

# *The Book of Isaiah*

**Bro. Frank Shallieu**

**(1976–1981 Study)**

The following notes on the Book of Isaiah were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1976-1981. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by **“Comment”** or **“Q”** (an abbreviation for **“Question”**) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1976-1981)

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

Notice, “the vision” (*singular*) that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem extended through the reigns of *four* kings. Nevertheless, it would have to be a *series of visions* considering the length of the book and the time covered. The Apostle Paul made a similar comment when he witnessed to King Agrippa: “Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly *vision*” (Acts 26:19).

The net benefit of Isaiah’s ministry was for Judah and Jerusalem. “Isaiah” is an abbreviated name meaning “salvation of the Lord,” “the Lord’s deliverance,” or “help of the Lord.”

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were contemporary prophets in different areas. Daniel was in the king’s court in Babylon, Ezekiel was among the captives of the ten tribes in exile, and Jeremiah was in Israel and later went to Egypt when those of Judah were dispersed. During a brief part of Isaiah’s ministry, there were seven prophets: three in Judah, three in Israel, and Isaiah himself. Of the seven, Isaiah was the most important because his prophecies contained so much information about Jesus. In fact, the Book of Isaiah has been called the “Gospel of the Old Testament.” Micah, Joel, and Obadiah were in Judah with Isaiah. Hosea, Amos, and Jonah were in Israel. Not all books of the Bible are in sequence, especially if some were contemporaneous. Isaiah 1:1 reads, “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of *Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah*, kings of Judah.” Micah 1:1 reads, “The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of *Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah*, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.” The books of the other five prophets show their ministries were of shorter duration than Micah’s, but during Isaiah’s ministry.

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

The Lord, through Isaiah, addressed the “heavens” and the “earth.” There is a double application. (1) One application would be the ecclesiastical “heavens” and the civil “earth.” (2) The “heavens” can also be the leaders or rulers in both the religious and the civil realms, and the “earth” would be the subjects underneath their control or influence. Because of the prophetic nature of the Book of Isaiah, the second application is the better one.

Verse 1 simply states who Isaiah was, who his father was, and at what time he lived. In verse 2, God said that the utterances to follow were of significant import, and He desired His people to *hearken*. In other words, “*Hearken, O heavens and earth, to the message of this book. Hear me speak.*” The Book of Revelation starts similarly, giving a little of John’s background and the circumstance under which he wrote the book, where he was, and the period of time involved. The introductory statement says that the message originated from God, was testified by Jesus, and was recorded by John—and “blessed is he that readeth, and they that *hear* the words.”

“I [God] have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” The “children” whom God nourished and who rebelled against Him are both natural and spiritual Israel.

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

The “master’s crib” was a building or enclosure for storing a food supply. A corn crib is a small building with air slats in which the corn ages while it is being stored. Verse 3 is saying that the dumb animals have more sense than the natural and spiritual Israelites. The animals know who nurtures, protects, and feeds them, but the people do not consider that God is doing these things for them.

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

“Ah” means “Alas.” Instead of being hypercritical, the Lord had a heavy heart. The situation was pathetic. The reflection is similar to Jesus’ remark, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt. 23:37). There was much pathos in Jesus’ words. Verse 4 is like an old person down through the ages giving serious reflection, and in summing up, he notes this condition of the people.

The people were “*laden with iniquity.*” They were a “seed of evildoers” in that both the current generation and their parents and their parents’ parents, etc., etc., were all sinful.

God called attention to His title: “the Holy One of Israel.” Why did He use this title? He was contrasting His attitude and condition with the attitude and condition of His subjects: the Holy and the unholy.

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

What strong language! The whole head being sick and the whole heart being faint suggest that the condition was terminal. The hopeless condition was beyond *human* repair.

**Isa. 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.**

From the top of the head to the sole of the foot, there were open, putrefying sores. The nation was being addressed as an individual. Comparing the nation to a human being would have to do with *character*: sores, wounds, bruises, etc., upon the person of the nation.

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

Verse 7 suggests that the Book of Isaiah was written at the end of a desolation—the desolation of the ten-tribe kingdom, which ceased in the days of Hezekiah. In other words, toward the close of Isaiah’s ministry, the ten tribes were pillaged, robbed, killed, and taken into captivity. and their cities were set on fire. Verse 1 had to be written at this time, for if it had been recorded earlier, how would it be known that Isaiah’s ministry would extend into Hezekiah’s reign? The context suggests that Isaiah concluded the book just before his death, and Chapter 1 was inserted as a prologue to his ministry. The messages in the rest of the book were delivered at earlier dates and on different occasions, but Isaiah did not collate them into one manuscript until near the end of his ministry.

Isaiah was especially directing this message to Judah and Jerusalem, the *two-tribe* kingdom. The

message pertained to the desolation in Hezekiah's day that affected the *ten-tribe* kingdom. God was saying in effect, "Strangers are pillaging *your land*." The land of the ten tribes was part of the nation of Israel. In other words, "You are in the land, and you are seeing *part* of this land being pillaged and destroyed in your very presence." This message should have awakened the two tribes to recognize their own sad condition. "Look at what is happening to the ten tribes. You, Judah, are also in a pathetic condition. Take note of what is occurring, and reform lest a similar fate befalls you."

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

The term "daughter of Zion" refers to the nation of Israel. Isaiah was implying that the same thing that had happened to the ten tribes would happen to Judah. The principle is the same with the French Revolution, which was a localized preview of what will occur on a worldwide scale in the great Time of Trouble. The coming conflict is irrepressible; it is just a matter of time until it occurs.

The nation of Israel was left as an *abandoned* "cottage in a vineyard" when the season of harvest is past. Such a temporary shelter was used by the laborers until the season ended, and when abandoned, the building went into disrepair. The principle is the same with "a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." Laborers picking cucumbers had a shelter like that of the grape pickers in a vineyard.

The nation of Israel was left "as a besieged city" that had previously been under siege and was now *abandoned*—like a ghost city.

The Book of Isaiah is a series of sermons. After Isaiah completed them, he inserted the first chapter as a prologue or preface.

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

In other words, if God had not left a remnant in Israel, the people would have been wiped out. There is a prophetic implication: What Judah witnessed as occurring to the ten-tribe kingdom would eventually happen to the two-tribe kingdom. Isaiah wrote about a *future* occurrence as though it were *past*.

Israel is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah, two prominent twin cities in the fertile "vale [valley] of Siddim," which were later covered with water to become the Dead Sea (Gen. 14:3). After a violent earthquake, the two cities were buried under water, and there they remain—under the Dead Sea—unto our day, with some relic of their civilization being preserved. Just as Lot's wife was encased in molten lava to appear like a statue when the lava cooled, so the cities, at least in a measure, have been preserved.

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

Isaiah addressed Judah and Jerusalem, likening them to Sodom and Gomorrah because they had the terminal disease of sin.

**Q:** Is verse 10 an amplification of verse 2, which says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth"?

**A:** Yes, the "heavens" were the "rulers," and the "earth" would be the "people." Isaiah's own

personality comes in here. The prophet himself said, “Hear the word of the LORD,” and not “The word of the LORD declares....” Isaiah was getting emotionally involved in connection with God’s judgment of their condition. It normally takes a strong personality to deliver a strong message.

The fact that the rulers were identified with Sodom and the people with Gomorrah indicates that the city of Sodom had more power and authority.

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

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

Many people minimize the Law of types and shadows in the Old Testament by using Scriptures such as these. They say that God does not delight in animal sacrifices but is more interested in character development. While, on the one hand, they use Scripture to prove their point, they are, on the other hand, trying to minimize the importance of the very things God instituted. Since He instituted these sacrifices and, in some instances, even established a death penalty for failure to perform them correctly, it would be contradicting Him to say, “Who required this of you?”

To get the right slant in verse 11, we should read with emphasis the words “multitude” and “full.” The people brought *many* animals to sacrifice, and Isaiah’s criticism was that the sacrifices were vain, for they did not denote a proper heart condition and spirit. The problem was that the people brought diseased animals; they consecrated the least of their substance and kept back their goodies for themselves. Therefore, the emphasis in verse 12 should be as follows: Not only were the people showering the Lord’s altar with abundant animals on the feast days, but they were coming to the religious services in full attendance (they came in numbers to “tread” God’s courts). The point of emphasis is like what John the Baptist said when the scribes and Pharisees came to him to be baptized, “Who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?” (Matt. 3:7). Isaiah was not happy to see the people coming with sacrifices because they were offered out of prudence and a wrong heart condition. The scribes and Pharisees went to John the Baptist out of prudence, thinking: “Maybe this is Elijah, who is to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. If so, we better get baptized in haste before we are destroyed.” Fear was their motivation, not repentance. Thus Isaiah was saying to the people, “Who hath required this at *your* hand? Who hath told *you* to come?” God required sacrifices of the people of Israel, but not of hypocrites. He wanted sacrifices from those who were obedient to His ordinances. The heart condition was the determining factor.

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

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

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

God established the ingredients of the incense, the proportions of the ingredients, and a death penalty for anyone who manufactured incense on the side. God ordained the new moons and the sabbaths, but here He called them “Your new moons” and “your appointed feasts

[sabbaths].” God was saying, “The way you perform the new moons and the sabbaths, you can have them.” It would be like getting a gift from a person who is so estranged from us that we resent it. Of course we would like to see a change in that person’s heart attitude, but a gift in itself, when no real reparations are made for the injury, will not bring forgiveness. Under such circumstances, the gift is obnoxious—it would be better if no gift were given. God’s saying, “I cannot away with,” was like His saying, “I am fed up with your vain offerings and feasts.”

Verse 15 refers to prayer leaders who sometimes lifted up (“spread forth”) their hands toward heaven and raised their voices to implore the Lord to hearken to their prayers. Spreading the hands suggests opening the heart for a response from God.

“I will hide mine eyes from you.” The *great* Jehovah spoke to the nation of Israel like a person and reasoned with the people on their level. He said, “It is *your* new moons and *your* sabbaths that my soul hates.” Because of the Israelites’ heart condition and disobedience, God was not pleased when they observed His *appointed* holidays. Sometimes the Israelites proclaimed or manufactured *additional* feasts to denote their holiness, and that also displeased Him. In antitype, for instance, the Roman Catholic Church kept adding feast days, feeling that the greater the number of feast days, the holier the people were.

**Isa. 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;**

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

In connection with the hands that were lifted up in prayer being “full of blood” (verse 15), God, through Isaiah, told the Israelites to “wash.” He was telling them to cease to do evil and to learn to do well. In other words, *repeated action* was needed to correct the wrong, not just words, not just saying, “I’m sorry.” Evil is usually *habitual*; therefore, to reform and correct the damage done through evil habits requires *good habits*.

There are several aspects of learning to do well: (1) seek judgment, (2) relieve the oppressed, (3) judge the fatherless, and (4) plead for the widow. How would Israel “seek judgment”? Making sure their judges were honest, fair, and unbiased would bring respect for the Law and for God. As in the Parable of the Unjust Steward, the “oppressed” should have been relieved by a merciful debt arrangement so that people in dire straits could pay what they owed. Men, women, and animals were to be treated mercifully, and not taken advantage of in conditions of slavery, indebtedness, etc. The fatherless (orphans) were to be “judged” in the sense of receiving justice; no one was to injure them by seizing their property. The Israelites were to “plead for the widow,” that is, not take advantage of her plight.

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

The previous portion of the chapter showed an almost hopeless, sin-laden situation. The Israelites were called children of iniquity, a seed of evildoers, etc. Now God said, “Come, and let us reason together.”

“Though your sins be as scarlet, ... though they be red like crimson.” Scarlet and crimson are essentially the same; thus the same thought is expressed twice. Red is the most difficult color to eradicate or bleach out. With the two clauses being a couplet, the same statement is repeated.

“They [your sins] shall be as white as snow; ... they shall be as wool.” This, too, is a couplet. The

scarlet sins shall become white like snow (snow white). Scarlet and white are quite a contrast! There are two contrasts: (1) The fastness of the scarlet is contrasted with white. (2) Wool is like an open-grained wood floor. A stain penetrates *deeply* in both materials. One contrast emphasizes the fastness of the crimson dye, and the other emphasizes the wool material.

The scarlet dye represents sin—its corruptibility and contagion. The wool garment pictures the person's weaknesses. The individual is porous in connection with the onslaught of sin. When scarlet dye impregnates wool and goes way, way down into the fibers, it is nearly impossible to wash out. The Scriptures say to *learn* to do well. Repetition is necessary; one must work on the stain *repeatedly* in order to remove it. But even if the stain (sin) is worked on, God's grace is needed for removal.

Imagine the Lord talking this way! "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." What a powerful statement! The principle is, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow *if you are willing and obedient*. If you want your scarlet sins to be cleansed to white, let us talk about it." The Lord is coming down to a *human* level.

When wool is washed, there is a cleanness about it. Sheep get dirty in the field, but when they are sheared and the wool is washed and dried, it is soft, fluffy, and white.

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

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

**Comment:** In verse 3, God was saying, "My people do not consider; they do not reason or think." Now He was inviting them to do so.

**Reply:** It is hard for us to love that way. When a person becomes estranged to us, the tendency is to say, "If he does not appreciate me, why should I have anything to do with him?" But God knows our frame: "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). In spite of all the evil proclivities of the nation of Israel, God wanted to give them another chance. We are reminded of the attitude of the father toward the wayward son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

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

A common theme of verses 21-26 is that Israel was in a favorable situation at one time in the past. Example: "How is the *faithful city* become an harlot!" The city once was faithful. "Thy *silver* is become dross." It once was silver. "I will restore thy *judges* as at the first." Israel once had judges and was quite harmonious with God.

"How is the faithful city become an harlot!" In one sense, the "city" is Jerusalem (Isa. 1:1), and in antitype, the "city" is the professed Church in the Ephesus period—also pictured as a white horse under the First Seal and shown as a woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12:1. The early Church had a good beginning, hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Eventually the woman clothed with the sun became pregnant, and following her labor pains, she brought forth a man child who grew up into the man of sin. The "judges" of the early Church were the apostles; only after they fell asleep did the devil come in and sow tares, which in time caused the wheat field to become a tare field. Isaiah called Jerusalem a "harlot," and Revelation 17 calls the papal Church the "mother of harlots."

The "city" can be considered in a third sense. As the capital city of a country can represent the



entire nation, so Jerusalem pictured the nation of Israel as a whole. The nation was once faithful and “full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it.” But in time, “murderers” lodged there.

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

Silver is compared with dross or tin (see verse 25). Silver and tin appear similar, but silver is pure and tin is an *alloy*. The Apostle Paul warned the Church in connection with sounding the gospel message. When an all-silver trumpet is sounded, the tone is clear and mellow; it produces a pure sound with a good ring. In antitype, this represents clarion truth. But if the trumpet is made of tin, it produces a tinkling or tinny sound. In antitype, the message would have the form of truth but lack the quality of truth; it would not have the ring of truth.

“Thy wine [is] mixed with water.” No matter how good the wine is, if it is mixed with water, it becomes flat. Diluted wine loses its ability to warm, encourage, and cheer the individual; it loses its medicinal effect. Water by itself is refreshing to drink and quenches thirst, but wine goes further and makes one joyous. Therefore, “wine” represents the *joys* of truth. Revelation 6:6 tells us that “oil” (the Holy Spirit) and “wine” (the joys of the truth) were not to be withheld from faithful Christians in the Dark Ages: “And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”

“Water” and “wine” each have separate functions for the Christian, but mixing the two ruins the effects of both. The refreshing quality of clean, pure water is vitiated by mixing in wine, and the distinctive characteristic of wine is lost by diluting it with water. Silver and tin each have separate functions, but mixing tin with silver to make a trumpet spoils the quality of the sound produced.

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

The “princes” (civil rulers, religious rulers, teachers, judges—those in authority starting at the top) were easily bribed. Corrupt leaders were in government affairs; they associated with thieves. Judges should lift up and help the people. They should “judge” the fatherless (orphans) by considering their needs and pitying them. Young orphans do not have the ability to work for wages. The same is true for widows, especially in ancient times. The judges should have looked out for their interests and helped them. Thus the word “judge” should have had a favorable connotation, but instead corrupt judges took advantage of widows and orphans, particularly if an inheritance was involved. Not knowing their legal rights, widows were trustful of those who came in to manage their estates; but their inheritances were taken away, and they were left penniless. If the widows and orphans had no inheritance, no means of sustenance, a means should have been provided for them to live.

The “princes” were rebellious in that they obstinately refused to listen to the Lord’s counsel but rendered judgment for personal gain and for sadistic enjoyment of power. They did not minister justice to the orphans and widows because to do so would not bring them money. They should have stepped down from the office.

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

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

How does one “purely purge away” dross? In Greek, the word “pure” (*purrhos*) is associated with “fire.” Fire is applied to the metal to smelt, refine, and purify it of the dross. A violent reaction pushes the dross up to the surface in a circular motion and burns it off. When silver has been purified, there is no longer any dross to throw up to the surface. The technique is not to destroy the metal but to apply enough heat to remove the foreign elements of dirt, dross, and debris. The point is that a strong process is needed to purge away dross. And so God was telling the nation of Israel that He would use drastic treatment with them.

**Comment:** The metal (Israel) was worth working on; it still had redeemable qualities, even though it was sick from the top of its head to the bottom of its feet.

**Reply:** Yes, the nation was full of disease and rottenness. Although the condition was terminal and beyond human cure, God said, “Come now, and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow *if you will obey and hearken.*”

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

“I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.” During the 450-year Period of the Judges, Israel was punished for disobedience, a judge was raised up to deliver them, Israel was again punished, a judge again delivered them, etc., etc. In other words, the evil condition was halted each time with a judgment from God. Without such judgments nipping evil in the bud, the evil increases more and more until it runs rampant throughout society. Israel’s judges included Samson and Gideon.

But Israel had judges even earlier, as shown in Exodus 18:16-23. Moses said, “When they [the Israelites] have a matter [a dispute], they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.” Moses’ father-in-law replied, “The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to Godward [you shall represent the people before God], that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.”

Not only was Moses being worn out in trying to judge all cases himself, but the people would be worn out by waiting in long lines for hours to be heard. Therefore, 70 elders were appointed as judges to assist Moses. His role was twofold: (1) He dealt with God, as it were, face to face. (2) The elders dealt with Moses, who was like a teacher of teachers. Hence he was a type of Jesus, the Head and the Teacher of the Church, who are to be kings (judges), and priests. Jesus is a King of (over) kings.

When the Law was *originally* given and justice was meted out with stern punishments as necessary, the nation was considered favorably. In time, however, the hardened hearts of a minority element permeated the whole lump, or nation, like leaven. As a result, the general attitude of the people deteriorated, and they were judged accordingly. God had compassion on the nation of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt in their humble condition. The

problem is that a mixed people came out, and in time, the leaven contaminated the whole. The same is true of the gospel Church. In the Ephesus period, the apostles pointed out the Nicolaitan element, which was anxious to get a crown. After the apostles fell asleep in death, the minority of grasping individuals increased and took control in the 300's, leading eventually to Papacy.

Thus the term "city," as used in verse 21, embraced the whole nation starting with their earliest beginnings. The judges that the Lord will restore refer back to the original arrangement He instituted in connection with both the giving of the Law and the raising up of judges during the 450-year period.

"Jerusalem" means city of peace ("salem" being *shalom*). Melchizedek was there at one time as the king of Salem. The Apostle Paul referred to Melchizedek as a king of *peace* and a king of *righteousness* (Heb. 7:2). Here Isaiah said Jerusalem will be called "The city of righteousness, the faithful city." This title reminds us of the last verse in Ezekiel: "The name of the city from that day shall be, *The LORD is there*" (Ezek. 48:35). Zechariah 8:3 states, "Thus saith the LORD; I ... will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a *city of truth*; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain." The prophet added, "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 14:20,21). After the Kingdom is established with great power and glory, there will be a tremendous celebration with *great joy*. Only the Holy Remnant will survive Jacob's Trouble (Isa. 4:2-4). This meek and contrite saved class, along with the Ancient Worthies, will be the nucleus of the Kingdom. Therefore, at the time of this celebration, there "shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts." Because there will not be enough utensils, the pots and utensils throughout the city of Jerusalem will all be declared "holy" by an edict and used for the celebration and the sacrifices.

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

When the Lord establishes the central seat of His government in Jerusalem, He will make sure it starts with a holy nucleus of Jews so that when others say, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord," they will realize the city is holy and faithful—a *changed* condition. The Jews who are purged out will come forth from the tomb with the rest of mankind in due time and will be dealt with on a different basis. As far as the surviving Jews are concerned—those who live through Jacob's Trouble—they "shall be redeemed with *judgment*"; that is, the dross will be purged out. The Jews who withstand the test in Jacob's Trouble, and who are humble and contrite before the Lord, will live through the trouble. They will be Zion's "converts," "her converts with *righteousness*." Only Jews who are handpicked will live through Jacob's Trouble. Isaiah will repeat and repeat and repeat this theme.

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

"The destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners" will take place in Jacob's Trouble—that is, before the Kingdom is set up—but "they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed" in the Kingdom Age. When God delivers Israel (the Holy Remnant), there will be many deaths, both of Gog and of the Jews. Being taken off the scene *temporarily* is one thing, and being "consumed" *permanently* is another. Those who continue to manifest a rebellious attitude in the Kingdom will go into Second Death.

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

**confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.**

The “oaks” refer to the groves where the Israelites had their idols and statues to heathen gods. Similarly, Catholics have statues in their own gardens, perhaps under a shade tree. The Israelites also committed other misdeeds under the oaks.

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

The symbol of the oak tree continues. While the foliage of an oak tree provides much desirable shade, yet oak trees lose their leaves each fall and become barren. The analogy is that just as the oak tree loses its leaves, so the condition of the Israelites would change from favor to disfavor. Without water, a garden ceases to exist. Without God’s favor, Israel would cease to prosper.

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

“Tow” is a used-up wick. Both the worker and his work of art, both the maker and the product of his making, would be destroyed.

“The strong [leaders] shall be as tow.” The “strong” were entrenched in positions of seeming security under the corrupt conditions that existed; for example, some judges today are appointed for life. Isaiah prophesied that the leaders would be removed from their positions. Not only would individuals be judged, but fire would destroy the system of government.

Verse 31 concludes the discussion of the preface to the Book of Isaiah, which was written at the end of the prophet’s ministry.

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

Isaiah’s ministry started with this verse; he began to record what he saw or experienced. “The son of Amoz” was inserted to distinguish this Isaiah from other men named Isaiah. This form of address was common back there.

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

Basically, verse 2 is a Kingdom setting. The language is figurative, for people will not literally “flow” unto the mountain, and the mountain in the city of Jerusalem will not be higher than Mount Everest. *Figuratively*, the people will be attracted. In humility and contrition, they will seek for guidance from the new capital of that day. However, in another sense, there will be a literal fulfillment, for the nations will send representatives to Jerusalem. The “flowing” emphasizes that Jerusalem will have a drawing power and that people will be melted from their former heart condition. Following the trouble, they will be soft and pliable and looking for deliverance. Jerusalem will be the highest government, or central *seat of authority*—the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (verse 3). Other Scriptures indicate that the Temple Mount will be literally raised up above the local hills. “The LORD’S house” refers to a literal building in which the government will be located.

Micah 4:1-3 is almost identical to Isaiah 2:2-4. “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob;

and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Almost all scholars say that Micah was written before Isaiah, but that is not the case. For one thing, Isaiah was on the scene before Micah and had a longer ministry. Also, Isaiah seems to be the more important prophet. The fact that God had these verses recorded twice suggests that this transcendent, happy theme is very important.

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

“Many people shall ... say, Come.” Notice that the account does not say “all.” Similarly, Matthew 20:28 states that Jesus gave “his life a ransom for many,” and 1 Timothy 2:6 says that he “gave himself a ransom for all.” Thus the “many” can be “all.” The emphasis is on a *universal* situation. In the beginning, some nations will refuse to send representatives to the Feast of Tabernacles, but those nations will fall into line (Zech. 14:16-18).

“Many people shall go and say...” Some people talk and then wait for the other party to take action, but here the action *precedes* the speaking. In other words, with some the desire to go to Jerusalem will be so much a burden on their heart that they will start and actually be *on their way* as they urge others to join them: “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”

The rest of the sentence, “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem,” is a comment by Isaiah, as is verse 4.

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

“And he [God] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.” In *Volume 4*, pages 628 and 629, the Pastor said, “And [previously—in the great time of trouble] he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.” In other words, Jacob’s Trouble is the *climax* of the humbling of all nations. God will not crush the nations further at the start of the Kingdom. Although it is true that some nations (like Egypt) will debate about going up to Jerusalem and to the Jews to worship, they will not be aggressively fighting the Lord. Pride will keep them from acquiescing. To find out that salvation is of the Jew will be a hard pill for some to swallow, but that is much different than actively fighting against Israel with tanks and bombs.

The time setting, then, for verse 4 is just after the Kingdom has been established with power and great glory. The “mountain of the LORD” will have been exalted above all the hills and mountains of earth; that is, God’s government will now be supreme and in control of all other nations. One of the first acts will be to start the melting down of armaments, which suggests that a tremendous amount of armaments will be used in the final battle in Israel.

A pruning hook is used to clip branches. Since spears and pruning hooks are both *long* instruments, economy will be used in the conversion process. In other words, the Lord will not convert one thing into something else that is radically different but will proceed in a practical manner, changing weapons into similar items. A tank could be converted into a tractor, for

example. Armaments will be made into domestic implements for farming the land.

“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” This prophecy shows that the demonstration at the end of the Millennial Age will not be a literal war. When the devil and his angels go up against the camp of the saints, it will not be an armed insurrection, for weapons will be obsolete at that time. People from various nations will go to Jerusalem to protest the Kingdom and its authority; they will say the thousand years have ended and it is time to return the earth to the children of men.

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

A representative group from among the Gentile nations will express these sentiments to the “house of Jacob,” that is, to natural Israel. The pronoun “ye” refers to the house of Jacob, and “us” would be the Gentiles. The latter will be saying to the Jews, “Come ... let us walk in the light of the LORD,” for the Gentiles will know that God is with Israel. They will have heard eyewitness accounts of God’s miraculous deliverance of Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble.

When God manifests His GREAT POWER and the Kingdom is first established, the Holy Remnant will be frightened, for they will realize that Jesus is the true Messiah and that they, as a people, crucified him. At that time, the Holy Remnant will be in no position to be leaders—they will be crushed, smiting their breasts and wailing as for an only son (Zech. 12:10). These thoughts will be flooding their minds.

At the same time, the Gentiles, having gone through the severe Time of Trouble, will be desperately craving blessings and help. When they see that God has delivered Israel, they will encourage the surviving Jews: “Come, let us both walk together. We know God is with you. Do not be ashamed.” Up to that time, the Jews as a whole have felt that the Gentiles’ criticism of them was thoroughly unjust. Generally speaking, the Jewish people do not see the need for repentance. To the contrary, they feel they have unjustly been a scapegoat. But the Jews are sinners just like everyone else (Rom. 3:10,23).

In describing the attitude of the Holy Remnant when God delivers them out of Jacob’s Trouble, Ezekiel says, “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall *loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations*” (Ezek. 36:31). Previously in history, the Jews may have loathed their condition or circumstance, but they have not loathed *themselves*. Seeing this changed attitude of the Jews, the Gentiles will no longer be prejudiced but will be willing to receive instruction through them. The holy, repentant attitude will be manifest. The Ancient Worthies will be the instructors at the top of the nation with the Holy Remnant underneath them.

Being somewhat conscience-stricken for their previous anti-Semitism, many Gentiles will assist the surviving Jews in their homelands to return to Israel. The Gentiles’ sending them back with gifts will be reminiscent of the Israelites’ leaving Egypt at the time of the Exodus, when the Egyptian people gave gifts. Gentiles, including some prominent ones, will even offer to help build Israel’s cities and the Third Temple. Thus there is a lot of thought behind short verse 5.

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

When Isaiah gave this message to the nation, those Israelites who were in the right heart condition applied it to themselves. There has also been a fulfillment during the Gospel Age.

Israel’s faults and sins that led to their rejection included being full of diviners “from the east”

(magicians, astrologers, necromancers, etc.) and “soothsayers like the Philistines.” In addition, the Israelites struck hands “with foreigners” (RSV). Their punishment was justified.

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

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

Jews today are not known for making idols. The Babylonian captivity cured them of that condition. The 70-year captivity was not just for the desolation of the land but also for ridding the land of idols. In Isaiah’s day, the Israelites had idols and statues in groves, they burned incense to the queen of heaven, and they offered children to Molech. Many of these sins have counterparts in the Catholic religion.

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

The Revised Standard has, “So man is humbled, and men are brought low—forgive them not!” Isaiah interjected his thinking here. Generally speaking, his prophecies were pleasant. Although he did make some sharp statements, he did not dwell on the theme of judgment the way some of the other prophets did. Nevertheless, this verse shows that he was a leading spirit with some fiery statements. Here Isaiah was not only acceding to the need for judgment but was asking the Lord to render that judgment: “Forgive them not!”

It is strange how people are filled with different moods. In the first chapter, God said that Israel was sick from head to foot but added, “Come now, and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” That was not Isaiah’s present attitude. Here he saw the necessity for a judgment, for stripes.

**Comment:** Israel’s chief sin seems to have been pride, and that is why Isaiah said, “Forgive them not.” They still had not humbled themselves.

**Reply:** The people were stiff-necked. The humbling of verse 9 would be demeaning. In verses 10 and 11, God said He would demean and humiliate the Jews in order to effect a basis for a change in character.

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

“Enter into the rock, and hide ... *for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.*” God’s deliverance of Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble and the inauguration of the Kingdom will be accompanied with such awesome signs and wonders that the Jews will be frightened as to where they fit into the picture. Verse 10 is related to verse 19.

Isaiah did not condemn the Israelites for entering into the rock but, instead, indicated that their hiding was understandable. He was saying, “Since God will bring judgment, enter into the rock.” Isaiah was encouraging the Jews to recognize and be fearful of Jehovah and *to repent*. At the time of Pentecost, Peter said to the Jews, “*You crucified Jesus.*” As a result, the hearers were smitten in heart and fearful because of what they had done, and Peter’s technique resulted in several thousand converts. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” was the type of strong sermon he gave (Acts 3:19). Here in verse 10, Isaiah’s instruction to “enter into the rock, and hide ... in the dust [sand] for fear of the LORD” was really telling the Jews to *repent*.

To “enter into the rock” meant to hide in caves, and to “hide ... in the dust” signified to dive into a hole or a pit in the ground. The Holy Remnant will mourn as doves, and feeling the guilt, they will repent and ask for forgiveness. Calling them “holy” does not mean that they are so noble and righteous but that when the crisis comes, they will repent and seek forgiveness. The Kingdom will start with a contrite, repentant class.

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

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

The brunt of the great Time of Trouble, “the day of the LORD of hosts,” will be upon the troublemakers and the wicked. Although those who seek meekness and righteousness are not guaranteed protection, the general principle is that the trouble will be primarily on the violent and the evildoers. Those who loot and pillage are apt to be killed by people who are protecting their own property. Those who do violence will suffer violence. They may harm many people, but it is only a matter of time until they themselves become the victims. Those who try to get out of the way of the steamroller and withdraw will have a greater chance of survival.

Lack of food and employment will be problems for all people. Where food is stored, such as in silos, will be the target of great plunder and violence. Therefore, while in some respects, the trouble will be on all alike, in other respects, it will not. Those in high positions of authority, influence, and comfort will lose them. To be brought down to the level of the common people will be great humiliation for them. The poor, who are accustomed to less, will not feel the trouble as keenly.

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

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

All high things—not only people but also institutions and governments—will be leveled.

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

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

The “ships of Tarshish” emphasize a swift mode of travel. Transportation, including aircraft, will grind to a halt, as well as all commerce and business activity. “Upon all pleasant pictures” is rendered “against all the beautiful craft” in the Revised Standard Version.

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

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

“Idols” are anything that man sets his heart on: money, sports, theaters, churches, etc.

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



All of these things will occur when “the LORD ... *ariseth* to shake terribly the earth.” God has not yet arisen.

When all law and order cease, the criminal element will delight in plundering their neighbors’ goods for a while—until the trouble begins to affect them too. The proud and the haughty are not just the wealthy but terrorists, organized crime figures, etc. We are still in the day of preparation, but all will be brought low in the day of God’s wrath yet future. The Lord’s hand will be seen in that trouble.

**Comment:** The language is similar in Revelation 6:15,16, which describes the French Revolution, a miniature picture of the Time of Trouble. “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” All segments of society “hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.”

**Reply:** In the French Revolution, the nobility and the clergy tried to lose their identities by hiding among the common people. The great Time of Trouble will be on a larger scale. *All* idols will be *utterly* destroyed. That is strong language!

The people will “go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, *for fear of the LORD [Jehovah].*” They will sense the trouble is the judgment of God against them. Prior to that time, trouble has been attributed to *man’s* inhumanity to man, but in the future, divine indignation, the *wrath of God*, will be manifest. When wickedness, lawlessness, and blasphemy of man get worse and worse and then judgments occur (including natural ones), the people will realize that God is manifesting His wrath. At the height of the trouble, they will look upward, and God alone will be exalted in that day.

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

“Idols of silver, and ... idols of gold” picture corruption. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal” (Matt. 6:19). A bat works in darkness at night, and a mole works underground. Both are hidden from view. The statement “In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, ... to the moles and to the bats” indicates the attempt to purchase safety. Wealth will be liquidated to appease the unlawful element. It will be like paying a bribe or a ransom to the creatures who dwell and operate in darkness.

Because of the great trouble and terror abroad in the earth, the people will try to hide; they will seek refuge in caves and in rocks. When industry and transportation come to a standstill, money will be worthless. Too late the rich will try to share their wealth.

**Q:** Are verses 19 and 20 a parallel to James 5:1-5? “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.”

**A:** In principle certainly. James 5:1-5 emphasizes the accumulation of illicit gain. Those riches

will prove valueless.

A special hard experience awaits those who have accumulated ill-gotten gains by exploiting their fellow man. One example is pornography kings, who exploit youth and others. Liquor barons and drug lords are other examples.

Ezekiel 7:19 is a pertinent Scripture: “They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.”

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

The expression “when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” appears twice (verses 19 and 21). The people will “go into the clefts of the rocks” to hide “and into the tops of the ragged rocks”; that is, they will try to get as far away from civilization as possible. One would not expect to be followed to the top of a mountain, but even that refuge will not assure safety.

Some of those who seek righteousness and meekness may be saved. The term “fear of the LORD” implies some repentance.

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

“Turn away from man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?” (RSV). In other words, “Why should you consider man, for he is only a bag of wind?” Man has an inflated ego.

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

The “stay” would be bread and water, that is, *food*. The “staff” is the structure of society, all the supports of society. Principal men in all aspects of government and social affairs will be brought low; they will no longer function. Therefore, the entire structure will collapse from within. Not only will the people suffer the loss of food and employment, but the whole structure of government will collapse as well. Judah was no less guilty than the ten-tribe kingdom. Incidentally, Isaiah uttered this prophecy not too long after Elisha died. The ministries of Isaiah, Daniel, and John the Revelator were unusually long.

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

In the great Time of Trouble, all of these individuals will find they can no longer do what they want. There will be no place of safety and nowhere to turn for help and protection. The term “mighty man” means an important man.

Isaiah was prophesying of a severe experience that would occur in Judah and Jerusalem. He was speaking to the people back there, warning them and predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah. The prophet had a long ministry, and his predictions preceded Ezekiel’s and Jeremiah’s by about 100 years. The ten-tribe kingdom was taken into captivity toward the end of Isaiah’s ministry, during Hezekiah’s reign, but the prophet was speaking of the trouble to come on Judah and Jerusalem in 606 BC, which was a still later event.

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

**artificer, and the eloquent orator.**

The “captain of fifty” (that is, of units of 50) is identified with the Hebrew system, not only in the Jubilee but also in groups of 50. Instead of having a Roman centurion over 100 men, the Israelites used groups of 50. The “cunning artificer” was a wizard, an adviser. All the staffs of society in verses 2 and 3 would be gone.

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

The “children” and “babes” would not be favorable rulers, for they would “oppress” the people (see verse 5). In other words, the structure of society would be turned upside down. A new, inexperienced, immature element would take over positions of control. Many corrupt politicians and financiers milk millions from the people, but they do it in a clever way that is as painless as possible. For example, they rob a bank by taking the money little by little so that the auditors will not notice. However, the new element would be more ruthless.

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

“The people shall be oppressed, ... every one by his [close] neighbour.” “The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient.” Many young, inexperienced people are very confident about what they can do, but experience is a qualification for office.

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

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

No one will want the job. We ask, because of the headaches involved and the abuses heaped upon the one in the office, “Why would anyone want to be President?” And we say this today when conditions are mild compared to what they will be in the future. The one who refuses the job in verse 7 is saying, “I am not doing so well in my own home, so how could I help you in your situation?” There were two elements: those who formerly ruled and the young (not necessarily in age), untried, inexperienced element. Stated another way, the mature, experienced counselors would be replaced by a ruthless, inexperienced element. But then the people would remove the inexperienced element if only the “brother” in the house would accept the responsibility. The “brother” was a third element. The whole stay and staff of Judah and Jerusalem were crumbling—both their food supply and their counselors.

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

Ezekiel’s technique was to look to the north, prophesy against the city, make a drawing, etc.—in other words, to dramatize. Isaiah’s technique was to speak as if the trouble prophesied were already occurring and he was witnessing and describing it.

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

This is a general statement about the immorality in Judah. The people were bold and brazen in their sins just as the inhabitants of Sodom had been. Sin became so prevalent that there was no shame attached to it. A similar condition prevails today. The Roman Empire was brazen in sin

during the century prior to its fall. And of course conditions got worse and worse in Noah's day, which is the parallel to our day; both terminate in great trouble.

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

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

God told Judah, through Isaiah, that the wicked would be recompensed for their evil.

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

The statement "children are their oppressors" means that those in rulership positions lacked maturity, experience, and judgment. Consequently, the whole fabric of government was distorted. "Women rule over them" probably refers to the immorality. At any rate, children and women dominated society, and sin was openly practiced. Society was rotten from top to bottom. The people lived without inhibitions.

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

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

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

For the rulers to "grind the faces of the poor" means they exacted heavy taxes and lived off the fat of the land. The "ancients" were the judges, who were supposed to have wisdom and to render fair judgments and decisions. With them, to "grind the faces of the poor" means they took bribes under the table and judged against those who could not afford to pay the bribes. Hence the brunt of the oppression was upon the poor.

The rulers and the judges "have eaten up the [Lord's] vineyard." God's vineyard was the nation of Israel itself, comprising those who were nominally the Lord's people. The parallel down through the Gospel Age has been the spiritual vineyard, the professed people of God. The time of reckoning for the spiritual vineyard will occur at the end of the Harvest. The vine of the earth will be harvested.

Jesus gave a parable about a certain man who had a vineyard. Finally he sent his son to see how the crops were growing, and the caretakers (the rulers, both ecclesiastical and civil) murdered the son. Jesus implied that he was that son. The parable reads as follows:

"A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winevat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

"And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

"And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

"And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and

wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

“And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

“Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

“But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

“And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

“What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.” (Mark 12:1-9)

“The LORD standeth up to plead, and [he will] ... enter into judgment ... for ... ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor.” Again Isaiah used strong language. To deliver his message, he had to appear before nobles, usually in the Outer Court of the Temple and sometimes at the chief gate entering the city. He cried out as the king and other nobles and judges went or rode by. The faces of the poor were being figuratively ground in the dirt.

“The spoil of the poor is in your houses.” Those in positions of power seized the possessions of the poor by foreclosing on mortgages, levying heavy taxes or fines, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

**Isa. 3:21** The rings, and nose jewels,

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

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

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

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

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

**ground.**

Women (plural) as the “daughters of Zion” became the woman (singular) as the nation of Israel, showing that these criticisms were directed to the nation as a whole. The Israelites’ behavior was likened to a woman with all her apparel. The abundant apparel indicated the leaders had wealth to acquire jewels, expensive perfume, and ornaments for the nose, wrists, and ankles. Their posture was proud and their walk seductive, tinkling ornaments attracting attention to their legs. The characteristics applied to both male and female, for pride and the accumulation of money overcame and permeated the whole nation. The same dangers of pleasure and relative wealth exist today. In the Dark Ages when right and wrong were clear-cut, true Christianity was purer and more wholesome. Today the dangers and temptations to the Christian are subtle. Judah was complacent, feeling the judgments that came upon the ten tribes would not touch them.

God would bring retribution: stink, a rent, baldness, sackcloth, and burning. And that is what happened. Those whose lives were spared were stripped of all jewels, goods, and property and taken into captivity. And captivity had a cleansing effect, as spoken of by the minor prophets.

“Her gates shall lament and mourn” sounds like the Book of Lamentations, which is a song that graphically describes poverty and famine in a foreign land.

“The Lord will smite with a scab [leprosy] the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.” When Isaiah started his ministry, the very king, Uzziah, was smitten with leprosy when he presumed to go into the Holy.

“When he [Uzziah] was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

“And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

“And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

“Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

“And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

“And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.” (2 Chron. 26:16-21)

When the priests remonstrated against Uzziah’s entering the temple, he ignored them. The priests had a right to be angry with the king, but instead he was angry with them. All of a sudden, King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy. In isolation and quarantine for the rest of his life in a separate house, Uzziah had his son, Jotham, administer the kingdom, especially public functions. As the king of the nation, he was the “*crown of the head*” (verse 17). This strong

prophecy points forward to an even more powerful fulfillment.

Verse 17 also refers to the retribution. “Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.” Instead of garments of glory, beauty, and sweet-smelling fragrance, the opposite occurred: sackcloth, stench, and a scab on the head instead of “well set [attractive] hair.” The Israelites were as bold “as Sodom” in their sins (Isa. 3:9). In antitype, the harlot has on her *forehead* “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS” (Rev. 17:5). This “scab” is the mark of the beast, a stigma, leprosy.

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

The original Hebrew writings had no chapter divisions. Verse 1 is abruptly sandwiched in between Chapter 3 and the remainder of Chapter 4.

What do the “seven women” taking hold of “one man” have to do with either chapter, or is it a separate lesson?

**Comment:** Verse 1 is usually interpreted in connection with the nominal Church. Seven branches of the nominal Church will take hold of “one man,” Christ, and say, “We will eat our own bread [doctrine], and wear our own apparel [our own justification].” But the phrase “in that day” is puzzling. When would that be?

**Reply:** The next verse also contains the phrase “in that day.” Matthew 24 keeps using “then.” Sometimes the word is sequential (referring to successive events occurring in a pattern or sequence), and sometimes it is just a review (a repeat). Here in Isaiah, verse 1 is isolated. The rhythm of the previous chapter slows the reader down. The Pastor gave the spiritual connotation as mentioned. The seven women represent the nominal Church, which is likened to a woman during the seven periods of the Church down through the Gospel Age, including Laodicea. That application will be considered first.

What do the seven women want to do? They want the name of Christ, but they want their own doctrine (“bread”) and form of justification (“apparel”) instead of *Christ’s* robe of righteousness. They are not particularly interested in doing the things of Christ (learning his doctrine, receiving forgiveness for sin, and walking in the narrow way); they just want his name. There are many forms of *self-justification* and *self-righteousness* such as social works and burning candles.

What is the thought behind “Let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach”?

**Comment:** During the supremacy of the false Church, it was a reproach not to be considered a Christian.

**Reply:** Yes, that is why excommunication was such a strong punishment. For a person to be excommunicated meant the loss of livelihood, friends, property—even the loss of life at times. The fault is in the eating of their *own* bread and the wearing of their *own* apparel. The fault does not lie in wanting to be called by the Lord’s name.

From the standpoint of *natural* Israel, it was God’s name that was desired. The people wanted to be known as true Israelites. This prophecy of the Diaspora was saying that the time would come when to be a Jew would be a reproach or a stigma, and they would desire to be looked upon favorably. At one time, many Jews even desired to be Christians. For example, many Jews are identified with *Christian Science*, a religion that caters to the wealthy and usually

attracts the better educated. For Jews, it was profitable business-wise to be identified with a “Christian” name. Thus many Jews found that blending in with the prevailing religion or thinking of the time helped them to escape persecution and want.

Again from the standpoint of *natural* Israel, many applied verse 1 to their national judgment when the Jews were in a condition of separation without homes, wealth, loved ones, goods, reputation, and “lovers” (alliances with other nations). They looked for consolation and security in the sense of esteem from their fellow man. This also happened to the Christian Church in the days of Constantine after years of persecution.

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

In verse 1, if “in that day” applies to the nominal Church during the seven phases of its experience, then the phrase would also apply to the Gospel Age. However, in verse 2, the phrase “in that day” refers to the glorification of Israel at the end of the present age when the Kingdom is established in power and glory. The Jewish survivors of the Gog and Magog invasion of the Holy Land will have a wonderful experience.

For “them that are escaped of Israel,” the Revised Standard has “the survivors of Israel [in Jacob’s Trouble].” That the survivors will be very highly honored, and why they will be “beautiful and glorious” and “the fruit” most pleasant, will be shown subsequently.

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

**Comment:** The statement “he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called *holy*” harmonizes with other Scriptures that indicate the Jewish survivors will be a “*Holy Remnant*.”

**Reply:** The fourth chapter of Isaiah emphasizes the Holy Remnant in no uncertain terms.

Notice the *repetition* of terms in verses 2-4: Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Zion, and Jerusalem. The terms are more or less synonymous, all referring to *natural* Israel. And notice the *repetition* of phrases referring to the survivors: “them that are escaped,” “he that is left,” “he that remaineth,” and “even every one that is written among the living.” What could be more emphatic? The Lord plainly used repetition to impress these points upon us.

