sins will be sent throughout the world, [Acts 8:4](#). We have a picture of ‘all nations’, [Isaiah 66:20](#), flowing unto spiritual Jerusalem, [Isaiah 2:2-4](#), and we read of a prophecy of the Gospel age, referring to the priesthood, [Isaiah 66:21](#), Jews and Gentiles, of believers, [1 Peter 2:5-9](#).

‘As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the LORD. “And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.” [Isaiah 66:22-24](#)

Here we have mention of the new heavens and earth, [Isaiah 66:22](#), as we did in the previous chapter, [Isaiah 65:17](#). In other words, [Isaiah 66:22](#), is a continuation of the promise of [Isaiah 65:17](#), and likewise relates to the present rule of Christ over His kingdom, the church.

Here we read that worship is offered from among all nations, [Romans 12:1-2](#). The mass of Israel perished but Israel would continue as the new heaven and new earth. This is a prophetic type and changes into a spiritual state, [Romans 2:28-29](#). Forever the church will be recognised as the people whom God has chosen to be His own. The old Israel of God will be replaced by the new Israel, the church, that is, spiritual Israel.

Using Old Testament figures, the prophet teaches that there will be a faithful, regular, legitimate worship of God on the part of all flesh in the new dispensation. Worship will no longer be on the Sabbath, just one day a week. It will be daily, from Sabbath to Sabbath, [Isaiah 66:23](#) / [Acts 5:42](#) / [Romans 12:1-2](#).

[Isaiah 66:24](#), is a figure of speech designed to cause the Jews to remember the terrible judgement God had brought upon the unrighteous. The figure of the condemnation of the wicked is taken from the Valley of Hinnom, that is, Gehenna, where the bodies of one-hundred and eighty-five thousand dead Assyrians were burned, [2 Kings 19:35](#) / [Mark 9:47-48](#). Those who would be cast out are those who refuse to obey the Gospel, [Mark 9:48](#). The Jews were thus left with a vision that encouraged hope for the future.

Pledge, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It would be well to keep in mind that the language of this closing section is extremely figurative and deals with the church today. It does not refer to some state yet future, but it was spoken regarding the national restoration of Israel as a TYPE of the greater restoration which should be affected by the servant whom the Lord would send, Jesus Christ.’