And here is an even more emphatic point: The account says not only that the survivors who live through Jacob’s Trouble will be blessed, but that others will realize the blessedness, namely, that those of the Holy Remnant are *handpicked* survivors, for God wrote down the names of the survivors *in advance*. Their names are “written”; and Daniel 12:1, another witness to the existence and survival of a Holy Remnant, says the names are “written in the book.” “At that time shall Michael stand up ... for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found *written in the book*.” When the trouble comes in Israel at the hands of Gog and Magog, the names of every Jew who is to be spared will have been previously recorded. God *will command* the holy angels to protect these individuals so that they will not die.

Based on other pictures, we use the illustration that when a wall falls down or someone tries to shoot a particular Jew and everything misses, not only will the shooter realize there is a direct providence in that life but also the individual himself will begin to realize something unusual is happening. God wants the Kingdom and the new government to be a *holy* Kingdom when it is established. It is not that the Holy Remnant are living the most honorable lives but that those



Jews who survive will be amenable to the Kingdom and be good citizens. The Kingdom will start with a holy nucleus. (Incidentally, those who die in Jacob's Trouble will come forth from the tomb later like the world of mankind.)

"Written among [the book of] the living" means that those of the Holy Remnant are to be kept alive. With this understanding, chapter 12 of Daniel takes on a distinctly *future* application. The fact the names "shall be found written in the book" means that Michael will read the book. When he stands up (future), it will be "for the children of thy [Daniel's] people [that is, for Israel, particularly the Holy Remnant]." Now Obadiah 21 begins to take on new meaning: "And saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." The "saviours," the Little Flock, will assist Jesus. Michael will not personally deliver each one of the Holy Remnant but will delegate responsibility: "John, you take care of this one. Paul, you take care of that one," and so forth. In other words, when Michael stands up, the Church will be with him. From this standpoint, the clause "many ... that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" pertains to the resurrection of mankind, starting with the Ancient Worthies (Dan. 12:2). Some of mankind will awaken "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

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

The "spirit of judgment" is Jacob's Trouble. This judgment will alert the Holy Remnant to their need for repentance and cleansing, and the trouble will be far more severe than even Hitler's furnaces because the psychological factor affects suffering. With the Holocaust of the past, many did not fully realize what their fate would be; they were in a kind of stupor as they traveled in freight cars. Their experience is not to be belittled, for it was a horrible experience, but almost until they were ushered into the gas chambers, they kept hoping conditions would change. From miles and miles away, only a few realized that the stench was human blood and hair burning. In Jacob's Trouble, the participants will be more sensitive and alert to what is happening, making it an even more severe test. At that time, the Great Company will give a comforting message to Israel—"comforting" in the sense of being wholesome counsel regarding the meaning of the judgment and how they should react to it. Those Jews who listen to the message and respond will be among the survivors.

**Q:** Does Isaiah 3:10,11 also apply to the Holy Remnant? "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

**A:** Yes. During the Diaspora, the distinction was not generally made between the righteous and the wicked, unless an individual was being called for a particular purpose. As a race, the Jews wandered about aimlessly, as shown in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Dives, the rich man, saw Lazarus, a Gentile, in Abraham's bosom. Meanwhile, he was in "hellfire" wanting a drop of water to cool his tongue. There was a great gulf in between, for God had, as it were, turned His back on the Jews. However, those who respond to the instructional message of the Great Company will see that Jacob's Trouble is correctional, which is a big difference. They will see that there are guidelines and discriminations in the judgment. For the survivors, the experience will be glorious. In fact, it will be so wonderful that the Holy Remnant will cry and repent and say, "We are not worthy to have been chosen" (Ezek. 36:31). The Gentiles will see that the survivors are humble, contrite, repentant Jews. The conversion will be so thorough that the Gentiles will want Israel and the Jews to be their leaders. Truly the "branch of the LORD" will be "beautiful and glorious"—truly humbled and handpicked by God (verse 2).

When those of the Gog element who live through the trouble go back as eyewitnesses to their homelands, they will say, “Not only did God spare these Jews, but we saw the salvation and glory with our own eyes.” God has promised to fight for Israel as He did in days of old. “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech. 14:3). Both the surviving Jews and the surviving Gentiles on the scene will recognize that God fought for the Holy Remnant. The Gentile eyewitnesses will report that God is the God *of Israel*, the Holy One *of Israel*.

The emphasis on the purging of the Jews in Jacob’s Trouble is fourfold in verse 4: He will (1) *wash away the filth* of the daughters of Zion and (2) *purge the blood* of Jerusalem from the midst thereof (3) by the spirit of *judgment* and (4) by the spirit of *burning*.

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

Just as every one of the Holy Remnant will be called holy (verse 3), so the Lord’s favor will be upon every *dwelling place* of Mount Zion.

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

Verses 5 and 6 give us an insight into what took place when 2 million Israelites came out of Egypt and went into the arid Sinai wilderness. For example, God’s providence on them was so pronounced that their shoes did not wear out for the entire 40 years despite the rugged, rocky terrain.

Imagine being a Moabite or an Ammonite on a mountain and seeing the Israelites coming at nighttime. We would see a cloud lighting the camp and a miraculous fiery pillar, or column, of the cloud over the Tabernacle reaching up into the heavens. The cloud cover provided light at night for the Israelites to see (to sleep, they went into their dark tents). For 40 years, the Israelites were preserved from wind and sandstorms, which are devastating in the wilderness. They were also protected from the danger of flash floods in the wadis.

A “covert” is a cover, meaning that the cloud was almost like a *literal* tent above the Israelites. In the sky, this cloud exercised an influence that preserved them from “storm” (sandstorms) and “rain” (flash floods), which comes down in torrents and races down wadis with the speed of a freight train. The cloud was a protecting cover against sandstorms and flash floods.

The cloud also screened the Israelites from the heat of the desert. In order to fully appreciate the spiritual prophecies and antitypes, we must fully appreciate the type. Understanding the mood of this type and why the Holy Spirit called attention to this particular experience helps us to realize the POWER of the larger picture and fulfillment. Back there the cloud shielded the Israelites from the burning rays of the sun. Normally there are no clouds in the desert, so this cloud was miraculous. The cloud was a covering, or an awning, upon all of the Israelites. Notice the language of verse 5: “The LORD will create upon every dwellingplace of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud.” This cloud covered the *entire* nation, as opposed to the *pillar foot extension* of the cloud with a dark exterior that went down into the Most Holy and, like a chimney, contained the *Shekinah* light. The mother cloud above covered the entire nation, not only their tents but even the surrounding countryside where they went to gather the manna. All of their assemblies were covered whether they were indoors or outside.

Now we can begin to understand the statement in Genesis 1:2 that the Holy Spirit hovered and fluttered over the waters of the deep in connection with creation. “And the spirit of God *moved*

upon the face of the waters.” The power, or Spirit, of God is invisible. We do not think of a cloud in the way it was used for the Israelites. Yes, we realize that a cloud provides some shade and relief from the sun, but we do not realize its potential under God’s guidance.

**Comment:** Verses 5 and 6 are a general lesson showing that God will be with Israel in the future as He was with the nation in the past. The RSV says the glory will be “a canopy and a pavilion.”

**Reply:** The Apostle Paul wrote that the whole nation was baptized under the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:2). In other words, all of the Israelites went through the divided waters at the time of the Exodus, but they went in a tunnel, the main cloud being over them. God’s protection was to their right and to their left and above them. In addition, He removed the pillar extension of the cloud from in front of them and put it behind them. The light shone forward to light their path, but to the pursuing Egyptians, the cloud created thick darkness. And so God’s Word is foolishness unto some, but life unto life to others; the same elements are an odor of death unto death to one class and an odor of life unto life to another class.

In the next age, the people will see the Third Temple instead of the Tabernacle. The Ancient Worthies will be there, and Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. Rain will be withheld from nations that do not send representatives to the Feast of Tabernacles.

In summary, just as back there, the Lord had visible manifestations of His presence with His people, so in the future, when the Kingdom is established, there will be visible manifestations of divine power on behalf of natural Israel. The powers that were exercised back there were ephemeral, whereas those of the future will be more beneficial and everlasting. If the glory of Moses was such that the Israelites could not see his face, what will the antitype be?

Exodus 14:19,20 describes the movement of the cloud pillar, the “angel of God,” during the Exodus across the Red Sea: “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them [the Egyptians], but it gave light by night to these [the Israelites]: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

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

**Isa. 5:2** And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Verse 1 sounds like the Song of Solomon. Israel was *God’s* “vineyard”; therefore, *He* did the fencing, planting, etc., and “built a tower [singular] in the midst of it.” The watch “tower” was Jerusalem, the capital. From Jerusalem, justice was to be dispensed and safeguarded. Grapes were crushed in the winepress to make juice or wine. “Grapes” represent the people, who were either good or bad depending on the fruitage they developed within themselves. “Wild grapes” would be the development of evil fruit. The people were favored by a hedged-in (“fenced”) condition, as was Job prior to his testings at the hand of Satan.

If the people had really loved God, they would have brought the best of their crops and animals when they went to Jerusalem on the required feast days. If the offerings had been made with the right heart attitude, the savor would have been very sweet to the Lord, and the gatherings would have been a source of joy.

“Wild grapes” signify characters that were untutored, unruly, untrained, undisciplined, and

nonsubmissive; such individuals did their own thing in their own way. Instead of bringing forth proper fruitage from a humble, disciplined heart, they brought forth unacceptable fruitage. In nature, a vine that is neglected, and thus is not pruned or trimmed for several years, produces stunted, bitter, hard, and immature grapes; such grapes are “wild” from the standpoint of being untended. “Wild grape” persons do not allow themselves to be “tended” by the Lord.

**Q:** What did the winepress represent?

**A:** The word “sacrifice” implies the giving of something costly to the Lord, something out of one’s substance. A sacrifice costs effort, time, money, etc., because of a desire to love and serve the Lord. The people went to Jerusalem on the appointed feast days with their sacrifices. The pouring out of the heart at the winepress took place there and at the Temple, where God’s presence was in a particular sense. The Lord built the winepress for the purpose of producing good wine and good grapes.

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

The inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem and of the tribe of Judah were being addressed. Judah occupied a very large portion of Israel—almost half of the land. Jerusalem was not in Judah, however, but was wedged in between Benjamin and Judah. Jerusalem was geographically closer to Benjamin, but it was technically accredited to Judah. In other words, Jerusalem was a neutral territory.

“Judge ... betwixt me [God] and my vineyard.” God was talking to the people and saying, “Judge between me and what I have done for the nation. Consider for a moment and judge what I have done for you as a nation, as a vineyard.” In everyday life, people sometimes forget what God has done not only for them but also for others. Sometimes people get a strange feeling that they are not loved and considered, especially when they are older. They are so lonely that they do not judge properly. Depending on the circumstances, sometimes we should have a good “forgetter,” and at other times, we should have a good “remembrancer.”

**Isa. 5:4** **What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?**

We are reminded of the words of a hymn: “What more can He say than to you He hath said? You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.” Verse 4 expresses the same sentiments but with regard to natural Israel.

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

The “wall” was literal; that is, it was the manmade barrier of defense around the city. An enemy had difficulty breaching a wall that was in good repair. The “wall” also suggests natural protection such as elevation or sharp cliffs on three sides.

A “hedge” is a line of demarcation or a barrier, but not necessarily for defense. For example, a thick hedge around one’s property marks boundaries and indicates the property as being off-limits. Spiritually, the “hedge” was the Law, which said, “If you do so-and-so, I will do such and such. If you fail to do so-and-so, I will fail to do such and such.” God’s blessings and curses were mentioned in the Law, being contingent upon the people’s compliance. The “hedge” can also be thought of as God’s providence or favor, as in the Book of Job. Satan said that God had

put a “hedge” around Job, so no wonder he was obeying God. Israel’s “hedge” meant that if they obeyed the Law, they would be favored with natural blessings of crops, health, etc.

Notice the order: the hedge preceded the wall. Therefore, the hedge (God’s providence and favor) was more important than the natural wall. The wall could be weak, but if God’s favor was about the Israelites, He would produce a miracle to deliver them. If the hedge, the favored circle of God’s providence, was impaired, then Israel’s enemies could breach the wall.

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

**Isa. 5:7** For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

The parable was answered in verse 7 by saying that the vineyard belonged to God and that His vineyard was the house of Israel. The men of Judah were His “pleasant plant” in that they, in a special sense, should have been more exemplary than the nation at large. With real estate, some people have a very choice location. Having property or a house in the city of Jerusalem was a choice location, a most pleasant situation, but it brought certain responsibility. Citizens of Jerusalem should have felt more patriotic than those elsewhere in the nation because they were in a favored position to hear the king’s and the priests’ judgments and pronouncements daily. Because of this favored position, they should have been the most ideal citizens.

With the parable being based on a vineyard, the “hedge” can be considered from another standpoint. It is proper for a vineyard to have an enclosure, a line of demarcation, which is usually quite thickly foliated to keep out intruders and to provide shade and moisture. Verse 6 mentions that the vineyard would not be pruned or “digged” (hoed). Hoeing breaks up the hard earth so that rain can penetrate to a greater depth. (If the ground is too hard, most of the water runs off.) Hoeing also aerates the soil. In addition, pruning results in a better crop. A horticulturist knows just where to prune or trim so that the sap will not be adversely affected and better fruit will be produced. In this case, God was superintending the pruning. Therefore, “pruning” pictures ordered trials and discipline, and “hoeing” stirs up an individual in one way or another. For example, someone might speak—uttering strong words if necessary—to awaken him out of lethargy or hardness of heart. “Hoeing” can also be considered counseling.

**Q:** Could verses 6 and 7 be related to the period of time after 606 BC when the land was laid waste and there was no pruning or digging?

**A:** Yes, from a negative standpoint, but we have been trying to consider the pruning and the hoeing in a positive sense.

When God was superintending the nation of Israel and putting His kings on the throne and having His prophets give messages, the pruning and hoeing would have been a wonderful blessing *if the people had been right-hearted*. Israel would have been a beautiful hedge, a fruitful vineyard, and a very pleasant plant indeed. However, the people’s hard hearts caused the situation to be otherwise. Therefore, God had someone else “take away the hedge thereof,” “break down the wall thereof,” and tread down the vineyard (verse 5).

God “looked for judgment” but beheld oppression; He “looked ... for righteousness” but beheld “a cry [for justice].” Unfair judgments were rendered by the corrupt judicial system, causing the people to audibly weep for their hard lot or experience. Judgment should be impartial and not based on emotion, and it should not favor the face of the poor. In other words, if the poor person has committed the wrong, the judgment should not be rendered

against a rich person just because he is rich. The individual merits of a case should be judged.

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

Woe to large landowners! To accumulate a large centralized plot of land required much thought and planning. The implication is that one had to lie awake at night and plot how to get the land. Bribery, foreclosure of mortgages, intrigue, and actual theft were all involved. Pressure was used to get “house to house” and “field to field.”

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

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

Seed is supposed to produce a hundredfold. However, according to this prophecy, the people would go out with a container that held seed and distribute the seed on the land, but they would come back with a *smaller* container of the actual crop. An ephah is smaller than a homer. Ezekiel 45:11 gives the principle: “The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer.” In other words, a homer of seed was ten times as much as an ephah, but one who went out with a homer of seed came back with a little crop that was only one tenth the size of the homer. That was a *powerful* illustration. The “bath” is liquid measure, and the “ephah” is dry measure, but they were both the same. For example, we have a quart of milk and a quart of raspberries.

If grapes in a vineyard were crushed into liquid form in a vat, it would take ten acres of land to produce one ephah or one bath of the finished product, whereas it should have been the other way around. In other words, one acre of land should have produced ten baths.

Before the Lord gave the seven times’ punishment, He gave other punishments and hardships, one being that the land would not yield. The failure of the people to heed these multiple warnings finally resulted in a complete laying waste of the land. “And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins” (Lev. 26:18).

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

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

Woe unto those who got up early in the morning to have a drink! Instead of having coffee at midmorning, they consumed more liquor. By nightfall, such a quantity had been consumed that their senses were dulled. In this state, they could not think about the Lord. In fact, wine, music, fancy homes (verse 9), and large property holdings all beclouded the mind. The people were living off the fat of the land. Jesus said of the poor in spirit, “They that [know they] are sick [need a physician]”; that is, the wealthy usually do not feel the need for redemption (Matt. 9:12). Thus there is a certain blessing in not having too much of this world’s goods. Instead of observing the feasts the Lord decreed, the rich back in Isaiah’s day had their own “feasts” (big parties), pridefully trying to outdo each other.

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

This hint was directed to Judah. The ten-tribe kingdom would go into captivity for their disobedience, but God was saying in effect, “Take a hint, Judah, so that the same thing will not happen to you.” However, the inhabitants of Judah were unaware not only of the providences in their own lives but also of the providences with respect to the ten-tribe kingdom.

“Their honourable men” were the aged, who longed for food, and the poor multitude were thirsty. Those in power ignored the plight of the people. The wealthy had wells on their own property.

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

What sarcasm! The rich and the poor die alike—they go into the same hole in the ground—despite the fact that the rich build elaborate homes, have large property holdings, hold large feasts, etc. *Sheol* had to yawn a little wider to swallow them all in their fullness of wealth and pleasures. This was a reference to the coming captivity of Judah and the despoiling of the land.

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

The condition would be reversed. All would be humbled in the coming leveling process. The rich were not noble but “mean” and *ignoble*.

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

God would bring the judgments as prophesied if they continued to disobey.

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

The RSV reads: “Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, fatlings and kids shall feed *among the ruins*.” The contrast is between people and animals. All of the people in the ten tribes were taken into captivity, but not all of the animals. The domestic animals that were left behind grazed at large like wild animals. Hence all the great land acquisitions reverted back to natural growth. The lavish buildings were meaningless after the people were taken captive.

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

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

“Vanity” is “falsehood” (RSV). “Let him make haste” (RSV). The people were hypocritically saying, “Let the Lord’s day come speedily. We would like to see it. Let God’s will be done.”

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

Conditions back there were like today. Good is called evil, and evil is called good. Villains are made into heroes. Error is put forth as truth.

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

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

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

Woe to those who think they are heroes for consuming large quantities of liquor! “Woe unto them” is used four times in verses 18 and 20-22. These verses may have been sung as a funeral dirge.

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

Verse 24 sounds like Malachi 4:1, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” God was especially displeased with Israel because those who had previously been His covenant people had cast away His Law.

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

The captivity of the ten tribes was future from Isaiah’s day. Isaiah 1:1 lists the successive kings of Judah during Isaiah’s ministry; Isaiah 6:1 shows that the time setting here is the days of King Uzziah. (The prophet Isaiah sometimes spoke of future events as if they were past.)

Verse 25 is talking about a severe earthquake in the days of King Uzziah that left corpses in the street and caused the hills to tremble. This same literal earthquake is referred to in Zechariah 14:4,5, “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” The earthquake was so severe that the people fled for refuge, and probably they attributed the earthquake to God’s displeasure with Uzziah.

Uzziah was high-minded. When he presumed to enter the Holy of the Temple to offer incense, he was struck with leprosy as a punishment. In fact, he was a leper until the day he died. The people had remonstrated with him not to go into the Holy, but he went in anyway. When he came out, the people saw that he had leprosy, and henceforth he had to live in a separate house, even though he was king.

This gives a little background about conditions when Isaiah began his ministry. Not only was Uzziah on the throne, but wickedness was rampant among the people. Some details of Uzziah’s reign are given in 2 Kings 15:1-4. “In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah [Uzziah] son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem.... And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the



high places.” Notice that in spite of the leprous incident transgression, Uzziah was called a good king when the Lord summed up his life, but why? Because the punishment was adequate for the sin, God did not lay upon him an extra burden. His father Amaziah had been a good king too, as was Uzziah’s son, Jotham. “In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.... And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD” (2 Kings 15:32-35).

Therefore, even though Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham did not remove the high places, all three received favorable reports. We would think, “Isn’t it terrible that the king permitted heathen worship?” It is true that these kings could have been more obedient, but their responsibility was not as bad as it seems. After all, the high places were in the countryside, in the suburbs, and on the private property of individuals. The point is that these kings kept the Temple worship pure, and that was their primary responsibility.

This thinking gives us an insight into how God judges. Consider some of the reformers. Certain things in their lives and doctrines may have been improper and erroneous, but the Lord considered the time and the circumstances under which they lived. Because their hearts were right, they received good judgments. In regard to Uzziah, it was the people who were doing the evil sacrificing, and he did not interfere with their individual liberty. He did not try to become a righteous dictator. (Of course some other kings did, and that was to their credit.)

Verse 25 was a warning to the people. If they had repented, the judgment would have been rolled back. At this time, the wickedness was not so fixed that the Lord could not rescind the judgment. (Ahab and other wicked kings came on the scene later.)

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

Verses 26-30 suggest a coming judgment. When this judgment would occur is not stated. Neither is it stated whether this judgment would be against the two tribes, the ten tribes, or the entire nation. The outcome also is not given. The description is of Jacob’s Trouble, as clues in the verse indicate. Clue No. 1: God “will lift up an ensign to the *nations from far*.” Clue No. 2: God “will hiss [whistle—RSV] unto them [the nations] from the end of the earth.” In other words, the Lord will loudly whistle, or signal an alarm, to get the attention of nations at a great distance from Israel. When He beckons to them, they will come “with *speed swiftly*.” How dramatic!

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

“Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.” If an army is taken by surprise, their loins are loosed and their shoes are untied. But this army will be prepared to come as soon as the alarm goes off. This army will be on alert. When the Lord whistles, they will come *immediately*.

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

This charging army will be an awesome, terrifying force. Their arrows will be sharp and all their big bows bent, ready to send forth arrows, as the horses charge with great speed. The sharp arrows will pierce right through shields and armor. “Their horses’ hoofs shall be counted

like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.” Imagine this army coming with speed on a paved road! The horses’ hooves will beat on the pavement and not stumble. The very noise will cause *terror*. To Israel, this situation will seem hopeless.

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

As the enemy roars, Israel will be frozen with *terror*, powerless to deliver itself. This verse indicates that the enemy is succeeding and there is no hope for Israel. In Scripture, a lion is noted for the *strength* of its jaw and its roar. When a lion captures a prey, its powerful jaws scrunch the animal, bones and all, in the eating process. Here the lion has the victim in its jaws and is carrying it away. The sound of the flint on the pavement and the roar of the lion both cause terror to the beholding victim.

“They [Gog] ... shall carry it [Jerusalem] away safe, and none shall [be able to] deliver it.” The city shall be captured, and half of the inhabitants taken out of the city into exile. “The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech. 14:2). In other words, there will be a little time period in which the enemy, Gog, will seem to be completely victorious. Understanding this time period of defeat for Israel will be difficult for many, even in the Bible Student movement, who are not expecting it. “Then [that is, *after* this short time period of defeat] shall the LORD go forth, and fight [for His people] against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech. 14:3).

NOTE: See the 2005 addendum at the end of the Zechariah study.

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

In Jacob’s Trouble, the enemy will come in like a cloud. “And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes” (Ezek. 38:16). “Behold darkness [like the cloud] and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.” It will seem as if God has turned His back on Israel. Many in Israel today are being encouraged by Protestant Christians that the Lord will save them when Russia comes down, but when Gog enters the land and is apparently successful, salvation will seem to be a lie. Jacob will be delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble, but not without *many* casualties. God will not make a *full end* of Israel, but there will be a considerable disruption. The survivors will be handpicked; only those who are written in the book of the living will be spared for the establishment of the Kingdom (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). The remainder, the vast majority, will come forth in the general resurrection.

It will seem as if the forces of Gog are doing whatever they please and getting away with it. The purpose is to show the Holy Remnant, when they are delivered, that it is *GOD* who brought the deliverance.

God will put hooks in the nose of Gog and pull the forces down to attack Israel. “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords” (Ezek. 38:3,4). The forces of Gog will be going in an opposite direction when something will providentially happen to make them change their mind. “Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time

shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land” (Ezek. 38:10-12). In their sudden change of thought, Gog will want to make an end of Jerusalem. The whistle and the hook will accomplish the same purpose as Zephaniah 3:8, “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations [to Jerusalem], that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” “For I will gather all nations against *Jerusalem* to battle; and the city shall be taken” (Zech. 14:2). God will set the stage. He is determined that this age will have a *dramatic* conclusion. The time will come when His wrath will rise up in His face. “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face” (Ezek. 38:18). In other words, God intends to demonstrate *His* fury. The results of that fury will be very dramatic so that people will realize *His* hand is in this matter.

Yet one more last wave of anguish must come upon this chastened people Israel: Jacob’s Trouble. Israel will seem to be the only nation prospering just before this trouble comes. The KJV margin for the end of verse 30 reads: “When it is light, it shall be dark in the destructions thereof.” Israel will have more prosperity just prior to Jacob’s Trouble; the people will feel secure, having unwalled cities and much cattle and goods. This prosperity will make Israel appear as a prize booty for the forces of Gog.

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

Verses 1-6 are mentioned in connection with King Uzziah’s death. Next to Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1), he had the longest reign of Israel’s kings (more than 50 years). Therefore, his death was viewed as the end of an era and as a time for change.

In this vision, Isaiah saw Jehovah sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; that is, He was sitting on the rectangular, flat Temple roof. “His train filled the temple,” meaning that His garments flowed down over the Temple, covering the sides. Stated another way, His garments *enveloped* the Temple.

*Being seated* suggests that *judgment* was about to occur (for example, Pilate *sat* in the *judgment seat*). God began judgment not only in the holiest city (Jerusalem) but also in the holiest place (the Temple).

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

Above the Temple stood the seraphim (the four attributes of God). They were higher than the building, but not higher than God on His throne, for the four attributes supported, or were under, His throne. In other words, the four attributes were the foundation of God’s throne. Isaiah was telling that this vision was *gigantic!* Not only was God high and lifted up, but He was of *immense stature!*

Each seraph had six wings (three pairs). Two wings (one pair) covered the face of each seraph, two wings covered the feet, and two wings were for flying. Isaiah 6:2 describes six-winged seraphim, whereas in Ezekiel 10:21 and 1:6, each cherub had only four wings. The two pairs of wings in Ezekiel represent the Old and New Testaments. The three pairs of wings in Isaiah

represent three postures of the Word of God, as follows.

1. The two wings covering the face of each seraph indicate that the character of God is covered (hidden) in His Word except to the consecrated. Since He cannot be seen externally as the God of Love, we have to read the Bible to understand this attribute. God's character is covered in the mystery of His Word.
2. The two wings used for flight show that whenever God moves, the movement is in harmony with His character and Word.
3. Two wings covered each seraph's feet. Feet are used for *standing*, and God's feet stand on the earth—on the Mount of Olives. At the end of the age, God will manifest that He is King of earth. He will do this by choosing a focal spot, a locale: *Jerusalem*. From Jerusalem, He will fight for His people as in the day of battle, and from Jerusalem, the word of the Lord will go forth to all nations. In the environs of the Holy City, His *great power* will be manifested. The splitting open of the Mount of Olives will be seen as Divine Providence. When the Lord speaks, let the earth be quiet.

Here in Isaiah, the seraphim with their six wings portray that the operation of God's attributes upon earth are also disclosed in His Word. Through His Word, we know God—His dealings down here and His contact with the earth, as well as His movements and purposes throughout future ages.

**Q:** Can we assume there were four seraphim because of the four attributes?

**A:** Yes, and also because there are four "beasts," or living beings, in Revelation 4:6-9. The seraphim of Isaiah 6, the cherubim of Ezekiel 1 and 10, and the living beings of Revelation 4 all picture God's attributes.

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

The seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy!" In the future, the whole earth will be "*full of his [God's] glory.*" This vision is a dramatization of what God intends to do in the future when He makes known His power. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). God's judgments will start in Israel, and then go abroad in the earth. He will be revealed as the Holy One of *Israel*.

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

What caused the posts of the door to move? The seraphim, as God's representatives, spoke so majestically (verse 3) that the posts moved. One seraph called to another: "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts!" The words were spoken with such volume that the posts of the Temple started to tremble. The vibration suggests that the Temple may not have been too stable. When something trembles, it can be removed. In other words, God will level the old order. A *radical change* is being suggested, and the things that can be removed will be removed. God wants to build a *new* (Third) Temple and establish a *new* priesthood and *new* rulers (the Ancient Worthies).

**Q:** Would the posts moving also relate to the natural house of Israel being replaced by the spiritual house in Jesus' day when their house was left unto them desolate (Matt. 23:38)?

**A:** Yes, in a secondary application, although certain details will apply only at the very end of the

age. When Jerusalem was taken and the Temple destroyed in AD 69-70, it was apparent that God had withdrawn His favor from Israel because *His* Temple and city were destroyed. In these verses in Isaiah 6, the language is stronger than would apply only to past history.

“The house was filled with smoke.” This phenomenon occurred at the *dedication* ceremony for the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. Revelation 15:8 shows that there will also be smoke when the Church is complete. Solomon’s Temple was of God’s ordination; it was the Lord’s Temple in spite of its subsequent defilement, for God gave David the instructions on how it was to be built. But the setting here in Isaiah 6 was one of *dedication*. King Uzziah had died, and this was the beginning of a new era, the introduction to an era of righteousness. God was going to *cleanse* His Temple and reinstitute His authority. Being “filled with smoke” suggests a change, a new start. As a result, Isaiah uttered the words in verse 5: “I am undone”!

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

Isaiah was comparing his own *humbleness* with the *glory* of God that had just been revealed. Isaiah did not say, “I am an unclean man,” but “I am a man of *unclean lips*.” When Peter recognized the resurrected Jesus on the seashore, he felt *naked* and then dove into the water to swim to the Master. He wanted forgiveness for having previously denied Jesus three times.

Notice, Isaiah said not only that he was a man of unclean lips but that he dwelled in the midst of a people of unclean lips. As God’s representative, he had been admonishing others, criticizing them for their wrongs. Now, after seeing this *glorious* vision, he felt humble and small. He felt unfit, much the way we might feel unworthy to be called to the high calling. He put himself in the same category as the other Jews; i.e., “We are all undone, including myself.”

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

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

“Seraphim” is another name for “cherubim.” One of the seraphim flew to Isaiah with a *live coal* he had taken with tongs from off the altar. He placed the burning hot coal on Isaiah’s lips as if to symbolically sterilize them. Remember, Isaiah had said, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” The live coal is sometimes dramatized in another way. The fire, the vehement flame, would be the inspiration and zeal of the Holy Spirit. The coal, too, would be God’s Word. At a later time, Jeremiah said, “His [God’s] word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9). Jeremiah could not stifle the message but had to proclaim it publicly. It was a burning message that he was to deliver.

Here Isaiah was sustained by not being allowed to dwell too long on his weaknesses, for doing so would have interfered with his service—it would have made him afraid to go out and talk to others. God strengthened Isaiah to proclaim the message. Thus the burning coal in the vision did two things: (1) it cleansed and (2) it encouraged and emboldened the prophet to proclaim the message to the people.

The source of the burning coal was the Brazen *Altar* in the Court. Proclaiming the righteous message cost Isaiah some suffering, as the message was not too pleasant either to his hearers or to himself (to his flesh). Sacrifice was involved—the burning coal caused pain. Nevertheless, he was privileged to be associated with that message.

When the burning coal was touched to Isaiah's lips, the cherub gave his approval: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

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

God asked, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah answered, "Here am I; send *me*." Notice, it was *God* who commissioned Isaiah—we have no authority to commission others. Isaiah saw the commission as a real privilege and a responsibility. There are principles in this prophetic picture that are excellent character lessons as well.

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

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

God replied, "Go and tell this people, but they will not understand." It helps to put ourselves in Isaiah's place. God told him, "You are going to deliver this message to the people as my representative. Make the heart of this people fat and their ears heavy." How did Isaiah do this? And why, if God really wanted to reform the people and help them mend their ways, would He issue this instruction and use these terms of command? He was ordering Isaiah to *blind* the people. How did Isaiah accomplish this?

A "fat heart" would be slow and lethargic to respond. Isaiah was told to "make the heart of this people fat" and their ears dumb "lest" they "understand ... and convert, and be healed." This instruction reminds us of the principle Jesus used to close the people's ears. Jesus spoke in parables so that the people would *not* understand. Then he rewarded those who questioned further—the really interested ones who sought additional information.

Another principle operates to blind the people: prejudice. (In spite of the darkness, Jesus could have opened the Jews' eyes with supernatural power if He had so chosen, but God's prophets cannot do this.) *Prejudice* blinds the minds of the audience. In obedience to God, Isaiah had to perform certain acts that the people regarded as disgraceful. Hence they could not see that the lesson was for them. Moreover, they attached the act to the prophet himself and looked upon him unfavorably. In spite of Isaiah's capability and cogent reasoning and exhortation, the people were turned off because of their *prejudice*. That which would be easy to understand by one in the right heart condition was unclear to the wrong-hearted. That which was logical became very illogical because the people rejected the channel. Hence the more Isaiah exhorted, the more they rejected him. They deliberately closed their ears because they did not like the messenger. Isaiah's words were unproductive, largely because of his personality.

Of course the Lord so overruled, for if one is to understand, He has to take the key and unlock the mind from the blinding influence of the Adversary. Even our minds can be blinded by Satan unless God keeps us in His favor. And Jesus' disciples were used by the Adversary on several occasions, so that the Master said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). To understand is miraculous. The miracle is not that others cannot understand but that we can see. Hence, when we understand, we should have humility and appreciation, not pride.

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

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

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

Isaiah was asking, “How long will the blindness be upon the people?” As regards Isaiah, his acceptance and recognition by the public as a true prophet would be after his decease, for the full aspect of captivity occurred later.

God gave the answer in two stages. He talked about an oak tree. While there was to be a forsaking or abandonment in the midst of the land, yet one tenth would be spared: Judah. (Judah was one tenth, and Israel, the ten tribes, were nine tenths.) *Within* the tenth (Judah) that remained after the ten tribes were taken captive was the holy-seed element. (Unfortunately, spiritual pride developed because the majority in Judah thought the judgment was against the ten tribes and considered themselves more righteous. But Judah itself was not the holy seed, just a *remnant* within the stump.)

However, even the tenth part needed purging. Therefore, the escapees from the 606 BC slaughter were taken captive to Babylon. From among that class, which multiplied in Babylon, the ones who returned to rebuild the Temple under Artaxerxes’ permission and Nehemiah were the holy-seed remnant—a remnant of a remnant, as it were.

“They cast their leaves” indicates that the Judah stump would have an experience. We are reminded of the tree that was cut down in Daniel 4:13-16, yet the commission was to keep the stump alive and wet with the dew of heaven. Ultimately from the stump would arise Messiah and his Kingdom. The promise of life remained in the stump.

Isaiah’s original question was, “Lord, how long?” Isaiah was told that when the people were taken into captivity, they would begin to understand that he had told the truth.

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

Isaiah had seen the vision of Isaiah chapter 6 in the last year of Uzziah and the first year of Jotham (Uzziah’s son), who reigned for 16 years. The reign of Jotham is almost entirely skipped over, yet Isaiah was not mute at that time (Isa. 1:1). Now Ahaz, Jotham’s son and Uzziah’s grandson, was reigning. In other words, from Isaiah 6:13 to 7:1 is a 16-year jump.

What is the setting here? Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, decided to go to war against Judah.

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

Judah was called “the house of David” because of the “sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3). God promised that of David’s seed, He would make an everlasting covenant. Those who had faith in that promise rested secure, feeling their future was assured. They were confident until this threat came. Now they were shaken up, especially since one of the two enemies coming down to war against Jerusalem was their own countrymen.

Verse 1 stated that Rezin and Pekah could not prevail against Jerusalem, but that was a statement of the *final outcome* of the two troublemakers' coming down. Now verse 2 went back and was telling the *details* leading up to their inability to conquer. In other words, verses 1 and 2 are not in sequential order. Verse 2 onward tells how the people of Judah were frightened by the report that Israel and Syria were coming to fight. Then the two enemies actually appeared and laid siege to the city.

Notice the dramatic language: The heart of the people was moved "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." When a storm is brewing in the distance and gets nearer and nearer, just before it breaks, the big trees start to sway back and forth, sometimes violently. From the force of the wind, the beholder knows a fierce storm is coming.

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

God told Isaiah to go and meet Ahaz, the king of Judah, and give him a message. Isaiah went with his own son, Shear-jashub, whose name means "the remnant shall return" (see KJV margin). Isaiah 6:13 told about the holy-seed remnant. To give force to the prophecy of that ultimate returning seed, Isaiah had named his son thus. Now Isaiah was told to take his son (and all the people knew what the son's name meant) and give a message to the king.

The Pool of Siloam is now in the southern part of Jerusalem at the end of Hezekiah's Tunnel, but the tunnel was not built until Hezekiah's day, years later. At the time of Ahaz, the water from the spring went around the hill (not through the tunnel) and spilled into a lower pool. Solomon had built a stairway from a magnificent garden at his house in the bottom of the Valley of Hinnom all the way up to the Temple Mount. Isaiah was instructed to go with his son to a strategic spot on the highway where he could hail the king of Judah (Ahaz) and tell him not to fear. This meeting took place near the Pool of Siloam.

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

King Ahaz must have been agitated about the coming assault on Jerusalem. Isaiah told him to "be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted." Why was Isaiah told to take his son? To remind the people of Judah of the Lord's promise that although the ten-tribe kingdom would ultimately go into captivity, a tenth part would be spared. (The people of Judah assumed they were the tenth part rather than the tenth part being just a small remnant of them.) Isaiah's son was the personification of the Lord's promise that yet there would be a tenth part and the stump would remain.

Isaiah's message was, "Do not be afraid of the two tails [Rezin and Pekah] of these smoking firebrands." The term "smoking firebrands" is based on the account of Samson, who caught 300 foxes, tied them together in pairs, and lit their tails. In panic, they ran helter-skelter through the field and destroyed it. Nothing could stop those foxes. Here the expression "two tails of these smoking firebrands" meant that the kings of Israel and Syria reaped destruction on the way down to Judah. In fierce anger, they cut a path down to the Holy City. Isaiah said not to be afraid of them.

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

**Isa. 7:6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:**



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

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

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

Isaiah was told to reveal the evil counsel of Syria and Israel. They wanted to capture Judah and set up their own king, the son of Tabeal, in Jerusalem instead of Ahaz. Isaiah said this plan would not come to pass and then gave an analogy. Damascus was the capital of Syria, and Samaria was the capital of Ephraim (Israel). In other words, if the capital of either Syria or the ten tribes was destroyed, the power of that king was also destroyed.

“If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” There is a *Manna* comment on Isaiah 30:15, “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” *One who has faith in the promises of God in a practical manner, in spite of dangerous situations, is not wobbly.* The one with faith may experience the brunt of a calamity, but because of a restful heart of faith, the experience is largely alleviated. In contrast, a lack of faith means one is tortured with anxiety even before the trouble as well as in the trouble.

Isaiah told Ahaz that within 65 years, Israel would be taken. Since Ephraim was actually destroyed about 30 years later, how can the difference be harmonized? This technique of the Lord puzzles many. However, Isaiah did not say that the 65-year period began the day he was talking to Ahaz. Although we are not given more information about Isaiah's son, Shear-jashub, we are given a clue that Isaiah's ministry began in the days of Uzziah (but not in the beginning of his 52-year reign). The 65-year period was first mentioned when Isaiah started his ministry in the days of Uzziah. Thus the prophet was now reiterating what had *previously* been predicted at the start of his public ministry. Isaiah was reminding Ahaz of the *former* prophecy.

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

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

Isaiah was saying, “I gave you a sign. Now you ask God for a sign.” In what way did God speak to Ahaz, and why did He proffer a sign? Isaiah was speaking, so why does verse 10 say, “The LORD spake”? By this method, the words to King Ahaz were personal. Ahaz was personally asked to request of God a sign as deep as *sheol* below or as high as heaven above.

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

Ahaz refused to ask for a sign and used as an excuse that he did not want to tempt Jehovah; yet God had told him to ask.

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

Isaiah turned to the people: “Hear ye now, O house of David. Is it too small a thing for you to weary men that you must weary God also?” The rulers were wearying both their subjects and God, but how? By not inquiring of the Lord. The *prophet* had to take the initiative and go out to meet the king and say, “Do not be fainthearted. Be calm. God will take care of the matter.” And the *prophet* gave a sign, but Ahaz would not ask for one. Evidently, the people were frustrated

with the leadership—their indecision and timidity.

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

God gave Ahaz a sign anyway. What was the *real reason* Ahaz did not want to ask for a sign? It is related to verse 8 and has to do with his lack of faith in Isaiah's prophecy and/or sign that Ephraim, the ten tribes, would be broken. (The fulfillment of that sign was a long way off, within 65 years.) Perhaps there was also a personality conflict between Isaiah and Ahaz. The king may not have appreciated Isaiah as a person and hence was reluctant to inquire of the Lord through him. Some people take offense at a personality, even though they may think the individual has a lot of scriptural knowledge.

But there is another factor. King Ahaz got a bad report (2 Kings 16:1-4). Therefore, Ahaz's refusal to inquire for a sign from God suggests that more culpability was attached to his refusal than merely a personality conflict. Ahaz did not want to hear.

The Lord gave a sign: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Christians say this is a prophecy of the coming Messiah, who would be conceived by a virgin and have a miraculous birth. Jews try to refute this premise by saying that the word translated "virgin" means a young maiden or a young woman of marriageable age. They say there are two other Hebrew words in the Old Testament that would have been used if "virgin" were meant. From a grammar standpoint, the Jewish reasoning would seem to be more justified. But how would a young woman conceiving and giving birth to a son called Immanuel be a *special sign*? Instead of being a miracle, that would be normal activity. Also, other Jews have been named Immanuel. However, it is unusual that the sign about the promised Messiah was given to Ahaz, an *evil king*.

Of course Isaiah is the prophet who speaks with great particularity about Jesus. Jews still do not recognize Isaiah as an authentic prophet from the standpoint of predicting the true Messiah. Therefore, the fulfillment of this prophecy is yet future. When Israel is converted and accepts Jesus as their Messiah, they will see that Isaiah was a true prophet. The name Immanuel was recognized by very few Jews at the First Advent, but when the Kingdom is established in Israel under Christ's reign, his name will be known by the public as Immanuel; that is, "God with us."

**Q:** In mentioning some of Ahaz's evil deeds, 2 Kings 16:3 says he burned his own son as an offering. Would there be an emphasis on the word "son" here? First, Isaiah was accompanied by his son, which was an important sign. Then Ahaz committed the evil practice of killing his own son as an offering. Now here is another sign of a son—one to be born of a virgin.

**A:** Yes, there could be a play on the word "son."

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

The sign continued. The son would "eat" butter (curds) and honey. Verses 21-25 refer to farming. The land would be laid waste, and briars and thorns would overgrow the vineyards. Although there would not be famine, food would come from grazing animals and wild honey. Butter would come from the milk of cows. In other words, the people would live off the animals of the land and not off the crops of agricultural pursuit.

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

Verse 16 is a prophecy that Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, would die. “The land that thou [Judah] abhorrest” was the ten-tribe kingdom, which was coming down with Syria to conquer their brethren in the two-tribe kingdom. However, Judah would be spared until later.

A double sign may have been given here; that is, a fulfillment may have occurred in the type as well as with Jesus. If so, that would explain the use of the Hebrew word for “young maiden.”

Isaiah told Ahaz that within 65 years, Ephraim would be broken. Then God gave the sign that a son would be born of a “young maiden” and his name would be called Immanuel. Before the child was mature enough to reason, the kings of Israel and Syria would die. The Holy Spirit of the New Testament indicates that Jesus is the primary fulfillment of the prophetic sign and the only one born of a virgin (Matt. 1:23). Just from the Old Testament alone, we would not know. The Hebrew word for “young maiden” was specially chosen to fit both type and antitype.

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

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

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

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

The reference was to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria. God “hissed” (whistled) for the “fly” of Egypt and the “bee” of Assyria, two kings from afar and their armies. King Rezin of Syria was confederate with King Pekah of Israel against Judah. When we consider the distance of the king of Assyria and the pharaoh of Upper Egypt, they traveled *fast* to fight. Israel was the buffer zone, the country in between. The outcome of the fight between Egypt and Assyria would affect Israel, Judah, and Syria.

Since the days of the dividing of the kingdom—that is, since Solomon, since the first 120 years of the 513 years of the Period of the Kings—there had not been such trouble. Since the birth of Ephraim, the ten-tribe kingdom, in the days of Jeroboam almost 300 years earlier, nothing so significant had happened as the bee coming down from Assyria and the fly coming up from Egypt to fight. These two numerous armies came in and occupied Israel, taking crops and stores. The effect was that they figuratively “shaved” the nation clean by taking Israel’s superfluous strength and produce. The expression “a razor that is hired” signifies that the Lord had a foreign “barber” (especially Assyria) come in and clean up the land. God whistled for the bee and the fly, and they came and filled the land and cleaned it out. The wages were the booty; that is, the word “hired” shows there was a benefit to the foreigner: a spoil or booty. The ten tribes were taken into captivity, and the land was cleaned out. “Them beyond the river” was Assyria, which was beyond the river Euphrates. Egypt and Assyria were both great powers, but of the two, Assyria was greater.

“[Assyria particularly shall consume] the head, and the hair of the feet: and ... the beard.” The Jews prided themselves on their beards. Under the Law, they were not to shave their beards but just to poll them once a year.

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

sheep;

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

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

Verse 23 pictures desolation. “In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briers and thorns” (RSV). The two powers coming in and inundating the land are pictured as almost like a locust plague, being numerous and settling everywhere. Flies and bees can be very onerous. It is interesting that the choice of insects (the bee representing Assyria and the fly being Egypt) shows which power would be victorious. The bee is stronger than the fly.

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

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

The Revised Standard reads, “With bow and arrows men will come there, for all the land will be briers and thorns; and as for all the hills which used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of briers and thorns; but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread.” The land on which people formerly cultivated crops and pruned vineyards was now left for grazing ground. When the ten-tribe kingdom went into captivity, the land was desolate, but not as desolate as when the two tribes were taken and the land lay completely desolate for 70 years. Here the thought is just that those who were taken captive could not use the land.

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

To “write in it with a man’s pen” meant to write plainly so that any man could understand. Why was Isaiah to take “a great roll”? The scroll was to be a display roll, a large placard. The message would be written in big letters and easy-to-understand language on a large, open scroll for demonstration purposes. The scroll bore the name of the child: Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Probably the prophetic contents of this chapter were also written on the scroll.

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

Two witnesses (Uriah the priest and Zechariah) were taken by Isaiah so they could testify that these things were written on that day. What was the purpose of notarizing the document? When the event took place, the notarization would prove that Isaiah had predicted it—and also that he had named this son in advance to indicate “the spoil speeds, the prey hastes.”

**Isa. 8:3** And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

Isaiah was a prophet; hence his wife was a prophetess. In addition, she probably was devout and spiritual throughout her life. Thus she was a *prophetess* from two standpoints.

Verse 3 refers to the previous chapter, Isaiah 7:14, showing that the prophecy had a double fulfillment. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The fulfillment back there was only a *partial* fulfillment. The Holy Spirit specially chose a word that could be either “young maiden” or “virgin” so that there could be both a spiritual and a natural fulfillment.

Another illustration is the Passover lamb, which was to be slain between the two evenings; that is, at 3 p.m., which was between the two afternoon “evenings” of 12 noon and 6 p.m. But “the two evenings” could also be understood as the evening of one day and the evening of the next day, so the slaying had to take place on the 14th day of Nisan. The language allows either interpretation, even though the Scripture actually refers to 3 p.m.

The natural fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 was Isaiah’s prophetic wife, who bore a son called “Maher-shalal-hash-baz,” not “Immanuel.” Hence the primary fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 was Jesus, the spiritual fulfillment. The son’s strange name, which means “the spoil speeds, the prey hastes,” was a *constant* reminder *all his life* of Isaiah’s prophecy—even though the prophecy was to be fulfilled before he could speak and know how to discriminate between his parents and others (verse 4).

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

“Before the child shall have knowledge to cry” and “before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isa. 7:16) meant that Maher-shalal-hash-baz was probably no more than three years old at the time the prophecy was fulfilled. The prophecy, then, was that before the child was three years old, Damascus (Syria) and Samaria (the ten tribes) would be taken by the king of Assyria (Tiglath-pileser).

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

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

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

“Forasmuch as this people [Judah] refuseth the waters of Shiloah [the pool of Siloam, the pool at Hezekiah’s Tunnel] that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s son; ... the Lord bringeth up upon them ... the king of Assyria.” Verses 6 and 7 contrast the waters of Siloam, which fed the king’s pool, and the Euphrates, a mighty river in Assyria. The clause “this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly” refers back to Isaiah’s counsel to King Ahaz of Judah not to be fearful of the “firebrands” Rezin and Pekah (Isa. 7:3,4).

**Comment:** For verses 6-8a, the RSV reads, “Because this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah; therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks; and it will sweep on into Judah.”

The waters of Siloam came from a single spring that fed a rivulet, which in turn emptied into the pool. (Hezekiah’s Tunnel had not been built at this time. The next king, Hezekiah, diverted the stream so that it was entirely within the walls of the city.) Since the stream originated in Jerusalem, it was as if the Lord supplied the water. (In the next age, the water for Ezekiel’s

Temple will be distinctly seen to come from under the threshold, that is, to come from God.)

God told the people not to fear, but they did fear and tried to get an ally. The Lord's counsel is *quiet*, but most people want something dramatic. (For instance, the Israelites were not satisfied to have Samuel speak on behalf of God but wanted a king.) God was saying through Isaiah, "You refused my counsel not to fear [the soft waters of Shiloah], so I will bring a more severe threat, the fiery king of Assyria, who is more radical than the two firebrands [Pekah and Rezin]." "The king of Assyria" would come "and all his glory [his army]."

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

Sennacherib, also a king of Assyria, would "pass through Judah." This prophecy refers to King Sennacherib, for Tiglath-pileser, who slew Pekah and Rezin, did not pass through Judah. This prophecy is deep. Through Isaiah, the people of Judah were told that God would take care of them, and they were not even to defend themselves. After prophesying about Tiglath-pileser, Isaiah abruptly started to prophesy about King Sennacherib and used the same language. Sennacherib would overflow into Judah; in fact, he flooded the land almost to the capital ("the neck"), and there he had his spokesman call up to the people, "You had better give in and submit peaceably because your God is not able to defend you." Isaiah counseled the people not to worry, for God would fight the battle.

King Sennacherib was likened to a tremendous bird such as an eagle or a vulture. So large was the bird that "the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy [Immanuel's] land." To those hearing the prophecy in Isaiah's day, "Immanuel" was Judah. The land of Judah was pictured as a person, the neck or head being Jerusalem. "Immanuel" means "God is with us." Judah was delivered from Sennacherib not by battle instruments but by the Lord's destroying angel in one night. When there were so many corpses on the ground and Judah had not defended itself, the people said, "God is with us!" They thought, "God has protected His treasured land, His covenant people, from the threatening enemy." This superficial natural picture must be understood in order to understand the spiritual.

Why is this prophecy stated in such a confused way? We will find out subsequently. In review, events thus far are (1) the strange naming of Isaiah's son, (2) an invasion threatening the city of Jerusalem, and (3) a mixed-up prophecy.

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

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

Again "Immanuel" was used, but this time it was spelled out: "God is with us."

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

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

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

In verses 9-13, three historic events were alluded to, but not according to the sequence in Kings and Chronicles. The events were mixed together for a lesson and a principle.

The lesson about the confederacy is part of the Harvest truth message. In their fear, nominal Christendom will seek to unite into a stronger religious group whereby they can proclaim a message warning the populace against what they see as the existing dangers of communism, etc. [NOTE: With the passage of time since this study of Isaiah in 1976-1981, the existing danger is seen to be primarily Islam.]

However, back in Old Testament times, when the Israelites heard that an enemy was coming, they usually tried to get an ally to be confederate with them. Israel then played one power against the other, being a buffer zone in between. In other words, political strategy, diplomacy, intrigue, and power politics were used.

“Say ye not, A confederacy.” Back there a minority was sympathetic to Isaiah and heeded his counsel. Like Isaiah, they trusted in God and hearkened to him as their spokesman. While the general populace were fearful and wanted a strong ally to fight with them against the enemy, Isaiah was telling those who would listen not to fear but to trust in God. “Let the LORD of hosts be your fear and your dread” was his message.

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

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

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

“Both the houses of Israel” would be natural Israel and nominal spiritual Israel OR (back there) the ten-tribe kingdom and the two-tribe kingdom. There was a lesson for both divisions of the kingdom. God was testing them. With one class, the test would result in their downfall, and with the other class, the test would bring out meritorious qualities. “Many ... shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.”

The final authority is the “law” and the “testimony” of the Word. They are the “yea” and the “amen” to any question that arises. We should listen only to counsel that is in harmony with God’s Word. Back there Isaiah was saying, “If my advice is in harmony with the law and the testimony, hearken to it.”

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples” is a reminder of Daniel 12:4, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” Daniel was privileged to utter certain things of which he was not fully aware. Here Isaiah was saying, “Close up this prophecy; it is not meant to be understood now. Close up the book and seal it [store it for posterity].” Isaiah’s message had a certain fulfillment back there, but the *larger* fulfillment, the unsealing, the unlocking, is in our day. God used Isaiah as a prophet to utter things that neither he nor his “disciples” fully understood.

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

Even Isaiah had to wait on Jehovah and did not fully understand—like Daniel. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Isaiah would “wait upon the LORD,” trusting in faith.

“I will wait upon the LORD, ... and I will *look* for him.” Some people trust in God’s providences, but they stop looking and say, “The Lord will let us know when it comes.” However, we must search the Scriptures *daily*.

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

Back there Isaiah was God’s representative. The faithful listened to his counsel, which was in harmony with God’s Word, as uttered by other prophets and as recorded in their books. Today we listen to Jesus’ counsel, for the present Lord is primarily responsible for the message. Thus, from a spiritual standpoint, “I and the children whom the LORD hath given me” refers to God’s children, whom Jesus is taking care of. This phrase refers to the Church, who are the children of the Father but who are espoused to Jesus, their elder brother. We are *God’s* children, not Jesus’ children, begotten by God’s Word of truth. *God* selects and draws the children and then gives them to Jesus.

Back there the people would think that “I and the children whom the LORD hath given me” referred to (1) Isaiah’s two children, to whom he gave odd names, or (2) Isaiah’s followers, who were harassed, as was Isaiah himself (the prophet was sawed in half at the end of his ministry). In this sense, Isaiah’s followers were “signs” and “wonders.”

While Jesus quoted this verse at his First Advent, and while Isaiah 7:14 says, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” we see that the virgin’s conception of Jesus took place at the First Advent. Two things were prophesied—the birth of the child and his name being Immanuel—but only the birth took place at the First Advent. At the present time, only God’s people understand that Jesus is as God with the human race. The world’s recognition of Immanuel will take place in the next age.

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

Because God’s voice is not being heard, the people will seek occult sources in the future, at the end of the Gospel Age. Instead they should implore *Him* more.

But what about the type? “And when they [the people of Judah] shall say unto you [Isaiah], Seek unto them that have familiar spirits,” the question would be, “Should not a people seek unto their God and not unto the dead for information?” It was a Gentile custom to seek occult sources.

This admonition also applies to the Harvest, for verse 12 reads, “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.” At the end of the Harvest, the nominal systems will unite in a confederacy, pictured as the rolling together of a scroll (Isa. 34:4). They will seek a confederacy to fight the imminent dangers of anarchy. The admonition not to join the confederacy is addressed to true Christians. We are getting *advance* information that there will be a delving into occult sources in our day. Heathen philosophies are making great inroads, and occultism will become an ever increasing temptation as time goes on.

Back in the type, the loyal remnant of Judah heeded Isaiah’s message. At this end of the age, the Lord’s people are being admonished in regard to the coming mark of the image of the beast. None will be able to buy or sell unless they have the “mark,” which will be a union, a



confederacy, to fight against the common enemy: agnostics, atheists, the godless, etc. We will be identified with them if we do not join with the nominal churches. Those in the nominal system will say, “Do you mean to say you call yourselves Christians, but you will not unite with us to fight the common danger?” It will be difficult to reason with them under those circumstances because the logic will seem obvious to unite for Christianity. But in verse 12, the Lord warned us not to unite.

Verse 19 is telling that some unusual circumstances will arise where it will be a temptation for some of the Lord’s people to go to occult sources for information about the future. But God’s counsel is to the contrary: To avoid the temptation, turn to *prayer* (to sanctify God) and to *His Word* (“to the law and to the testimony”—verse 20). “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (verse 13).

“Them that have familiar spirits, and ... wizards that peep, and ... mutter” is a reference to communication with fallen angels and spirits from other worlds. Suppose intelligent communication came from outer space that revealed things far in advance of the knowledge of our day in science and past history. Next the fallen angels would advise regarding the future. The people would listen to false information from this supposedly superior race, especially if they first received a few examples of correct information as bait. Some of the consecrated throughout the world who are not as enlightened as those in present truth would no doubt also be deceived. The fallen angels could claim they were from another planet or even pose as *holy* angels through different acts. We would have to warn against this great danger, saying God’s Word warns us not to have anything to do with communications from occult sources.

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

Light comes from *God’s Word*, not from occult sources. Light comes from the “law” and the “testimony.”

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

“They [the people] shall pass through the *land*, greatly distressed and hungry” (RSV). In the final analysis, the people will find no satisfaction in earthly things, even if temporary miracles are performed. Conditions will be worse than at any previous time in their lives. And eventually the trouble will be greater than at any previous time in history. Elsewhere in Isaiah, we are told that the fallen angels will be loosed en masse (as a “flood”). Here we see the earlier stage of communication from them. Later on will come the deluge.

Verses 19-21 indicate several problems in addition to lying wonders: unemployment, crop failures, and starvation. The people walking through the land will have no food. With money being worthless, employment will cease. With crops being pillaged, farmers will stop growing food. As a result of these dire straits, the people will start to curse *their* “king” (governments) and *their* god (religious leaders and systems).

In this dilemma of the future, both the nominal churches and the governments will give advice. As things get more and more out of hand, martial law will be established. Next the people will curse their religious and civil leaders. *Then, after that*, they will look upward—to God, the only source that can save them. Conditions will become so bad that no flesh would be saved without divine help. How else would conditions get stabilized? Crops do not grow overnight. It takes time to produce crops, and during this time, people must be patient and obey authority. Only God Himself will be able to bring order out of such chaos. One purpose of the

Time of Trouble is to bring the world to its knees to see the need for divine help. At that time, the people will not look to familiar spirits and peeping voices, for they will be in very desperate straits. In the anarchy, they will walk aimlessly, looking for scraps of food for survival.

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

On earth will be real trouble: darkness, distress, gloom, anguish. The Revised Standard says the people “will be thrust into thick darkness.” “A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains” (Joel 2:2). “Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people” (Isa. 60:2).

While the Church will be gone at this time, they will pass advice on to others beforehand. Many Christians do not like to study about the trouble; they say they will face it when it comes. But such is not a wise course. The Lord has given advice in advance not to join the confederacy. When the preparation for the confederacy is getting more and more pronounced, at least the surprise element will be removed for those who study in advance, for much of the problem will be fear. “Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid” (Isa. 8:12). Fear and anxiety make inroads into one’s nervous system and faith. Fear has a devastating effect on faith. The trouble will come very close to the Lord’s people.

In witnessing, we must give the *whole* picture: the good that is coming as well as the bad. For example, we try to speak a message of comfort to the Jews, but we must also tell them of the coming Holocaust of Jacob’s Trouble. Just telling them about Kingdom blessings will not help them go through Jacob’s Trouble.

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

The prophecy in verses 1 and 2, which is partially quoted in Matthew 4:15,16, refers to Jesus as the “great light” who came to the Jews at the First Advent. Naphtali and Zebulun were in the Sea of Galilee area, where Jesus performed many of his miracles. Part of the shore of the Sea of Galilee belonged to Naphtali, and another part belonged to Zebulun.

Although the Jordan River starts farther up, it is from the Sea of Galilee that the river flows uninterruptedly to the Dead Sea. Here “beyond Jordan” means *north* of the Sea of Galilee (not east or west of the Jordan River, as is usually the case). The reference is to the upper part of the Jordan River that is north of Galilee. “Capernaum” is the key word in Matthew 4:13, for Capernaum was on the boundary between the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and Jesus spent a lot of time there, preaching in the synagogue, healing, and calling disciples. In other words, Jesus and his ministry were a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1,2.

“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation” refers to the last verse of the previous chapter: “And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.” What is peculiar to the region of Galilee? Whenever a conqueror entered Israel from the north, he came in from the Galilee area. Hence Galilee was attacked first and was occupied most of the time. Also, the area had ideal weather and plentiful water, and these conditions led conquerors to settle there. For example, the Romans occupied the southern end and the western shore (including Tiberias) of the Sea of Galilee as a resort. For this reason, Galilee (called “Galilee of the nations”) became a mixture of Jews and people from other nations.

**Isa. 9:2** The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the

**land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**

The Jews were told that they would get a future blessing in the Naphtali and Zebulun area of Galilee, and the fulfillment came at the First Advent. In a practical sense, Jesus began his ministry there.

However, there is another picture. Verse 2 tells about Jesus being a “great light” to those who formerly walked in darkness and to those who were troubled in spirit in this area. When Jesus came, that is where he began his preaching. While Bethlehem is honored as his birthplace, how often did he go there? And how often did he preach in Nazareth, the village where he was raised? Only a few times. The bulk of his ministry was in Galilee and Jerusalem. But during the Gospel Age, the *Gentiles* have been blessed with the light of the gospel. The hearing ears were found mainly in Gentile nations. This prophecy, then, is a hint that the Gentiles would bring forth the fruitage for the Church. In a spiritual sense, the term “Galilee of the nations [Gentiles]” indicates that great benefit would come to the Gentiles. Naphtali and Zebulun were relatively *unimportant* tribes, as shown by their position on the high priest’s breastplate.

Messiah was introduced earlier in Isaiah with the prophecy that a child would be born of a virgin and he would be called Immanuel. There is *much* in the Book of Isaiah about *Jesus*; in fact, it is called the Christological book. Here Messiah was brought in again.

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

The word “not” should be omitted, as rendered in the Revised Standard Version: “Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.” What “spoil” is being divided? Who are those rejoicing as in the harvest?

There is a twofold application. Naphtali and Zebulun were greatly favored, but Jesus criticized Capernaum because with all of the mighty works done there, the people did not bring forth proper fruitage. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matt. 11:23). When the Jews as a people did not accept Jesus, the gospel message went to the Gentiles and punishment came. But the Gentile response has been slow, for it is taking 2,000 years to complete the Church. A principle is involved; namely, with the gospel light comes increased responsibility. The implication is that just as with Israel, after the current era of favor ends in so-called Christian lands, the repercussions will be severe with unemployment, hunger, etc. Because the United States has been blessed with the gospel, comforts of life, greater education, and civilization, it will suffer proportionately more than Third World countries when the Time of Trouble comes. Trouble will result because the favor and the joy have been ignored.

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

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

“For thou [God] hast broken the yoke of his burden.” The breaking of the yoke, the staff on the shoulder, and the rod of the oppressor is tied in with verses 6 and 7, “For unto us a child is born....”

Those of Capernaum saw “a great light,” which was Jesus. The gospel message brought great

joy, as when men “divide the spoil.” The apostles left everything to follow Jesus. Even the multitudes, who ate the loaves and the fishes, walked distances for the benefits, and they *listened* as they ate. We should not be too disparaging against those who were only *partially* interested, for many others did not listen at all. There are three categories of interest: (1) those who hunger and are the real searchers for truth, (2) those who are only partially interested but get certain benefits from their partial interest, and (3) those who have no interest.

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

Of those who recognized Jesus as the Messiah and followed him, some did so in a more credulous sense and some in a very deep sense. Thus verse 6 was *partially* fulfilled at the First Advent. Jesus was a “wonderful Counsellor,” for “never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). He was a “mighty God” in the sense of being a mighty prophet doing wonderful works, with POWER being vested in him. And he was a teacher—people thought of him as a “Father,” who took much time to counsel and teach them. The “child” was given unto them, but the *real, larger, and full* fulfillment of verse 6 will be in the Kingdom. What Jesus did at the First Advent was a sampling of what he will do in the Kingdom.

We will review verses 4 and 5. With the type pertaining to the land of Israel, the prophecy was a comfort to those living in Isaiah’s day.

Verse 4 refers to a burdensome yoke, a staff, and the rod of an oppressor—like a whip used to strike the back of a slave who did not work fast enough. The prophecy was saying that the yoke of slavery and oppression will be broken. Accordingly, when Israel is surrounded by Gog and Magog at the end of this age, God will work a *great victory* for Israel, breaking the yoke of the oppressor. Salvation will come to the Jew (the Holy Remnant) first. “Saviours” (Jesus and the Church) will be the instrument used (Obadiah 21).

Verse 4 continues. “As in the day of Midian” refers to another situation where the odds against Israel seemed overwhelming: hundreds of thousands against 300 men. Jacob’s Trouble will be analogous with one exception. Back there the Lord used Gideon, but the 300 were “armed” with only pitchers, lamps, and trumpets. Although they cried, “The sword of Jehovah, and of Gideon,” they did not have literal swords, and the Midianites slew one another. In the future, the enemy will be as a cloud covering the land, and God will deliver the Holy Remnant **SUDDENLY!** It will be a startling, sudden victory as with Gideon’s 300. A dramatic rescue will come. Before this victory, however, Jerusalem will be taken, and nothing will be done for a while, so it will *seem* as if God’s plan is failing. But when the Lord acts, it will be **SUDDEN!**

Verse 5: There will be confusion, noise, and tumult—this, too, happened with Gideon. The battle will be “confused noise” and have garments soaked in blood. When God fights for Israel in the future, many will be consumed by a plague, others by convulsions of nature, and still others by slaying themselves. When God does this fighting, no earthly army will be used. *God* will fight this battle, and it will clearly be *His* victory. In Gideon’s day, the 300 participated in the battle; they took the offensive and initiated the battle. When Gideon gave the signal, they broke the pitchers and shouted. The exception, or difference, in the future is that the Jews will not be doing the fighting. They will not be on the offensive as Gideon and the 300 were. In other words, in Jacob’s Trouble, there will be *no visible army*, for the power will come *from heaven*. The earth will open up and swallow people, fire will come down from heaven, pestilence and disease will ravage, etc.

Verse 6 shows that Jesus will be the general of Jehovah. He is not the general yet, and he is not reigning yet. When he does reign, he will break the rod of the oppressor.

**Isa. 9:7** Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

“Of the increase of his [Jesus’] government and peace there shall be no end” is a reminder of the stone in Daniel 2:35. After the stone smites the image, it will grow and grow until it fills, or embraces, the whole earth.

“The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this [work in connection with Messiah and the establishment of his Kingdom].” The real authority is God’s, and Jesus is His active agent. Pertaining to the stone smiting the image, Daniel 2:44,45 states, “And in the days of these kings shall the *God of heaven* set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom ... shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.... the *great God* hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and *the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.*” God’s superiority is emphasized; it is *His Kingdom* in the final analysis.

The “throne of David” is the “throne of Jesus.” Jesus came from David’s line (Psa. 89:3,4). God made a covenant that the scepter would not pass away until Jesus came. The promise was sure to David’s seed. Thus the “throne of David” refers to Jesus’ position of authority in the future Kingdom. God’s original promise to David was that Israel would be restored one day and that Messiah would be honored in connection with the restoration. The throne will be in Jerusalem, and the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies is implied, among whom will be David. The name David means “beloved”; that is, the “throne of the beloved.”

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

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

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

This portion of the prophecy was directed to the ten tribes. Four names were used for the ten-tribe kingdom: Jacob, Israel, Ephraim, and Samaria. The attitude of the ten tribes was, “The bricks are fallen down, but instead of bricks, we will use superior hewn stone and make the rebuilding even greater than before. Instead of the common sycamore trees, we will use stately cedars for the beams.” In other words, even though the punishment came upon them, the ten tribes did not see the punishment as of the Lord. Regarding the destruction as simply a calamity, they were proud and boastful.

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

Earlier Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the king of the ten tribes, had made a covenant to defeat Judah and put their own king on the throne. God had predicted that their purpose would be thwarted.

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

The Syrians were to the northeast and the Philistines to the southwest of the ten tribes. Now Israel was between the upper and lower millstones, as it were. “For all this his [God’s] anger is

not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still [against Israel, the ten-tribe kingdom].” God’s “stretched out” hand is a reminder of the Israelites and the Egyptians at the Red Sea. God’s authority was shown when the rod of Moses was stretched out over the sea and the waters divided. The same rod of authority was a blessing to Israel and a judgment to the Egyptians. Thus when two parties are involved, God’s hand is for one party and against the other. In this particular prophecy here in Isaiah 9, the burden of God’s stretched-out hand was against the ten tribes.

When the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser, defeated Rezin, Israel was weakened (“devoured”) as well. It is hard to get an accurate chronological understanding of the end of the ten-tribe kingdom because its destruction was in two phases. For a while, there was an interregnum, or a void, which was followed by a partial restoration. (The ten tribes reasoned that “the bricks are fallen down,” so they would rebuild with hewn stones—verse 10. They did not recognize the first trouble as a punishment from the Lord.) Then came the later strong defeat, and the ten tribes were carried away captive.

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

Israel did not recognize that the *first preliminary* judgment was a warning from Jehovah.

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

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

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

The *final* judgment of the ten tribes would be short, severe, and complete. The ten tribes kept looking to their *human* leaders, not to God. The categories were (1) head, (2) tail, (3) branch, and (4) rush. The “rush” represented the more numerous *common people*, the grass element. The “branch” was something more secure that was used for support, that is, the *leaders*. (Jesus was favorably called “the Branch.” He is to be “the Branch” of hope and strength in the Kingdom.) Here, in the *unfavorable* sense, the “branch” was the less numerous *ruling class*, the more elite. The “head” was the same: the leaders, the ruling element, “the ancient and honourable” (judges, princes, advisers, the Sanhedrin, etc.). The categories are summarized below:

Branch	vs.	Rush
Head	vs.	Tail
Leaders	vs.	“They that are led”

“Branch,” “head,” and “leaders” were all more or less the same. However, distinctions are to be made with the “rush,” “tail,” and “they that are led.” The tail is “the prophet that teacheth [or tells] lies.” Thus the “tail,” the “rush,” and the “led” give insight into the role of the false prophets. Instead of speaking the word of the Lord, the false prophets kowtowed to and assisted the leaders. Being “yes” men to the leaders, they observed which way the wind was blowing and acted in harmony with it for reasons of personal advantage. Thus the prophets who taught lies followed the leaders, and of course the multitudes, or common folk, followed the false prophets. *Flattery is very dangerous among the Lord’s people—it is dangerous both to those who use it and to those who are flattered.* The tail follows the head and it wags. Hence the prophet wagged his mouth or tongue in harmony with the leadership, and the people followed. What was the result? All were deceived and judgment resulted.

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

God would *not* be merciful in making a selective judgment, for *all were guilty* and rotten. Thus He would not spare the fatherless, the widows, or the young men in the coming final judgment. His anger would not be turned away—the judgment was necessary. The people were “godless” (RSV) and *unrepentant*. They did not turn to God.

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

Verse 18 is a reminder of Malachi 4:1, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” The difference is that in Malachi, the *day shall burn as an oven*, and the *wicked will be destroyed as stubble*. Here in Isaiah 9:18, the *wickedness will do the burning*. This wording suggests *retribution* (their wickedness, as the Lord’s people, brought upon them a corresponding responsibility and judgment), and it suggests that the trouble would purge and cleanse them as a people. Just as briers, thorns, and stubble burn rapidly, so the fire of wickedness burning and devouring briers and thorns emphasizes the *violence and suddenness* of the judgment. In other words, the final captivity of the ten tribes would be violent and short.

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

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

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

It was a custom in olden times for bards to act as journalists and to go from place to place to tell the news. The news was spread by this means. Many of the bards were quite accomplished, and they often extemporaneously translated the news into story *songs*, poetry, or prose that was sometimes accompanied with music. Hence some of the Old Testament prophets probably composed prophecy songs. Then assistants learned the prophecies by heart and went throughout the land telling and/or singing them. As they traveled, they depended on the goodwill of the people to support them. The prophets and their assistants—probably thousands of them in Old Testament times—got two reactions: benefactions and rebuffs. The way the prophecies here in Isaiah are phrased suggests they were put to music.

The reason the trouble (wrath and darkness) was brewing and the people would be as fuel for the fire was that God was angry at their forsaking His covenant. Verses 20 and 21 suggest homelessness and anarchy. “They snatch on the right, but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied” (RSV). In other words, as a result of the war, the people would forage for food and be starving. The statement “they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm” meant that the people would bite their “brothers” under the same Law Covenant. Ephraim and Manasseh, brothers and the two sons of Joseph, were devouring each other, and together, they were against and tried to devour Judah, also a kinsman. Thus is seen the *terror of anarchy* with brother devouring brother.

In antitype, Christendom (Israel) is composed of Catholicism (the ten tribes) and Protestantism

(the two tribes). This very condition of trouble and anarchy will come to pass at the end of the present age. First, Catholicism and Protestantism will unite against a common enemy. Then the veneer of Christianity will wear off, and for survival, they will attack and devour one another like beasts. Disorder will increase to the point of no return: anarchy. All government will cease. When supermarkets and warehouses are stripped of food, the people will have to forage for food in the open land, trying to save their families. Isaiah 8:21 says the people will walk through the land hard "bestead and hungry," and they will curse their god and their king and look up to Jehovah in that day. Realizing that all government has ceased, that anarchy has come, they will turn to the true God. When they become horrified at conditions, they will say, "Only God can help." Then they will pray to God, and He will save them. Their turning to God will be timed to fit in with Gog and Magog.

Isaiah 10:1-4 belongs to Chapter 9.

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

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

This criticism was directed to the corrupt *judges* and *legislators*. There were ulterior motives in the very legislation that was supposed to relieve the oppressed. An example of this today would be burying an unrighteous or grievous decree in the midst of a heavy, voluminous bill so that even many who would vote for the bill would be unaware of some of its content. The criminal element inserts the loopholes they want. Ostensibly the bill seems constructive, but it contains hidden inimical riders. Other modern-day examples would be gambling legislation and legislation to take over a savings account that is inactive for five years. In such cases, the government legislates malpractices and does far-reaching irreparable damage. Today the economy is geared for both husband and wife to work in order to live.

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

When the masses get angry enough, they will vent their wrath on everyone who has had a position of prestige and honor. In the antitype, all *radical* movements will be involved in tearing down *Christendom*. Somehow the dissidents will group themselves together and cause anarchy simultaneously. Generally this type of danger has been repressed by the enactment of stern laws, but when the dissidents act simultaneously, nothing will be able to avert the destruction of *Christendom*. In the type, these elements were Philistines, Assyrians, Syrians, etc.

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

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

The "Assyrian" is the rod of Jehovah's wrath, His instrument. Who is the Assyrian? In the type, the king of Assyria killed the king of Syria and took the ten tribes captive (Isa. 8:4). The Lord dealt harshly with the ten tribes, permitting the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser, to take them captive during Hezekiah's reign in Judah. The ten-tribe kingdom went into captivity about 125 years before Judah. There were two stages of captivity with the ten tribes and also two stages with the two tribes, although the Book of Jeremiah mentions three stages (Jer. 52:28-30).

Israel and Judah were professedly God's Kingdom, but they, especially the ten tribes at that time, were not faithful. In antitype, the ten tribes represent Papacy because they were larger



and more numerous than the two tribes. The ten tribes are sometimes called “Ephraim,” meaning “fruitful.” The two tribes represent Protestantism. Collectively, the ten and the two tribes picture Christendom, the religious world.

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

“I [God] will send him [the Assyrian] against an hypocritical nation [Israel—Christendom in antitype].” Revelation 16:13,14,16 says, on the one hand, that three unclean spirits will gather the kings of the whole earth to Armageddon and, on the other hand, that God will do this. In other words, in His providence, God will allow certain individuals to come into power (just like Pharaoh of Egypt), knowing their temperaments and dispositions. These individuals will do the gathering and be responsible for their actions. God, who is not morally responsible for their actions, will providentially arrange the scene and the players like a chess board. “And I saw *three unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.... And he [God] gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue *Armageddon*.”

The ten tribes were called a “hypocritical nation” (a “godless nation” in the RSV). A heathen conqueror, Assyria, visited judgment on them. At the end of this age, Russia and the anarchists and discontents will be the antitypical Assyria.

“Assyria” thus pictures a foreign un-Christian power not fettered by restraints. At the end of the age, the Vatican will literally be destroyed by Gog, who will subsequently come down against Israel with a confederate host.

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

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

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

The Assyrian will not fear his own fate, for he will have already despoiled other peoples. In fact, he will be so successful in his exploits that he will use an illustration to show his greatness: his commanders, generals, and princes are equal to the *greatest* of other nations. How boastful!

Calno, Hamath, and Samaria correspond to places in Lebanon and Israel today. The king of Assyria was prophetically saying that when he would come down against Israel, nothing would thwart his will, for he had already conquered Carchemish, Arpad, and Damascus.

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

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

The king of Assyria captured not only the people but also their idols. He was saying, “Do you think Jerusalem will be any different? Do you think I will have any more of a problem there than with these other people?” “Certainly not!” was his implied answer.

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

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

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

**Isa. 10:15** Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

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

These verses are an earnest description of God's intention after Assyria does its work. In antitype, the power that destroys Christendom will itself be destroyed after the work is accomplished. The "*whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem*" was *not* fulfilled by the king of Assyria in the type. Hence these verses are *especially prophetic*.

In antitype, the Lord's "*whole work upon mount Zion*" will be the completion of the Church and the Great Company. When God has finished His *whole (spiritual) work* on Mount Zion (both the Church and the Great Company) and His *whole (natural) work* on Jerusalem (natural Israel—its purging and the handpicked rescue of the Holy Remnant), He will punish the symbolic king of Assyria. In other words, both the church of the firstborn and God's work pertaining to natural Israel must be finished before the judgment. The primary purpose of Jacob's Trouble is to purge natural Israel and to sanctify the Lord God in the sight of all the nations (that is, to convince the invading armies, natural Israel, and the world that the God of Israel is the true God). When God's purpose with regard to the development of the spiritual class and the hard, purging experience on natural Israel are completed, *then* He will deal with Gog and Magog.

Before God deals with the anarchistic element in the rest of the world, stopping the Time of Trouble and saying, "Peace, be still," He will bring peace in Israel by delivering the Holy Remnant and defeating Gog. The Time of Trouble will be a short period of trouble leading to anarchy in the rest of the world, perhaps three years in length. The *last, very short phase* of the three years will be Jacob's Trouble.

The *nephilim* and the violence, suffering, and evil caused by fallen angels and fallen men in the earth prior to the Flood have their counterparts now, *prior to* the Time of Trouble. That violence was not *the* trouble—it was a different kind of trouble. *The Flood was God's wrath*, whereas the *nephilim* and the violence in the earth were *men's* retribution, *not God's wrath*—and neither is the violence in the earth today. When Jacob's Trouble is finished, *then* God will punish the "rod," the "Assyrian."

Lawless bands with guns are one thing; the relatively law-abiding general populace is another. When the Gog armies come down against Jerusalem, God will be visiting judgment on the homeland, Magog. In other words, the judgment on Magog is separate from Gog. As another example, if the United States were completely obliterated during a war, U.S. armies would still be stationed throughout the world with a two years' supply of food and ammunition, enabling them to continue on. The armies would be self-sufficient up to a certain point. Hence, while the

homeland is in anarchy, the armies of Gog will continue to tear through the land, taking spoils as they go (Ezek. 39:6).

*Verse 12:* The language describing God’s punishment of the Assyrian power is *too strong and too emphatic* for anything that happened in the type. Therefore, verse 12 and succeeding verses are especially prophetic—the fulfillment is primarily in the *antitype*.

*Verse 13:* God will be angry at the Assyrian for thinking the victories are through his *own* might and power and his *own* wisdom. (Instead, the victories will occur because God *providentially permits* them temporarily.) The Adversary thinks of himself similarly, believing in his *own* “physical” and mental power.

“I have removed the bound[arie]s of the people.” Boundaries will be “removed” in the sense that the Assyrian power will think it is conquering the world. When Assyria thinks it is on the threshold of world dominion, God will act.

*Verse 14:* In nature, birds peep and flutter when a nest is threatened. But Assyria’s enemies will be so frightened, they will not peep or move.

*Verse 15:* Despite Assyria’s pride, the power will be just a tool. The tiny tail does *not* wag the dog. The saw cutting down the tree does *not* push the man. The axe does *not* have power over the hewer (God). Assyria is merely *God’s instrument*. The success should be accredited to *God*.

*Verse 16:* What is the illustration about the sickness and the fire? Other Scriptures tell us that a strange pestilence (called “leanness” here) will kill many when God delivers the Holy Remnant at the end of Jacob’s Trouble. Earthquake, fire (molten lava), and hail will also occur. God will cause natural wonders to destroy the enemy (Assyria) of Israel. “And I will plead against him with *pestilence* and with *blood*; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an *overflowing rain*, and *great hailstones, fire, and brimstone*” (Ezek. 38:22).

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

The proud Assyrian (Gog) will be unaware of the impending judgment, not realizing he is sitting on a keg of dynamite. The keg is in Jerusalem, and in due time, God will light the fuse and blow up Gog. The emphasis is on SUDDENNESS (“in *one day*”). Within seconds, the briers and thorns (Gog, the Assyrian) will become a roaring inferno.

Anarchy throughout the world will be stopped suddenly—but not until after the Gog and Magog climax is reached. In other words, the Time of Trouble must continue until God saves the Holy Remnant. God will suddenly bring the miraculous deliverance in Israel, and when the rest of the world hears from surviving Gentile eyewitnesses (perhaps a month or two later) what has happened in Israel, they will also pray for deliverance (Isa. 8:21).

God will fight for Israel through The Christ. “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:26). Immediately afterwards the anarchy in the rest of the world will be stopped—as soon as enough time has elapsed to get word back to the other countries via the survivors of Jacob’s Trouble. The people will be in dire straits with no food and little or no communications. News of the miraculous deliverance in Israel will be spread by word of mouth.

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

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

Few will be the survivors of Gog. “Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and *leave but the sixth part of thee*” (Ezek. 39:1,2). Only one sixth of Gog will survive. The forces will come down like a cloud upon the tiny land of Israel, but when God delivers the Holy Remnant, the “trees” of the Gog “forest” will be decimated. Very few of the enemy will survive when God fights for His people as in days of old.

Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish picture the bystanders or onlookers from Europe and the United States (Ezek. 38:13). Those who survive will be like the journalistic element; they will return to their homelands and give eyewitness accounts of the great drama. The survivors of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish will run back to the Western capitalistic countries, and the survivors of Gog will run back to the communist countries, so that the whole world will know something has happened in Israel.

The enemy will come down from the north into Israel and surround Jerusalem. Hence the allied forces, who will be eyewitnesses, will probably be stationed south of Jerusalem. The bottom portion of Israel, south of Jerusalem, will be relatively peaceful.

Ezekiel 39:6 tells that God will send “fire” (anarchy) on Magog (Russia). Anarchy will break out in Russia while Gog (the army) is fighting in Israel. Russia will be one of the last governments to go into anarchy—the governments of Christendom will fall first.

Order of events:

Fall of Babylon

World War 3: The sword shall be “doubled the *third* time.” “Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain” (Ezek. 21:14). The “sword” represents physical violence. “I will [1] overturn, [2] overturn, [3] overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him” (Ezek. 21:27).

Anarchy

Jacob’s Trouble

Guerrilla bands will raid the public for food and lust. When food runs out, the bands will fight each other. The advice to the world is to seek meekness and righteousness: “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; *seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger*” (Zeph. 2:3).

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

A Holy Remnant will escape Jacob’s Trouble: “the *remnant* of Israel,” “*such as are escaped* of the house of Jacob.” This verse is a reminder of Isaiah 4:2-4. The following expressions are used:

Isaiah 4:2 - “Them that are escaped *of Israel*”

Isaiah 10:20 - “Such as are escaped ... *of Jacob*”

The terms “Jacob” and “Israel” are somewhat synonymous in this context. The word “escaped” suggests flight, but no flight is involved. The better translation is “survivors” (RSV): the Holy Remnant will *survive* Jacob’s Trouble in *Israel*.

The Holy Remnant is a theme of the Prophet Isaiah. Chapters 4 and 10 refer to the same

incident, but Chapter 4 emphasizes the purification or *purging* of Israel: the remnant “shall be called *holy*,” for the Lord will wash away “the *filth* of the daughters of Zion” and shall purge “the blood of Jerusalem ... by the spirit of *judgment*, and ... *burning*.”

The Holy Remnant “shall no more again stay upon him that smote them.” How did Israel stay or lean upon “him that smote them”? Today Israel trusts in the arm of flesh (the UN, the United States, munitions, friendship from other nations, etc.). The effect of God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble will be to turn Israel to the “LORD, the Holy One of Israel.” With all their problems, the leaders of Israel have not set aside a day for the nation to publicly beseech the Lord in prayer for deliverance.

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

“The remnant shall return” to *God*.

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

This verse suggests that a great majority of the Jews will die in Jacob’s Trouble and that the remnant who survive will be a relatively small handpicked number. If the application is to the Jews worldwide, “the sand of the sea” would number between 8 and 10 million. Perhaps a larger historical sense is also intended. If so, verse 22 refers to *all* Jews down through history since the death of Jacob. The mention of a “remnant” shows that God predetermined a Holy Remnant.

“The consumption decreed [predicted, prophesied]” is Jacob’s Trouble, the *last* holocaust experience, which God, in His providence, considers necessary for Israel to go through. The consumption will “overflow with *righteousness*.” (1) Blessings of the Kingdom will follow Jacob’s Trouble. (2) The Holy Remnant will be a righteous and joyful class, a fit nucleus for the Kingdom on the earthly plane. (3) God’s righteousness will be vindicated. When people in the Kingdom look back at God’s permission of evil, they will see that it was necessary for man’s ultimate good. The people will then have the answers to questions such as: Why did God permit Jesus, His dear Son, to suffer? Why did He permit Israel to go through so many hard experiences?

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

The “consumption” will affect *both* the enemy and the Jew. Judgments will be executed on both. The consumption being “in the midst of all the land” refers to Israel’s being called the “navel” of all the earth. Israel is the land bridge for three of the five continents, and thus Jerusalem is an ideal location for the capital of the world. Israel, particularly Jerusalem, will be the center of the world stage for the final drama at the end of the age.

“Consumption” means utter destruction, and in the RSV, it is translated “a full end.” If considered in this latter sense, it would pertain to the sinner, at least temporarily, of both Israel and the enemy. Isaiah 66:16 refers to the purging of the Gentiles in Jacob’s Trouble: “For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.” Isaiah 66:17 pertains to the purging of Israel: “They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.” “Eating swine’s flesh” refers to Jews who break the Law Covenant by eating unclean meat. This text is a unique way of saying that ungodly, unreligious Jews will be weeded out. Hiding “in the gardens behind one tree in the midst” refers to the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve’s guilt complex

after they sinned. When ungodly Jews see dramatic, strange events occurring in Israel in Jacob's Trouble, their consciences will bother them and they will want to convert. Upon realizing that the Lord is intervening on Israel's behalf, they will be conscience-stricken and go and hide. However, by waiting so long, this class will not be written among the "holy" survivors at that time but will come up in the general resurrection later on. Stated another way, this ungodly class, who eat swine's flesh and hide behind the tree, will be purged out. Jacob's Trouble will be a very severe experience for Israel. Many people like to talk about smooth and happy things, but truth is truth. The whole counsel should be declared. When informed that the trouble is coming and that God will purge out the unrighteous element, the *right-hearted* Jews will look to their consciences and obey the Lord *earlier*; they will mourn as doves (Ezek. 7:16).

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

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

The "Assyrian" in Isaiah is the *same* enemy as "Gog" from the land of Magog in Ezekiel. The Assyrian will actually *smite*, not just threaten. This thought harmonizes with Ezekiel 38:11,12 and Zechariah 14:2. Jerusalem shall be captured. Notice the careful wording of Isaiah 10:24,25 to show a temporary delay before God delivers the Holy Remnant. For a brief time, the enemy will appear to be successful: "the Assyrian ... shall lift up his staff against thee ... *for yet a very little while.*" In other words, God will permit the Assyrian/Gog to prosper for a very little while. The enemy will be victorious momentarily. Therefore, God is telling those Jews who are properly exercised to be patient, for He has predetermined that the Jacob's Trouble experience is necessary. In a little while, His wrath will be past, and He will deliver them.

"He [the Assyrian] shall smite thee [Israel] with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt [as the Egyptians smote Israel]." God was telling Israel, "Do not be afraid." These words are somewhat similar to what Moses said to the Israelites when he lifted up his rod just prior to the opening of the Red Sea: "*Fear ye not*, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you today" (Exod. 14:13). In Jacob's Trouble, the enemy will be temporarily victorious: "He shall *smite thee* with a rod." Then verse 25 tells Israel to be patient "*for yet a very little while.*" After that, God will intervene and His anger will result in the destruction of the Assyrian. Verse 26 shows that God will smite the enemy similar to when Moses lifted up his rod and the waters of the Red Sea covered Pharaoh and his host.

The future experience is an interesting comparison with what happened in Egypt. First, the Assyrian will smite Israel, and then God will smite the Assyrian. Ezekiel 38 says that Gog will come from the land of the north (Magog) and invade Israel, yet other Scriptures, of which Isaiah 10:24 is one, liken the future experience to the Israelites' coming out of Egypt, especially from the standpoint of the great booty Israel will get after the manifestation of God's wrath against the enemy.

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

There are two comparisons: (1) to God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt through Moses and (2) to God's deliverance of Israel from the Midianites through Gideon.

"At the rock of Oreb." This rock across Jordan is where Prince Oreb was slain fleeing from Gideon. "And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb

upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan” (Judg. 7:25). The Ephraimites slew Oreb and Zeeb, two Midianite princes, and brought their heads to Gideon. Earlier the Ephraimites had complained to Gideon that they did not have a major role in the battle against the Midianites. Gideon and the 300 initiated the battle, but the Ephraimites took an important part in the victory later by slaying Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. 8:1-3).

Prior to Oreb’s slaying, the Midianites had fled in confusion. Likewise the pursuing Egyptians were thrown into confusion when the cloud that had been leading the Israelites moved to their rear and was thus between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The cloud sent light forward for the Israelites and darkness and confusion backward upon the Egyptians. Similar confusion will befall the Assyrian at the end of the age when the earthquake occurs splitting the Mount of Olives. A valley will open through which the Israelites will flee (Zech. 14:5). God will divide the land as He formerly divided the waters of the Red Sea. Both the earthquake in the future and the parting of the waters in the past were salvation to the Jew and destruction to the enemy.

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

The enemy will come in like a flood up to the “neck,” that is, to Jerusalem (Isa. 8:8). It will look like utter defeat for Israel, for when the head goes underwater, the individual drowns. At this very place, however, at the “neck,” at Jerusalem, God will deliver His people. He will lift the yoke of the Assyrian off the shoulders of the Jews.

“The yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing.” The “anointing” refers to the days being shortened by the elect (Matt. 24:22). “Saviours [plural, i.e., The Christ] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S” (Obadiah 21).

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

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

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

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

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

Many of these places are immediately north of Jerusalem. The Assyrian will come from the north, so these verses are saying that word will spread as the enemy comes closer and closer. Realizing they are hopelessly outnumbered, those in Jerusalem will experience great fear.

“He hath laid up his carriages.” Gog will be an *orderly* host with many munitions; it will be a well-organized guerrilla invasion from the land of Magog (Russia), in which other nations will participate. As the enemy marches down, others will join their host. Just before invading Jerusalem, just outside the perimeter of the city, the enemy will be so confident of victory that he will pause and *confidently* “shake his hand [*fist—RSV*]” against the Jew and God. But God will take care of the enemy (verses 33 and 34).

The set-off treatment of verses 28-32 in the RSV is a clue that the drama will be narrated and viewed in the future. The enemy will be seen coming closer and closer. And the inhabitants in these little towns or suburbs will flee for their lives as the enemy approaches. The earthquake will cause the land to be lifted up from Geba to Rimmon (Zech. 14:10). It will be a moving dramatization.

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

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

God will decapitate the enemy and cut them down to size, lopping off the height—*after* the “very little while” has elapsed, during which Jerusalem is taken (Isa. 10:25; Zech. 14:2). Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all contribute to a full picture and understanding of Jacob’s Trouble. The anarchy in the rest of the world will cease right after God says “Peace, be still” in Israel, ending Jacob’s Trouble. In other words, God will save Israel *first* and then stop the anarchy in the nations. And He will stop the anarchy in the other nations *before* the eyewitness survivors return to their homelands with the news of the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant. (Because of the anarchistic conditions, Jacob’s Trouble will not be broadcast live on television, and it will take a little time for the survivors to get back home with the news.)

God will *forcibly* stop the anarchy by *divine judgments and power*. No doubt He will send the holy angels. Many of those in the guerrilla bands will destroy each other when their food supplies run out, and divine power will stop the rest.

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

Verse 11 refers to Jesus and his lineage through Jesse and David. A “rod” coming out of the “stem of Jesse” and a “Branch” growing out of “his roots” are more or less saying the same thing except that the Branch is more of a development than the rod. The “rod” (also called a shoot, twig, or sprout) came out of the “stem,” or stump, of Jesse. A “stump” suggests humiliation—the formerly great Israel (particularly Judah) was humbled. At the time of the First Advent, Israel was under the Roman yoke.

Humiliation is shown in two ways: the twig and the stump. The little shoot refers to Jesus’ humble birth in a manger, his humble employment as a carpenter, etc., at the First Advent. The stump alludes to Israel’s being a captive people.

“A Branch shall grow out of his roots.” “Branch” is a title of Jesus (Jer. 23:5; 33:15). “Branch” suggests *more growth* than a shoot, twig, or sprout, and it reminds us of the dove returning to Noah with an olive leaf, or peace branch, in its mouth, predictive of the coming Messiah. As the Branch, Jesus will shelter and support mankind in the future. In other words, out of that former dominion will come a new dominion in which Jesus will be King.

Starting with verse 24 in Isaiah 10, the Gog and Magog setting at the end of the age is being described. Verses 28-32 describe the invading host of Gog coming down from the north to besiege Jerusalem. Their destruction is likened to the slaughter of the Midianites by Gideon and the drowning of Pharaoh and company in the crossing of the Red Sea. Verses 33 and 34 prophesy that God will cut down the powerful, haughty, high-minded forces of Gog. Isaiah 11, instead of discussing the establishment of the Kingdom, goes back to the First Advent and to Jesus’ being born of the lineage of David. Verse 1 gives a mark of identification of the little beginning of our Lord at the First Advent, for he is the one who will put an end to and replace



the Assyrian. Jesus, the little twig, grows up into a Branch and into a tree of *mighty stature* at the establishment of the Kingdom.

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

The Holy Spirit of the Father rests upon Jesus, and verse 2 describes what that Holy Spirit is. “The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, [namely,] the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” These qualities tie in with Jesus’ four titles of Isaiah 9:6, which are (1) Wonderful [delete comma] Counsellor, (2) The mighty God, (3) The everlasting Father, and (4) The Prince of Peace. The characteristics of both Isaiah 9:6 and 11:2 are expressed in dual form: *wisdom* and *understanding*, etc., and *Wonderful Counsellor*, etc.

The qualities of the Holy Spirit can be differentiated from each other, even though they sound similar, and they remind us of the four ingredients of the holy anointing oil. “Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of [1] pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of [2] sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of [3] sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of [4] cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil” (Exod. 30:23-25). The myrrh was free-flowing; that is, it was beaten so fine and ground so evenly by the apothecary that it poured like salt. Cinnamon and calamus, both being *sweet*, were coupled together to total 500 shekels, the same amount as the myrrh and the same amount as the cassia.

1. The “spirit of wisdom and understanding” corresponds with the myrrh. Myrrh comes from the Hebrew *marah*, meaning “bitter.” Hence an individual acquires wisdom (myrrh) through *bitter experience*. Wisdom and understanding are coupled together because experience results in *experimental knowledge*. Having partaken of sufferings in his earthly ministry, Jesus speaks of that which he knows through *experience*.

2. The “spirit of counsel and might” suggests *verbal instruction*. “Counsel” is good *advice*. A person might have experience yet not counsel others; both qualities are needed. In counseling others, the Christian draws upon his previous experience. Jesus shall be called “Wonderful [Sweet] Counsellor,” pictured by the sweet cinnamon. The theoretical aspects of truth are delightful—like a reward—to the Christian. Both are needed (experience and instruction), and one seems to help the other. As a person suffers, he gets more knowledge and more grace, etc.

But what about the spirit of “might”? “Counsel” is *verbal instruction*, while “might” is *demonstrating* how something can be done, that is, teaching by *example*.

3. The “spirit of knowledge and of the fear [reverence] of the LORD.” Why is reverence for God coupled with knowledge in this context? Because of his preexistent knowledge, Jesus will justify many. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities*” (Isa. 53:11). Jesus’ association with God as the Logos particularly helped him to understand the Father’s motives. Of course what he learned during his earthly ministry helped too—knowledge gained through experience. Thus Jesus had knowledge from two sources: as the Logos with the Father and later as the man Christ Jesus here on earth. Satan misunderstood God’s motives, whereas Jesus understood them. When Jesus was perplexed by something during his earthly ministry, that knowledge helped him until he received instruction from on high.

When Jesus reigns in the next age, an *abundance* of God’s Spirit will rest on him. He will have

wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. Verse 3 explains the “spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.”

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

“Quick understanding” is literally a keen sense of smell. Hence Jesus will be quick in *judgment*; he will have *keen judgment*. For example, in the case of wrongdoing, a person may smell a rat; he may be suspicious without actually being able to identify the matter. The repetition of the words “the fear of the LORD” here in verse 3 explains the “fear” in verse 2.

Jesus will have a quickness or keenness of sense or scent; that is, an extremely *keen sense of judgment*. The colon after “the fear of the LORD” means that what follows explains the first part of verse 3. How will the Holy Spirit make Jesus “of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD”? He will neither judge by “the sight of his eyes” (eyesight) nor reprove by “the hearing of his ears” (hearing). Why not? Because such superficial judgment can be erroneous and not based on the *heart condition* of the individual. Even though Jesus sees the act committed, he will judge the *heart*, the *will*, the *intent* of the individual. Just as we are now judged in the Gospel Age by the heart’s intent, so the world will be judged, to a large extent, until the end of the Millennium. If it were otherwise, no one would get life. Jesus gives opportunity for progress.

In other words, God will give Jesus *intuitive* knowledge. This kind of knowledge has nothing to do with what an individual is saying or doing, and it has nothing to do with experience. With intuitive knowledge, God simply knows the end from the beginning, and this is the kind of knowledge He will give to Jesus. Jesus has sympathy, experience, intellectual knowledge, etc., and in addition, God will give him the ability to judge beyond seeing—he will be able not only to read the heart to the fullest extent but also to see the results in advance.

At his First Advent, Jesus had this ability to a limited extent. He could see the motive of a person and judge the heart intentions and thoughts. (His preexistent knowledge as the Logos was helpful in this regard.) However, he will be given this quality even further. He will get the very essence of God’s Spirit, so that he will even be able to judge with a sense of *finality*.

*Gifts* of the Holy Spirit are *mechanically given* talents, the talents we are born with. In the early Church, some had gifts or talents that could be blessed by the Lord under certain circumstances.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit are *development* based on obedience and working for the development. Examples of the fruits are joy and peace.

Intuitive knowledge will be given mechanically to Jesus as a reward. He will have all of these qualities *plus* the divine nature.

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

Notice the word “But” at the beginning of verse 4. Verse 1 starts, “And there shall come forth.” Verse 2 begins, “And the spirit of the LORD.” Verse 3 starts, “And shall make him.” Now verse 4 reads, “*But with righteousness.*” There have been two abuses of power with the poor. The Law said that the judge shall not regard the person of the poor. In the past the poor were regarded as the scum of the earth. Not only were they not given a fair trial, but those with money and prestige were favored in the courts. Today the situation is the reverse. The poor are given certain benefits and favored in judgment just because they are poor. There should be no

favoritism or bias either way; the poor should be neither specially favored nor disregarded. Rich and poor should be treated alike before the bar of justice. In the Kingdom Jesus will judge the poor *with righteousness*, favoring neither poor nor rich.

Jesus will “reprove [decide, argue] with equity for the meek of the earth.” The Lord (and the Church) will make sure that the meek receive fair treatment; they will be both lawyers and judges, as it were, taking into consideration all pertinent factors and rendering an equitable judgment. The “meek” are those who cannot defend themselves for one reason or another.

Thus there are two aspects. Judging the poor with righteousness is judging *without partiality*, and reproving with equity is taking an *active interest* in the individual, considering all the factors, and doing the utmost to help him.

Jesus “shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth [give a public tongue-lashing and a verbal reproof], and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” If verbal reprimands are ignored, the person will be considered incorrigible and go into destruction, Second Death. As shown by preceding verses, a person will have *every opportunity* before being rendered incorrigible.

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

The “girdle” represents servitude. The common denominator of verses 2-4 is *mental and heart* qualities, products of the *mind and heart* (wisdom, perception, quick understanding, sight of the eyes, counsel, etc.). But verse 5 pertains to *work, servitude, activity*. Hence Jesus will *accomplish* things in the Kingdom. He will be faithful as the Messiah—faithful to each individual, faithful to God, and faithful to the task at hand.

Isaiah 11:1-5 is all one unit referring to Jesus. These verses are more detailed than the holy anointing oil of Exodus 30:23-25.

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

Verse 6 starts a new section about the Kingdom. There are several pairings of natural *enemies* or *opposites*: wolf and lamb, leopard and kid, young lion and calf. Their characteristics follow.

Wolf	=	Ferocious, harmful
Lamb	=	Docile, harmless
Leopard	=	Adroit, ferocious, agile, calculating
Kid	=	Joyous, spontaneous, harmless
Young lion	=	Survival of the fittest, ruthless, wild
Calf	=	Harmless, defenseless, domesticated
(The fatling is also a young animal; hence all three are young.)		

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

A cow is tame; a bear is wild. Both are cumbersome and awkward. The lion will eat straw like the ox; it will no longer be carnivorous—a radical change.

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

A *sucking* child (a young child not yet weaned) will be able to play over the hole of an asp (a poisonous snake). A *weaned* child will be able to put his hand into the “cockatrice's den” (probably a tarantula's nest).

Notice that quite far into the Kingdom, there will be *infants* and children. There will be infants, but no “infant of days”; in other words, a child will not die as an infant (Isa. 65:20). Death for disobedience will come when one is older.

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

They will not hurt or destroy *because* the earth will be full of the knowledge of Jehovah. Notice, the verse does NOT say there will be no death or punishment. The thought is that there will be *peace between man and beast*, between man and the animal kingdom. This verse, which reminds us of the Garden of Eden before Adam sinned, suggests the control and removal of much of the curse. Death in the Kingdom will be a punishment for disobedience; it will not be accidental.

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

The word “ensign” is used here and in verse 12. The Messiah “shall stand for an ensign [standard] of the people.” After Jacob's Trouble, the Gentiles will seek the “ensign,” and people from other nations will go up to Jerusalem.

In warfare an ensign (a flag, or a standard) was used as an insignia to show where the king or the commander was. The ensign was held *high above* the heads of the soldiers so that *all could see it* and know where it was leading.

In what way will there be a standard in Israel in the future to which the nations will go? The standard will be the recognition of *God's hand* in delivering Israel out of Jacob's Trouble. This standard will be lifted up in the deliverance of the Holy Remnant, and it will gain *worldwide* fame for Israel, exalting God and calling attention to the Jews as *His* people. The Ancient Worthies and the *humbled, repentant* Holy Remnant will receive recognition too.

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

God shall lift up His hand the “second time”; the “first time” was the gathering of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. The “second time” (*yet future*) will be the gathering of Jews (the “dispersed of Judah”—see verse 12) from all over the world *after Jacob's Trouble*:

Assyria = Russia (for the Hittites were in the Ararat area)

Pathros = Upper Egypt

Egypt = Lower Egypt, the delta area near the Mediterranean Sea

Cush = Ethiopia (different from the Cush in Genesis)

Elam = Persia (Iran and Iraq)

Shinar = Babylon (where the tower of Babel was)

Hamath = Lebanon

Islands of the sea = various Western republics (England, United States, etc.)

Hence this is an *international* picture—that is, “from the four corners of the earth”—as Isaiah expressed it in his day (Isa. 11:12). The gathering of a remnant the *second time* from all over the earth and setting up “an ensign for the nations” is not the current Zionist work of regathering a smaller remnant to have a holy nucleus for the establishment of the Kingdom in Israel. The second remnant is the larger general exodus from the nations after Jacob’s Trouble.

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

Verse 12 sums up the thoughts of verses 10 and 11. This gathering of “the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” will occur *after* Jacob’s Trouble—specifically *after* the trouble comes on Gog. It will be a more extensive regathering than has taken place so far.

The trouble coming on Gog is likened to the Exodus plagues—and God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant from the four corners of the earth is likened to His deliverance of Israel from Egypt *after* the plagues. God punished the Egyptians, and He will punish Gog. The *miraculous deliverance* will be the attraction.

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

A spirit of rivalry existed in times past between Ephraim (the ten tribes) and Judah (the two tribes). Ephraim was jealous of Judah because Jerusalem and the Temple were there and because the promises were more specifically of Judah, yet Ephraim was larger, stronger, richer, and more populous.

“Judah shall not vex [or harass] Ephraim.” In Isaiah’s day, Judah kept taunting Ephraim and giving reminders about the advantages to the two tribes. That will not be the case in the Kingdom.

There are two antitypes here: (1) Ephraim represents Papacy, and Judah pictures Protestantism. (2) Ephraim symbolizes nominal Christians, and Judah represents the Jews. Regarding the second antitype, the Catholic Church made an attempt to discard the roots of Judaism by taking the holidays, the incense, the robes of the high priest, etc.

**Isa. 11:14** But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

Those of “the west” were the Philistines. “Them of the east” were Edom, Moab, and Ammon. This verse is a comparison of the west and the east. Both will meet a common disaster (shown by the word “together”). Ephraim and Judah will swoop down upon both east and west. Today the Philistines are in the Gaza Strip area, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 14 shows *the Jew* in aggressive action, whereas verse 11 showed *God* in action. How can the two verses be harmonized? For one thing, this verse should be considered separately from the Lord’s deliverance of Israel mentioned earlier. But there is more to the story. When will verse 14 take place?

Verse 14 suggests *warfare*—warfare that will take place *before* Jacob’s Trouble. This great victory by Israel will result in their dwelling safely with unwallled villages (Ezek. 38:11,12)—from which condition they will later be attacked by Gog. In other words, a war will bring *temporary* peace to Israel. Such a victory will help to stir up hatred and jealousy around the world against Israel.

This resentment, as well as the desire to “take a spoil,” will be factors in Gog’s going down against Israel. Notice that the nations of verse 14 were on the south, east, and west of Israel, whereas Gog will come from the *north* later.

Verse 14, which is not in sequence, is parenthetical. It is a natural picture only, not spiritual.

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

Verse 15 refers to the Nile, which originally had seven streams. (Only three streams contain water today because of sediment.) God will utterly destroy the “tongue of the Egyptian sea”—again there is an allusion to the drying up of the Red Sea in the Exodus. When Moses lifted up the rod of God and smote the Red Sea, the Israelites passed over dry-shod. Also prevalent in the crossing of the Red Sea was the strong wind God caused to pass over the sea the entire night. Moses had a rod back there, and God will use His “hand” in Jacob’s Trouble.

If God caused the Aswan Dam to break with an earthquake so that the water went down a parallel valley instead of the Nile, Egypt would be without water. The Lord will smite the Nile so that all seven streams will dry up. The “tongue” would be near the headwaters of the Nile, that is, the Aswan Dam area. Zechariah 14:17,18 mentions that no rain will fall upon the nation, particularly Egypt, which will not recognize Jerusalem. For Egypt to have no rain will bring the people to their knees.

This same earthquake, which will be part of the miraculous deliverance of Israel, will prepare the land around Jerusalem and bring down the Construction Chambers of the Great Pyramid. However, the earthquake will have *more than one tremor*. For example, at the First Advent, an earthquake occurred when Jesus died, and three days later there was a tremor when the stone was rolled away from the tomb. The Egyptian tremor will be *after* the one in Israel (because the Egyptians will not believe the report of events in Israel), but *shortly* thereafter. The second tremor will be a *mighty* one.

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

Again the account contains a reference to the Exodus. The word “remnant” means those who are left. Usually a remnant is a small number but not always. Here the word “remnant” refers to the Israelites who came out of Egypt—all 2 million people. Isaiah was saying that the future remnant will come out of Assyria (that is, Russia) after Jacob’s Trouble *just as* the Israelites came out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

The word “highway” implies that a *direct* figurative highway will be opened up after Jacob’s Trouble so that a *great number* of Jews can be shipped back in the second regathering. When the Gentile eyewitnesses return to their homelands and tell how God manifested His *great power* to deliver Israel, the surviving Jews will be shipped back to Israel posthaste. At that time, the land will be like a straitjacket because of the large number of Jews. They will spill over into Gilead, etc., across the Jordan River to enlarge their borders.

Note: This “highway” should not be confused with the one in Isaiah 19:23,24, “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.”

The Book of Isaiah is opening up more slowly than other books because it contains important

end-of-the-age clues.

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

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

The Holy Remnant (“I,” “me,” and “my”) are collectively speaking after being saved out of Jacob’s Trouble, acknowledging the Lord’s mercy on their behalf.

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

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

Verses 3 and 4 are the prophetic declaration of a third party who is witnessing the event from the sidelines. “Wells of salvation” are The Christ. This is a reference to Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman regarding the Church being a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). It is also a reference to the 12 wells and the 70 palm trees at Elim where the Israelites encamped after crossing the Red Sea (Exod. 15:27).

God’s miraculous “doings” in intervening on Israel’s behalf in Jacob’s Trouble will be declared among the Gentiles by the Holy Remnant. Not only will the Gentiles desire to go to Israel (“the mountain of the LORD”), but the Holy Remnant will welcome them with open arms (Isa. 2:3).

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

The Kingdom will be inaugurated with a spectacular display.

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

“Great is the Holy One of *Israel* in the *midst* of thee.” God will set up His Kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital of the whole earth.

This chapter is a prophecy of thanksgiving primarily for God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. Eventually *everyone* will share in this chorus.

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

“The burden of Babylon” is a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon.

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

Isaiah was told to “lift ... up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt his voice ... , and shake the [his] hand.” He would have *literally* demonstrated this prophecy on a high hill with hand gestures, etc., at least two centuries before literal Babylon was destroyed in 536 BC. In fact, he uttered this prophecy even *prior* to Babylon’s conquest of Israel in 606 BC. In the type, Cyrus (meaning “son,” that is, Jesus in antitype) and his army (the “kings of the east,” the Church—Rev. 16:12) went under the gates to defeat Babylon (Christendom). The Christ will direct the issue from heaven.

Spiritually speaking, the prophet was hastening the last members to get into the gates (the body of Christ) to make their calling and election sure in order that the Time of Trouble might come. (The Time of Trouble cannot start until the Church is complete.) To “shake the hand” would be waving the hand to beckon the last members to hurry into the “gates of the nobles,” which signify the Church passing into the heavenly Jerusalem for their change. The Christ will be the instrument both in the destruction in Armageddon and in the deliverance in Jacob’s Trouble. The stone must be completely cut out of the mountain and *exalted* first, before the Time of Trouble can begin. As Jesus promised, “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26,27). And Psalm 149:5-9 is pertinent: “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.”

**Comment:** In effect, shaking the hand is like the last call to “Come out of her [mystic Babylon], my people” (Rev. 18:4).

**Reply:** Yes, that is all involved. The consecrated must be separated from earthly conditions to the spiritual.

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

God’s “sanctified” and “mighty ones” are the Church. Here they are being summoned for the Time of Trouble.

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

Verse 4 pertains to anarchy in *all* kingdoms or nations, whereas Jacob’s Trouble in Israel will be the climax, or last feature, of the Time of Trouble. Isaiah’s hearing this noise coming closer and approaching from a distant land indicates that the nations will have been in anarchy for a little time, and finally the anarchy will come right down into the Holy Land itself as expressed in Gog and Magog.

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

Notice, “they come from a *far country*, from the end of heaven.” This coming will occur in two ways: (1) The trouble will come from other countries and center in Israel, and (2) the Church will return from the wedding. Jesus was likened to a nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and return (Luke 19:12).

This verse commingles the work of the Church and the instruments down here who will be the sledgehammer. The Church in glory will direct the issue and the outcome of this great battle so that it can be described as *God’s* battle. The *Lord* will muster the forces of Gog.

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



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

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

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

**Isa. 13:10** For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

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

Verses 6-11 continue to describe the trouble. In the day of the destruction of the Almighty, the land will be made desolate. Individually and collectively, the hearts of the people will fail, and their hands will be faint. Great sorrows and pangs (plural) will seize them as of a woman in travail. The trouble will be an all-consuming and all-encompassing experience—like a fire.

The “pangs” (plural) of verse 8 should not be confused with the 1 Thessalonians 5:3 “pang” (singular): “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail [the birth pang] upon a woman with child.” The singular pang applies to the fall of Papacy, the “they” element. The plural pangs of verse 8 indicate that all segments of society will experience great anguish, violence, distress, famine, etc. The clause “their faces shall be as flames” means that the anguish and the all-encompassing distress will be reflected in their faces. There will be some selectivity, however, for the trouble will be primarily on the heads of the wicked.

Verse 10 tells about the dimming of the spiritual sun, moon, and stars—both true and false—in this dark period of distress. Neither truth nor error will be appreciated. The false “sun” is Papacy, the false “moon” is its canon law, and the false “stars” are its clergy. *Counterfeit light*, including Protestantism and Christendom in general, will dim. The wicked will seek information, but because their counsellors will be in darkness, truth will not be forthcoming. In other words, no information or instruction will be forthcoming from either false or true sources at this point. “Constellations” are a collection of stars as in the signs of the zodiac; that is, alliances of Christians and groupings of ministers, the World Council of Churches, etc., will be uninformed as to what is happening.

The “arrogancy of the proud” will cease. Imagine being a powerful politician or a very wealthy individual and suddenly being brought down to the level of a common ditch digger!

**Q:** The phrasing of verse 10 is repeated in Joel 3:15 (“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining”) and Matthew 24:29 (“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”). Will there be any literal fulfillments?

**A:** There is a literal application, but that is not the emphasis here in Isaiah. With verses 9 and 11 saying that the day of the Lord will be “cruel” and hard and that God will punish the wicked, we can see that in addition to mental anguish and sorrow, there will be physical pain and death. We concentrate heavily on the literal application in Ezekiel 38 and 39 but not here, although these verses in Isaiah will have a literal application, particularly in the Holy Land. When God’s

wrath is displayed there, the physical signs will be witnessed so that the people will know the God of *Israel* is intervening. In other words, the darkening of skies will be literal in Israel, but the worldwide fulfillment will be primarily figurative. God's cloud of favor will be seen to arise on Israel.

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

This verse is inserted because silver and gold will be worthless in that day. What good are great wealth and gold if they are worthless? Referring to the "golden wedge of Ophir" is comparable to referring to King Tut's valuable mask of gold. The golden wedge of Ophir was a literal famous wedge in an arch in the land of Ophir. In the future, a man's life will be more valuable than that wedge. In other words, during the anarchy, what good would the wedge be to a person who is going to die? Food for the belly will be prized. Violence, rape, and looting with guns will be rampant. The anarchistic bands will want those things that satisfy for the moment.

While millions will perish in the Time of Trouble, millions will not. Even in Israel, where the slaughter will be the worst against the *enemy*, one sixth of the enemy will survive. No flesh would be saved if the days were not cut short, but they will be cut short (Matt. 24:22).

"I will make a man[*'s life*] more precious than fine gold; even a man[*'s life*] than the golden wedge of Ophir" is the thought. In a desperate effort to save their lives, people will cast their gold and silver into the street. "Here, take these, but leave us alone!" will be their cry. But those to whom the money is thrown will not want it because it will be worthless. The rich and the powerful will be the chief targets of the anarchists.

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

The "earth" (organized society) and the political and ecclesiastical "heavens" will be shaken and removed. Organized society includes police and fire departments, business institutions, banks, etc. The "heavens" are the rulers. In Revelation 6:14, pertaining to the French Revolution, the mountains and the islands were "*moved out of their places*" but not *removed*. In the future, all will be shaken up and *removed*. Buyer and seller will be brought down to a common level.

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

"A sheep that no man taketh up" would be a sheep without a shepherd. Normally when a sheep goes astray, the shepherd pursues it, takes it up in his arms, and returns it to the flock. But here the people are likened to sheep without a shepherd—and to deer chased by a hunter. A shepherd is interested in saving a sheep and returning it to the fold, whereas a hunter seeks to kill his victim. It is pitiful to see a beautiful, delicate, sprightly, happy "roe" (a doe) terrorized by a hunter who is seeking a prey.

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

The people found by the enemy will be thrust through. Selfishness will prevail as each person thinks of his own survival. Panic will prevent the people from coordinating their forces and strength to fight unitedly against the foe.

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

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

Verses 17-22 pertain to the destruction of literal Babylon by the Medes. Many of the prophecies have a *dual* application that was profitable to natural Israel in Isaiah's day as well as being primarily beneficial to us in our day. "Light is sown [put in the ground for later sprouting and growth] for the righteous" (Psa. 97:11). Clearly, the Time of Trouble was discussed earlier—a tumult of all the earth involving all nations—but now there is a localized, natural application about the Medes coming down to destroy Babylon. "Behold, I will stir up the Medes."

When the Medes captured Babylon, they did not regard the silver or the gold. No doubt the people of the city tried to buy them off—but unsuccessfully, for the Medes were fierce and already rich.

Verse 17 is interesting, for Isaiah identifies who really captured the city of Babylon: the Medes. Darius the *Mede* took Babylon (not Cyrus the Persian), even though the kingdom was of the Medes *and* the Persians. Not until two years later, when Darius died, did Cyrus give the decree for the Jews to return to their homeland.

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

The Medes showed no mercy in the type, nor will they show mercy in the antitype.

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

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

This is a prophecy that after the destruction, Babylon would never again be inhabited as a city. The ruins crumbled and it became like Sodom and Gomorrah—destroyed and desolate. To this day, there are no big cities in that whole area of Iraq, just small villages. People passed through, but none desired to remain in that place of desolate ruins.

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

Babylon became like a haunted city to the superstitious bedouin. There were owls and "doleful creatures," and "satyrs" (goblins, devils)—that is, imaginary creatures—danced at night. God put a curse, as it were, on the city of Babylon, which originally was glorious. Not wanting to be among the ruins at night, the superstitious bedouin pitched outside the city.

Earlier God magnified the city of Babylon as the instrument of His judgment on the nation of Israel. However, when the king gloated over the glory of Babylon and after the empire had served its purpose of keeping the Israelites away from their land until the 70 years of desolation were fulfilled, the Medes and the Persians took over.

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

"Wild beasts" are hyenas and "dragons" are jackals in the RSV. The animals made the ruins

their habitation. At night, the cries struck terror in any bedouin or passersby because they feared a pack of hyenas, jackals, wolves, etc.

Isaiah was saying that Babylon's days would "not be prolonged," yet this prophecy was uttered approximately 200 years before the actual destruction. The Apostle Paul used the same principle when he said at the beginning of the Gospel Age, "The night [the Gospel Age] is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12).

**Q:** Why were the people informed so far in advance?

**A:** In whatever age the Lord's people live, they are informed in advance.

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

This gathering will take place *after* Jacob's Trouble; this second or last regathering will occur *after* the Kingdom is set up. "The LORD ... will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." The last regathering will be *permanent*—no more will the Jews be plucked up.

"Strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob." This portion of verse 1 reminds us of Zechariah 8:23, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." It also brings to mind Isaiah 2:3, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." The Gentiles will cleave to the Jew.

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

"And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place." The Gentiles will ship the Jews back to Israel with gifts. The Jews will come from afar to the Promised Land (Isa. 60:4,9). The handpicked survivors still in exile after the Kingdom is set up will be transported back to Israel. As a whole, the Gentiles will gladly submit to and help Israel and the Jews.

"The house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids." Isaiah 60:10 reads, "And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto [serve] thee." These Gentiles will voluntarily help rebuild Jerusalem, being glad for the privilege of helping. When it is realized that the God of *Israel* is the true God, there will be many willing Gentile hands wanting to assist in any way possible.

"They shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors." The Jews will *rule* over those Gentiles who previously oppressed them, and the Gentiles will obey. For example, those Jews who were forced into concentration camps by Hitler and put to death will rule over their captors. Gentile domination will end, and Israel will rule with Jerusalem being the capital of the world.

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

Israel will get rest from former sorrows, comfort of mind from their fears, and rest from the hard bondage of being servants.

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

This verse predicts the destruction of the king of Babylon. In the days after 606 BC, the Jews in captivity in Babylon would have thought verses 1-3 applied to their day and their return from Babylonian exile, but the burden of this prophecy is primarily *future*. A clue that there is a future application is the statement in verse 1 that God will set Jacob and Israel in their own land. Since they were uprooted again in AD 69-70 and 135, verse 1 refers to a further regathering after Jacob's Trouble. Also, the cooperation of strangers puts the fulfillment future, for after the Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah did not accept the offer of help from strangers to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and strangers did not "cleave to the house of Jacob" but harassed them instead.

Babylon was called "the golden city." In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, his empire was pictured by the head of *gold* (Dan. 2:38). In the spiritual application, Babylon is Papacy, the "eternal" city, the bulwark of Christendom. Gold is a symbol of divinity or of a claim to divinity.

While Babylon is a picture of Papacy, the account will gradually build up to a likeness of Satan, the "king" of Babylon (Papacy). Satan is head over the pope. He is the king of Christendom in the highest sense of the word—in the sense of *power*.

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

God will break "the staff [nominal church systems, antitypical Babylon] of the wicked [Satan]." Verse 5 refers to the fall of mystic Babylon. Satan controls the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The beast has been used the most effectively, but the dragon best represents his true, uninhibited character.

Fulfillments for breaking the staff of the wicked are as follows: (1) The literal fall of literal Babylon resulted in the liberation of Israel from bondage and the return to their own land. (2) The fall of Papacy will be the first concrete evidence that Jesus is taking his great power and *reigning*. (3) Satan will be bound. When the chains of restraint, or *tartaroo*, are loosed and the fallen angels are allowed to materialize en masse, Satan will be the first of the fallen angels to be bound. (4) Gog and all the confederate host will be defeated in Jacob's Trouble and the Holy Remnant delivered.

When Papacy falls, only the consecrated with a present-truth background and those associated with them will realize Jesus is reigning. But the deliverance of Israel out of Jacob's Trouble will apprise the world. The minds of natural men will appreciate the great miracles.

Satan is pictured as the highest level of wickedness under the following symbols: king of Babylon, king of Tyre, and pharaoh of Egypt. In the earthly sphere, one step down, is Papacy, the center of Satan's earthly *ecclesiastical* rule and control. The next step down is civil government, the dragon, Satan's earthly *political* rule and control.

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

The pronoun "he" refers to Papacy and, in the highest sense, Satan, the oppressor, the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).

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

Verse 7 will be fulfilled when the Kingdom is set up. Then the earth will be at rest and quiet. There will be singing and great rejoicing when Satan's authority is broken and the Prince of Peace is reigning.

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

When the king of Babylon (Papacy or Satan) is laid down (bound), the fir trees and the cedars of Lebanon (the righteous element) will prosper. Sin and death are Satan's weapons. He is the executioner, but at that time, he will no longer be able to "fell" (cut down) the righteous.

**Isa. 14:9** Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

How poetic! When Satan goes into the grave, all the great of the past will *figuratively* line up to see him coming down into the pit (see RSV). The executioner, the one who currently has the power of death, will himself end up in death, as it were.

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

The chief ones of the earth in the tomb will say to Satan, "You have become weak like us." We have to know the truth about hell in order to understand this highly dramatized *figurative* picture. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand, whereas the natural man cannot be convinced on these subjects.

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

The arrogance, strength, and pleasure that Satan has enjoyed will go into *sheol* with him. Just as the worm, the maggot, destroys a dead animal or a human corpse, so it will *figuratively* consume Satan. In other words, the pompous one not only will share the same grave with the great ones of earth but will die like the common man.

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

The RSV reads, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!" Satan was originally created as a bright luminary, perfect and glorious. Only Jesus was brighter, but *both* were morning stars. The sun is the "day star" of our solar system. Each star that we see is also a sun, a "day star," and a star, or sun, has its own universe. Just as our universe revolves around our sun, so a universe revolves around each of the other stars, or suns, and the universes themselves are in a galactic system.

**Comment:** 2 Peter 1:19 mentions the "day star," the sun: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the *day star* arise in your hearts."

**Comment:** Isaiah 14:12 seems to be a play on words, saying that Satan, who tried to supersede Jesus and take his place, will be debased. When the day dawns, Jesus, the real day (or morning) star, will take over. He will be exalted to the very place Satan aspired to—on "the sides of the north" (verse 13). The Day Star will be exalted when the day *dawns*.

**Reply:** Yes, the Logos and Lucifer were two great beings, two morning stars, the Logos being slightly superior. But Jesus did not aspire by usurpation to exalt himself, whereas Satan did. Satan aspired to the highest place in the universe below God. (He wanted to be *like* God—to be almost as great as God—but not greater.) Jesus will occupy the very place Satan wanted: on the sides of the north underneath the Father.

“How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” At his First Advent, Jesus said he had seen the Adversary as a great light falling from heaven (being cast down). “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Actually, Satan was bound to earth’s atmosphere at the time of the Flood, but when he became responsible for Jesus’ death, all hope of retrieval was lost forever. The Crucifixion of God’s dear Son sealed Satan’s doom. But Isaiah 14:12 pertains to a *yet-future* cutting down of Satan. The following shows a progression of deterioration with Satan:

- (1) Satan was bound at the time of the Flood in the sense of being cast out of heaven and cut off from materialization on the earth. Still the prince of demons, he has been operating as a spirit being in earth’s atmosphere.
- (2) Satan’s doom was sealed at the Crucifixion. His actions showed his incorrigibility.
- (3) Satan will be completely bound, or cast into the pit, at the beginning of the Kingdom (Isa. 14:12). This cutting down will be further humiliation—to a corpse-like condition.
- (4) Satan will be loosed in the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom and then receive the sentence of Second Death.

Verse 12 suggests the possibility that Satan will materialize in the near future, just before the Kingdom is established. The verse says, (1) “How art thou fallen *from heaven*” and (2) “how art thou cut down *to the ground*.” It is true that Satan was cut down to *tartaroo*, to earth’s atmosphere, but verse 12 may be hinting at a further cutting down. If such be the case, we should be forewarned and thus forearmed.

Satan’s control over the nations will be broken. How can Jesus enter the “strong man’s house” (Satan’s personal headquarters) unless he first binds the Adversary? Then, after binding Satan, Jesus will enter his house and destroy his goods. “How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he *first bind* the strong man? and then he will spoil his house” (Matt. 12:29).

The present general trouble among the nations is not the destruction of Satan’s goods because all of the nations continue to be his. When one nation captures or destroys another, the result is still under Satan’s control and part of his goods. Satan is still the god of this world. The people are still the children of the Wicked One.

Just like the beast, Satan will go into the “pit” (death). And just like the beast, Satan will come out of the pit for the Little Season. Going into death, literal or symbolic, does not necessarily mean the end of all hope. The whole human race has been going down into the tomb, the “pit,” but Second Death is more than the pit—it is permanent extinction in the “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:10). Satan’s being cast into the pit is equivalent to his being bound for the thousand years. With this further humiliation, it will be obvious that the Oppressor has ceased and has been rendered to the condition of a corpse—until the time of his loosing for a short time.

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

The term “mount of the congregation” indicates that Satan aspired to be like Jesus, like the top stone of the Great Pyramid. Jesus is the top (stone) of the congregation in every sense of the

word (he is over both angelic and human beings), although he has not exercised this power and control yet. The Pyramid is without a literal top stone—Jesus is not reigning yet. However, Satan aspired to rule the earth, and he was allowed to temporarily usurp that rulership.

The Great Pyramid represents a congregation of beings, governments, and natures. From top to bottom, the order of rulership is Jesus, Little Flock, Ancient Worthies, Great Company, Israel, and world of mankind. The New Testament likens Jesus to being the top stone of the Church, the head of the royal priesthood. The whole structure is “fitly framed together”; that is, it fits under and conforms to the top stone (Eph. 2:21). Thus, to be at the head, top, or mount of the congregation is a comprehensive picture. Satan wanted the dominion that Jesus will get. Except for the Father Himself, Jesus will be exalted *over all* in both heaven and earth. The “mount of the congregation” and the “sides of the north” refer to this higher dominion. Satan got only the earth—*temporarily*. Jesus will get the earth and the angelic realm—*forever*.

“I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God.” As archangels, the Logos and Lucifer were “morning stars”; the angels are “stars.”

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

Satan desired to ascend above the “clouds” (above the limit of human capability). As physical beings, we are below the clouds, limited by our human senses and frame. The only communication we can presently have is through prayer and the Holy Spirit. The words of the hymn “O! may no earthborn cloud arise to hide thee from thy servant’s eyes” mean we do not want to have that communication interrupted or cut. Satan is the god of this world, but he even wanted to be a god in the heavenly realm.

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

Satan’s aspirations are stated three ways in verse 13: (1) “I will ascend into heaven,” (2) “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,” and (3) “I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.” But instead of ascending, Satan will descend “to hell, to the sides of the pit.” The “sides of the pit” refer to the Great Pyramid.

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

“They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee” can be understood in two ways. (1) If Satan materializes, the *living* generation will see his humiliation and debasement enacted. (2) If Satan does not materialize, those in the *spiritual* realm will see his abasement. The Revised Standard is interesting: “Those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you.” This sounds like a materialization that will be seen.

Satan’s materialization is a fine point. Just before Babylon falls, there will be miraculous signs and wonders in connection with Papacy’s rise to power for one hour. It could be that the Adversary will materialize in connection with that brief hour of power. However, the Church must be gone before Babylon falls, and Babylon will fall before Satan is bound. The order will be (1) Church is complete, (2) Babylon falls, and (3) Satan is bound. The feet members will be here for the deception but must be off the scene before Satan’s humiliation.

Just as at the time of the Flood, Satan was “bound” to earth’s atmosphere, so if he materializes on earth in the near future, he could be momentarily “frozen,” as it were, as a human being so that men could stare at him. Then he would be invisible during the Kingdom until his loosing in the Little Season.



The Lord used the picture of Satan's being bound in a prison house merely to show that he will not be loosed until the due time in the Little Season (Rev. 20:1-3). Jesus' *great power* as a divine being will forcibly restrain and imprison Satan with a time-lock until then. His imprisonment could actually be *temporary* death, or he could be restrained in a spirit prison with spirit chains. "Thou shalt be brought down to hell" (verse 15) seems to suggest death, but either way he will be completely immobilized. After the Little Season, Satan will go into Second Death.

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

Verses 16 and 17 describe Satan's destructive actions: he "made the earth to tremble," "did shake kingdoms," "made the world as a wilderness," "destroyed the cities," and "opened not the house of his prisoners." Satan is responsible for wars and destruction. Greed, violence, lust, etc., are all part of war, and Satan is behind these evils.

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

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

The kings have mausoleums or sepulchers for their burial. In comparison, Satan will be cast out without a grave and die with dishonor, his clothing being figuratively disheveled as with those who die in battle.

Whether or not a person has a proper burial in a grave, he will still be brought forth in the resurrection. The body decays whether one is put in a grave or is torn by wild beasts. Jezebel, who was eaten by dogs, did not receive a proper burial or have a tombstone. Attached to her death was *great shame*. And so it will be with Satan. He will not have a proper burial, yet he will be awakened in the Little Season.

Satan will be "cast out of ... [his] grave like an abominable branch." Jesus bore fruit as the rightful Branch, whereas Satan bore thorns and thistles as an illegitimate or "abominable" branch. Satan's being cast out of his grave like an abominable branch reminds us of Ezekiel 29:2-5, which speaks of his being drawn or pulled out of the river Nile with hooks in his jaws and cast out on the ground to die with dead fish clinging to his scales. He will die on the banks in humiliation in the sight of all the people, and none will pity him. He is spoken of as the "great dragon [crocodile] that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself" (Ezek. 29:3). In different places in Scripture, Satan is likened to a serpent, a dragon, and a leviathan.

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

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

The wicked will be destroyed in Second Death. The devil and his angels will go up against the camp of the saints in the Little Season and hence fail to get life. Those who cooperate with Satan are likened to his children, and he is the father: "Ye [children of disobedience] are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). At the end of the Millennium, the "children" of Satan will be the incorrigible. The land will be cleansed when they go into Second Death.

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

In the natural picture, the great city of Babylon was never rebuilt. In the spiritual picture, Satan and all those in sympathy with him will be cut off.

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

Literal Babylon was reduced to a marshy area with pools of water. The “besom of destruction” is a figurative broom. In other words, God would wipe the city of Babylon off the face of the map.

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

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

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

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

This prophecy about breaking the Assyrian was uttered during the reign of King Ahaz, who died that very year (see verse 28). A prophet primarily to Judah and Jerusalem, Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa. 1:1). *Future* to that day, the Lord would miraculously break the yoke of the Assyrian.

An unusual experience Israel had with King Sennacherib of Assyria, who invaded Judah, is recorded in 2 Kings 19. He sent his general Rab-shakeh to threaten King Hezekiah. In fear Hezekiah consulted Isaiah. When they prayed, God delivered them from the destruction of Sennacherib. In one night 185,000 Assyrians died when the angel of the Lord smote them—an *enormous* number! As a result, the king of Assyria fled, and he was massacred at home. This miraculous deliverance occurred during the reign of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz. Therefore, Isaiah’s prophecy that God would break the Assyrian had a natural fulfillment back there, but the primary fulfillment is yet future.

In the Book of Isaiah, Gog from the land of Magog is called the “Assyrian.” Notice, God says, “I will break the Assyrian ... and ... tread him under foot.” *God* will slay Gog, just as God slew the Assyrians in the natural picture. Rab-shakeh was a *fierce* and *powerful* general; hence his defeat was miraculous and dramatic. A pestilence will be one way God will fight for Israel in Jacob’s Trouble.

God has purposed this “upon the *whole earth*” (verse 26). In the past and in the future, the effects of Israel’s deliverance will be felt *worldwide*. The Assyrian yoke will be removed and the burden taken off Israel’s shoulders.

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

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

**fiery flying serpent.**

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

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

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

Although separate, verses 29-32 are a sequel to the previous vision. King Ahaz had died, and Hezekiah was the successor. Although literally in the type, the destruction of the Assyrian was yet future, the viewpoint of this vision is *beyond* the defeat and the breaking of that yoke.

“Whole Palestina” in verse 29 suggests that the *whole Middle East area* will feel this experience: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Egypt, etc., as well as Judah.

Isaiah was telling Judah, “Just because the Assyrian has been broken and you have seen the fulfillment of a previous prophecy of mine, do not get overconfident, for you will have a *worse* experience. You shook in your boots over Sennacherib, but God delivered you. A situation even more severe is coming.” The prophet was saying that Judah would have a temporary reprieve, but out of that same serpent would come forth another and *worse* experience.

The “cockatrice” was King Nebuchadnezzar, one of the world’s greatest *conquerors*. He was also a great architect and builder of cities and temples. Hence he was pictured as the head of *gold*. King Nebuchadnezzar did affect all of the surrounding nations—the whole area of Palestine (Philistia in the RSV)—but the glory went to his head.

Judah was given a temporary reprieve when God miraculously defeated Sennacherib, but Nebuchadnezzar, being likened to a serpent coming out of its hole, would come down from the north to defeat Judah. (The kings of both Assyria and Babylon came out of the north.) Nebuchadnezzar was worse than Sennacherib as far as defeating Israel and surrounding lands.

Nebuchadnezzar’s fruit was a “fiery flying serpent” in that the invasion was both terrible and *lasting*. In fact, he came down twice. The first time he installed Zedekiah as a puppet king, but when the Israelites did not get the lesson, he returned to destroy the intrigue, leaving only a few vinedressers to keep the land. After the vinedressers subsequently slaughtered Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar made the whole land utterly desolate, as Jeremiah had predicted.

The historical event in the past was real, but verses 29-31 are an allegory of what will happen to Israel in our day. When temporary peace comes to Israel, our message should be, “Do not get overconfident, for an enemy from the north (Gog, the Assyrian) will return with *more* destruction.

Verse 32 is telling that in the future, God will establish the Kingdom with a humble, meek Holy Remnant. Israel will be thoroughly chastened in Jacob’s Trouble.

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

The fulfillment of this prophecy was future from Isaiah’s day.

**Isa. 15:2** He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl

**over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.**

**Isa. 15:3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.**

Ar, Kir, Bajith, Dibon, Nebo, and Medeba (Madeba) were all important cities in Moab, an extensive area at that time, extending from the river Arnon to Jericho. Nebo and Madeba exist today in Jordan. Isaiah prophesied that all of these leading cities would be destroyed.

The men of Moab were proud of their luxurious beards. When Moab was defeated by King Nebuchadnezzar, the beards were roughly cut off, the men's faces being mutilated in the process. The enemy grabbed the beards and hacked them off, often cutting off chins or noses at the same time. This punishment came because Moab had laughed at Israel's plight.

**Isa. 15:4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.**

**Isa. 15:5 My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.**

**Isa. 15:6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.**

Not only would the leading cities of Moab be destroyed and captured, but also it would seem as if the land itself was cursed. The crops would not prosper. This is true even today, and few people live there. A promise of fertility is there, but basically the land is arid. Prior to the fulfillment of this prophecy, the land was lush and sustained *large* flocks. Being astride the King's Highway, the cities were prosperous.

Zoar is the little city where Lot fled when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Gen. 19:20,22). Zoar means "little." Lot and his wife and two daughters were en route to Zoar when his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. (A glob of bituminous sulfur came down and encased her, and she became a memorial.) Incidentally, the Dead Sea did not exist prior to Sodom's destruction. Lot had chosen that land because it was a fertile valley. The earthquake *radically* changed the land so that there was no outlet for the Jordan River.

The mention of the three-year-old heifer is a reminder of Genesis 15:9, Abraham's sacrifice. The RSV translates this point as a proper name.

**Isa. 15:7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.**

**Isa. 15:8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.**

**Isa. 15:9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.**

News of Moab's destruction would be heard in Israel. God would bring figurative "lions upon him that escapeth of Moab" in the sense that even the fugitives, or escapees, would be pursued and violently killed.

**Isa. 16:1 Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the**

**mount of the daughter of Zion.**

**Isa. 16:2 For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.**

In the days of King Jehoram, son of Ahab, Moab gave a huge tribute, or levy, to Israel: “Mesha king of Moab ... rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool” (2 Kings 3:4). The lambs and rams were sent by the Moabites in Petra to the king of Israel via the desert or wilderness. Incidentally, when the Israelites were trying to enter the Promised Land, they were prevented from using this route and had to detour way around.

Sela is Petra (*Sela* is the Hebrew). The “nest” was Petra, which seemed impregnable. God would push the Moabites out of this sheltered, secure location to wander about aimlessly. In other words, God was now counseling Moab to send gifts to Israel, His people, as pacification, but He knew they would not do so. Hence the Moabites were not to feel so secure, for He would push them out of their “nest.”

**Isa. 16:3 Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; betray not him that wandereth.**

**Isa. 16:4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.**

**Isa. 16:5 And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.**

Instead of protecting the outcasts of Israel, instead of making shade to cover them, Moab laughed at them. God was warning Moab in advance to be merciful to the Israelites, saying that the future capital would be identified with Israel; hence it was good to pacify that nation.

The “tabernacle of David” in the Kingdom will be Ezekiel’s Temple, from which Messiah’s judgment will go forth. “David” was a type of Jesus.

**Isa. 16:6 We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.**

**Isa. 16:7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.**

**Isa. 16:8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.**

**Isa. 16:9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.**

**Isa. 16:10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.**

**Isa. 16:11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts**

for Kir-haresh.

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

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

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

All of this judgment on Moab would happen in three years. Isaiah prophesied that the remnant would be *very small* and feeble. This is still the experience of Moab today. Once a great and prosperous nation, Moab lost its prosperity.

In verse 11, Isaiah was saying, “I will weep to the point that my stomach will ache.” The message affected his emotions. In times of great emotional distress, some people get stomach and bowel disorders. The Apostle Paul said to “*put on* therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *bowels of mercies*, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing ... and forgiving one another” (Col. 3:12,13). We *develop* “*bowels of mercies*.” By thinking of others and praying for them, we cultivate sympathy for the brethren going through trials.

The treaders of grapes sang songs in the vineyard and shouted to keep their rhythm and make the job more interesting and happy. This joy would be silenced when the judgment came.

**Isa. 17:1** The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

**Isa. 17:2** The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

**Isa. 17:3** The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah prophesied that Damascus would one day be made desolate and become a heap of ruins. Regarding the first destruction of Damascus, Isaiah 7:1-9 told about an alliance of the ten-tribe kingdom under King Pekah with Syria. Syria’s capital was Damascus, and Ephraim’s capital was Samaria. The ten tribes and Syria joined forces to depose King Ahaz of Judah and install a puppet king, favorable to both of them, in his stead. But Isaiah was sent by God to inform King Ahaz of the matter. The people of Judah were discouraged and depressed when they heard about the conspiracy against them. (The hearts of the people were “as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind”—Isa. 7:2.) However, God assured them that Judah would prevail.

While Syria did not prosper in this campaign against Judah, a punishment was to be visited on Israel and Syria, nevertheless. See Jeremiah 49:23-27. “Ben-hadad” was a title of the rulership in Syria. 2 Kings 16:5-9 shows how God punished Syria and Israel for their evil intentions. Judah, in its dilemma, got Assyria to come to its aid by giving a present. (Although Israel and Syria could not overcome Judah the first time, Judah realized they might renew the attack and be successful, so an emissary was sent to Assyria.) When the king of Assyria came down, he captured Damascus, killed King Rezin, and carried away some captives from the ten tribes.

The prophecy here in Isaiah 17:1-3 that Damascus and some surrounding cities would be made desolate had a *partial* fulfillment in the defeat by King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria. (The RSV is

incorrect in saying that the cities would be deserted forever.)

Isaiah 7:16 states that “both kings” (Rezin of Syria and Pekah of the ten tribes) were a threat to Ahaz. In Isaiah 8:1-4, the king of Assyria was again shown desolating Damascus. The sequence was (1) the threat of Syria and the ten tribes abated, (2) Ahaz made an alliance with Assyria, and (3) Assyria came down and fought against Damascus. But prior to the destruction, a sign was given; namely, “a virgin [a ‘young woman,’ or maiden, of purity and chastity—RSV] shall conceive, and bear a son” (Isa. 7:14). The Hebrew word for “young maiden” was used because there was to be a twofold fulfillment: the type and, of course, Jesus in the antitype. In the type, Isaiah fathered a child of a prophetess, a chaste and virtuous woman. Before that child was old enough to cry “Father” or “Mother” or to distinguish between good and evil, the cities of Samaria and Damascus would be destroyed and both kings (Pekah and Rezin) would die. Thus the threat to Judah would be removed. To repeat, because of the type and the antitype, the Holy Spirit carefully chose the Hebrew word for “young maiden” rather than “virgin.”

The next fulfillment of the prophecy of the destruction of Damascus occurred in Jesus’ day. In Chapters 6–9 of Isaiah, fragmentary verses have a double fulfillment with an application at the First Advent. While this is a prophecy of Jesus, the full fulfillment pertains to Isaiah being a picture of Jesus and the woman being a picture of the Church, the chaste virgin espoused to Christ. The Little Flock are a “virgin” class who will have children. Jesus will be the age-lasting Father of the human race, and the Church is to be the second Eve, or mother, of the human race. The children will be the regenerated world of mankind. In other words, at the very end of the age, there will be a *third* fulfillment, pertaining to the marriage. Only a *short* time after the marriage, Israel will be threatened by Gog, but Israel will be saved by the elect.

Thus three pictures are involved:

1. Isaiah’s son born of a chaste prophetess
2. Miraculous birth of Jesus
3. Marriage of The Christ and the miraculous removal of the threat by Gog

Blindness in part has happened to Israel *until* the full number of the Gentiles be come in (Rom. 11:25). Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, was stricken with dumbness in the Holy at the time of prayer as a sign that he had seen a vision. The prophecy was that his old wife, Elisabeth, would give birth to a son, and the child was to be named “John.” The dumbness of Zacharias was removed when the child was born and given that name. Hence there are two kinds of man-child: (1) the false one in Revelation 12 and (2) the true one in Isaiah 66. “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child” (Isa. 66:7). After The Christ is complete, Zion (natural Israel) will travail (in Jacob’s Trouble) and bring forth children. Israel’s deliverance from Gog will be *sudden and miraculous*. A time of trouble (“her pain”) precedes the future birth of natural Israel.

Two fulfillments of the destruction of Damascus are as follows:

1. *Past* destruction at the hands of Tiglath-pileser (Amos 1:3-5).
2. *Future* destruction (Zech. 9:1-4). In the Kingdom, the cities of Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon will be incorporated into Israel proper. Lebanon will become the northern part of Israel. In a nutshell, the Euphrates will be the northernmost boundary, which is traced in more detail through valleys and cities in Ezekiel 47:15-17 and 48:1. Hamath, Damascus, etc., will be part of northern Israel. Hence Damascus will be displaced from its present arrangement. Today Damascus, called the “city of Eden,” is attractive and fertile. Damascus *will be* a place for flocks and pasturage and a place of peace where none are afraid (Isa. 17:2). Thus it will change into a pastoral hamlet in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 17:4** And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

Verses 3 and 4 are tied together. “The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim [the ten-tribe kingdom].” In what way will Ephraim, Damascus, and Syria “be as the glory of the children of Israel”? Verse 4 indicates that the glory is *negative*, for just as God found it necessary to humble Israel, so He would humble Damascus.

**Isa. 17:5** And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

**Isa. 17:6** Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.

Verses 5 and 6 describe a remnant harvesting, a *gleaning*. The gleaning of grapes is mentioned. Grapes and olives are abundant in the regular harvest, but gleaning often requires beating the tree to get the ones on the top and outermost limbs to fall.

**Isa. 17:7** At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

**Isa. 17:8** And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.

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

Verses 7-9 still probably apply to Damascus, although some say they apply to Israel. Both Damascus (the Arabs) and the Jews will have a common humbling experience. Zechariah 9:1 gives the same thought: “The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.” Hadrach was the province of Damascus.

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

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

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

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

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

Verses 12-14 start a different picture but are related to the previous verses. These verses sound like Joel and other prophecies about the Time of Trouble and the anarchy. Satan capitalizes on conditions of unrest to serve his purpose, but God will take care of the situation. Satan will again try to destroy Israel through the invasion of Gog and Magog. It will look as if Gog will



overwhelm and swallow up Israel right up to Jerusalem, but God will rebuke the threatening horde. “The nations [the mixed multitude of Gog and Magog] shall rush like the rushing of many waters [as in a flood]: but God shall rebuke them.” He will disperse and roll them back as if with a blast of His nostrils. He will stop them as the wind blows away a tumbleweed or chaff.

Verse 14 is a prophecy of the future. “This is the portion of them that spoil us, and ... rob us.” The evil intent of Gog will be to take a spoil (the “cattle and goods”—Ezek. 38:10-12). This portion of verse 14 represents Israel’s recognition that God has stepped in and delivered them lest a full end be made of them.

“Behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning [sunrise in the Kingdom] he [Gog] is not.” Although we are technically in the Millennial morning, the night of trouble is future, and *dawn will follow* the trouble. Darkness precedes the ushering in of the Kingdom in its grandeur and light, the morning of the new day. There will be great trouble “at eveningtide”; that is, at the very end of the age. Israel’s trouble is called “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

Verses 12-14 can be taken as a *general* picture of the world’s trouble with the sunrise of dawn following the trouble. However, these verses can also be understood as a *specialized* picture of Jacob’s Trouble; verse 14 shows that the particular emphasis is on Israel’s deliverance.

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

This chapter contains the thought of some suffering and discipline, but on the whole, it is an encouraging and comforting chapter.

“Woe [Ho] to the land *shadowing* with wings.” The land is the United States. The Holy Spirit used the term “shadowing wings” to show watch-care, safety, and shelter—God’s providence in this direction. Young’s Analytical Bible and other translations use “Ho” instead of “Woe.” “Ho,” which suggests that a message of comfort will follow, is as though one is audibly addressing and giving the Lord’s pronouncement to a far-off unseen land.

“Shadowing” implies shade and shelter. Those suffering from religious persecution in Europe came as refugees to the United States, a country that was new compared to Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Laws were enacted in this country to avoid religious intolerance. Also, the eagle with its sheltering wings is the emblem of the United States. In the Old Testament, eagle’s wings were a symbol of Divine Providence (Exod. 19:4).

“Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.” Ethiopia, the land of the Queen of Sheba, was the outpost of civilization in Isaiah’s day.

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

The “ambassadors [sent forth] by the sea ... in vessels of bulrushes” are messages of truth. These messages are based upon the utterances of the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus himself. Messages of truth are shipped abroad and dispersed throughout the nations of earth in “vessels of bulrushes,” that is, in published literature.

The RSV has “which sends ambassadors by the Nile, in vessels of papyrus upon the waters!” “Papyrus” is appropriate, for paper was anciently made from this substance. One translation even has “vessels of paper.” “Nile” can mean just “river”; that is, it does not have to be the river in Egypt. The point is that messages of truth are sent in vessels by water. (Rivers and seas

were a means of travel in olden times.) The translators tried to tie together thoughts of Egypt, papyrus, and the Nile. But the context is discussing the land *beyond* Ethiopia: the United States.

“Go, ye swift messengers.” “Swift” (Hebrew *qal* or *qol*) can mean “light.” Bible tracts and publications are messengers of intellect (light), and they travel quickly and conveniently. In addition, *qol* can mean “sound” or “voice,” which also travels swiftly. The messengers have messages of sound, voice, light, and truth. “Go, ye sound and voice messengers.” “Go, ye light and truth messengers.” Notice the plurals: ambassadors, vessels, messengers. Perhaps the Holy Spirit intentionally chose *qal/qol* because all of these thoughts are applicable.

The messengers are directed “to a nation [that is] scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!” The “nation” is the royal priesthood. “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). They are a “terrible people” in the sense that they have *trying* experiences for their own good—experiences of being “meted out and trodden down.” What is the meaning of the term “scattered and peeled”? This “holy nation” consists of a mixed people of various tongues and backgrounds scattered throughout the world.

The “shadowing ... wings” (verse 1) indicate not merely that Divine Providence has sheltered the holy nation but that the United States has, in turn, sheltered others. Through Divine Providence, the United States has sheltered people of all nations, beckoning the persecuted to come here (see verse 3). God’s care was on this country, holding it in reserve for Harvest work.

“Whose land the [hostile] rivers have spoiled!” Just as an unruly river washes away valuable topsoil, so the holy nation, the royal priesthood, has had hard experiences at the hands of European civil and religious powers. God permitted a stirring up of the nest through persecution by the European religious systems so that the persecuted would come to the United States; He beckoned them to the land of shadowing wings. Divine Providence has so overruled the matter that they could leave their hostile environments and come to the shelter here. (The principle is similar with the persecutions of the Jews in our day—the pogroms in Russia, Hitler, etc.—all of which gave an impetus to the colonization and development of Israel.) The good element (true Christians) in the land (of Christendom) was driven out of foreign countries through persecution.

The allegory is of the Church in various parts of the earth. As the mother eagle stirs up her nest by removing the down to expose thorns and make it uncomfortable for the eaglets, thus forcing them out of the nest, so God has allowed persecution to force true Christians out of the nest and, hence, to seek shelter here. Tracts (the messengers) encouraged Christian Europeans to come to the United States.

The wings and sun on the cover of the original *Volumes* indicated that “messengers” of comfort and hope would go out, telling about the “Sun of righteousness,” who will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2).

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

The United States has been like a beacon. In fact, the Statue of Liberty holds up a torch of light and liberty that calls to and welcomes newcomers who enter the New York harbor.

An “ensign” (a standard of truth) is lifted up “on the mountains” (kingdoms). On the old *Watchtower* covers was a beacon of light shining out to those lost on the tempestuous sea. The

thought of an ensign (or a beacon) fits the context of verses 1 and 2: “Ho to the land shadowing with wings,” which sends out ambassadors by sea with messages of truth and comfort.

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

Verse 7 helps us to understand verses 4-6. God sits back and watches this spectacle. Though it is dark and cloudy down here, He can see what is going on. He is where it is clear—where His will is done and there is perpetual sunshine and gentle refreshment (“dew”) in the heat of the Harvest going on down here.

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

“Before the [end of the] harvest [of both the wheat and the tares]” (RSV), God will “cut off the sprigs [the Great Company class] with the pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the [unfruitful tare] branches.” He will do a pruning and developing work for the purpose of producing better fruit and getting rid of the wood. Before the completion of the Harvest, there will be a real threshing of the Church—a hard experience, a severe pruning, in the hour of temptation yet future. “When the blossom is over,” and the flower has become a ripened grape (RSV), the Church will have its final test. Stated another way, there will be a final test just before the grape is harvested into the barn. To use the King James language, the “sour grape [that] is ripening in the flower” is the Church.

Chapter 18 discusses the Harvest period and work: “Ho to the land shadowing with wings” that sends out swift messengers bearing truth. The United States has been highly favored with truth, and the seventh trumpet alerts the people of earth. Although there have been hard testings during the Harvest period, a particularly severe test will come at the end.

The “harvest” here is an *overall* harvest, including the burning of the tares. In the time of Harvest, there will be, first, the bundling of the tares, then the gathering of the wheat into the barn, and finally the burning of the tares. The tares are bundled *before* they are burned. In 1846—*prior to* the Harvest, hence in the *time* of Harvest—the Evangelical Alliance began the bundling (Matt. 13:30).

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

“Fowls” are “birds of prey” in the RSV. The shoots and branches (the tares) will be cut off (verse 5) and left to the birds of prey (carnivorous vultures) and to the beasts of the earth. There are two parts to the harvesting:

1. The wheat (or grape) harvest
2. The destruction (or burning) of the tares (unfruitful branches).

In our Lord’s illustration of the vine, the branches that did not produce fruit were cut off and destroyed. The tares will be left to the birds of prey—or it could be the Great Company class who are left to the birds of prey. The Great Company must share in the plagues of mystic Babylon and in her destruction. When forced to flee Babylon, they will have certain experiences in common with the hypocrites.

“The fowls of the mountains ... shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.” The birds of prey of the mountains are contrasted with the beasts of the

earth. A possible interpretation is as follows: The feet members will receive their persecuting experience at the hands of the nominal Church (the fowls of the mountains in the “summer” while the Harvest is still taking place). The tares and the Great Company will get their experience from the beasts of the earth (the anarchistic masses) in the “winter” Time of Trouble (Matt. 24:20). The Great Company will share in the world’s Time of Trouble at the hands of the masses, whereas the Church will be harvested earlier, while it is yet summer. When the Church harvest is complete, the Great Company will say, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20). The Great Company will then be developed in the winter.

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

“In [during] that time shall the present [of the Little Flock] be brought unto the LORD.” The description of the Little Flock is a repeat of verse 2. The Lord’s crown jewels (the Church) will be brought together to God, “to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts,” that is, to Mount Zion. The Church will be a gift to God.

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

“The burden of Egypt” is the subject matter of Chapter 19. “Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud.” A cloud can be a cloud of either blessing or trouble, but a dark cloud indicates trouble. Here the cloud comes *suddenly*. The Lord will ride or fly on a swift cloud to bring judgment against Egypt.

Isaiah 60:8 has a vague similarity: “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves [homing pigeons] to their windows [to their roosts]?” Isaiah 60:3-5 tells that after the Holy Remnant is delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentile nations will come to Israel’s light for a blessing. In fact, there will be a gathering of both Jews and Gentiles to Israel. The Gentiles will come to assist Israel, to pay homage, to learn about the Lord, etc. Isaiah 60:6,7 tells that goods will be brought to Israel. Isaiah 60:8 implies Gentile recognition that God has favored the Jew and that blessings will be proportionate to assistance and cooperation with Israel.

Many Scriptures tell us that God will take a certain action, but sometimes the context indicates that He will accomplish the matter through others, rather than doing it firsthand. For example, King Nebuchadnezzar was God’s “servant” to visit judgment on Israel, and Cyrus was His “servant” to punish Babylon after the 70 years of desolation. Jeremiah 46:13,25 prophesied that King Nebuchadnezzar would visit Egypt and cause it to be completely desolate for 40 years (this radical experience is not recorded in history). The cities of No (Thebes) and Zoan were also punished. Isaiah wrote, “And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord [King Nebuchadnezzar]” (Isa. 19:4).

Certain clues indicate a probable future fulfillment of portions of Isaiah 19 as well as a past fulfillment. Similarly, Jeremiah 50 and 51 indicate both a past fulfillment against natural Babylon and a future fulfillment against mystic Babylon. Some verses (or half verses) apply to only *one* of these fulfillments, and some apply to both.

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

Egyptians fighting against Egyptians, and neighbor fighting against neighbor, indicate anarchy. Kingdom fighting against kingdom is a larger thought—perhaps meaning that the Arab allies will fight among themselves, one against the other (Sudan, Libya, Morocco, etc.). Such Arab dissension would be like a blight on Egypt because Egypt is the main bulwark of the Arab world. Egypt is the key to either peace or war in that area.

**Isa. 19:3** And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

Verse 3 describes a seeking after occult powers. This happened when King Nebuchadnezzar attacked in the past. Whether or not there will be a future fulfillment remains to be seen.

**Isa. 19:4** And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

Verse 4 refers to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon in the past.

**Isa. 19:5** And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

Verse 5 refers to the Nile (the “waters” and the “river”). Although its headwaters are Lake Victoria, a large and deep lake, that body of water did not fully account for the great volume of water in the Nile during flood seasons of the past. Heavy rains in the Ethiopian forests and tributaries supplemented the water coming from Lake Victoria. One method of the “waters ... fail[ing]” was the withholding of rain from the Ethiopian forests. If there is a future fulfillment, it will be strong, and the judgment will be reckoned as coming from the Lord in the sense that He predicted it—even if other agencies are used.

The “sea” is the Aswan Dam. The “swift cloud” of verse 1 could be airplanes. If the dam were bombed by planes, there would be dreadful destruction, havoc, and flooding, followed by a dry riverbed and drought. The flooding would cause erosion and perhaps a diversion of the waters from the Nile riverbed into other channels.

In the Kingdom, God will judge Egypt with a plague, withholding rain for not going up representatively in homage to Israel (Zech. 14:17,18). That judgment, which will occur later, is different from the one here in Isaiah 19.

**Isa. 19:6** And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

**Isa. 19:7** The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.

**Isa. 19:8** The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

**Isa. 19:9** Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded.

**Isa. 19:10** And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.

**Isa. 19:11** Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of

ancient kings?

**Isa. 19:12** Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

**Isa. 19:13** The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.

Noph (Memphis), which was from an earlier period, is well known to tourists today. However, Zoan, once a large and important city but now in ruins, is not visited because it is off the beaten path and in a military area. At the time of this prophecy, Zoan was a significant city, yet twice Isaiah stated that the princes of Zoan were fools (verses 11 and 13). One of Pharaoh's residences was in Zoan. Pharaoh was regarded as the son of Ra (that is, God incarnate). Just as Jehovah God sent His Son into the world, so Satan took that idea and had his god (Pharaoh) come into the world as the son of Ra. Each time a Pharaoh died, another son of Ra was God incarnate. Not only was "Ra" part of Pharaoh's title or name, but the Egyptian people considered him to be God. However, when King Nebuchadnezzar came down to Egypt, Pharaoh did not know what to do—his wise counsel and that of his subordinates failed.

**Isa. 19:14** The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

God caused the confusion in their thinking.

**Isa. 19:15** Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

**Isa. 19:16** In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.

**Isa. 19:17** And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

Isaiah prophesied that Judah "shall be a terror unto Egypt."

**Isa. 19:18** In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.

Notice that the preceding verses (1-18) of this chapter are just before the frequently quoted "Great Pyramid" verses. The term "in that day" is starting to be used in verses 16 and 18.

Five Egyptian cities will speak Hebrew (the "language of Canaan") and swear to Jehovah God, that is, be converts. Therefore, in that day, five Egyptian cities will be more or less amenable to Israel. In other words, the supernatural happenings will cause them to see that God's favor is on Israel and Judah.

Having "cattle and goods," Judah will prosper *until* Gog and Magog come down (see Ezek. 38:10-12). Then a problem will develop, and only God will be able to deliver Judah.

An Egyptian city will be called "The city of destruction" (or "The city of the sun"). Because of Arabic pronunciation, Cairo could be the "city of destruction." Two thoughts are possible. (1) One of the five cities will oppose Judah. (2) Five Egyptian cities will favor Judah and one will oppose it. The latter thought is probably correct. In other words, an element in Egypt will not

go along with the recognition of Israel. This thought would fit the earlier picture of brother fighting against brother and city against city.

Verses 5-10 show that when the Nile dries up, the livelihood and economy of Egypt, which are tied to the river, will also be wiped out. Drastic unemployment will be the result. The people will cry and mourn.

**Q:** Would there be a larger application where Egypt pictures the world?

**A:** Yes, in a general way, but the literal, natural fulfillment is stronger, the Pyramid reference being a clue and also the prophecy about the Nile.

**Isa. 19:19** In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

**Isa. 19:20** And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

**Isa. 19:21** And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

**Isa. 19:22** And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.

The Great Pyramid is introduced as a praise altar or a monument of witness and testimony unto the Lord God. In the near future, Israel's blind eyes will be opened to see that Jesus, a Jew, was indeed their true Savior. They will realize that Old Testament prophecies repeatedly spoke of him. Many Egyptians, even those living in Cairo, have never visited the Pyramid, *the great testimony of a Savior in their own land*, but the Pyramid will "speak" in the future, revealing its secrets. Just as Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and long identified with that nation, was not accepted or recognized (until the near future), so the Pyramid in Egypt, which has been a testimony and has contained the message of Jesus as Savior, has been unrecognized in Egypt. The top stone is primarily about Jesus and his role as Savior. The Pyramid *will speak in the future* to the Egyptians, just as Jesus, like Joseph, will reveal his identity and speak unto his brethren. Just as with Joseph's brothers, consternation and fear were followed by great rejoicing, so in the future, surprise and fear will be followed by healing and comfort. God will "smite and [then] heal" Egypt (verse 22). The Great Pyramid, then, will be especially significant to the Egyptians when they realize what the monument that has been *in their own land for thousands of years* represents.

"They shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors." This portion of verse 20 is related to history at the time Shem was used of God to superintend the building of the Great Pyramid. In Egyptian mythology, Shem was considered to be the "saviour" because Nimrod greatly oppressed the people. With Nimrod and his associates occupying positions of cruelty and power, Ham asked his brother Shem to help. In the "land of Ham," Ham was technically the king or Pharaoh of Egypt, but in reality Nimrod superseded him in power and influence. Shem delivered the Egyptians and hence is a prototype of Jesus.

In verse 20, who are the "they" of the future, at this end of the age? Who will "cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors"? The Jews, the Egyptians, or the world? There is a double application. The Jews were oppressed in Egypt at the time of the Exodus, and Moses was sent as savior and deliverer, but that oppression does not fit the time setting of this picture of the

Great Pyramid. The Egyptians were oppressed by King Nebuchadnezzar, but that was too small a fulfillment for such a powerful picture. The clue *for the future* is the prototype of Nimrod and those associated with him and his religion *in the past*—the “oppressors.” (Incidentally, Nimrod married his own mother.)

The future fulfillment pertains to the world and its being inundated with “oppressors.” The world will cry for deliverance from Satan and the fallen angels. Remember how they (“mighty ... men of renown”) oppressed mankind before the Flood, filling the earth with lust and violence and taking women as they chose (Gen. 6:4). The world will be similarly oppressed when the fallen angels are loosed from their chains of darkness in the “judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). Only God’s great power can deliver the people from such evil, oppressive power. Only a greater supernatural force can deliver the world from the power of these fallen supernatural beings. At the end of the First Dispensation, God used the Flood and other means, of which we can only conjecture, to thwart and imprison the fallen angels. A *great force and power* had to be used to chain or imprison the fallen angels when they dematerialized. And in the future a *great force and power* will be needed to restrain the fallen angels.

The Great Pyramid identifies the Savior—he is the true and tried (top) stone, the head of the corner, which the builders rejected. In Matthew 21:42, Jesus said, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” And Psalm 118:22 reads, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

While it is true that “the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do [give] sacrifice and oblation” to Him, Egypt is a picture of the world. The world will give recognition to Jesus as Savior and to the Kingdom of God, and will offer gifts, services, oblations, etc. Gentiles will want to show their cooperation, and they will “vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it”—they will consecrate.

The Great Pyramid is described as an altar, a pillar, a sign, and a witness. These terms break down as follows:

*Altar* – An altar of *prayer and praise*, a place of thanks and commemoration.

*Pillar* – A stone monument of *victory*.

*Sign* – Something that is visible and tangible; for example, the Bible is a sign—and so is the Pyramid, the *Bible in stone*.

*Witness* – The Pyramid not only testifies of *God’s plan* but shows *His foreknowledge* in a number of ways: its passages and chambers are symbolic, picturing, among other things, Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection and the call of the Church; the top stone pictures Jesus; etc.

**Isa. 19:23** In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

**Isa. 19:24** In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

**Isa. 19:25** Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

Down through history, depending on the circumstances, Israel sought help at times from Egypt or Assyria, but such alliances always ended in disappointment, as predicted by Moses in the Law. It was like leaning on a reed for support, but the reed kept breaking and piercing Israel in the side.



Verses 23-25 show that in the future, Egypt and Assyria will have social, economic, and moral sympathy for Israel. Not only will Egypt and Assyria, traditional enemies, go back and forth to each other on a peaceful highway, but en route they will go to Israel to worship. Israel will be “the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.” In other words, Israel is geographically situated between the two, and both will recognize Israel’s role in the Kingdom. In the final picture at the end of the Kingdom, all will be brethren together on an equal basis (each being a “third”). At that time, Israel will no longer have a unique position as a leader among the nations, for all will be in harmony and part of God’s family under the Pyramid symbol. Egypt will be God’s people, Assyria will be the work of His hands, and Israel will be His inheritance (verse 25). The natural, more obvious fulfillment is that there will be a lasting peace and friendship between these three parties who, in the past, were always at enmity among themselves in various combinations.

In the larger fulfillment, the following definitions apply:

“Israel” would be the Jews.

“Egypt” pictures the religious (“Christian”) nations; that is, Christendom.

“Assyria” represents the nonreligious (atheistic, communistic, etc.) nations.

The Book of Revelation uses different terminology by saying there will be a new heavens and a new earth and no more sea (anarchistic, irreligious element). All people will work together, worshipping the one true God and obeying the royal law.

**Isa. 20:1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;**

Ashdod was one of the chief cities of the Philistines, who occupied the southern coastline of Israel. Tartan, a general of Assyria, captured Ashdod. Sargon, the king of Assyria, was the father of Sennacherib.

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

**Isa. 20:3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;**

“Amoz” could be the minor prophet Amos (see Isaiah 1:1 and Amos 1:1). If so, Amos (Amoz) would be Isaiah’s father. Amos would have to be older because he prophesied in the days of one king (Uzziah), and Isaiah prophesied in the days of this king and three successive ones: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Furthermore, Hezekiah may have been the grandson of Isaiah. If so, what an interesting family! The lineage would have been: Amos, Isaiah, ?, and Hezekiah.

At the same time as the besieging of Ashdod, God used Isaiah to demonstrate a prophecy that was directed against Egypt and Ethiopia. Isaiah’s going barefoot in Israel with his buttocks exposed showed God’s foreknowledge that Egypt would be decimated in spite of an alliance with Ethiopia. Egypt was a strong power at this time, and the large-framed Ethiopians were fierce and fearless warriors. Despite this combined strength, they would be defeated.

Being in southern Israel, Ashdod was near Egypt. This was particularly the area in which Isaiah walked. His appearance was shocking, even though he probably was not stark naked but had the barest of coverage. By walking in this manner, with his buttocks uncovered, Isaiah simulated the humiliating experience that befell prisoners of war. (They were stripped of clothing and armor and forced to walk barefoot. Arms were twisted behind their backs, rings were put in their noses, etc.) Isaiah walked barefoot and at least partially naked *for three years*.

Isaiah's actions indicated God's foreknowledge that when Tartan of Assyria finished with the Philistines, he would regroup in Assyria and then go down to fight against Egypt.

**Isa. 20:4** So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

**Isa. 20:5** And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

**Isa. 20:6** And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

Israel would be afraid when Assyria defeated Egypt and Ethiopia because Israel hoped to have Egypt as an ally. Israel would feel lost and frightened because of not turning to God. The real purpose of Isaiah's demonstration was to give Israel a lesson, for Israel sometimes sided with Assyria against Egypt, and sometimes with Egypt against Assyria.

This chapter ties in with the earlier prophecy in Isaiah 7 and 8 about Assyria, the bee, being victorious over Egypt, the fly. They would fight in Israel, the buffer zone. By means of this battle, Israel and Syria were also defeated, leaving Judah free from their threat.

For "inhabitant of this isle," the RSV has "inhabitants of this coastland."

**Isa. 21:1** The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

Chapter 21 is a prophecy against Babylon and Arabia. Notice the terrain: "desert of the sea," "whirlwinds in the south," "the desert," "a terrible land." The reference is to great wastelands of desert. As with the Nile in Egypt, there was fertile, fruitful land along the banks of the Euphrates River but then great expanses of utter waste beyond this limited area.

Verse 1 is a picture of a storm brewing in the desert. Trouble, a stirring up, is coming. The large expanse of desert is likened to a "sea." In both the desert and the sea, there are no landmarks, and one must rely on stars for navigation. Also, camels, which can travel for two or three weeks on one drink of water, are called "*ships of the desert.*"

**Isa. 21:2** A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

As *associated* territories, Elam and Media are relatively synonymous, both being part of the kingdom of the Medes. The troublesome situation that is developing is figuratively said to be in a desert setting.

**Isa. 21:3** Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

Isaiah had an emotional reaction when he heard and saw this vision. His loins were filled with pain, he had pangs like a woman in travail, and he was doubled over with pain and dismay.

**Isa. 21:4** My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

Isaiah's reaction to the *grievous* vision continued. Fear seized him; his heart panted.

**Isa. 21:5 Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.**

Verse 5 is an abrupt change. Isaiah was saying, "Prepare your food, shelter, and weapons, for *very great trouble* is coming in the future." The "princes" are the Church, those destined to be heirs in the throne. In preparation for the sandstorm, the instruction is to "anoint the shield"; that is, grease the shield so that oncoming weapons will be deflected more easily. In other words, the Church is to prepare for a future confrontation. They are to bestir themselves: to eat, drink, arise, and anoint the shield.

The word "watchtower" is a reminder of the early days of the *Reprints*, which were called *Views from the Watch Tower*. On the cover was a lighthouse (a haven or refuge) that beamed light out on a stormy sea. The "princes" being in the "watchtower" signifies their *interest in prophecy*. These princes are on the alert in the watchtower; they are concerned about the future.

"Prepare the table." The Lord's "table" has had abundant spiritual food in the Harvest. The Lord used a faithful and wise servant to feed his people at the end of the age. That servant, Charles Russell, is called a "watchman" in verse 6. In verse 5, the admonition is addressed to the "princes" (plural), warriors of faith.

**Isa. 21:6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.**

**Isa. 21:7 And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:**

The Revised Standard brings out the right thought for verse 7: "When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on asses, riders on camels, let him listen diligently, *very diligently*." The latter part is like saying, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

This is a strong admonition, but so far not much has happened except that a storm is brewing in the desert where the terrain of Elam and Media is harsh. Now the watchman sees riders—a company or cavalcade approaching in pairs, one line on asses and one line on camels. These are animals of *unequal tread*; hence this is an unusual scene. We are exhorted to pay *strict attention* to this prophecy. There is a spiritual significance.

**Isa. 21:8 And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:**

The *watchman* cried as a *lion* (that is, with a *strong* voice). The purpose of the lionlike roar was to *warn or alert* listeners to the danger. The watchman, in wanting to faithfully discharge his responsibility, felt an inner compulsion to declare what he saw. The lion represents *justice* (and *wrath*).

The watchman cried, "I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights." In other words, he was at his post day and night; he had a spirit of concern. He continually watched the horizon of the *future* as well as the present.

**Isa. 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.**

Verse 9 is good in the RSV. The watchman continued to speak, “‘And, behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!’ And he answered, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods he has shattered to the ground.’” The watchman was looking, and he saw in the distance riders in pairs. Then he made the statement, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon, and all of her images he has shattered to the ground.” We are reminded of the white horses and riders in Revelation 19:11-16 and of the rider coming back from Bozrah in Isaiah 63:1-3—that is, of the *victorious return* of The Christ after the smiting of Babylon.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Rev. 19:11-16)

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” (Isa. 63:1-3)

The treading of the vine of the earth (the harvest of the grapes of wrath) is another (third) picture of the Church victorious and Babylon having *literally fallen* (not just the fall from favor in 1878 but her *actual destruction*). At that time, Jesus will have already trodden the winepress. With blood-stained garments, he will be returning from the battle, and the Church will be with him as victorious conquerors. The images will have been *shattered*. This is FUTURE. The destruction of mystic Babylon is the desert storm, the grievous experience, that the watchman was warning about.

Why are asses and camels used in this vision? An ass is frequently a symbol of victory or kingship. Jesus, as a King, rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass. The judges of Israel also rode on white asses, which were symbolic of their authority. Here in Isaiah 21, the white asses picture the authority of the future.

The camel, a ship of the desert, pictures the Church during the Gospel Age, either during its entire wilderness journey or for the 1,260 years from 539 to 1799. The camel is the mode of

transport of the Church in the *present life*, whereas the ass is the symbol of victory.

The animals are paired: a camel and an ass, a camel and an ass, etc., and there is a rider on each animal. For each pair, the two riders are the *same person*. The principle is, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). The rider on the camel is the Christian during the *present life*, and the rider on the ass is the same individual *beyond the veil*. It is the season of mating: prophecy foretold, prophecy fulfilled. The watchman knows this is a vision of the complete Church. The faithful warriors of the past are now the victors. In the vision, Babylon has fallen, and the Church must be complete before that fall.

The thought of pairs is shown in Song of Solomon 2:12 regarding the time of mating of the singing birds: “The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle[dove] is heard in our land.”

**Isa. 21:10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.**

Verse 10 is addressed to the feet members on this side of the veil, who will have a troublous time. They are called the “corn of ... [the threshing] floor.” A threshing floor indicates *trouble*. A *hard experience* will befall the feet members, the John the Baptist class, the Gideon class, the heel class that the serpent bites (Gen. 3:15).

When the Pastor opened the Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, he asked a painter to paint an open Bible on the window, but he did not specify a particular verse or page. When the painting was finished, the Bible was open to the text about the watchman and his duty. Supposedly the Pastor got pale when he saw the finished painting. And the name was the *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*. Of course today that name has a stigma because of the JWs, but that was not true originally.

The realization that the feet members will have a very severe experience is what caused Isaiah and/or the watchman pain in verse 3. Just as with Jesus, there will be discouragement and trial, but a feeling of strength, exaltation, and victory will follow. First, our Lord was hailed as King, the Garden of Gethsemane experience followed, then he was betrayed in a trial by false witnesses, and during the hour of power of Satan, the Crucifixion took place—but when he cried and gave up the spirit with a *very strong voice* (“It is finished!”), he felt *victory*. In the Gideon picture, a sense of triumph and victory came when the clay vessels broke.

Thus the winnowing or threshing experience of the feet members was foretold. Although Isaiah did not fully understand the vision, he sensed the severe trouble emotionally.

**Isa. 21:11 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?**

**Isa. 21:12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.**

Dumah, Idumea, Edom, and Seir all picture *Christendom*. The question was asked, “Watchman, what of the night?” The watchman replied, “The [Millennial] morning cometh [in 1874], and also the night.” The seventh 1,000-year day chronologically began in 1874. However, although the day has technically begun, a nighttime of trouble will occur *before* the day dawns for the world. And a time of trouble for the Church will precede the great Time of Trouble for the world. The burden of the message here in Isaiah 21 is the trouble for the feet members. In other words, not only will the world have a time of trouble, but the Church also. The *Church*, not the world, are the “wheat” of the Lord. The feet members are the threshed and winnowed

class in the end of the Harvest.

A time of trouble will come on the following, and in the order listed: (1) Church (feet members), (2) nominal Church, (3) Great Company, (4) world, and (5) Israel. These times of trouble will be distinctly different experiences, all occurring in the very end of the age. The true Church will be gone before the nominal Church falls, before the world's great Time of Trouble, and before Jacob's Trouble.

We (the prospective "princes") are exhorted to arise, eat, and drink now (to exercise ourselves and partake of the spiritual food), and to put on the armor (to prepare for the coming trouble). Throughout the Harvest period, putting on the armor has helped the Church to develop and stay in the truth, but as we near the day of trouble for the Church, it will become increasingly important to be alert, prepared, and armed for the approaching confrontation—for the Church's Gethsemane.

"If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." In other words, "If you will inquire, inquire; come back *again*." This chapter keeps stressing: "Listen! Pay attention! If you want to know more, come back and *keep inquiring*. Inquire for understanding."

The following is a transcription of a talk given by Bro. Frank Shallieu in May 1975 entitled:

### **Watchman, What of the Night? (Isa. 21:5-12)**

Pastor Russell is the "watchman" of Isaiah 21:11,12 because he alerted God's people at this end of the age to many prophecies. This prophecy is related to the burden of Dumah, one of the sons of Ishmael. Hence the prophecy refers to Edom (Idumea in the Septuagint). However, "Dumah" is purposely used instead of "Edom" because Hagar and her seed were cast off from the special inheritance.

The seventh Millennium commenced in 1874, which is 6,000 years from the time sin entered the world (there were two years of sinlessness in Eden). The 1874 date is more significant than 1872 because it deals with God's working in this hemisphere during the seventh day, or seventh period, within the Seventh Creative Day, which started with the nighttime of sin and darkness. It started with the evening. "Weeping may endure for a night" (Hebrew "evening"). The man Adam, whom God had made in the sixth day and pronounced perfect, fell in the seventh day through sin. From that dark beginning, years went by and God's purposes became clearer. It is the same principle with the other Creative Days. For example, God said, "Let there be light," and it took 7,000 years for the light to penetrate to the intended extent. Also, this day began in darkness—just as in the Seventh Creative Day. As morning comes and we are nearing the climax, we are in the seventh day, or seventh period, of the Seventh Creative Day.

God prepared a watchman: Bro. Russell. Technically, the morning began in 1874, but it was still dark. Other prophecies show that in the early part of this morning, there would be a great darkening, a storm, an hour of darkness, as it were. The watchman said, "The morning cometh [has come]," but there is yet to be a nighttime of trouble followed by the ushering in of the morning (verse 12) and the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams. But notice that after answering the query, the watchman says, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." In other words, if a Christian is pure at heart and loyal to the Lord, he will desire more than a superficial understanding of truth, and the Lord will reward him with information. The watchman commends those who search diligently for more information. When the Master was asked why he spoke in parables to the people and then gave a clearer explanation to his disciples, he answered, "It is given unto you [my disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Thus knocking, inquiring, and entreating all help us not only to develop in our understanding of God's Word but also to have more appreciation for His Word.

In the early *Reprints*, the watchman usually treated chapters as subjects, somewhat in the Frank and Ernest style with questions and answers. Then occasionally he would end with the words “If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.” The watchman commended the searching. The name of the magazine was “*Watch Tower*,” and it had beams of light over troubled waters.

Habakkuk 2:1 says, “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d.” In other words, if anyone objected, there would be a reasonable rebuttal. Thus the watchman had a certain responsibility not only to make an announcement but also to be prepared to defend and clarify the situation. Habakkuk 2:2,3 shows that the Lord gave this watchman a responsibility to “write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it [seems to] tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” In His providences, God allows His people to overanticipate events beyond what is strictly recorded in His Word—just as with the wise and foolish virgins.

The strategy of tarrying or *seeming* to tarry is for the development of God’s people; it purifies them and weeds out the less desirable ones from the high calling. The prophecy in Habakkuk is identified with Pastor Russell because he made things so clear: dates, prophecy, etc. The message or vision he pronounced was so clear that it was even written down or demonstrated on a blueprint.

There is more about the watchman earlier in Isaiah 21:5,6. “Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.” The burden of the message in Isaiah 21 is the *Church’s* time of trouble, not the world’s Time of Trouble.

The analogy is something like this: Jesus, during his ministry of 3 1/2 years—with his miracles, healing, and gracious words—even became popular *toward the end* of his ministry, as far as the people were concerned. The people heard him gladly and multitudes followed him. But at the *end* of his ministry, as his message became stronger and stronger, the people began to forsake him. However, those who had a sufficiency of experience with Jesus and his fellowship—even though they could not clearly understand what he was saying—had enough faith that they were carried over the gap caused by his crucifixion, and later they grasped the significance of the Memorial service that had been established. Similarly, this nighttime refers to the nighttime of Jesus’ life. He preached and then his career ended in violence, for he had to die as the Savior of the world and to show the supremacy of his love for the Heavenly Father.

Hence the nighttime pertained to Jesus first—“The night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Jesus meant his work would be curtailed, his public ministry would be *abruptly* terminated during this night (the same principle as Elijah being carried away with the chariot). In our day, the Millennial morning has come, and people are rejoicing in the truth, promulgating the gospel, etc., but a nighttime will also come. This time of trouble on the Church is not the Time of Trouble on the world because the world’s trouble will come *after* the Church is gone. The Church will have its *own* experience of darkness first, as emphasized in Isaiah 21.

“Prepare the table” (verses 5 and 6) is a message to prepare the bounty (the Harvest message) at the end of the age. But after this feast, there will be a battle. The setting: princes are sitting at the table, partaking of the feast (verse 5). After the feast, they begin to polish their armor (“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”—Eph. 6:11). We are to prepare for the battle in which Satan will be *very active*. This is a reminder of Gideon and the water test, the final way of paring down the army to just 300 men. The class

that lapped up water as a dog, looking ahead (to the future end of the age, feeling a sense of responsibility), were the ones chosen to go into battle with Gideon. Those who just buried their heads in the water and did not look ahead did not have a sense of anticipation, and hence were not given the reward: the primary responsibility for the victory. Thus the 300 were chosen because of their spirit of preparedness and anticipation. And so these princes (verse 5) are to arise from the table, prepare their armor, and anoint their shields so that when the darts of the Adversary hit that shield, its strength and slipperiness will help to deflect the blows. Sharpened spears mean their arguments will be so precise and to the point that the enemy will be slain.

Jeremiah 51:11,12 reads, “Make bright the [pure] arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, *the vengeance of his temple*. Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.” In history the Media-Persia Empire overthrew the Babylonian Empire. Cyrus the Great entered the city of Babylon under the water gates, but it was Darius the Mede who actually took the kingdom of Babylon (as shown in Daniel). Darius was the leader at the time of the capture and Cyrus was his successor. Jeremiah 51:11,12 is a judgment against Babylon because Babylon was responsible for the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem in 606 BC. Similarly, mystic Babylon has been responsible for the blood of the saints down through the Gospel Age, and she will receive a judgment for the blood she has spilled and for the spoiling of the Temple class. Mystic Babylon has trod the “holy city” underfoot. In the literal account, Babylon was destroyed by the Medes. Here in Jeremiah, the allegory is a little different: Watchmen are to be set up on the walls of Babylon in connection with her destruction. As the impending destruction draws near, it is a responsibility of the watchmen (the Lord’s people) to enunciate a message of God’s disfavor with the system and the meaning and significance of the judgments about to come. They are to declare a message of vengeance as the day approaches. The anointing of the shield in Isaiah 21 is related to the sharpening of the arrows in Jeremiah 51—all preparatory work.

Isaiah 21:5-8 in the RSV states, “They prepare the table, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink. Arise, O princes, oil the shield! For thus the Lord said to me: ‘Go, set a watchman, let him announce what he sees. When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on asses, riders on camels [the riders are peculiarly separated into two divisions, some riding on asses and some riding on camels], let him listen diligently, very diligently.’ Then he who saw cried [as a *lion*, showing the message is one of *justice, vengeance*]: ‘Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights.’” In other words, the watchman, Pastor Russell, felt the burden of the responsibility of being a watcher over spiritual Israel at the end of the Gospel Age. Similarly, the Apostle Paul felt the responsibility at the beginning of the Gospel Age.

The picture of Isaac and Rebekah clarifies the vision. Abraham was desirous that Isaac have a proper mate, so he sent his servant Eliezer to Haran to find a bride. Thus the Heavenly Father sends the Holy Spirit on a quest to select a bride for Jesus. Eliezer wanted to make sure his selection was the Lord’s will, so he asked for a miracle—that a woman would be at the well and that she would offer him a drink and also offer to water his ten camels, which would consume a *tremendous* amount of water. This Rebekah did—and cheerfully. When Eliezer informed Rebekah and her family of his mission, she was willing to go *at once* on the journey toward Isaac. Genesis 24:61 tells that Rebekah was accompanied by her maidens (picturing the Great Company class). As they approached, Isaac was meditating in the field in the evening. Rebekah alighted from her camel and went forth to meet him. The wedding eventually took place.

Note that *both* Rebekah and her damsels went on this journey on the back of camels. The camels traveled on and on until they reached the vicinity where Isaac was. This represents



traveling to the end of the Gospel Age when Jesus returns at his Second Advent.

There are other pictures of the Church riding. Judges 5:10 tells of a custom during the Period of the Judges in Israel. God used the leading judge (Samuel, Gideon, etc.), and the judge had helping judges in a subsidiary sense who were responsible for certain territories. The judges rode on white asses, administering judgment in their own territory. By riding on the white asses, they could easily be identified as the appointed judges.

The Book of Revelation tells of the Church riding on white horses. “These [the ten kings and the beast] shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are *called*, and *chosen*, and *faithful* [showing a completed class].... And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Rev. 17:14; 19:14). The white linen represents the actual purity the Church will receive on the other side of the veil. In this scene, the Church is returning *from* the battle, victorious. This is verified because Jesus is also riding on a white horse (Rev. 19:11), a sign of triumph and victory. Jesus has already manifested his authority in this picture. The battle is finished because his garments are wet with blood (Rev. 19:13). In the Bozrah picture in Isaiah 63:1, Jesus is also seen returning from the battle with his garments all spattered with the blood of judgment from treading the winepress.

The thought of the white horse or white ass represents a finishing act. This class have made their calling and election sure; they have overcome. Thus there is a contrast in connection with Dumah in Isaiah 21:7 (RSV), where riders are seen in pairs, some being on asses and some on camels. The RSV clarifies that they are coming in pairs in a long caravan. One of the pair rides a camel; the other, an ass. There are also clues in Isaiah 34:16, “Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her *mate* [a prophecy goes forth out of God’s mouth; the time is coming when that prophetic word will have a mate, that is, its fulfillment]: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.” In Song of Solomon 2:12, it is said to be the time of mating (“the time of the singing of birds”). One purpose of God’s Word going forth is the selection of a bride for the antitypical Isaac. Hence there are prophecies of this class, the characteristics they must develop, the number of this class (144,000), etc. At the end of the age, when God’s purpose regarding the Church is accomplished, His Word will be fulfilled. In Song of Solomon 2:12, one bird is the Word of God going forth. When this bird meets its mate, it is the fulfillment. The second bird, or mate, is the image of the first bird; the fulfillment is exact. Just as with Rebekah and Isaac, the bride class will meet her mate at the end of the age. First comes prophecy, then history fulfilled.

In regard to the pairs of riders on camels and asses in Isaiah 21:7, the rider on the camel represents the Christian in his walk *in the present age*, that is, during his calling in the Gospel Age. The rider on the ass is his image, the same individual, but *in glory*. Having fulfilled his role, he is the mate, or double, of the one who walked in the narrow way in the flesh. With this understanding, the response of the watchman makes sense: “‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods he has shattered to the ground’” (Isa. 21:9 RSV). This fall of Babylon is a *future* act, but the pronouncement is made when the peculiar cavalry comes toward the watchman. Why? Because the Scriptures clearly teach that the Church will be complete and beyond the veil when Babylon actually falls, when judgment is *executed*. (Mystic Babylon fell only *from favor* in 1878.) The Church will be involved in the destruction of Babylon. In the hour of Babylon’s *power*, the last members of the Church will be put to death—just like when the scribes and Pharisees, who were *in power*, put Jesus to death. When Babylon literally falls, we will know the Church has already been *completed* and *glorified*. This is what the watchman declared. However, all of a sudden, a moment of reflection then occurred—as though God inserted a little comment when this announcement was made. “‘O my threshed and winnowed one, what I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you’” (Isa. 21:10 RSV). The Scriptures tell us the Church will be persecuted at the end of the age. Paul used

the word “tribulation” to describe the disciplinary experience he had, and “threshing” has been the lot of God’s people all down through the age. At the end of the age in a particular sense, there is to be the development of the corn of God’s floor (that is, the *choice* corn, the *seed* corn). The experience on the Church will be *very severe*—similar to Gethsemane and the Cross.

**Isa. 21:13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.**

This is a prophecy against Arabia. Dedanim were the people of Dedan. There are two Shebas and two Dedans in the Bible, one being in Arabia and one in Africa. The Dedan in this verse was in Arabia. Notice that Arabia was called a “forest” (“thickets” in the RSV), but now it is barren desert except for oases and a few cities.

**Isa. 21:14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.**

The tense is correct in the RSV for verses 13-17: “The oracle concerning Arabia. In the thickets in Arabia you will lodge, O caravans of Dedanites. To the thirsty bring water, meet the fugitive with bread, O inhabitants of the land of Tema. For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the press of battle. For thus the Lord said to me, ‘Within a year, according to the years of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar will come to an end; and the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few; for the LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.’”

Tema was a city in northern Arabia on the edge of the desert in the vicinity of Edom. The Dedanites were told to bring water and meet the fugitives with bread. The desert area of Arabia was a logical place for fugitives fleeing from attack. Armies would not pursue there lest they perish. Arabia was in between Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and its occupants were scattered nomads. God was saying that if the Arabians, the bedouin, had been merciful to those fleeing there for refuge, He would, in turn, have been merciful to them.

**Isa. 21:15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.**

Instead of being merciful to fugitives, the Arabians took advantage of them. In addition, they waylaid rich caravans traveling through the desert.

**Isa. 21:16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:**

Kedar bordered Moab and Edom but was on a lower plateau; hence Kedar was in this Arabian area. *Large* flocks of goats were pastured in Kedar. The “glory of Kedar” would fail within a year of this prophecy because of their lack of mercy.

Kedar is mentioned in Isaiah 60:7, “All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.” This is a prophecy of the Kingdom. When the Temple is built, these people will pay homage and respect in this way.

Kedar and Dedan are mentioned in Ezekiel 27:20-22. “Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.” Dedan, Arabia, and Kedar describe a bedouin type of life in the large

country of Arabia. In the past when Israel had feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, the bedouin found it profitable to bring their herds to Jerusalem and sell their animals.

It is interesting that the Lord's judgment reached out to these other areas. Elsewhere we see the judgments went also to Egypt and the Philistines. Israel looked to Egypt and Assyria for military help, and Israel looked to these other peoples for commercial and economic aid. Amos 1:12 is a prophecy against Tema. "But I will send a fire upon Teman [the Edom area], which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

Bozrah, Dedan, Tema, Kedar, and Sheba all refer to the desert area of Arabia. The bedouin living there felt they were safe, for they knew where the oases were, but God's judgment would reach them. In other words, God can search out and bring judgment on even the most *elusive* of foes.

**Isa. 21:17** And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.

**Isa. 22:1** The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

This prophecy against "the valley of vision" concerns Judah.

**Isa. 22:2** Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

Judah was exultant, prosperous, and joyous but should have been paying attention to warnings of a coming judgment. Judah had seen the judgment come on the ten tribes through Sennacherib and was now gloating that they were spared, considering themselves favored of God. Instead they should have been repentant and gotten down on their knees. The time between the defeat of the ten tribes and the trouble on Judah in 606 BC was an opportunity for Judah to repent, but they failed to act.

"Thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle." Judah *seemingly* escaped certain judgments, but it was actually just a temporary reprieve.

**Isa. 22:3** All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.

Verses 1-3 are a *spiritual picture*. Down through history, Catholicism has experienced many vicissitudes, but the system has seemingly weathered the storm. Both natural Israel and Catholicism have felt secure, protected, and safe, but judgment came and is coming.

**Isa. 22:4** Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

Isaiah was talking. He could not communicate the warning to the people at large. Being joyous, celebrating, and satisfied, they did not have a hearing ear.

**Isa. 22:5** For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

In the type, this was "a day of trouble" for Judah. In antitype, it is "a day of trouble" for Christendom. The Temple was in Jerusalem, the capital city. And the Roman Catholic Church,

located in Rome, the spiritual capital of the world, is considered the mother church. Doom is pending despite the festivities and rejoicing. Similarly, Babylon was feasting and felt secure, even though the enemy was just outside the broad walls, when *suddenly* there appeared handwriting on the wall and capture.

**Isa. 22:6** And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

**Isa. 22:7** And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

The Assyrians came down almost to the gate, but because Isaiah and King Hezekiah prayed together, God miraculously delivered Judah *temporarily*. In vision, Isaiah saw the enemy (the Assyrians) ready to attack.

**Isa. 22:8** And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

**Isa. 22:9** Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

**Isa. 22:10** And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

**Isa. 22:11** Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

Verses 8-11 are a reference to the building of Hezekiah's Tunnel. When the king heard that the enemy was coming, he realized there were many breaches in the protection of the city. As a result, he did two things: (1) He built a wall to keep the water supply inside the city. The spring was inside, but it wove around outside in the valley where the enemy could cut off the water supply, making Jerusalem vulnerable in time of siege. (2) He had a tunnel dug to channel the water from the upper (Virgin) pool down through the rock to the lower pool, even to the king's garden.

King Hezekiah "numbered the houses of Jerusalem" and purposely destroyed several of them to get enough stone and masonry to build the wall in haste.

**Isa. 22:12** And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

Verse 12 continues where verses 1-3 left off. God called the people to weeping and repentance, but instead they had a feast. Although Hezekiah was truly repentant, the people were not, and it was just a matter of time until the judgment would come. The people of Judah forgot that *God* was their protector; they were looking to their *own* efforts.

**Isa. 22:13** And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.

When the wall was built and the water supply was brought inside the city, the people should have mourned and repented, praying for deliverance. Instead they feasted with joy and celebration. "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die" was Isaiah's way of expressing that the people were only interested in having a good time and were not listening to his

warning. The people did not really believe they would die the next day. They should have been weeping, but instead Isaiah wept (verse 4), for despite their temporary deliverance from the Assyrians, he foresaw the coming destruction (it came 100 years later).

According to tradition, Isaiah was sawn asunder by his own people. They tried to kill the prophecy by killing the prophet. They refused to heed his counsel. (A general rule is to accept tradition where it is rational and reasonable *unless Scripture states otherwise.*)

**Isa. 22:14** And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Isaiah knew the judgment against Judah was irrevocable, but he would not live to see it fulfilled. He died having faith that the prophecy would come true.

Judah was given a space to repent as was mystical Babylon (360 years from 1517 to 1878). After the opportunity to repent was ignored, the judgment (with both) became irrevocable.

**Isa. 22:15** Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,

**Isa. 22:16** What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

The Lord's indignation was against Shebna, the treasurer, who had built himself a sepulcher on the *holy* ground, or rock, of the Temple area. Tombs were not to be built in close proximity to the holy site but should have been outside the city. A distinction was to be kept between the civil and the sacred. Hence the sanctity was violated.

The same idea has been carried on by the Catholic Church. The ground in Catholic cemeteries is considered holy, being like a form of life insurance. Moreover, to perpetuate their names, some of the wealthy had their names engraved on plaques and hung on the church walls. This was most inappropriate, for in a place of worship, the Lord is to be honored, not man.

**Isa. 22:17** Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

**Isa. 22:18** He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

Isaiah prophesied that Shebna would be demoted and carried away captive to a foreign land and die there. He would be tossed about like a tumbleweed. Shebna pictures Papacy, the false Christ, the vicegerent of Christ, who will *forever* be demoted.

**Isa. 22:19** And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

Shebna would feel insecure and be driven from place to place.

**Isa. 22:20** And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah:

**Isa. 22:21** And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

**Isa. 22:22** And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Eliakim would take Shebna's place. Eliakim is called the Lord's "servant" and "a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah." Eliakim pictures Jesus, who will be the age-lasting Father in the Kingdom and have "the key of the house of David" (the key to the government). Jesus is the "David," that is, the Beloved.

There was a real Shebna and a real Eliakim, but this language is so strong for relatively insignificant people that we know they are a type. The principle is the same with Zerubbabel, who pictures Jesus.

**Isa. 22:23** And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

**Isa. 22:24** And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

**Isa. 22:25** In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Verses 23-25 are in reverse order. Verse 23 says that Jesus will be fastened as a nail in a sure place. God appointed Jesus as the sure nail, and the *whole* fate of "his father's house" ("the offspring and the issue, all vessels," etc.) hangs or depends on his role. The Father will entrust everything to him in the Kingdom, yet he was not accepted at his First Advent as Israel's King. He was "cut down" on the Cross (verse 25). However, the nailing of Jesus on the Cross *secured the promises of God* instead of doing away with them, as his detractors thought.

**Isa. 23:1** The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

**Isa. 23:2** Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

This prophecy is a burden against Tyre. In Isaiah's day, the "ships of Tarshish" were identified with Tyre. Zidon (Sidon) was a village about 20 miles up the coast from Tyre. Tyre and Sidon were the two primary seaports for the mercantile nation of Phoenicia. Today Tyre and Sidon are located in southern Lebanon.

"Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in." Because the harbor of Tyre was destroyed, the boats of this navy were in a dilemma as to where to dock.

"From the land of Chittim it is revealed to them." Tyre was besieged twice. Future from Isaiah's day, Nebuchadnezzar laid waste the city of Tyre. Several centuries later Alexander the Great destroyed the rebuilt city of Tyre. When Tyre was laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar's army, the ships and inhabitants withdrew to a little island just off the coast. The people rebuilt the city on the island. In time, Alexander scraped the debris and stones from the mainland into the harbor to form a land bridge on which his soldiers marched to destroy the rebuilt city of Tyre. Anticipating the coming destruction, the inhabitants sailed a distance away to the large island of Cyprus (called "Chittim" in the KJV). The setting of this chapter is that from Cyprus,

the people heard Tyre and Sidon had been destroyed.

“Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle [of Cyprus].” The reference to Sidon indicates that the inhabitants of that city also fled to Cyprus. In the past, Cyprus was a natural stopping point for sailors, especially during a storm.

**Isa. 23:3 And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations.**

Sihor was a river. Grain and agricultural products were floated down the river to Tyre, the seaport. Tyre was the “mart of nations”; that is, the city was so well supplied with goods that it was like an *international* seaport. Sihor, the local river, was a picture of a larger river. In other words, Tyre was such a great maritime power that the ocean was like a river to the city, from which all kinds of goods and revenues were brought. Not only the localized produce of the nation but also the products of the river of the world (the ocean) went to Tyre.

The city of Tyre represents Papacy, which sits on many waters, on the river Euphrates, and is enriched by that river. Papacy prides itself on being the holy “Catholic” (universal) Church.

**Isa. 23:4 Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.**

Sidon was addressed, “Be thou ashamed!” The meaning of this verse is uncertain. Sidon derived its wealth from being a sea power. If this verse was a threat, it meant that the ones at the top reaped all the benefits and honors while the supporters, the masses, were not proportionately rewarded. The pope is crowned with gold and jewels and carried about in a chair. He is given the best food and homage, while the masses are exploited.

**Isa. 23:5 As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.**

The RSV gives a time element: “When the report comes to Egypt, they will be in anguish over the report about Tyre.” King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Tyre first, but his men got no revenue, no booty, for the inhabitants of Tyre sailed away with their goods when they saw the invasion was coming. The seaport was destroyed, but there was no profit, no material gain. Therefore, the Lord said that Nebuchadnezzar was to go next to Egypt, and there he would receive much reward. What was verse 5 predicting? When news of Tyre’s destruction reached Egypt, the Egyptians would be fearful, knowing the Babylonians would come to them next. Nebuchadnezzar would march right down the coast. All coastland inhabitants would fear his coming and the impending destruction, for with Tyre having been destroyed—the biggest fortified city on the coast—the way was clear for the enemy to come down.

**Isa. 23:6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.**

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

There are two possible interpretations for verses 6 and 7. (1) The people of Tyre were on the island of Cyprus, where they had fled for refuge from Nebuchadnezzar. They were sarcastically being told, “Go back and look at the city you thought was so great and so joyous. It is in ruins.” (2) The people of Tyre were being told to stay on Cyprus.

The main point is that the destruction of the seaport of Tyre, a mart of all nations, caused a

great mourning. The profits of merchants and tradesmen were affected. Tyre is a picture of Christendom, which gets wealth from sucking the lifeblood of the people. When the time comes for its destruction, there will be a great howling (Rev. 18:11).

Tyre's "own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn." When Tyre was destroyed, the inhabitants fled. The maritime power moved elsewhere.

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

The Phoenicians of old were extremely skilled merchants and traffickers. Although a small area, Phoenicia was international in scope, as was England (with colonies all over the world) and Papacy. The Vatican state is a *tiny plot of ground with great international power*. Papacy claims to be the original church, the oldest church. (Notice that Tyre's "antiquity" is mentioned in verse 7.) Tyre was "the crowning city." In antitype, the pope crowned the kings of Europe, and Rome was the capital (the "crowning city") of the Holy Roman Empire.

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

"The LORD of hosts hath purposed ... to stain the pride of *all* glory, ... [and of] *all* the honourable of the earth." The more comprehensive picture of Christendom is included in this prophecy of Tyre and Sidon. Throughout the world, the proud and honorable will be brought to their knees. Both *literal* Tyre and *literal* Babylon picture *spiritual* Babylon, yet the history of both literal cities was different.

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

The RSV has, "Overflow your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish." When a river floods, the result is devastation and destruction, and so Christendom will be destroyed as by a flood. Turbulence precedes a flood. In desperation, sandbags are placed on the banks, but usually to no avail. Once the dikes break and the water has had time to spread out over the land, it is like a calm lake. Nevertheless, the water causes extensive damage.

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

Verse 11 is a prophecy of our day. The "sea" (the turbulent masses) will overrun stabilized society, causing anarchy in the great Time of Trouble. The Lord will permit this because He wants to "bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth" (verse 9).

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

Verse 12 is related to verse 4. Papacy prides itself on being both a mother and a virgin—like Mary, who was both. It is sarcasm to call Papacy an "oppressed virgin." The Catholic Church is the *oppressor* virgin, rather than the oppressed virgin. An unfavorable picture!

**Isa. 23:13** Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin.

Suddenly the Chaldeans and the Assyrians are introduced into the picture about Tyre. The "land of the Chaldeans" refers to the fierce Babylonians. Assyria had greater antiquity than



Babylon as a world empire. The Book of Daniel starts the four universal empires with Babylon in 606 BC, but prior to that time, Egypt and Assyria were universal empires.

Verse 13 is saying there was a time when Babylon was insignificant. The Chaldean “people was not, till the Assyrian founded it.” This statement is interesting because Nimrod founded the cities of Nineveh (in Assyria) and Babel (Babylon) (Gen. 10:10,11 RSV). Verse 13 is also saying that the Assyrian power preceded the Chaldean power. After the Flood, the Ark rested in eastern Anatolia. When Noah and his family exited the Ark, they did not immediately rush to other lands but migrated *slowly*. Noah lived 350 years after the Flood, and Shem lived 500 years following the Deluge. In Genesis, “Cush” refers to India (which is nearer Turkey), not to Ethiopia in Africa. In time, Japheth went into Europe primarily and partly into Asia. Shem went partly into Asia and partly into Saudi Arabia (Babylon). Then several generations later along came Nimrod, who was related to Ham’s progeny. Nimrod became popular and established several cities. Assyria is Kir (Kars), a capital city of ancient Turkey. In fact, Assyria even took some Jewish captives up into Turkey (2 Kings 16:9). Prior to the massacre in Turkey of the Armenians at the turn of the century, many Armenian Jews lived up there.

The point is that ancient *Assyria originated in Turkey* and then moved farther south into Babylon. Hence the Chaldeans were originally in Turkey, and they were nothing until Assyria founded them. Nimrod established high fortified “towers.”

**Isa. 23:14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.**

**Isa. 23:15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.**

Seventy literal years of being forgotten (one generation) were pronounced on Tyre, and then it would be rejuvenated to a certain extent. Tyre was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, forgotten for 70 years, and then rebuilt.

At the end of the 70 years, Tyre would “sing as an harlot”; that is, she would try to woo or win back her former paramours in trade, etc., calling to mind as an asset her former days of glory. In other words, “If you help me get back on my feet, my restoration will benefit you. You will be prosperous with me as in the days of old.”

**Isa. 23:16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.**

**Isa. 23:17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.**

Tyre would recover, singing as a harlot and winning back her paramours. She would sell herself for money and goods; that is, she would commit fornication for “hire.” Before the destruction, the great mercantile seaport was proud and wealthy. Then it was humiliated and destroyed, and it lay in ruins for 70 years. The rebuilt city is described as a harlot.

This is a picture of Papacy as a harlot (Rev. 17:3-5). Papacy was given a *deadly* wound by Napoleon, which, in some respects, was more effective than Martin Luther’s Reformation. The wound was very effective in the hard *commercial* world, whereas Luther was very effective to the godly person. Luther spoke in ecclesiastical circles and opened the eyes of the truth-seeker. On the other hand, Napoleon was a great conqueror. His humiliation and imprisonment of the pope and his seizing the Vatican lasted for *70 years*. The Vatican actually became French property. Papacy likens the 70 years of humiliation to Israel’s 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

Napoleon imprisoned the pope in 1799. Seventy years later, in 1870, *during the time the Papacy was shorn of its temporal dominion*, the pope uttered the doctrine of papal infallibility. This was a seemingly *absurd* time to utter such a boastful claim—but Papacy was singing as a harlot, calling to mind her former greatness. The year 1870 marked the beginning of wooing her former paramours—and the effort was successful. The Vatican state was restored when Papacy got back its temporal dominion under Mussolini in 1929 with the signing of the Lateran Treaty. *Papacy is coming back into power.*

**Isa. 23:18** And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

Tyre's (Papacy's) "merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD." "Her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD [in a favorable sense]." In other words, Papacy's goods would be restored, but they would be taken from her and given to others—to The Christ.

"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift [after the wedding]; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour" (Psa. 45:12). "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Psa. 72:10,11). The daughter of Tyre, the kings of Tarshish and of the isles, etc., shall bear homage and respect to The Christ. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 14:20,21). All pots shall be "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD"; that is, all vessels will be consecrated to the Lord. These verses imply that *previously* Canaanites (traders, merchants) were in the "house of the LORD." The Catholic Church was making worldly profits.

Hence Papacy's usurpation power will be removed and replaced with the arrangement the Lord originally ordained. There will be a "housecleaning," and different leadership will be installed. The house of the Lord will be purified. In the Kingdom, Papacy's former adherents and leaders who are *rightly exercised* will acknowledge the change of leadership and gladly make restitution for their past wrongs. Because of their change of heart condition, their offerings will be acceptable. The masses will no longer be exploited but will be benefited and helped up the highway of holiness. What was taken from the people will be given back to them in a much more profitable way. They will be nourished by their obedience instead of being impoverished by it.

**Isa. 24:1** Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

**Isa. 24:2** And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

**Isa. 24:3** The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

**Isa. 24:4** The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

All strata of society—the whole earth—will be affected by this calamity (the great Time of Trouble). Activity will cease in the commercial as well as in the religious realm. The various goods and artifacts will lose their charm and appeal because everyone will be brought to a common level of distress.

The “earth mourneth and fadeth away” and the “world languisheth and fadeth away.” Both nature and society will be affected. For instance, the singing of birds will cease. There will be a mournful atmosphere in nature.

Verse 4 reads as follows in the RSV: “The *earth* mourns and withers, the *world* languishes and withers; the *heavens* languish together with the earth.” The “heavens” would be religious and civil leaders. Nature, the common people, and the leaders will all be affected.

**Isa. 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.**

The earth is “polluted” (RSV) in every sphere—naturally (air, water, food, etc.) and spiritually and figuratively.

“They have ... broken the everlasting [Adamic] covenant.” When Adam disobeyed, the death penalty came on the human race through him. However, if individually tested, no one (except Jesus) could have kept the covenant perfectly. All would have come short. “Everlasting” means “age-lasting” here.

**Isa. 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.**

Without a general knowledge of Scripture, this verse would seem to be literal, but it is not, as other Scriptures help us to know (for example, Zeph. 3:8,9). Nevertheless, there will be *universal* suffering and distress of the inhabitants. All will be “burned” figuratively.

“Few men [are] left” is like saying, “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee” (Jer. 30:11). In spite of the horror of Jacob’s Trouble, and in spite of the fact the Holy Remnant will be both “holy” and a “remnant,” the number of Jews who survive the trouble, proportionately speaking, may be higher than the number of survivors in the other nations. We are told that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. 24:22). Therefore, while the “burning” is figurative and not a literal scorching of the surface of the earth, many deaths and calamities will occur. The majority will probably die. The advice to the world is, “Hide yourself. Do not get involved in the pillaging. In quietness and meekness, you may live through the trouble.”

Zechariah 13:8,9 reads, “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts [Little Flock and Great Company] therein shall be cut off and die; but the third [Holy Remnant of Israel—and indirectly the world of mankind] shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”

Ezekiel 39:1,2 says, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel.” When Gog and Magog come down against the Holy Land in Jacob’s Trouble, only a sixth part of these Gentiles will survive to go home as eyewitnesses of God’s miraculous

deliverance of the Holy Remnant. That means five sixths of Gog will perish. What the percentage is of Gentiles who will die worldwide the Scriptures do not say, but it could well be over 50 percent because of the anarchy.

**Isa. 24:7** The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.

**Isa. 24:8** The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

**Isa. 24:9** They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

Wine and song will cease. Merriment and frivolity will stop. Even the musical instruments will be silent.

“Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.” Some people can drink strong liquor with pleasure. But at that time, such people will find they can no longer consume strong drink.

**Isa. 24:10** The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

The “city of confusion” is mystic Babylon. Thus verses 7-10 can be spiritualized. The “strong drink” would be false doctrine. There are two possible interpretations for the “new wine” of verse 7. (1) The “new wine” would be the *false* doctrines promulgated by the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3). Their false doctrines will not bring happiness and safety but will be “strong” and “bitter” to those who drink them. (2) The *true* “new wine” would be the doctrine of the Kingdom, which is not yet here at the time setting of these verses. The vine will languish because of the lack of this doctrine. Later in the Book of Isaiah, this interpretation would fit.

**Isa. 24:11** There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

When all else fails, the people will cry out for the true new “wine”; they will ask for help. “They shall pass through it [the land], hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward” (Isa. 8:21).

**Isa. 24:12** In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

“In the city” (Babylon, Christendom), “the gates are battered into ruins” (RSV). Verse 12 is a reminder of the invasion of Babylon by Cyrus, who went under the gates of the city.

**Isa. 24:13** When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

The Roman Catholic Church is “in the midst of the land among the people [nations—RSV]”; that is, it is international.

“As when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done” (RSV). The true vintage, the wheat harvest, is over; the Little Flock is gone. When the salt of the earth is removed, the destruction will come quickly. Once the true Church is gone and Protestantism and Catholicism, the two pillars, are torn down by the antitypical Samson, the whole fabric of

society will tumble.

**Isa. 24:14** They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

Verses 1-13 were all woe and trouble. Verse 14 gives a ray of hope—hope and rejoicing as the people lift their voices to God.

**Isa. 24:15** Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Verses 14-16a describe jubilation and rejoicing (see RSV). “They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the LORD they shout from the west. Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; in the coastlands of the sea, to the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.” Isaiah was standing in the middle, occupying center stage in the Holy Land. Prophetically he heard jubilation from the eastern and western extremities of the earth; hence there will be universal joy and understanding because of the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Jacob’s Trouble. “Glory to the Righteous” God!

**Isa. 24:16** From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

The pronoun “I” refers to Isaiah. The prophet said, “My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! ... the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.” This portion of verse 16 is a flashback in time, prior to the trouble. For “My leanness,” the KJV margin has “My secret to me”; Isaiah (like the Church) had advance prophetic knowledge of the coming trouble.

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

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

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

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

A person hears a report of coming trouble. He is running to escape the terror, but in his blind haste, he falls into a pit. He climbs out of the pit only to get caught by a snare (a tree bent over with a loop that hangs an animal when triggered).

One lesson is that those in the world who flee in terror and fear will not escape the trouble in the Day of the Lord’s wrath. Those who flee from the country to the city will not escape, and vice versa. The best advice to the unconsecrated is, “Hide yourself meekly and righteously wherever you are and in whatever situation—and PRAY! There will be greater safety in contrition than in panic.”

“The earth shall reel to and fro [stagger] like a drunkard.” The whole foundation of society is intoxicated. (Reasoning is illogical in the courts, for example.) Finally all institutions will

crumble. The people will act for self or family.

“The earth ... shall be removed like a cottage.” In the vineyards during the heat of harvest, a cottage sheltered the workers from the sun at lunchtime and in times of rest. The cottages were thatched *temporary* huts. Hence the present arrangement of society with the permission of evil and Satan usurping power is likened to a *temporary* cottage; it will be “removed.” In the future, when society is built upon the proper foundation, it will last.

“The windows from on high” will be open. This same expression was used at the time of the Flood, when the “world that then was” ended (Gen. 7:11; 2 Pet. 3:6). Now the expression was used in regard to the end of the present evil world. When the sluice gates from heaven are opened and the fallen angels inundate the earth, the great Time of Trouble will be precipitated.

A similar expression about opening the windows of heaven is used in Malachi 3:10 in reference to receiving abundant blessings. In other words, when the windows of heaven are opened, there is always a *flood*—either of judgment or of blessing.

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

The Lord will punish all segments of society but, as shown here, especially the leadership (religious and civil).

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

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

The “high ones ... and the kings of the earth ... shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall ... be visited.” The picture changes here. Earlier verses show how the Time of Trouble will affect all society with disarray and harsh experiences. The condemnation will be particularly on the “high ones” of the earth. When earth is viewed throughout its history, there have been cycles of conditions leading up to a climax requiring judgment: guilt and sin, then judgment; guilt and sin, then judgment; etc. But many have died without receiving judgment, punishment, or retribution. Now the wicked flourish “like a green bay tree” (Psa. 37:35), and those who tempt God seem to prosper. Verses 21 and 22 are summarizing that down through history, those who have failed in their stewardship of responsibility will not escape retribution. Those who have gone quietly down into the grave await a future verdict and punitive judgment when they are resuscitated in the Kingdom. In other words, the sins of the present life will not all be forgiven by any means. The *opportunity* for escape will be offered, and leniency and mercy will be extended, but for specific willful acts of injustice, there must be retribution in the future. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men[’s sins] they follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24).

“Then the moon [papal canon law] shall be confounded, and the sun [Papacy] ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion [through The Christ], and in Jerusalem [the earthly phase of the Kingdom], and before his ancients [the Ancient Worthies] gloriously.” Those who have exercised stewardship in the religious world in the present life will come forth from the tomb shamefacedly.

Verse 23 suggests that the Ancient Worthies will be the first ones to have a resurrection here on earth and to have a role to play. Just as Jesus and the Church are the firstfruits on the spiritual plane, so the Ancient Worthies will be raised before the world of mankind.

**Isa. 25:1 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.**

Verse 1 sounds like a Psalm of David. This praise, especially “thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth,” is particularly pertinent to this chapter, as will be explained later.

**Isa. 25:2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.**

Verse 2 pertains to the destruction of mystic Babylon, that is, to Papacy. The “palace of strangers” refers to the Catholic Church for several reasons. This false professed Church of God lives in luxury as a “palace.” The “Catholic” Church, having communication with the peoples of various nations, boasts of being “THE Church” because of the universality of its communicants. The word “strangers” implies its communicants are not really God’s, not really Christians. Following mystic Babylon’s destruction, “it shall never be built [again].” The RSV has, “It will never be rebuilt.”

**Isa. 25:3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.**

“Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee [the Lord]” because Babylon (Christendom) will have been made “a ruin” (verse 2). God’s great power manifested on behalf of defenseless Israel in Gog and Magog will cause the formerly “strong people” to praise Him. They will be humbled and their pride removed; they will have a holy fear of the God who is abasing them. “Cities of ruthless nations will fear thee” (RSV).

**Isa. 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.**

“Poor” refers to a general, continuous condition with perhaps just the barest necessities of life. “Needy in his distress” implies an emergency—those who require immediate help during a particular time of crisis lest they perish. Both classes will be helped in God’s due time and way. (In the past God has not helped them. Generally the poor have gotten poorer.)

What is “a refuge from the storm”? Based on the *literal* experience with sandstorms of many who lived in tents in the desert, “storms” can be storms in life, that is, particular crises. Bedouin sometimes experienced sandstorms that continued for days. The “storm,” then, is something that is temporarily continuous (in contrast to a tornado that moves through quickly). The Lord’s people must trust in God that they will weather such storms without personal injury, spiritually speaking.

“A shadow from the heat” is also a picture of the desert. In other words, there would be protection from both the sandstorm and the burning rays of the sun. God would be a shadow, or shade, from the heat to His people.

**Isa. 25:5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.**

With the first two verses, Isaiah was praising God for destroying a certain city and making of it a ruinous heap. This age will close with a great Time of Trouble. Verses 3-5 refer to that trouble and especially to God’s intervention on behalf of Israel in Jacob’s Trouble. Gog’s attempt to destroy Israel will be a terrible “blast,” or ordeal (verse 4); it will be like a “storm against the

wall.” Since sandstorms do not occur in the United States, we can use the illustration of a severe windstorm that threatens to destroy a house. Because of the pressure, which can be felt, it sounds and seems as if a wall will collapse. In the future, the great horde of Gog will threaten to overwhelm Israel and wreak great harm, but God will still the storm.

There are two pictures:

1. The great Time of Trouble will threaten the destruction of all flesh—the very survival of the human race. The anarchistic hosts, the Lord’s great army, will go through city and country, pillaging everything they find. A certain merriment and joy will accompany their pillaging because they will be unfettered—no one will be able to stop them. The strong and armed anarchists will overwhelm their hapless prey, doing terrible things, until the Lord *suddenly* stops them, stilling the waves (the motion and the noise) and bringing a calm.

2. Gog will come down against Israel. What will happen? The Master will stand up in the boat and still the waves. At first, the noisy, ruthless horde will be victorious and revel and carry on. Their exultation and joy will be terrifying to hiding Jews who hear the sound and fear they will be found and killed. The sheer terrorism will be a severe experience. However, God will still not only the storm but also the noise.

The “wonderful things” of verse 1 will be the marvelous intervention of God’s power. In the terrible hour of need, the mighty power of Jehovah will take over. The “poor” and “needy” classes who survive will rejoice to see the overturning of the anarchistic mobs. And they will rejoice that God’s plans of old have come to fulfillment. God predicted the trouble and He predicted the deliverance; in other words, His “counsels of old are faithfulness,” and they are “truth” in the sense that His Wisdom and Justice permitted the evil in order to apprise mankind of their need for salvation (verse 1). As dreadful as the trouble will be, all will acknowledge that it was necessary. Thus verse 1 is the aftermath of the terrible experience.

**Isa. 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.**

First, we will consider the natural picture: The “feast ... of fat things full of marrow” is like an outdoor barbecue with the entire roasted animal on a spit and plenty of food for all. God will also make “a feast of wines on the lees.” A feast is usually associated with a momentous occasion such as a marriage or a coronation. A controlled and supervised use of wine on such occasions produces joy and would not be wrong. In the Bible, “wine” pictures the *full joy* of truth, whereas water pertains to cleansing or to simply the quenching of thirst. “Lees” are usually the dregs, or sediment. The translators missed the point here, for the wine would be strong. Of course the lees would be carefully strained out, but the wine would be taken from the bottom where the lees are and thus be strong, good wine.

“Well refined” means that in the future in the Kingdom, wine will be doled out on a controlled, refined basis for special occasions to produce proper joy.

Verse 6 is describing a Kingdom “feast of fat things” “unto all people,” that is, for the world of mankind. God has prepared a feast in the future where He will bless all mankind. Think of the joy that awaits the human race. Knowing that God has intervened and having the hope of everlasting life, justice for all, mercy, perfect health, etc., will bring great spontaneous joy with singing and dancing. Particularly those who have suffered greatly in the present life with disease, war, and poverty will be overwhelmed with joy at the glorious prospect of living forever in God’s Kingdom.



In the unfavorable sense, those who sit on their “lees” are inactive; they sit on their behinds and contribute nothing to society. Christians, too, can sit on their “lees” in regard to activity and service for the Lord.

**Isa. 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.**

Verse 7 refers to a “covering” or “veil” of *ignorance*. Satan has cast a veil over the minds of the people—a veil of ignorance, superstition, fear, and death.

Jesus purposely did not reveal his message to the world lest they be converted in the present age (Matt. 13:15). Why did Jesus not want the conversion? The veil of Satan, blinding the people, has served the purpose of developing the Church class, the only ones not now under Satan’s control (2 Cor. 4:4). The called of this age are taken out of the blinded condition, or darkness, and are enabled to see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The Israelites could not penetrate the first veil (the Door) of the Tabernacle; this indicates that the world cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14).

**Isa. 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.**

Verse 8 is the basis for Revelation 21:4, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” The whole Bible is like one harmonious symphonic theme. The Book of Revelation is sometimes called the “flute of [the Apostle] John.”

The “reproach” (RSV) of God’s people (natural Israel) will be taken away. In a broader sense, the “reproach [curse of death, with attendant sickness]” will be removed from *all* people. Therefore, this chapter of Isaiah hints of Gog and Magog, the destruction of Papacy, the diminishing of Satan’s power, and the removal of the curse.

**Isa. 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**

In the Kingdom, the people will say, “This is *our* God; we have waited for Him.” This is what the groaning creation has unknowingly been waiting for (Rom. 8:22).

**Isa. 25:10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.**

“In this mountain” is primarily a reference to Israel. God’s hand will “rest” there, giving favor, reassurance, and affection. It is like a person putting a hand on another’s shoulder as a connotation of friendship.

However, “Moab shall be trodden down” by God, by *His* hand. God’s hand will rest reassuringly on Israel but will press down *hard* on Moab, giving discipline. *God* will fight for Israel as He did in the days of old (Zech. 14:3).

Moab is not equated with the Assyrian, or Gog, but was a kinsman of Israel; hence the term seems to refer to the Arabs as a whole. Thus verse 10 indicates that the trouble Israel has been having with the Arabs will be resolved. The Arabs will have to cease their hatred and become subservient to Israel in the Kingdom, allowing the land the Lord has deeded to Israel to belong

to the Jews. Incidentally, since Moab and Ammon were sons of Lot through his daughters, “Moab” was the land of Lot.

**Isa. 25:11** And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.

Verse 11 refers to the breaststroke. The power of strong swimmers doing this type of stroke sometimes causes little whirlpools. This analogy shows that the proud boasters in front will be put behind. Jehovah, the “swimmer,” will reach out to those in front and just take and put them behind His back into a secondary position. Their boastfulness and hatred will be blotted out. There is a real need for a rod of *iron*.

In regard to the “spoils,” the Moabites were known for their dehumanizing methods and the ferocity they practiced on those they captured.

**Isa. 25:12** And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

Moab was on a *high* plateau above and on the other side of the Dead Sea (in what is Jordan today).

Note: Chapter 25 was repeated, as follows.

**Isa. 25:1** O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Isaiah was praising God “for thou hast done wonderful things.” We do not know at this point what the “wonderful things” are.

“Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” Numbers 23:19 states, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” In other words, the truthfulness of God’s utterances and their surety of fulfillment can be relied on.

**Isa. 25:2** For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

This “defenced city,” this “palace of strangers,” which will be made “an heap” of ruins and “no city” and which “shall never be [re]built,” is mystic Babylon. In Scripture, a “palace” can be a “temple,” as in Jeremiah 30:18, “Thus saith the LORD; Behold, ... the city [Jerusalem] shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace [the Temple] shall remain after the manner thereof.” Verse 2 is saying that the “palace,” the false nominal temple of God, will be destroyed and never rebuilt. It is a “palace of strangers [tares, unconsecrated professed Christians].”

**Isa. 25:3** Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

The “strong people” could be a class who have been at enmity with God but who will, through awesome judgments, now see the Lord in the proper perspective and reverence Him. The “strong people” are synonymous with the “city of the terrible nations.” Those who were formerly ruthless and disrespectful of law and order will undergo a change of heart and recognize Jehovah as the truly “strong” One.

**Isa. 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.**

The Lord will humble one class with strong judgments (the “strong” of verse 3), and He will uplift and strengthen the other class (the “poor” and the “needy” of verse 4). A time will come when the meek will be exalted in the earth. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning” (Psa. 110:3). When the Kingdom is established, the “willing” class will be the very element who in this life get nowhere, are downtrodden and oppressed, have no opportunity to develop their talents, and are generally poor and hungry. They will gladly follow Jesus’ instructions because they will immediately see the benefits of doing so. They will recognize Jesus as the Wise Counselor, the mighty God (Isa. 9:6).

“A refuge from the [sand]storm” and “a shadow from the heat.” This verse is prophetic, more spiritual, and figurative. In ancient times, God knew Israel out of all the nations, and He manifested Himself as dealing peculiarly with them not only by miraculously opening the Red Sea to let them through, but also by causing a cloud to accompany them for 40 years. It was not just a pillar of a cloud, for the whole sky had an awning, or tent, as it were. God put a cloud in the sky as a tent to shield all of the Israelites from the burning rays of the sun and from sandstorms and cloudbursts in the desert. The cloud had a stabilizing or blanketing effect, for “upon every dwellingplace of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies [plural],” “upon all, the glory shall be a defence” (Isa. 4:5). The cloud was spectacular, especially at night when it was illuminated. The luminescent cloud, which was like bright moonlight in intensity, covered the entire nation, giving them a feeling of supernatural protection. God’s presence with them was thus manifested in a very special way, and they began to recognize that there was no danger from heat, sandstorm, or cloudburst. Incidentally, with the cloud covering, the Israelites could not see the sun, the moon, or the stars.

Isaiah 4:5,6 is saying that just as God supernaturally led Israel and protected them in the past, so He will do again in the future *in principle*. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight for Israel as He did in days of old. Every individual whose name is found written in the book of the living will be spared in Jacob’s Trouble. Since God will handpick the survivors, He will subsequently favor them *all* as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

At the end of the age, when the enemy (the “terrible ones,” Gog from the land of Magog) comes into the land as a flood to overwhelm and obliterate Israel, God will protect the Holy Remnant from this “blast.” In other words, verse 4 is talking not about a literal sandstorm, heat, or flash flood, but about protecting the Israelites from complete annihilation and miraculously saving the Holy Remnant.

Thus a second application is brought in. Not only does this picture apply to nominal spiritual Israel’s destruction as a “palace of strangers,” but it also applies to the protection of fleshly Israel from the enemy. One class is humbled; the other is uplifted.

The setting pertains to the impact of Israel’s deliverance out of Jacob’s Trouble in connection with the inauguration of Christ’s Kingdom, and that is what verse 1 refers to: “O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; *for thou hast done wonderful things [at the end of the age]; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*” The Book of Isaiah was written to be either sung or narrated in the future. At that time, the book will be read with understanding and joy, for God recorded Israel’s experiences and reactions *in advance*.

Jacob’s Trouble will be a contest between Satan and God. Satan opposes fleshly Israel, and Papacy is one of the main citadels of his empire. However, Satan prefers to work direct and not

to be an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). He has used Papacy because he is more successful as a deceiver, but his natural disposition is to be the accuser, the opponent, the adversary. He prefers to live without any inhibitions or restraints. While he is the god of this world, there are certain things he knows he cannot do. These restrictions frustrate him and cause him to all the more try to damage either spiritual or fleshly Israel. He always hopes that someday he will triumph over both.

In the near future, the same message will go out of the mouth of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. That message will be the doctrine of *demons*. Hence the demons can use nominal Christians as well as anarchists and terrorists. The evil powers above—principalities and powers—control and influence the hearts of men, resulting in confusion down here. Lawlessness is a part of Satan’s plan. Just like the Catholic Church, he tries to put one foot on each side; then, as an opportunist, he takes advantage of the side that triumphs.

**Isa. 25:5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.**

Verse 5 begins to narrow down the picture. From the natural standpoint, heat can silence tumult. On a hot day, the people languish and are weakened. Accordingly, God can quiet the rambunctious anarchistic element, with all their noise and tumult, by causing an especially hot day. Lawlessness will threaten the destruction of all humanity, not the hydrogen bomb. The extremity of chaos at the end of the age will be beyond human repair. Only God will be able to bring order out of worldwide chaos. He will “bring down the noise” as “heat in a dry place.”

On an extremely warm day in the desert, where there are no trees or shelter and one is perishing from the heat, God can simply spread a cloud as an awning for shade (“the shadow of a cloud”). Man cannot do this, but God can. And so Isaiah extolled the greatness of God in verse 1. In His own time and manner, He will justify Himself as the God of all comfort, the Helper of all needy, etc. In the coming extremity, when the “terrible ones” are blowing “against the wall [Israel, the only bulwark left],” He will intervene (verse 4). In the worldwide anarchy, Israel will be the last vestige of righteousness and hope. Gog will come down from the north to blow against that “wall.” However, God can still that tumult just as He can cool the heat of a scorchingly hot day with a cloud. When necessary, He effortlessly uses elements of nature as His angels.

The “branch” refers to Satan’s evil powers. When the crowd chanted, “Crucify him!” it was Satan and the demons who operated on their minds to stir up passions and prejudices against Jesus. The powers of evil were overwhelming. Just as Jesus said, “I am the vine, [and] ye are the branches,” so Satan has his “branch[es]” too. We similarly speak of a branch of government. In other words, while Gog will consist of ruthless individuals, the whole will be under the control of Satan and his hosts. Satan will cause “an evil thought” to enter the hearts and minds of the leadership of Gog to go back and destroy Israel, which dwells in the navel of the earth, and to seize their “cattle and goods” (Ezek. 38:10-12). Gog will want to plunder Israel’s spoil and seize control of the world from there.

The principle with Gog is illustrated with Pharaoh. God “hardened” Pharaoh’s heart by arranging for an individual to be on the throne of Egypt who would react a certain way under certain circumstances. However, God was not morally responsible for Pharaoh’s depraved decisions. From one standpoint, God caused Pharaoh’s reaction, and from another standpoint, Satan caused it, yet Pharaoh was ultimately responsible for his own decisions. The same is true with regard to Adam’s deflection in the Garden of Eden. God *permits* the evil but is not morally responsible for the wrong itself. Stated another way, He designed the permission of evil but is not morally responsible for the actual decisions man makes as a free moral agent.

The first five verses of this chapter tell about “strangers,” “strong people,” and “terrible ones” being brought low. Now the picture will change to blessings, peace, and victory.

**Isa. 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.**

The Lord will make a big feast for the world of mankind, starting in Israel. The “mountain” is probably Israel, and particularly Jerusalem, as the capital of the world (Isa. 2:2,3). It is to be “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,” that is, a very pleasant time with meat and beverages of joy and satisfaction.

**Isa. 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.**

Spiritually, God will remove the “covering cast over all people,” “the veil that is spread over all nations.” As the god of this world, Satan has blinded the eyes of men lest they see the glorious gospel in the face of the Lord Jesus, but in the breaking or piercing of this veil in the grand finale at the end of this age and the opening of the Kingdom in Israel, the awakening or revealing that will take place will be so extensive that it will reach out and take away the veil over all nations and bring them into the wonderful feast. At the ongoing “feast,” the people will enjoy doctrinal, historical, pleasurable, etc., things, for they will no longer be working by the sweat of the brow. They will have liberties and be free from the pressures of Satan, the flesh, and the world.

**Isa. 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.**

The Lord “will wipe away ... the rebuke of his people [Israel primarily].” When the Jews are given a heart of flesh, the stigma will be removed.

**Isa. 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**

**Isa. 25:10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.**

Verses 8 through 12 apply to the beginning of the Kingdom, which will be established in such an impressive way that those who are in the right frame of mind will be sure of its ultimate success. They will anticipate death being swallowed up in victory, knowing that God *will accomplish* His purposes in cleansing the earth.

“Lo, this is our God [present tense]; we have waited for him.” In the time setting of this verse, God has made His appearance, as it were, in delivering the Holy Remnant, in resurrecting the Ancient Worthies, and in establishing the Kingdom. Then the people will hear knowledge, witness cures, and see resuscitations from death. All of these factors will convince them that the Kingdom will be successful.

“Moab shall be trodden down.” “Moab” personifies the Arabs. Those who are so arrogant and hostile to Israel at present will be humbled through judgments.

“Even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.” The Arabs will have to eat humble pie, for

they will have to go to Israel for instruction. The judgments will be needed to tenderize them so that they will see matters in the right perspective. They will have to recognize not only the Jew but also the change in society. Based on other prophecies, Israel may have a military incursion into Moab prior to Jacob's Trouble. Nevertheless, the full import of these Scriptures pertains to the Kingdom.

**Q:** Why does "Moab" mean the Arabs here? Doesn't the term usually refer to Christendom?

**A:** Yes, but not here. When Catholics hear the truth in the Kingdom that there is no Trinity or hellfire, they will accept it right away. They will not be offended because the truth will delight them. It is the leadership that will be ashamed for having assumed honors and prerogatives belonging to Jesus and to God. In Old Testament times, Moab manifested animosity toward the Jew. Hence the name was used here because the Arabs manifest that same attitude today.

**Isa. 25:11** **And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.**

The way God will bring down the pride of the Arabs is likened to a swimmer doing the breaststroke. The swimmer reaches out and propels himself by thrusting the water behind him. And so God will make sure the hands reach out and put Moab back in a secondary role. This method will bring down the pride of the Arabs and Moab "together with the spoils of their hands." This wording suggests some plots that will appear very ominous to Israel, but God, by His providence, will remove the pride of the Arabs.

**Isa. 25:12** **And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.**

"The fortress of the high fort of thy walls" refers to Moab's supporters. See the RSV: "And the high fortifications of his [Moab's] walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust." The Arabs will get such power that it will seem to be more than Israel can handle. Later Scriptures show how God will accomplish their defeat.

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

The setting is after Jacob's Trouble, when the Kingdom is set up in Israel. The figurative "walls and bulwarks" refer to God's invisible wall of power and protection. Of course there will be literal manifestations too.

"This *song*" will actually be *sung* in the future. Today each nation has its own nationalistic songs, such as the national anthem for the United States, "The Star-Spangled Banner." This song of the deliverance of fleshly Israel is similar in principle. The hymns of the Christian Age are somewhat different from the songs of the Kingdom Age because the sentiments and hopes of the Church versus those of the world are different. In the Kingdom, select historical songs like Psalm 22 will be sung—songs that are deeply spiritual but that deal with a particularly important moment of history.

**Q:** Ezekiel 48 shows that when the land is divided into parallel strips in the Kingdom, Judah will be just north of the portion set aside for the Temple. Is that why Isaiah was singling out Judah here—to show its proximity to the real heart of the government?

**A:** Yes.

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

Psalm 118:19,20 reads, “Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.” With Ezekiel’s Temple, one will not just walk in the gate but will have to go up seven steps, through a long vestibule gateway, and into the Outer Court (which is for the world of mankind). The seven steps indicate that only those with the right heart condition (the “*righteous nation*”) may enter. The opening of the gates in the Kingdom will mean that the time of opportunity has come.

The clause “which *keepeth* the truth” shows that the gateway will be like a *testing* ground for entering, for the inside pictures a relatively stabilized condition. In the Tabernacle in the antitype, the outer gate is called an entry of *faith*, for only *believers* can enter the Court.

Psalm 24:7-9 reads, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” This type of city gate was lifted up through leverage rather than swung open. Going in through the open gate will show hearty acquiescence to the Lord’s deliverance. These verses pertain to God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant from Jacob’s Trouble. Jehovah will figuratively enter the gates and deliver those comprising the Holy Remnant, and they will want that condition to be perpetuated—they will want God to abide with them throughout the Kingdom Age.

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

Christians use this verse, and properly so, for this principle applies to *all* ages. However, the setting is primarily the establishment of the Kingdom.

**Isa. 26:4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:**

“Trust in the LORD for ever, for the LORD GOD is an *everlasting rock*” (RSV). God is “the *rock of ages*” (KJV margin). We usually think of Jesus as the Rock of Ages, but here it is God.

**Isa. 26:5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.**

Mystic Babylon (Papacy) will be brought down and laid low, “even to the ground, ... even to the dust.”

Verse 5 is a break in thought. Verses 1-4 describe God’s Kingdom and Temple. The “strong city,” the Kingdom, is contrasted with the city to be destroyed, namely, mystic Babylon (verses 5 and 6). Verse 7 is an observation.

**Isa. 26:6 The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.**

Verse 6 shows the uprising of the *masses* in connection with the tearing down of mystic Babylon.

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

God observes and reflects on the struggles and trials of the faithful in all ages, and He remembers their steadfastness.

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

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

In verses 8 and 9, the Church is speaking and looking *forward* to the Kingdom. “With my soul have I desired thee in the [Gospel Age] night.” The Church speaks of the time yet future when “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

**Comment:** This song, then, will be sung with different voices and choruses as in an opera or Handel’s *Messiah*.

**Isa. 26:10** Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

**Isa. 26:11** LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

The “land of uprightness” is the Kingdom. In the Gospel Age, the *wicked* predominate. In the Kingdom, the *righteous* will predominate. Verses 10 and 11 show the attitude and existence of the willfully wicked in the Kingdom. They will not be permitted to do real injury to others, but they will be allowed sufficient liberty to manifest their incorrigible spirit. For instance, they might not be allowed to murder another or to disrupt the general peaceful condition of that age, but they will be allowed to verbalize their thoughts and intentions. Amos 8:5,6 also reveals the thoughts of the incorrigible.

The willfully wicked will not see (that is, know) the majesty of God. “And this is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). To *know* God in the *full* and intimate sense, to appreciate Him and His majesty *fully*, is to have a crystallized character and then a guarantee of eternal life. For all who get life in the Kingdom, God will be “all in all,” that is, everything in everyone (1 Cor. 15:28).

For verse 11, the RSV has, “O LORD, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for thy adversaries consume them.” This is the same principle as the withholding of rain for the nations that will not go up to Jerusalem. God’s favor and blessing will be there waiting for them, but the willfully wicked will not recognize, acknowledge, or appreciate the extent of His favor and blessing in the Kingdom. Later they will be made to feel shame and to experience the judgment (Second Death). God has reserved this “fire” for the destruction of the wicked.

**Isa. 26:12** LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

**Isa. 26:13** O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

The world of mankind are prophetically speaking in the Kingdom. In the past, other “lords” ruled over them, but now they acknowledge God. These “lords” would be Satan, money, earthly rulers, and all other types of bondage allowed during the permission of evil.

**Isa. 26:14** They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore



**hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.**

This verse is a reminder of 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” At the *end* of the Millennium, *after* the Little Season, all evil and enemies will have been destroyed, the last enemy being death. All previous bondage will have passed away. The curtain, or “shades” (RSV), will be drawn down on all evil. Evil will come to a definite end.

Those who live on into the ages of ages will express these sentiments and will be able to say that all the previous “lords” (verse 13) have passed away. “They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35,36).

**Isa. 26:15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.**

Israel’s borders will be enlarged.

**Comment:** The Kingdom will start with Israel. Not only will her natural borders expand, but as people consecrate and come into harmony with God’s ways, the borders of the Kingdom will expand too. The end of verse 15 in the RSV is, “Thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.”

**Reply:** The Kingdom will start with Israel but will be enlarged to include all who render obedience to God. Hence all the faithful will become “Israelites.”

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

“O LORD, in distress they sought thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them” (RSV). The true Church has received chastening from the nominal Church.

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

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

The nominal Church is speaking in verses 17 and 18. She is in pains (*plural*), trying to bring forth converts, works, fruitage. (This verse is not to be confused with the *singular* birth pang of 1 Thessalonians 5:3.) The nominal Church expects to convert the whole world eventually, but instead the percentage of Christians in the world is shrinking. The nominal Church has “brought forth wind [gas, emptiness].” The inhabitants of the world have not “fallen” prostrate in acknowledging they are sinners and in recognizing Jesus as their Master.

**Isa. 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.**

The dead *in Christ* shall rise. This verse applies to the true Church. If the supplied italicized words are omitted in the King James, the verse begins, “Thy dead shall live, my dead body

shall arise.” Why was this verse inserted here? The previous two verses were the lament of the nominal Church over the lack of converts. That thought is related to this verse. The nominal Church confuses the work of two ages; they think that *now* is the *only* time for the salvation of both the Church and the world. Hence they labor to convert the world in the *present* age, but the Bible teaches that after the Church is found and proved faithful in this age, then will come the salvation of the world in the next age—and that work will be successful. First, the true Church will rise as a unit, as the body of Christ, and be glorified; then salvation will be opened up to the world. The awakening of mankind from the tomb awaits the completion of the Church. The resurrected Church will resuscitate and bring joy to the world and give them the “dew” of enlightenment. Jesus will come down like the “dew” on mown grass.

**Isa. 26:20** Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Verse 20, which is a paragraph break, applies to the end of the present age—to the *meek of Israel*, who recognize the meaning of events about to transpire. When news of Gog’s coming down reaches those in Israel, some will mourn like doves and hide themselves meekly in the clefts of the rock. By hiding themselves from judgment, this class will providentially survive the trouble.

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

The song that will be sung in Judah (see verse 1) ends with verse 21. Verse 20 is an instruction to those who will comprise the Holy Remnant. This class are to get out of the way of God’s judgment—they are to hide themselves—and pray to God for deliverance. Of that time, Ezekiel 38:18 says, “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face.”

“The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” After God’s indignation is visited upon Gog, then will come the general resurrection. The dead will come forth for judgment, and all iniquity will be revealed and cleansed. Chapter 26 is a Kingdom message. Several classes are mentioned: natural Israel, the true Church, the false Church, and the Holy Remnant.

**Isa. 27:1** In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

Verse 1 is a preface or title describing the ode that is to follow.

“Leviathan,” which is capitalized in the RSV, is called the “fleeing,” “twisting serpent.” The “dragon” in the midst of the “sea” of mankind, Leviathan is “that old serpent, called the Devil” (Rev. 12:9).

A “leviathan” would be a whale or an alligator—or part of each. Satan is a large fleeing, crooked serpent. The word “crooked” suggests that he works deviously, forming a serpentine or twisting path like a snake. Satan is devious but with a *purpose or objective*. It is interesting that the word “crook” comes from “crooked.” When these characteristics are combined, the result is a composite picture of Satan as a whale (the largest monster), a vicious alligator, and a devious serpent. The strongest evil individual or personality in the universe is Satan.

**Isa. 27:2** In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

Verse 2 is a radical change of thought. The “vineyard” is Israel. In the Kingdom, Israel will be the vineyard of the world, from which great blessings will go forth.

**Isa. 27:3 I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.**

God’s providential care will be over Israel. He will water and protect this vineyard and send out refreshment to the world from there.

**Isa. 27:4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.**

“Fury is not in me.” In Jacob’s Trouble, God will rescue Israel (the Holy Remnant) by manifesting His anger and fury against the enemy. In contrast to His previous wrath, when the Kingdom is set up, God will manifest love and peace, the disposition He prefers.

The modern-day “briers and thorns” would be barbed wire. In other words, God will go through His enemies as a tank goes through barbed wire.

**Isa. 27:5 Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.**

The enemy (Gog) has a choice: he can either make peace with God (“take hold of ... [God’s] strength”) or be an enemy.

**Isa. 27:6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.**

When the Kingdom is established after Jacob’s Trouble, Israel will take root, bud, blossom, and “fill the face of the world with fruit.” Jacob will never again be uprooted but will be a blessing to the whole world.

**Isa. 27:7 Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?**

Verses 7-9 are saying that Jacob’s Trouble will have a purging effect on the Jews. God will not make a full end of Israel, but He will punish them “in measure” to tenderize them into meekness to be fit vessels for the Kingdom. In other words, the Lord wants Israel to have a hard experience at the end of the age for their own good. This will prepare them to be good administrators of the new Kingdom government through the Ancient Worthies.

**Isa. 27:8 In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.**

“He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.” If God did not stay the rough wind of trouble, Israel would be exterminated. The “east wind” is the hot, dry desert wind. God purposes to punish Israel in measure, but the enemy will be brought down to the dust.

**Isa. 27:9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.**

Israel’s former worship will be changed to the pure, true religion of the true God. When

Ezekiel's Temple is built, Israel will have both a Temple and an altar. (Because Isaiah's prophecy was written 150 years before 606 BC, he referred to groves and images.)

**Isa. 27:10 Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.**

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

Jerusalem was the "defenced city" in Isaiah's day. Hence verses 10 and 11 can partially apply to the 70 years' desolation and are like a parenthesis, a break in thought. Isaiah was saying that Israel would be shown no favor until the end of the age.

In review, verse 4 refers to Jacob's Trouble and the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. Verse 5 is advice as to what the enemy (Gog) could have done. Verse 6 tells that after Jacob's Trouble, Israel will fill the face of the world with fruit. Verse 7 says that God's purpose in chastening Israel is not to destroy the people but to educate and prepare them; He will be merciful to them and purge their iniquities. These verses all describe events yet future. Therefore, if the end of verse 9 and verses 10 and 11 describe conditions in Isaiah's day, they would be an abrupt change in thought.

These verses can be spiritualized too. The Lord has had a spiritual vineyard of his professed people down through the age. Both the nominal and the true vineyards have needed purging and pruning. Nominal Christians do things of no real consequence and, therefore, have no real understanding. They are not truly converted.

Nevertheless, it is *hard to harmonize* the desolate city with the calf feeding in verse 10 and the "women" and the "people of no understanding" of verse 11 with either of these two applications. The picture changes from city to agricultural life.

Perhaps the best explanation would be to apply the "defenced city" to Gog, the heavily armed aggressor in Jacob's Trouble. Magog, the homeland of Gog, will be experiencing anarchy while Gog is marching down to Israel. Those comprising Gog will be leaving a less desirable situation, but they will be coming with booty they have acquired. Judgments will be visited on Magog. Magog will become desolate and the government radically changed. The women picking up sticks means that, in desperation, they will be foraging for anything they can get. Many of the people in Magog are atheistic; hence they are a "people of no understanding," and God will show them no favor—temporarily. Magog, the "habitation," or homeland, will become like a wilderness.

Verse 7 mentions how God will smite the enemy. God will not smite Israel as severely as He will smite the Gentiles, for He will punish Israel only "in measure." "Hath he [God] smitten him [Israel], as he smote those [the Gentiles] that smote him?" No! He will make a full end of the Gentile governments but will preserve a purged remnant in Israel. "Yet the defenced city shall be desolate." In other words, that which was once a fortified city shall become desolate. A radical change will take place.

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

The RSV has, "In that day from the river Euphrates to the brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh

out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel.”

“Ye shall be gathered one by one.” Today there are only a few Jews in Egypt because Nasser made them get out, so the gathering “one by one” harmonizes beautifully and is occurring even now. Also, those Jews in other nations who are faithful in heart will be brought through the trouble as part of the Holy Remnant. In the Arab nations, where their numbers are so few, the Jews have difficult experiences, and thus they are being purged already.

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

The RSV reads, “And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.”

Verse 13 suggests the rebuilding of the Temple as a place to come to and worship. In addition, these verses are a reference to the “highway” mentioned in Isaiah 19:23,24. Egypt, Israel (or Jerusalem), and Assyria will each be one third.

The seventh trumpet was blown in 1874, but the world was unaware of its sounding. The situation will be different when the “great trumpet” of Jubilee is blown on the antitypical tenth day of the seventh month, for the world will be caused to hear this trumpet, which will be blown during the month of the Feast of Trumpets when Jacob is delivered from the trouble.

*Spiritual application:* The nominal house will be destroyed and have no favor at all in the future. The systems were nominally cast off in 1878, and the literal fall of Babylon will occur in the near future. However, individuals can still receive favor today and even at the time of the literal fall. When the nominal Church comes crashing down, God will have mercy on the consecrated—that is, the Great Company—who will be spiritually delivered following a hard experience in washing their robes. Therefore, the Great Company will also be gathered one by one at the time of the fall of Babylon.

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

Ephraim represents Christendom, particularly Papacy. (Ephraim, the ten-tribe kingdom, was the most populous, and Papacy is the main denomination.) Christendom is “overcome [drunk] with [the] wine” of false doctrine. In *falsely* applying Scripture to justify its stewardship of truth, Papacy has taught that Catholicism is the only way to salvation. The system has also blasphemously assumed prerogatives of Deity, but the day of reckoning is coming. Papacy’s glory and honor, obtained over the centuries by draining the people, will fade as a flower. A flower looks beautiful, but its beauty is fleeting and transitory.

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

God will come with a mighty storm of hail and overflowing water to cast down Christendom with *violence*. Verse 2 reminds us of Revelation 18:21, which prophesies that mystic Babylon will be lifted up like a millstone and cast down with violence into the sea.

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

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

Why is this illustration used in connection with the destruction of Ephraim? Papacy is “on [at] the head of the fat [rich] valley” in revenues. In other words, Papacy occupies the chief role of Christendom and is the wealthiest and most numerous of the nominal churches.

Papacy is described as the “*hasty fruit*” because it will be destroyed *swiftly* and *prior* to the civil power. Just as Papacy has occupied the chief role during the Gospel Age in the eyes of the world, so the system will occupy the chief role—that is, be the first—in destruction. The anger of the masses will be especially directed against Papacy because they will see it as the “mother” of the daughter systems. Just as a person anxiously grabs and eats the first-ripe figs, so Catholicism will be grabbed and devoured *suddenly and first*. The kings of the earth will stand afar off and mourn as they see Papacy burning (Rev. 18:9,10). As a first-ripe fig easily falls off the tree when the wind blows, so Papacy will fall.

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

**Isa. 28:6** And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

God will be a “crown of glory” and a “diadem of beauty” to “his people” (Israel) when He delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. All nations will be against Israel. In Israel’s dire extremity and humiliation, God will handpick the survivors. And how will God deliver the Holy Remnant? He will be strength to those who “turn the battle to the gate.” This is a reference to the gate of Jerusalem, for the city will be captured (Zech. 14:2). Israel will actually *be defeated* for a short while so that when the Holy Remnant is delivered from the gigantic host of Gog, it will be obvious that *God* has done this. In the miraculous deliverance, five sixths of the enemy will die. A city may be under siege for a while, but when the enemy crashes the gates, all is lost for those within. Hence it will seem that Israel is utterly lost when God fights for the Holy Remnant. Symbolically, the capturing of Jerusalem is analogous to the enemy pressing in at the gate. God has said, “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.” Then the following was added: “But I will correct [punish] thee in measure” (Jer. 30:11). In other words, Israel needs the experience to prepare them for the establishment of the Kingdom.

“And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment.” God will sit in judgment; He will determine not only who wins the battle but who the survivors are. It will be very obvious which individuals are marked for deliverance and which are marked for destruction. The same principle operated when the seven last plagues were only on the Egyptians and not on the Israelites in Goshen. Moreover, the cloud was blindness to the pursuing host but light to the Israelites in front. God’s providence was most apparent. And so, in the coming judgment and deliverance of the Holy Remnant, the survivors will discern *God’s* “spirit of judgment.” The Jews who survive Jacob’s Trouble will overflow with praise for the Lord. Those Jews who die will have a stigma attached to their death.

**Isa. 28:7** But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

“They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way.” This

prophecy opened with the condemnation of the “drunkards of Ephraim,” the false prophets of Christendom (verse 1). But verse 7 indicates that Israel, too, has a problem with false doctrine and false prophets. Down through history, the majority of both Jews and Gentiles have followed false leaders and doctrine. Those Israelites, the majority, who heed the false counsel will die in Jacob’s Trouble. The handpicked survivors will heed the true counsel and have faith. Rabbinical leaders have misled the Jews just as the clergy have misled Christendom in the instruction of God’s Word.

**Isa. 28:8** For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

What strong language! Verse 8 is usually applied to Christendom, as would be proper elsewhere in Scripture. For example, Babylon is become the cage of all unclean birds and their filth (Rev. 18:2). This element came into the Catholic Church with impure motives and predominated in that system. The worldly Church that resulted became a stench in the nostrils of the Lord. But here in Isaiah 28:8, the condemnation applies to the Jews. They are unclean because they have no teaching of repentance; they do not recognize their need of redemption. Thus both the nominal Church and Judaism are guilty of erroneous instruction—their “tables are full of vomit and filthiness.”

**Isa. 28:9** Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

It is true that the Holy Remnant will respond to proper instruction, which will come from a spiritual class. Nevertheless, verses 9 and 10 also apply to the true Christian. All of the consecrated start as babes feeding on milk at the breast, the barest rudiments of knowledge and understanding, that is, the “milk of the word” (1 Pet. 2:2). But it is abnormal for a child to remain on milk for years and years. The time comes for weaning—when we should develop and eat stronger food. Those in the nominal system are content with the milk; they are satisfied to gurgle and sing hymns, whereas the Christian is to mature in both knowledge and grace.

**Isa. 28:10** For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

The repetition indicates progression and development. To gain an understanding of the Bible, we need to know a certain point here and a certain point there that seem to have no particular bearing, but it is the line upon line and the precept upon precept that result in understanding. The Bible is not meant to be easily understood. The Christian receives instruction through *study and application*. For example, we study Jesus’ life and how he met his experiences in order to know how to handle our own experiences. We receive indirect instruction for our experiences through precept upon precept. To learn of God, we must pray, meditate, study with regularity, and hearken to His Word.

**Isa. 28:11** For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

In Isaiah’s day, “this people” referred to the vast majority in Israel who did not understand his message because of a wrong heart condition. Instead of seeing that the fault lay with them, they accused the prophet of speaking with “stammering lips.”

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

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

Verse 13 is a play on words. The technique of line upon line serves a *double* purpose. Out of the mouth of babes, God causes wisdom to come forth. The meekness and the humility of those who hearken to the Lord's Word enable them to grow strong in His might, knowledge, and understanding. Yet the worldly wise regard this method of teaching as puerile and foolish; they scorn it. God's method of teaching is good to those who are properly exercised and they grow thereby, but it is confusion to the other element. Similarly, the Cross of Christ is a fragrance of life unto life to one class but an odor, or stench, of death unto death to the other class. Hence God's Word serves a twofold purpose. The worldly wise think we are abnormal to spend so much time studying the Bible, and they say the Bible contradicts itself.

Actually God speaks the *same* through His Word to *all* classes. Understanding depends on the heart condition and the opening of the mind to receive it. "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest." God's Word is meant to be very helpful and comforting, "yet they [the majority] would not hear."

"That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." Many use a Scripture to teach what *they* want it to teach. But then another statement contradicts that teaching. Hence they go forward and backward, to and fro—they stumble in the Word and are confused because they do not understand it. God uses this method to show the worldly wise how foolish they really are (1 Cor. 1:26,27). In the Kingdom, the worldly wise will be humbled when they realize that unlearned fishermen ended up being apostles and saints in glory.

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

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

Verse 15 is usually applied to nominal Christendom, whose leaders teach that the dead are not really dead but that death is the doorway to the next life and the soul is immortal. In this sense, they are in agreement with death. This application of verse 15 is a proper principle, but the setting is directed primarily to natural Israel (see verse 14). In the future, the *false* teachers will be confident that Israel will not be defeated and that God will stop the host of Gog and Magog. The false prophets will say, "Do not worry. God will deliver us." When Jerusalem is captured, the people (except for the Holy Remnant) will falter. Those who listen to the *false* teachers will have a *false confidence* that they will be saved. However, when the "overflowing scourge" goes through (when Gog enters Israel), the false leaders will have to admit they were wrong.

Prophetic truth is necessary for proper advance preparation. The false leaders will have a false confidence that the overflowing scourge of Gog coming down into Israel will be stopped in its tracks. They will say, "It shall not come unto us." God replied that when the overflowing scourge goes through the land and flattens them, it will prove they have told lies. On the surface, it would seem to be an evidence of faith to say, "The Lord will protect us and punish Gog and set up His Kingdom." But to prophesy that the nation will be spared is *wrong*. Those who so teach will be making lies their refuge. *We must know prophecy* to realize that Israel will *first be defeated* before God delivers them. To be part of the Holy Remnant, the Jews must repent. When they see the overflowing scourge coming into the land up to the neck (up to Jerusalem), they must repent and humbly and earnestly pray to God for instruction in righteousness that they might be delivered.

**Isa. 28:16** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make



**haste.**

Jesus is the “tried stone,” the “precious corner stone,” the “sure foundation.” And this verse *follows immediately after the instruction to the Jew to beware of false teachers and to study “precept upon precept.”*

It is interesting that God regards His Son as “a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” How much the Father appreciates what the Son did! The counsel is to recognize Jesus.

“He that believeth [in Jesus] shall not make haste.” In times of crisis, we should not allow emotions to guide our decisions. We must look at the stark facts and not make a rash, hasty decision based on emotion. A believer is to pray for, meditate on, look for, and weigh the counsel of God for guidance in handling experiences. Pray for counsel and guidance in how to act aright. Do not precipitate a decision. Be swift to hear and *slow* to speak and act (James 1:19).

A *Manna* text reads to the effect that in the past, the sun of God’s favor smiled and shone upon us, but now the storm, wind, and waves of temptation and trial have come. The Lord gives us checkered experiences. We try to be careful and examine our steps daily, for we want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Some guiding principles are the following: Be not wise in your own conceits. Trust in the Lord and His wisdom, and lean not on your own understanding. Endeavor to have no will of your own. Do not be emotional in times of crisis.

Some attribute an experience or development as being the Lord’s will when they actually have run ahead of Him and made advance preparations for doing things their own way. For example, a person may make plans to move without first asking for and receiving guidance from the Lord. The lesson is not to make plans *first* and then pray for guidance *afterwards*. All things work together for good to those who love God, but that does not mean we do everything right in the Lord’s sight. We may have many pluses and minuses in our Christian walk—things we have handled right and things we have done wrong—but when they are summed up, it will be a plus value for those who love the Lord. Not literally everything works for our good, for we do things amiss, but the sum total of the experiences of those who love God will be a “Praise the Lord.”

**Comment:** These verses are interesting, for they indicate a message will have to go out to the Jew that Israel will be defeated by Gog.

**Reply:** And those who believe will listen carefully and weigh the matter. Jeremiah was only one voice against the many voices of false prophets, but the few who were looking for the Lord’s counsel and leading weighed his words and then made a proper decision. The message to the Jew will be that Jerusalem will be taken, that Israel will be defeated momentarily, that hard times will be experienced, and that *Christ is the Messiah*. The feet members will give this message shortly before they pass off the scene. The Great Company will have a greater opportunity to repeat or echo this message *after* the Church is gone. Elijah instructed Elisha, but Elisha was more active later on.

**Isa. 28:17** Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Verse 17 (and other verses in this chapter) can have a double application and apply to the sweeping away of the lies of the beast and the false prophet and their being replaced with truth, but in this context, it can also refer to God’s deliverance of natural Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble.

**Isa. 28:18** And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

**Isa. 28:19** From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

The “report” will be the prophecy of the coming trouble. The “overflowing scourge” *will pass through* Israel. Calamity *will come* in Jacob’s Trouble. When a calamity threatens, people desire to hear a sweet message, but truth is more important than good news and is better preparation for what is to come. And so the message must be, “Yet one more wave of trouble must go over Israel,” even though the Jews think they have had enough trouble already. We can speak comfortably, but we must also speak the truth. God *will purge* Israel and *handpick* the survivors one by one. If we can show the Jews this fact in advance in their own Hebrew Scriptures, those who are rightly exercised will consider the matter.

**Isa. 28:20** For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

Verse 20 is true of the nominal Church, but it also true of the Jew and his religion *without Christ*. Regarding the nominal system, if the food is milk, those who drink it are kept as babes. For those who grow bigger, the doctrinal bed is too small. The discomfiture of the earnest truth-seeking Christian in Babylon is shown by this crib picture. As one grows, the crib becomes more and more uncomfortable, and the small sheet or blanket is not suitable. Similarly, the Jewish religion is inadequate. Few Jews know the Old Testament, and thus they are much like nominal Christendom in their lack of understanding of God’s Word.

**Isa. 28:21** For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

Notice the context of this verse, which begins with “For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim.” The word “for” ties in verse 21 with verse 20. God’s “strange work [and] ... act” is the deliverance of Israel. The *manner* of God’s deliverance will seem strange to the Jews. They are not accustomed to this type of message and instruction; it is alien to their type of thinking, generally speaking. The Lord’s method of delivering them is opposite to human philosophy. As Gog comes down against Israel, human nature would like God to *immediately* stop the mighty host. Just as it is not always best for a parent to spare the rod and be more merciful, so God will use the rod in Jacob’s Trouble. His method of allowing Israel to be defeated will seem strange, for it will appear that all of His promises have come to naught. In the final analysis, when the victory has been won, the Jews will see that God’s way was best.

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

Verse 22 refers to the particular “consumption” at the end of the age. God has decreed a consumption of the Gentile forces that come down against Israel and a purging, or burning, of the Jews themselves. Only a handful of each will be spared in this drastic experience.

The consumption will be “upon the *whole* earth.” It will be a part of God’s “strange act” and “strange work” (verse 21). The method He will use of *trouble* is the opposite of human reasoning. Jesus never would have died on the Cross if human reasoning had been used. Man would reason: “Why should that nice man die such a terrible death when he is holy, harmless, and without sin and obeys his Father perfectly and preaches so wonderfully?” But that is *God’s*

plan, and we must learn *His* methods.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verses 23-29 are discussing the *ministry of suffering*. The Christian suffers, the backsliding Christian suffers, the world suffers, and the Jew suffers. God's different dealings are needed for lessons and the proper perspective in connection with present and future instruction in righteousness.

God chooses His instruments, as illustrated by the seed in these verses. Barley, wheat, rye, cummin, fitches—the various types of grain are treated alike in that *all suffer*, but only the Master Workman, God, knows how to deal with each class or individual. The fitches are beaten out with a staff, the cummin is beaten with a rod, the bread corn is bruised, etc. All classes experience trouble in varying degrees, for *the permission of evil is absolutely necessary* for man. Each seed category has its own “appointed” type of discipline.

It is often asked, Why does God permit evil? In the future, when mankind can look back upon God's finished plan, they will understand the necessity for the ministry of suffering and praise Him for the experience.

The following notes are from *Reprint No. 576, “Prophetic Pen Pictures,”* which discusses Isaiah 28:23-29.

“Made plain” (verse 25) means “prepared.” God's times, seasons, and plans are definite and methodical. (1) God breaks up and prepares the soil of humanity with the plow of bitter experiences to make it ready for the seed of truth. (2) There follows the sowing of seed and the harvest of each kind of seed in its season. Stated another way, there will be as many harvests as there are kinds of seed—but order governs them all.

The time of trouble coming on the Church is the harvest or threshing time; it will separate the wheat from the tares. The Harvest represents two general classes, with some variety in each:

1. Fitches and cummin were small aromatic seeds used mostly for medicinal purposes. They were easily crushed by *gentle* threshing with a rod or staff. This class is quickly and easily separated from the world.

2. The other grains grow in larger quantities and cling closely to the chaff. Hence *rough* threshing is needed; that is, cart wheels pass over them repeatedly. And so some cling more closely to the world's forms and institutions.

Every time the *true* grain is (or will be) saved by some process. Though stronger methods of threshing are required with some, God's design is to save ultimately all who want to be saved.

**Isa. 29:1** Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

"Ariel, the city where David dwelt" is Jerusalem. (Bethlehem was the "city of David" at the time Jesus was born.) Depending on the Hebrew pronunciation, "Ariel" means "lion of God" or "mount of God" (*Ar* is "mount"; *El* is "God"). The Hebrew word for the altar of Ezekiel's Temple is *ariel* in Ezekiel 43:15, "So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns." The lion pictures Justice, one of the four attributes of God. The sacrifices are made acceptable on the altar, the hearth of which represents Justice. The wrath of God is pictured as a lion that devours those who transgress. In the throne of Solomon were lions, which were symbolic of executing judgment. The cover of the Ark of the Covenant was called the "Mercy Seat," and the seat of mercy is Justice. In other words, Justice is the foundation of God's throne (Psa. 89:14; 97:2). The seat of justice and judgment was Jerusalem, which was both the "lion [Justice] of God" and the "mount of God." In the context of verse 1, Jerusalem represents Israel, the entire nation.

"Add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices." One thought is that the message of doom was being pronounced, but more years had to pass before the execution. Another thought is that the clock was running out. While the people perfunctorily performed the sacrifices on the feast days of Passover, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles in the capital of Jerusalem, yet it was just a matter of time until judgment would come. The people were rendering mere *duty* worship, and the date of judgment was coming nearer and nearer.

**Isa. 29:2** Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

Even though the people went through the motions and dutifully traveled to Jerusalem for the three feasts, the fact that they did not sacrifice from the heart and were careless meant their sacrifices were not acceptable to God, and "distress" (trouble) and "heaviness and sorrow" would come.

"Woe to Ariel.... Yet I will distress Ariel, ... and it shall be unto me as Ariel." This strange phrasing of verses 1 and 2 is a play on words. While "Ariel" was a known name for Jerusalem, here the Lord was using that title to say the very name implied impending judgment. Judgment would be upon Jerusalem—upon itself.

**Isa. 29:3** And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

God was behind this experience of the city of Jerusalem. "I will camp against thee round about [I will put Jerusalem under siege]." "I ... will lay siege against thee with a mount [I will make a ramp or an incline of debris to scale the city wall and/or build a siege tower for observation and battering rams]." "I will raise forts against thee."

**Isa. 29:4** And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out

**of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.**

Like a person being humbled, Jerusalem would be brought down to the ground and speak from a humbled condition—“as of one that hath a familiar spirit.” The voices of fallen angels sound very *low*, as if they are coming off the floor.

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

This very strange verse sandwiched in here has several meanings depending on how it is read: an application in Isaiah’s day, a later application, and a prophetic undertone.

Regarding Isaiah’s day: Rab-shakeh threatened to destroy Jerusalem and taunted the people and their God. He suggested that they submit, for their God would not help them. In distress, the king consulted the Prophet Isaiah. As a result, the destroying angel killed the enemy host *in one night*. The point is that the threat seemed *overwhelming* to Israel, but the Lord fought and won the battle for them. The multitude of foes vanished, as it were.

Regarding the later application: Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC as a judgment from God. Hence there was a double lesson that *Ariel needed judgment*. Judgment was necessary.

Regarding the future: Although the multitude of Israel’s foes (Gog) will seem invincible in Jacob’s Trouble, they will be as the chaff that blows away in the wind. Verse 5 describes the *sudden* fighting of God for Israel—after Israel has been momentarily defeated in Jacob’s Trouble.

Chapter 29 could have started with verse 23 of the preceding chapter about the seed. How does God instruct? With one type of seed, He uses one instrument. With another type of seed, He uses another instrument. His wisdom sees what kind of discipline is beneficial and constructive for a particular individual or nation. With this background information, God then says that He will distress Ariel and that the experience is necessary.

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

Although Israel will be threatened with annihilation and defeated, God will eventually deliver the Holy Remnant with a *severe judgment*. Israel *needs* these checkered bitter-sweet experiences—miraculous deliverances, humiliating defeats, deliverance, trouble, deliverance, trouble, etc. Jacob’s Trouble will be a severe experience, but it will be the *final* trouble.

Verse 5 says that this judgment will occur “at an instant *suddenly*.” Just as in the past, God will use the elements of nature as weaponry to defeat Gog: storm, earthquake, hail, etc. It will seem as if all is lost when Jerusalem is taken, but THEN God will go forth and fight for His people as in the day of battle. Fire will come down from heaven, disease will occur, the enemy will slaughter one another in confusion, etc., to leave only one sixth of Gog as survivors.

What is the difference between thunder and “great noise”? Both are elements of nature, as are the other phenomena of verse 6. The God of NATURE will vent His wrath. Thunder is of the heavens and will be related to a deluge, but the “great noise” will be associated with the earthquake. In Jacob’s Trouble, there will be both the shaking and the roar of the quake, as well as the great sounds and explosion of volcanic eruptions of fire. Thunder, torrential rain, huge hailstones, earthquake, great noise, storm, tempest, fire, and brimstone—all will be manifestations of God’s power in bringing Jacob’s Trouble to a conclusion and in convincing

the people, Jew and Gentile, that Israel's God is *the God*.

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

“The multitude of all the nations ... [will] fight against Ariel”; that is, God will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. Jacob's Trouble will be “as a dream of a night vision”; in other words, it will be a terrible nightmare experience. The Holy Remnant will awaken with the dawn of deliverance, a morning of joy. The manifestation of God's power will be SUDDEN. There are stages of development, but when God acts, He will act *suddenly!*

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

The foe will have this experience. Their plan or dream will be to obtain plunder and booty. When they defeat Israel, they will prepare to reap the benefits when *suddenly* God will oppose them. The enemy will be SHOCKED!

Also, when the dead awaken, they will not be conscious of the length of time they spent in the grave. Hence their resuscitation will be like awaking from a dream, and they will awake in the condition they were in when they died. Their first thoughts will be their last conscious thoughts before death. Imagine those who die in Jacob's Trouble having these thoughts when they first come forth from the tomb!

Therefore, with both the survivors who are in shock and those who literally die in Jacob's Trouble, the expectation of these Gentiles will be completely turned around.

**Isa. 29:9** Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

**Isa. 29:10** For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

**Isa. 29:11** And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

**Isa. 29:12** And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

Neither the learned nor the unlearned can explain this experience. God caused a deep sleep in which prophet, priest, king, seers, and common people are unable to understand the vision. What is the “vision”? What is the “sealed book”? Verses 9-12 can pertain to the blind leaders of Christendom who try to understand the Bible but cannot because they are too steeped in false doctrine and error. Natural-minded theologians cannot understand spiritual matters.

These verses might also have a special *dispensational* application at the end of the age to rulers, both civil and spiritual, who will not understand what is happening. They will stagger in their drunkenness and confusion over the meaning of events taking place. In principle, saying that the book is sealed has been the history of the unconsecrated spiritual leaders of the nominal Church all down the Gospel Age. If one who wanted to advance in the knowledge of Scripture went to the priesthood, the standard answer was, “That doctrine is a mystery you are not

supposed to understand. Accept it by faith.”

In addition to this principle, there seems to be another special dispensational fulfillment at the end of the age. People are not now interested in prophecy, but a time will come when world events are such that the people will want information on Bible prophecy because they will not know where their next meal is coming from. The people will want answers, but who will explain the Bible to them? The Lord will set the stage for those with a present-truth background to explain.

**Isa. 29:13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

**Isa. 29:14** Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

**Isa. 29:15** Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

**Isa. 29:16** Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Although the context of this chapter is Ariel (Jerusalem), there is a lesson for everyone, Jew and Gentile. Consider the philosophy of verses 13-16. In the midst of the coming confusion, can man say there is no God? When Armageddon comes, it will persist for a few years in a worldwide capacity. At the end of that period of trouble will come *Jacob's Trouble*. The world, as well as Israel, will wonder at the Lord's "marvellous work."

What is the "marvellous work" and "wonder" that God will do "among this people [Israel]"? It is His deliverance of the Holy Remnant of Israel and the *manner* in which He delivers them. We accept by faith *past* miracles such as the parting of the Red Sea, Joshua's long day, Gideon's slaughter of the Midianites, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but such miracles have not happened recently. What is unique about the end of the age is that startling sample demonstrations of past miracles will occur more or less *simultaneously*—not piecemeal as down through Israel's history. Phenomenal natural and supernatural occurrences all happening within a very short period of time (say, within one week or one month) will be momentous revelations of God's glory, authority, and power.

God's "marvellous work," then, is the manner in which He will establish His Kingdom with AUTHORITY and POWER—He will rescue Israel, defeat Gog and Magog, and cleanse and purge the Jews, sparing a handpicked contrite Holy Remnant and weeding out the element not fit to be the nucleus of the Kingdom. This will be God's "marvellous work," His "wonder," His "strange work," and His "strange act" (Isa. 28:21; 29:14). When people look back at God's "strange work," they will be even more startled than when it actually occurred because hindsight is better than foresight. *In the midst of the deliverance* and the accompanying confusion, the human minds of the Holy Remnant and the Gentile eyewitnesses will be able to absorb only so much.

In times of great confusion and chaos, it is hard to reason and see a God of order, an intelligent Creator who has all things under control. It is similar to a drunk person who cannot reason. The problem is with the world of mankind, for God's will is done in heaven. Only on earth are there sin, darkness, and disobedience; earth is like the *one* lost sheep of the 99. And so, with this

world being full of confusion and sin, if one on earth looks up to God through a lens, the picture is very distorted. But for the 99 other sheep in heaven, who are whole and pure, everything is orderly and harmonious. From the present perspective of earth, it is hard to judge God and His character. Shall man, who is framed down here, judge God through his distorted lens? Only FAITH can reach up and trust the invisible God that all things are under His control.

**Isa. 29:17** Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

Lebanon will become a “fruitful field” and a “forest” as in days of old with the cedars of Lebanon, a symbol of everlasting life. Mankind will get everlasting life in the Kingdom—if obedient. Verse 17 is saying that earth’s devastation will be turned into prosperity.

**Isa. 29:18** And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

When the Kingdom is established, *all* will see and hear, from the least unto the greatest. The eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf will be opened.

**Isa. 29:19** The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

**Isa. 29:20** For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

**Isa. 29:21** That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Verses 17-21 are a *general* picture of *all* mankind. The Kingdom will be centered and established in Israel—that is where God will reveal Himself and take authority—but the message in regard to the deaf, the blind, the meek, and the poor is to the *whole world*.

“That make a man an offender for a word.” What a terrible condition! The reprover in the gate was approved of God as an instructor. He was trying to do that which was right, but he was falsely accused. In the past, the people went to the gate for judgment and answers to difficult questions on the moral code and legal matters. Right-hearted individuals who served in this capacity were often thrust aside, and the office of judgment was given to evil men. That is the situation today. The accusers, in finding fault with one who tries to render righteous judgment and follow a righteous course, weigh every word to try to trap him. What false witnesses say is often partially true, but a truth can be taken out of context and given a completely wrong connotation. For example, Jesus was accused of saying the Temple would be destroyed in three days, the suggestion being that he was a dangerous radical destructive of society.

A “snare” is a loop covered with leaves. When an unwary animal steps on it, the noose hangs the animal in the tree—sometimes for days—until the trapper comes around to remove and kill it for the pelt. Hence a snare is an unseen trap. Sometimes people set traps, spiritually speaking, to “turn aside the just for a thing of nought”; that is, they blow up something way out of proportion.

**Isa. 29:22** Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

**Isa. 29:23** But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they



**shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.**

“Jacob shall not now be ashamed ... when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him.” When the Kingdom is set up, the nation of Israel will not be ashamed. Of course Jacob himself will be resurrected immediately as an Ancient Worthy.

**Isa. 29:24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.**

The Jews’ understanding of God’s plan and doctrine (particularly that pertaining to Christ) and also the world of mankind’s understanding will become clear. An example of murmuring would be, “Why does [or doesn’t] God do such and such?”

**Q:** Can much of this chapter be applied spiritually as well, with “Ariel” being Christendom?

**A:** Part of the chapter, yes. The primary burden is on natural Israel, “the city where David dwelt” (verse 1), but we could have a general review of the chapter from a spiritual standpoint.

**Comment:** The word “suddenly” in verse 5 is interesting with both applications. The fall of Babylon will be sudden and so will God’s manifestation of the deliverance of natural Israel.

**Isa. 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:**

**Isa. 30:2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!**

The “rebellious children” were natural Israel in Isaiah’s day. Their sin was seeking protection from and making their own plans with Egypt instead of seeking the Lord’s counsel through either the prophet or the high priest.

**Isa. 30:3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.**

Their pact with Egypt would not avail Israel much—it would lead to shame and confusion.

**Isa. 30:4 For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.**

Zoan and Hanes were two of the principal cities of Egypt. There are two lessons: (1) a historical lesson from a fulfillment that took place in the past, and (2) a spiritual application that rebukes professed Christians. In the latter case, “Egypt” would represent seeking natural and worldly counsel, advice, and ideas instead of consulting the Lord and His Word.

**Isa. 30:5 They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.**

The help from Egypt was (and is) fruitless. A lesson for natural Israel today is that Egypt’s help will be in vain, even though a *temporary* peace may come. To Israel’s shame, since the nation was reestablished in 1948, there has not been a national day of fasting and prayer for God to deliver them from their enemies as in days of old.

**Isa. 30:6 The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a**

**people that shall not profit them.**

**Isa. 30:7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.**

“Beasts of the south” should be “beasts of the Negev” because of the animals. Since the Hebrew word is the same for both, the context determines whether “south” (a direction) or the “Negev” (a desert) is intended. Beasts traversed the desert wasteland.

How do “asses” and “camels” relate to the context? Israel sought protection from Egypt in two stages. On both occasions, Pharaoh tried to help Israel. The first time God broke one arm of Pharaoh, and the second time He broke the other arm, resulting in Egypt’s capture and humiliation. In regard to the earlier experience, God found fault with Israel for seeking an alliance with Egypt as protection from the threat of Babylon, which was approaching from the north. (Isaiah was talking as if he lived 150 years *later*, after these things happened.) The king of Babylon was so strong that the last two or three kings of Israel were puppets installed by him.

Later on (150 years later), when Jerusalem was destroyed, a small number of Jews were left in the land by Nebuchadnezzar as vinedressers to keep the land from going to seed. However, this small remnant of Jews rebelled against Gedaliah, the ruler Nebuchadnezzar had installed, and assassinated him; then they fled to Egypt with their personal belongings. In other words, they went through the Negev desert with their belongings and beasts of burden to Egypt to live there and find protection—but to no avail.

The account here was criticizing both Israel’s making an alliance with Egypt and Israel’s actually going down to Egypt for protection and to live there. The same principle will apply to those who trust in church organizations for refuge in the Time of Trouble—and, even now, to those who look for security and companionship in nominal systems, which have a worldly spirit and are not particularly interested in the Word of God.

“Their strength is to sit still.” The people were to be submissive and stay in Israel (“to *sit still*”). They were not to go to Egypt. The Lord would be merciful if they obeyed.

**Isa. 30:8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:**

**Isa. 30:9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:**

**Isa. 30:10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:**

Isaiah was commissioned by God at this early date to make a *big* banner—large enough to attract attention—and inscribe it with the accusation “You are a rebellious people; you are lying sons, who do not want to hear the instruction of the law of God.” Not only was Isaiah to put these words on a placard for the people to see, but he was to record this for posterity in a book, that is, in the Book of Isaiah.

This is *strong* language! In the Old Testament, God *castigated* His people for their sins. In the first chapter, Isaiah told them they were full of ulcers from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet, and their sins were like scarlet. But there was hope if they would listen to counsel from the Lord. Did Israel listen? No! The people did not want to hear the truth (verse 10). They were selective and listened only to the false prophets, who spoke “smooth [pleasant] things” and prophesied “deceits [deceitful things contrary to truth].” They wanted to hear happy

lessons, praise for doing right, daydreams, and illusions.

Later, after Isaiah's day, Jeremiah put on a wooden yoke to demonstrate that the king of Babylon was coming down and would capture the people of Judah. They were to submit and go into captivity peacefully. When a false prophet smashed the wooden yoke and broke it off Jeremiah's shoulder, he put on an iron yoke. That was a very dramatic way of demonstrating the coming judgment on Judah.

Jeremiah 42:11-16 reads:

“Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.

“And I will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

“But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,

“Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

“And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

“Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.”

Before the remnant of Jews assassinated Gedaliah, who was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar out of mercy, Jeremiah had told them, “Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, for God will deliver you *if you obey* and do not go to Egypt. But if you go to Egypt, you will die.” Of course the people disobeyed, and they were all buried in Memphis.

*Prior to receiving this counsel*, the people had said to Jeremiah, “Pray for us that God will show us the way.” Jeremiah 42:2-10 states:

“And [all the people] said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)

“That the LORD thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

“Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

“Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.

“Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

“And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

“Then called he ... all the people from the least even to the greatest,

“And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;

“If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.”

The people asked Jeremiah to petition God for them and said they would obey whatever the counsel was. However, when they actually got the advice, they refused it because it was not what they wanted to hear according to *human judgment*. Apparently, they concluded the message to remain in the land of Israel and be submissive was false.

In anger over Jeremiah’s advice that the people should not fight against Babylon, the king of Judah put Jeremiah in a dungeon filled with mire up to his armpits. The king thought Jeremiah was undermining the people. But later, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, the people knew Jeremiah was a true prophet. Even King Nebuchadnezzar recognized him as a prophet and hence gave him the choice of remaining in Israel or going to Babylon. Jeremiah chose to stay in Israel with the vinedressers. Note: *Human reasoning is deceitful*, for it led the Israelites *not* to obey Jeremiah’s counsel. They did not have the faith to sit still.

**Isa. 30:11** Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

How rude the people were to Isaiah! “Get out of the way! Do not tell us God said this and God said that. We do not want to hear the word of the Lord.” How brazen! Not only was Isaiah treated this way personally, but also he prophesied that Jeremiah would be rejected later. Jeremiah was put in stocks and mocked. Isaiah’s death occurred when he was sawn asunder. This treatment shows how hardened and calloused the people were.

**Isa. 30:12** Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

**Isa. 30:13** Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

Think of a big dam ominously filled with a great quantity of water. Should it break, the results would be catastrophic. Now the wall is beginning to bulge, and the breaking is imminent. When the dam does break, it will *explode suddenly* in an instant and, with the speed of a freight train, flood the valley and terrain below. The illustration is one of SUDDENNESS.

**Isa. 30:14** And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters’ vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.

To teach the same lesson, Isaiah now turned the picture from that of a breaking dam or a high wall to that of a dry potter’s vessel *smashed suddenly*. The potter’s vessel illustration shows that

the shattering will be so *complete* (like the smiting of the image) that not even a fragment big enough to scoop up a little coal of fire or water will be left. There will be *sudden and complete pulverization*, not stages of destruction. Revelation 2:27 says of the nations, “As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to *shivers*.” Breaking to shivers indicates a *sudden, explosive* effect.

This description in Isaiah helps us to understand the picture in Daniel of the smiting of the image. To emphasize the suddenness, Isaiah said, “*Suddenly at an instant*” (verse 13). The explosion will be sudden and violent.

When this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, it was sudden, and it was a *prototype* fulfillment of Jacob’s Trouble (just as the French Revolution was a miniature picture of the great Time of Trouble on Christendom at the end of the age).

Jeremiah 19:1-5 reads:

“Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter’s earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;

“And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

“And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

“Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

“They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.”

Jeremiah was told to get a potter’s earthen bottle and go to the Valley of Hinnom. There he was to proclaim God’s words, which condemned Israel for offering human sacrifices to Baal. God said of the burning of human babies in the Valley of Hinnom that such a thing is so foreign and repulsive to His character that the thought never even entered His mind. (This shows God condemns the doctrine of hellfire.) At least the babies died after a little while, ending their suffering, but the erroneous teaching is that God puts the sinner in hellfire *to burn eternally* without even a drop of water to cool the tongue.

Jeremiah 19:6-9 continues:

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

“And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

“And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

“And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.”

Just as Israel caused their firstborn, male or female, to be roasted before the fire god Molech, so the Lord would cause Nebuchadnezzar’s army to come down to besiege Jerusalem in 606 BC, resulting in such severe starvation that the Israelites would eat their own sons and daughters in desperation. The people hoped to escape these judgments—even right down to the beginning of the actual siege. Therefore, when Nebuchadnezzar did come down, the Israelites, caught by surprise, were bottled up in the city without an adequate food supply, and famine set in after several months.

Jeremiah 19:10,11 reads, “Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.” Next Jeremiah was to smash a bottle to smithereens to demonstrate *complete* destruction. Isaiah alluded to this destruction, and it is a lesson as a prototype.

Jeremiah 52:29 states, “In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons.” In 606 BC, only 832 Jews were taken captive to Babylon out of 9 million people; the rest died. How appropriate was the illustration of the smashed bottle! The captives were so few that they were like dust or powder. The number of captives taken in the two other captivities is as follows:

“This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty [3,023]” (Jer. 52:28).

“In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred” (Jer. 52:30). The captain of Nebuchadnezzar’s guard went down to Egypt to punish the Jews for rebelling and assassinating Gedaliah. Only 745 Jews were spared and taken to Babylon. The Scriptures are silent on Jeremiah, but probably he, too, returned to Babylon. The total number from all three captivities was  $3,023 + 832 + 745 = 4,600$ .

“And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison” (Jer. 52:31). It is possible that the three Hebrews, Jeremiah, Baruch, and Jehoiachin were all given honored positions and allowed to associate together.

**Isa. 30:15** For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

**Isa. 30:16** But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

**Isa. 30:17** One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

Verse 15 is a famous text, a principle we often quote: “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” In context, this advice was part of a prophecy given by Isaiah about what would happen in Jeremiah’s day. When the people were packing and departing for Egypt on horses and camels, the instruction from God would be: “Stop. Go back. Stay quietly in Israel.”

But the people would respond, “That advice is ridiculous! Get out of our way! Our baggage is packed, and we are going to Egypt.” Verses 16 and 17 describe the Israelites’ fleeing to Egypt.

Flee “till ye be left as a beacon ... and as an ensign on an hill.” In the prototype or earlier fulfillment, the Israelites were rebuked as a people and as a nation for wrongdoing. The *overwhelming* majority died as a punishment. Because *so few* (the remnant) were spared, they received notoriety as a stigma. They served as an unfavorable beacon or noteworthy reminder of God’s *great judgment* against His *own* people.

**Isa. 30:18** And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

**Isa. 30:19** For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

**Isa. 30:20** And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

**Isa. 30:21** And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

These verses furnish a valuable clue that the historical fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy 150 years later will have an even *greater* fulfillment yet future when the Holy Remnant is delivered. In the Book of Isaiah, which is written as a witness for all generations, the Holy Remnant is a major theme. Already, up through chapter 30, multiple illustrations from the past have pointed forward to the Holy Remnant—the *very few* who will be spared when the dross of Jews are purged in Jacob’s Trouble.

It is not pleasant to tell of such trouble coming on natural Israel, but we must be careful not to prophesy *only smooth things*. Isaiah prophesied of blessings to come, but he also spoke the plain truth. In addition to the blessings, we must tell of the hardships to come upon natural Israel, for a *great purging* lies ahead. There will be another siege against Jerusalem and another slaughter. In Ezekiel 38 and 39, the emphasis is on the judgment to be meted out to the great hordes (Meshech, Tubal, Togarmah, etc.) of the enemy Gog, who will come down from Magog to wipe out Israel. But Isaiah shows repeatedly what will happen to *Jewry* in Jacob’s Trouble. Israel will be thinned out, purged, cleansed. The ungodly, the dross, the *great majority*, will die. The Holy Remnant survivors will be like a *beacon* (a *light*), an *ensign* on the hill, signifying to all nations that God has delivered His people Israel. The Holy Remnant will be very honored.

The difference between the “beacon” of the type and that of the antitype is as follows. Back in 606 BC, the “beacon” received *unfavorable* attention because there was a stigma of punishment for the great majority who had died. In the future, the other nations will view the Holy Remnant very *favorably* because they will know that the *Lord God Almighty* revealed Himself and delivered them in a *remarkable* manner.

The high hill from which the beacon will shine is Jerusalem, the capital of the world. The Holy Remnant will be the nucleus of the Kingdom, and the Ancient Worthies will be the “teachers,” the leaders or princes. Of course the divine government will be in the hands of The Christ.

The precedent of earlier chapters led up to this point. Laborious chapter followed laborious chapter with just a *little* here and a *little* there, but now the clues are being brought together. Chapter 4 spoke about the Holy Remnant. Chapter 1 said that although Israel’s sins were as

scarlet, they could be made as white as snow. The Israelites have a history of disobedience, but when the Kingdom is established, a contrite, cleansed people will be its representatives. Past chapters were preparation for opening up this book. Proof that this is a prophecy of the Kingdom is the fact that there will be *true teachers*: Jesus, the Church, and the Ancient Worthies. The teachers will no longer be hidden in “a corner.”

The leadings of the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age are radically different. In the Gospel Age, Jesus goes *ahead* of his sheep, and his sheep follow him. One consecrates *freely, voluntarily*. In the Kingdom Age, every knee *must bow and confess* that Jesus is Lord. And Jesus will be *behind* the sheep. If they make a wrong turn, he will command them which way to go under the “rod of iron” rule. Obedience will be required. It will be a Kingdom of righteousness.

O = Jesus	<u>Gospel Age</u>	<u>Kingdom Age</u>
X = sheep	X X X O	O X X X

**Isa. 30:22** Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

**Isa. 30:23** Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

**Isa. 30:24** The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

**Isa. 30:25** And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

**Isa. 30:26** Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

In the natural application, the pronoun “ye” (verse 22) is natural Israel, and the picture is of a reformation of character of the nation of Israel. After 606 BC, the nation was no longer noted as worshippers of literal idols. At least nominally, the nation worshipped only one God, whereas previously there were seven major gods. However, the primary fulfillment of this verse and subsequent ones will be after Jacob’s Trouble. At that time, the nation will no longer worship the “gods” of silver and gold in finance and commerce; that is, as a people, they will no longer be the big bankers and worship money. (When barred from trade unions and other endeavors in the past, the Jews were more or less guided into finance and commerce; then their natural proclivities for wealth took over.) In the next age, the reformation will be so complete that the gods of silver and gold will be renounced. The Holy Remnant will be a changed people.

Another clue that the real fulfillment of this verse is after Jacob’s Trouble is the phrase “in the day of the great slaughter” (verse 25). Reformation of character will be a net result of the Holy Remnant’s going through Jacob’s Trouble. A New Testament text states the principle: “the love of money is the root of all [much] evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). They will “cast ... away [their gods of silver and gold] as a menstruous cloth” and “defile” the silver and the gold (verse 22). In other words, their former love of money will become repugnant to them when they realize it was a chief snare; they will abhor this former weakness.

Verses 23-26 give the nature of the blessings that are promised in the Kingdom: (1) rain and the resultant prospering of seed, (2) an “increase of the earth” in both minerals and agriculture, (3)



many cattle in “large pastures,” or grazing lands, as the desert is made arable, and (4) plenteous springs and rivers. Israel will be a very changed land in the Kingdom. Although the blessings are primarily for the Kingdom, the *beginnings* of these blessings will make Israel attractive as a booty in Jacob’s Trouble. Hence there will be quite a measurable period of prosperity in Israel before the invasion of Gog (Ezek. 38:11,12).

When an evil thought comes into the mind of Gog and hooks are put in its jaws, this mighty horde will invade Israel, a people then dwelling securely and at peace in the navel of the land, having gotten cattle and goods (temporal prosperity). Near the end of the Time of Trouble, these guerrilla bands styled Gog will go after Israel as a booty and prize. Of course after the Lord’s hand is manifested in the defeat of Gog and the deliverance of the Holy Remnant, the latter will be blessed more and more.

Verse 24 mentions “clean provender.” Even the food of the animals will be “clean” in the Kingdom; it will not be adulterated with fillers and impurities. The animals will get good, clean, hearty grain. Hence God provides for the welfare of the animals too. Incidentally, *after* the Millennium, the animals may not die anymore (and may not reproduce either). However, they will not be resurrected.

**Q:** Will there be a reason, as a reminder of Jesus, to have animal sacrifices after the Kingdom—and thus a reason to continue animal reproduction?

**A:** If sacrifices continue, they will be very minimal. The purpose of animal sacrifices in the Kingdom will be to educate and acquaint those brought out of the grave with what they misunderstood previously in regard to the Law. The meaning of the sacrifices will become clear with graphic visual demonstrations, especially if they are televised with proper explanations. Once the Kingdom Age is complete, repetitive sacrifices would seem to be unnecessary.

Oxen and young asses “ear the ground.” At first in the Kingdom Age, there will be meat and agricultural food products. Then the meat will phase out and the agricultural products will probably shift to the fruit of the trees.

In the Kingdom, every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree. The complexity and artificiality of today’s society will change to not have an emphasis on speed. In the present age, everything is geared toward a short life span and death. People rush to get an education, rush to succeed in a career, rush to purchase and pay for a house, rush to educate their children, and the next thing it is time to die. When people realize that life is everlasting, what will be the hurry? *Leisurely* outdoor exercise is a pleasure, whereas exercise done under *time pressures* and with our imperfect bodies can cause heart and other problems.

### **Spiritual Application**

Christendom has figurative idols of silver and gold, for its economies are based on profit and incentive motives and the law of supply and demand. Mammon is idolized and given a primary importance in life. The poor, as well as the rich, can be guilty of a lust for money. Not the money itself but the *love* for it is the root of much damage, even in the Christian life.

In addition, Papacy has literal idols of saints. In the Kingdom, *all idols*—figurative, literal, and symbolic—will be defiled and cast aside and become repugnant. Some of the poorest Catholic towns and countries have huge, elaborate cathedrals with great wealth incorporated into their literal statues and idols. The Catholic Church has been a leech on the land, sucking or draining the revenue of the people.

The “great slaughter” of the Time of Trouble, and especially Jacob’s Trouble, will be like a

stage. Immediately following the drama of the great slaughter will come multitudinous blessings to the world—a “feast of fat things” (Isa. 25:6).

The “towers” that will fall are artificial, man-made structures (religious, financial, commercial, sports, etc.). “Towers” can also be thought of as “watchtowers”; hence military structures will likewise be cast away. In comparison, God will bless the natural structures: hills, mountains, rivers, etc. And He will increase the seed in the more agrarian type of life in the Kingdom. Society will be thoroughly reorganized and completely restructured.

The “light of the moon” will be like the “light of the sun,” which will increase seven times. In other words, the “moonlight” of the New Covenant will be as bright as the sun. The requirements of the New Covenant will be easily understood and infallibly taught. Today we have to *prove* all things; in the Kingdom, the people will have to *learn* all things. The figurative sunlight in the Kingdom will be seven times brighter than at present; that is, it will be thoroughly understood, and obedience will be mandatory.

The Bible will always be a permanent record, for it is to be a witness throughout eternity. The Bible will be understood seven times better in the Kingdom than it is now. At that time, it will be a reference book (and not a “study book” as at present). The “study book” of the Kingdom will be the New (Law) Covenant, with its new terms of obedience. Although much detail of the old Law Covenant will not be carried forth into the New Covenant, both are *Law* covenants, both are made with Israel, and the *principles* are the same. One of the great sins of present-truth Christians is their neglect of the *principles* of the New Testament, especially the epistles.

The sunlight will be “sevenfold” and “as the light of seven days.” In Scripture, “seven days” can represent the seven Creative Days (Genesis), the seven days of consecration (Leviticus), and the seven periods of the Gospel Church (Revelation). In addition, the Millennial Age will have seven days, or periods, and that is the reference in verse 26. From the Millennial Age standpoint, the eighth day corresponds with the eighth day of the seven-day Creative Week. And the seven days of the Millennial Age correspond with the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, the instruction period for the world of mankind. The Feast of Passover (seven days) occurred at the *beginning* of the religious year, and the Feast of Tabernacles (seven days) occurred at the *end* of the religious year.

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast [of Passover] ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:7,8). Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross was followed by the seven-day Feast of Passover (picturing the Gospel Age), whereas the Feast of Tabernacles (or Feast of Harvest) occurred at the end of the year after the Day of Atonement (after the world’s recognition of Christ). Even though the Day of Atonement type contained the bullock, the Lord’s goat, and the scapegoat, the primary emphasis is on *mankind’s* realization that the blessings did not immediately follow Christ’s death because God had set aside time in His plan for the development of the Church. The Day of Atonement shows the primacy of Christ, the relationship of the Church as part of the sin offering, and atonement for the world following the application of the blood, or merit, for their benefit.

The light of the Kingdom will become like the waters of the sea. The knowledge of the Lord will so fill the earth that everyone will be drenched with the water (“sea”) of truth. “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9). If the Church has been blessed with instruction from God in this Gospel Age of *faith*, how much more the world will be blessed in the Kingdom Age of *sight and works*! How much more resplendent the Kingdom light will be when all walk *by sight*! And the light will be cumulative, for as generation after generation comes forth from the tomb and is instructed, the earth will become more and more filled with the knowledge of the Lord. By the end of the Kingdom, there will be light on all subjects and on all circumstances. In the face of all this

knowledge, Satan's loosing in the Little Season will be a *character* test. It will not be a test of knowledge, for all will have knowledge. (No matter how much knowledge one has, an individual can still succumb to the wiles of the Adversary unless he is absolutely loyal at heart to God.) Every individual who disobeys will then be fully responsible—and thus receive the full penalty of Second Death.

**Isa. 30:27** Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:

**Isa. 30:28** And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

God's name shall come (approach) from afar. This was Isaiah's way of saying "many days in the future," "in the last days." To us, who are living at the end of the age, the wrath of God, predicted so long ago, is *coming*; it is *near at hand*. His wrath is SMOKING HOT, and all who are living at that time will *know* He is angry. His fury will "reach to the midst of ... [His] neck." His "fury shall come up in ... [His] face" (Ezek. 38:18). God has hidden Himself for thousands of years, but now He will *reveal* Himself and *manifest* His indignation.

God's wrath will "sift the nations with the sieve of vanity [*destruction—RSV*]." At the crucial time in Jacob's Trouble, God will shake the nations as a sieve, back and forth, back and forth, purging out the undesirable element, the chaff. The day of destruction will purge out the sinner and leave the Holy Remnant alive in the sieve, especially in Israel. Of the Gog element, five-sixths will perish. The one-sixth who survive Jacob's Trouble will return to their homelands to give eyewitness accounts.

Note: The "sifting" action implies that God will shake the ground with an earthquake. *Many* Jews—those appointed to temporary destruction—will die. Only a select few will be handpicked to survive as the Holy Remnant. Not only will the sieve eliminate the chaff and save the kernel, but it will be literal destruction and a literal shaking of the land. The shaking of the land is symbolically comprehensive to include wind, rain, pestilence, fire, brimstone, etc., and especially an earthquake. It will be a sieve of both "vanity" (a play on words indicating the humbling of the nations) and "destruction."

God will put "a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err." After Gog causes destruction in Europe, certain providences will occur to cause these forces to turn back and attack Israel. God will put "hooks" in their jaw to change their direction (Ezek. 38:4). He will gather all nations to Israel, to Jerusalem, for this final battle and there pour upon them His fierce indignation. Through providences and the manipulation of events, He will set the stage. God is setting a trap, as it were, to ensnare the many forces of Gog through their own selfish motives.

God's indignation will involve His breath, His lips, and His "tongue as a devouring fire." This coming judgment will be so convincing that all gathered there will know it is the indignation of the *God of Israel* against the enemy (Gog); clearly it will be a *miraculous* destruction. In principle, the worldwide trouble will be the same: "when *thy [God's] judgments* are [abroad] in the earth, the *inhabitants of the world* will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). The world will then know that God is in control, that what He says He means, that His instruction is to be obeyed, and that disobedience will be punished. Words followed by ACTION will manifest to the people that a *supernatural power* has established the Kingdom of God. However, the *first* demonstration of God's power will be in Israel—that is where He will first reveal Himself in the affairs of man. God's feet will be on the Mount of Olives, splitting it in half with an earthquake. He will manifest His judgments, His indignation and fury, so POWERFULLY that they will be seen to

emanate from HIS FACE: His eyes, lips, tongue, head, neck, and nostrils.

The “overflowing stream [the forces of Gog and Magog], shall reach to the midst of the neck [Jerusalem],” but God will break that power at its zenith. He will allow the enemy to *almost* snuff out Israel, but then He will act. Though God makes a full end of all other nations, He will not make a full end of Israel (Jer. 30:11). The forces of Satan will appear to be victorious. Israel will be like a drowning person whose head is just about to go underwater, but at that very psychological moment, the Lord will intervene and deliver the Holy Remnant. In addition, the Ancient Worthies will appear “in the day of the great slaughter,” “in the day that the LORD bindeth up the [open] breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound [with compassion and mercy]” (Isa. 30:25,26).

**Isa. 30:29** Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

As previously in Israel’s history when the people gathered for feasts, there will be a literal song with various instruments. The procedure was that after the *solemn* assembly of the day was finished, a song of *gladness* followed in the night. Songs of *joy* were sung as they wended their way to Jerusalem on foot and donkey for the feast. There was joy in knowing they would be reunited with relatives, and they wanted to pay respect and show appreciation to God with their offerings. Next came the *solemn* feast. That night, after the feast, songs of *joy* were again sung. The city of Jerusalem was so small that it was surrounded with tents and people who came in from other parts of the nation and world. Social intercourse was important and enjoyable.

Verse 29 shows that after the initial shock of Jacob’s Trouble, there will be *great joy and rejoicing*. After Jacob’s Trouble and their deliverance (a sobering experience that will evoke a period of mourning), the Holy Remnant will SING for joy, and the pipe or flute will be used. It was the same principle with Joseph. When he revealed his identity to his brothers, they were terrified. After he reassured them, they rejoiced that Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt.

Why is the “mighty One of Israel” called the “Rock of Israel” in the Revised Standard Version? A “rock” is a symbol of stability, shade, a fortress, and a place of deliverance. As a Rock, God will be in back of Israel’s salvation.

Fragmented allusions to Jacob’s Trouble frequently appear in the Book of Isaiah. The clues are “here a little,” “there a little” (Isa. 28:10). Some examples follow:

“And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel” (Isa. 8:8). The Assyrian in Isaiah is the same as Gog in Ezekiel. The Assyrian will invade Israel right up to the “neck” (Jerusalem) and spread his wings to fill the breadth of the land. This verse sounds like Ezekiel 38:9, “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.” The forces of Gog will be so numerous they are likened to a cloud covering the horizon.

“In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind” (Isa. 27:8). The “east wind” is the sirocco, a *hot*, dry, destructive wind that produces sandstorms. This is one method God will use to purge Israel in Jacob’s Trouble.

“O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.... Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner

of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction” (Isa. 10:5,24,25). The Assyrian (Gog) will smite Israel with a rod.

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

“In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it” (Isa. 19:16). Egypt will be afraid in that day, the day when God shakes His hand over it.

“Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (Isa. 37:36). Some of these prophecies had a *partial* fulfillment in Isaiah’s day. This one, for instance, had a fulfillment with Sennacherib. But certain details *not* yet fulfilled show a *future* application. The point is that a great slaughter will yet occur.

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3). The “mountain of the LORD” is identified with Jerusalem, the future capital of the world. This same phrase is used in Isaiah 30:29.

“But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:4). “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). The lawless (“Wicked”) one will be revealed, and Jesus will destroy him with his breath and coming. (Compare the word “breath” in Isaiah 30:28.)

**Isa. 30:30** And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

God will make “bare [the descending blow of] his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. 52:10). Here verse 30 tells that He “shall show the lighting down of his arm.” In other words, not only will God raise and lower His arm with a descending blow, but also, with fury coming up into His face, He will roll up His sleeves to show His anger, raise His arm, and inflict the blow. He will ACT! The God of nature, who has hidden Himself, will REVEAL HIS POWER!

God will also “cause his glorious [majestic—RSV] voice to be heard.” The Kingdom will not just glide gently in, as some believe. This age will be dramatically concluded, and the new age will be opened with the majesty of Jehovah. Not only will the overwhelming host that comes against the little nation of Israel be destroyed, but also that host will be backed up by the fallen angels. The openly rebellious fallen angels will be destroyed, and the other fallen angels will be curbed and reserved for judgment during the Kingdom Age.

God’s majestic voice will say very authoritatively, as it were, “Be still, and know that I am God!” All will hear it. The one-sixth survivors of Gog will return to their homelands with fright and respect—and in awe, they will declare what they have seen and heard.

This chapter cannot be spiritualized in its primary application because the setting is physically

and literally in Israel. The cloudburst and tempest and hailstones will be manifestations of the wrath of the God of nature. A small sampling of this type of demonstration to show God's disapproval through nature was the earthquake and darkness over the land of Israel when Jesus died. The timing caused the centurion to say, "Truly this was the Son of God!" The timing of the judgment on Gog at the end of the age will indicate that The Christ is complete and the Great Company is off the scene, releasing the mortgage of the Ransom for the world. There will no longer be any reason to delay the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Verse 30 is referring to Almighty God, not Jesus. The authority of GOD will be manifested. When Jesus takes over, the world will know that GOD is the author of salvation, that HE is the God of Israel, that HE is causing restitution, and that Jesus is HIS appointed agent. "Saviours" plural (The Christ) will come from Mount Zion to deliver Jacob out of his trouble (Obadiah 21); they will be God's agents or representatives, but the credit will be given to GOD. It is HIS power and wrath. During the Kingdom, Jesus will shepherd the nations with firm judgment (that is, with a rod of iron), but the honor, authority, and majesty will be God's, even though Jesus does the work.

The work of God and Jesus tie in together, and we should not try to break down the work of each into different phases. They *both* are involved. The Book of Revelation speaks of the "kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ," of Jehovah and His anointed, of God and The Christ (Rev. 11:15). Psalm 2:2 also indicates Jehovah and His Christ: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed." God, Jesus, and the Church will all be involved in exercising the authority.

We should not vitiate these verses by giving them a mild application. We must not rob God of His THUNDER. These are STRONG verses of indignation. *Indignation is indignation*, but it will be a *short* work.

**Isa. 30:31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.**

The Assyrian (Gog) will smite Israel with a rod, and then God will reverse circumstances and smite the Assyrian with a rod. God will use the power of Gog as He used the power of Egypt in the past. With the plagues hardening Pharaoh's heart, God had opportunity to manifest His glory and power in delivering Israel from Egypt. God will use the power of Gog to pull down Gentile nations; that is, Assyria will be the rod of God's judgment on the other nations. Then, subsequently, Assyria will be turned with hooks to go down against Israel.

**Isa. 30:32 And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.**

God will fight "battles [plural] of shaking." He will fight mightily as He did in days of old, using numerous sample demonstrations of the power that He manifested on Israel's behalf in the past: flood, fire, brimstone, earthquake, hailstones, thunder, disease, anarchy, etc. There will be "battles" (plural) when it seems as if the God of Israel and Israel itself are going to be eliminated.

**Isa. 30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.**

The King James Version uses "Tophet" as a title in "Tophet is ordained of old," whereas the Revised Standard has, "For a burning place has long been prepared." "Tophet" is correct, as

the following two Scriptures will show.

1. “And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech” (2 Kings 23:10). King Josiah defiled the literal place of Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, where fire worship of Molech was observed by passing firstborn sons (and occasionally daughters) through the fire.
2. “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place” (Jer. 7:31,32). Again the account states that in literal Tophet in the Valley of Hinnom, Israelite sons and daughters were burned in sacrifice. This is an excellent text to prove there is no hellfire. The thought of burning children in fire *never even entered God’s mind*, yet many in the church denominations believe disobedient people burn eternally in hell.

**Q:** How could parents burn their own children?

**A:** Erroneous doctrine can blind people to the distinction between right and wrong. Many heathen religions think of God as a God of wrath, who needs to be appeased with innocent human sacrifice.

Satan is trying to distort the nature of Christ’s vicarious sacrifice. God did not even burn live animals. Animals used for sacrifice in the Old Testament were first killed painlessly, and then the flesh was put on the altar. Today we eat meat daily and think nothing of the slain animals. Meat was given to man for food following the Flood, and the animals can be killed humanely. Under the Law, the firstborn of both animals and humans belonged to God (Exod. 13:12; 34:19; Num. 3:13), but Satan distorted this truth to be a live fire offering to Molech. And in Egypt, instead of the bullock representing the perfect man Christ Jesus, who *voluntarily* gave his life as a substitute for Adam, the bull was worshipped as a sex symbol. Ranting on the street to preach the gospel is another example of Satan’s attempt to bring discredit to Christianity. Whenever a truth is revealed, he tries to counterfeit, outdo, or embellish it. A great imitator, Satan tries to appear as the innovator and author. Heathen practices are counterfeits of true religious practices, not vice versa.

Leviticus 18:21 reads, “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.” Way back in Moses’ day, the commandment was given to the Israelites not to burn (offer) their children to the fire god Molech, for this was an abhorrent heathen practice. “Molech” means “king.” At first, Molech was a statue on a high hill or cliff, and an altar was below. Later the statue of Molech had a furnace in its stomach. Children were placed in the arms of the statue to be roasted alive and then eaten. The Canaanites did this type of sacrificing. In fact, the word “cannibal” is related to this ancient practice of cooking live babies and eating them. This fiendish Satanic orgy was accompanied with discordant clangs and beats of music(?) on timbrels and cymbals, which drowned out the screams of agony. As the victim screamed, these sadists clanged their cymbals with Satanic *joy and delight*. (With sadism comes a peculiar delight in the suffering of others. This perverseness helps to explain why some who commit gruesome murders feel no twinge of conscience and actually receive satisfaction and pleasure from the violence.) In their frenzy, those guilty of these practices did not realize how vile and low they were.

The Jews today do not want to admit this type of worship was part of their past, but such statements in Scripture reveal that they were (and are) no better morally than any other people. *Only in proportion* as they kept the Mosaic Law did they refrain from the practices of the

surrounding heathen nations.

Molech worship was practiced by the Canaanites when the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Years earlier Moses warned the Israelites not to be involved, but 500 years later, in King Josiah's day, they were still practicing Molech worship in the Valley of Hinnom. With righteous fury, good King Josiah hunted out and destroyed statues to Molech throughout the realm.

God has prepared for a slaughter that will take place in the area of Tophet in the Valley of Hinnom, previously the site of Molech worship. He has designed a pit, or snare, in Israel for the unsuspecting nations in the end of the age. All nations will be gathered there for the final drama of this age. God is setting the stage and building the scaffolding for His inauguration address. There will be *great destruction* in the Valley of Hinnom in Jerusalem when the earthquake occurs and opens up a valley as a way of escape for the right-hearted Holy Remnant. As that day draws nearer, our responsibility as Christians will be to preach the *doctrine of repentance* to the Jews. They are not innocent victims as they claim. We must speak truth, the *whole counsel* of God. When the trouble comes, the right-hearted Jew will get down on his knees in repentance and look to *God* for help.

Just as King Josiah destroyed the literal Tophet, so God will destroy the present evil order. What happens in Israel will be figurative of that which happens worldwide. Josiah not only desecrated the Molech altar in Jerusalem but also sent emissaries up to Beth-el to destroy that altar and other statues and groves. Such action took great courage on Josiah's part, for these practices had been deeply ingrained in the people over the centuries. Similarly Gideon acted courageously to cut down his father's grove to Baal. Josiah's efforts back there represent a complete cleaning out in the future.

There is a *secondary* hint in verse 33 that just as God will inaugurate His Kingdom in a dramatic way in Tophet in Jerusalem, so He has built Tophet for Satan's destruction at the end of the Millennial Age, when the Adversary and his followers go up against the "camp of the saints." Fire will come down from heaven to consume them. In this way, the "king," the "god of this world," the "Tophet" of Satan himself, the "Molech" who has inspired and backed up these heathen practices, will be destroyed forever. It is interesting that a Gog and Magog picture applies to the end of both the Gospel Age and the Kingdom (or Millennial) Age.

At the time of Gog and Magog in the near future, allied powers—Sheba (the United States), Dedan (France), and Tarshish (England)—will be representatively on hand in Israel as an expeditionary force, feeling civilization will collapse if Israel goes under. They will want to help Israel for selfish reasons—because it is their last hope. But they will be powerless, for Israel will be hopelessly outnumbered by the host of Gog. Former President Eisenhower wrote a book showing that it would be impossible for the United States to win a war with Russia.

**Isa. 31:1** Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

What roles has Egypt played in Israel's history? Egypt has been both an ally and an enemy depending on which period of Israel's history is being considered, and at one time, Egypt even held the nation in bondage in its midst. Here Israel desired Egypt's protection against Babylon, for Egypt had a large army with many horses and chariots. Israel leaned on Egypt for support, but Egypt proved to be a broken reed that pierced them through the side because God was chastising Israel for their worldly alliances.

Symbolically or spiritually, "Egypt" represents the world or the worldly nominal Church. "Horses" picture doctrines, and "chariots" are organizations. The relationship between horses



and chariots is that organizations are built upon certain doctrines and principles. Doctrines support an organization and vice versa. An example of a worldly organization is the United Nations, whose charter or doctrinal purpose is to help save the world. “Israel” represents God’s professed people. To the extent that Israel seeks help from worldly organizations and not God, the nation becomes alienated from Him. God is displeased because “they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!”

**Isa. 31:2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.**

God was aware of this situation—that the Israelites’ hearts were leaning on others for support rather than on Him. The nation would be punished accordingly for disobedience to the instruction given in the Law.

**Isa. 31:3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.**

Verse 3 contrasts men and God, flesh and spirit. If God were on the Israelites’ (or our) side, the whole world could be opposed, and they (we) would win. A spirit being is far more powerful than a human being. God and the spiritual realm are more powerful by far than anything natural. Therefore, for the Israelites to seek help from Egypt meant they had a very low appraisal of God’s capability and power. In other words, *their faith was very weak*. They would rather trust in men, horses, and chariots.

A chariot pulled by many horses requires a *strong* horseman, or driver, if it is to be used in warfare. Spirited horses racing into battle want and delight in excitement and war; hence only a powerful man could restrain them. Israel looked to Egypt’s strong, capable leaders and comfortable, pleasing doctrines. This policy seemed to be the sensible thing to do, but it was an affront to God. For God’s professed people to look to worldly leaders and to trust in worldly doctrines was an affront to Him. Therefore, both parties (Egypt and Israel) would suffer from their relationship—the helper as well as the one who was helped. “Both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down.” The spiritual lesson is that the professed people of God should look to Him for help, and not to large numbers and organizations for fellowship, strength, and protection.

**Isa. 31:4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.**

Occasionally a lion sought out a lamb for its prey. A shepherd was generally fearful of pulling the lamb from the lion’s mouth, but if other shepherds were nearby, they tried to dispatch the lion and kill him, even if the lamb could not be saved. (The taste of blood so excited the lion that it would not give up its prey or be afraid, even though the shepherds made noise.) The illustration here in verse 4 is that when God comes down to fight for Mount Zion, *nothing* will distract or deter Him from defending and delivering His people Israel, that is, the Holy Remnant.

**Isa. 31:5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.**

The RSV has, “Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare and rescue it.” Birds have great courage in trying to protect their

nests and their young. They will attack foes much larger than themselves. The lesson is that in the future, God will defend His people as a lion and as birds (plural) “hovering.” The word “hovering” indicates *repetitive* judgments against Gog. God will protect, spare, deliver, and rescue Jerusalem.

**Isa. 31:6 Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.**

**Isa. 31:7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.**

In their hour of real dilemma and need in Jacob’s Trouble, Israel *will seek the Lord*. With all of their troubles since 1948, they have not truly sought Him, but they will be *so outnumbered* in Jacob’s Trouble that they will realize God is their only protection.

Israel’s idols of silver and gold—that is, *money*—will be worthless in Jacob’s Trouble. Their idols of business, finance, money, etc., will all be useless in their hour of extremity.

**Isa. 31:8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.**

The Assyrian/Gog will “fall by a sword, [but] not [the sword] of man; and a sword, [but] not [the sword] of man, shall devour him” (RSV). The *double emphasis* alludes to the earlier comparison of God and man, spirit and flesh (verse 3). Israel had been relying on man, flesh, chariots, and horses, but God can destroy an entire army without any military equipment at all. The natural application in Isaiah’s day pertained to the forces of Sennacherib; the angel of the Lord went through the camp and slew 185,000 in one night.

**Isa. 31:9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.**

“His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,’ says the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem” (RSV). The Assyrian’s “rock,” or strength (their military might), would pass away.

In Jacob’s Trouble, God will defend Jerusalem as a *lion roars* over its prey, as *birds hover over* and defend their young, and as a *furnace*. It is as though He is setting a trap or a staging area. “My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine *indignation*, even all my *fierce anger*: for all the earth shall be devoured with the *fire* of my jealousy” (Zeph. 3:8). God’s “fire is in [natural] Zion” and His “furnace [is] in [natural] Jerusalem” to protect the Holy Remnant.

Gog’s “officers [will] desert the standard *in panic*.” God will fight for the Holy Remnant as in the days of Gideon. In trying to flee, the forces of Gog will slay each other in sheer fright.

**Isa. 32:1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.**

This chapter sequentially follows the previous chapter. After God delivers Israel, a “king [Jesus] shall reign in righteousness,” and “princes [the Church in glory or the Ancient Worthies] shall rule in judgment [justice—RSV].”

**Isa. 32:2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.**

The thought is that each of the princes (the Church in glory or the Ancient Worthies) will share in the government and be like (1) a hiding place from wind and tempest, (2) refreshing water in the desert, and (3) shade in the heat of the day. In the desert, a large rock provides welcome shade and protects against wind and sandstorm. Moreover, a rock retains coolness in the daytime and warmth at night. It can also be a means of defense. Being stable, implacable, and immovable, a rock is a symbol of strength.

**Isa. 32:3** And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

In other words, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, ... saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest” (Jer. 31:34). “Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8). Many Scriptures indicate that there will be *no excuse for ignorance* in the Kingdom. All will be made aware that the Lord is King.

**Isa. 32:4** The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.

Hasty, rash people will be *forced to listen*. These are people who are too quick and too ready to speak. “Be swift to hear, slow to speak” is the guiding principle (James 1:19). All will have to abide by the rules and regulations of the Kingdom. And the opposite, the “stammerers,” will be assisted to speak and express themselves plainly. Thus the Lord will curb one group and assist and encourage the other. It will be a leveling process.

**Isa. 32:5** The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.

The RSV has, “The fool will no longer be called noble, nor the knave said to be honorable.” The proud and worldly wise of this life will be brought to naught, and the meek will be elevated. Now the proud are called happy, those who work wickedness are set up, and those who tempt God are even delivered (Mal. 3:15). The wicked flourish like the green bay tree (Psa. 37:35), but conditions will be reversed in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 32:6** For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

The RSV reads, “For the fool speaks folly, and his mind plots iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink.”

A “fool speaks folly” by saying in his heart, “There is no God” (Psa. 14:1). Examples of a fool uttering error concerning the Lord would be to blame Him and claim that God is not listening. Infidels, agnostics, and atheists are all “fools.” An infidel believes that God exists but that He does not communicate with or reveal Himself to man because we are too insignificant. Hence an infidel does not believe in the Bible as God’s Word. An agnostic does not know if there is a God. An atheist does not believe in the existence of God. Error would also include a doctrine such as hellfire.

A fool will “leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied.” Today we live an artificial life, so to understand Scripture, we must consider how people lived for 6,000 years. The false teaching of the divine right of kings—that kings are of divine appointment—has kept millions “hungry” and “thirsty” and led to the development of privileged classes and nobility. Under the feudal system, which prevailed for centuries, the common man was considered to be of no worth—

and it was believed the Lord approved the arrangement. Scripture was even quoted to justify the abuse of power. Although God *allowed* certain individuals to get into positions of power over their fellow man, He *did not sanction* either them or their power. Because of “legal birthrights,” insane men were put on thrones.

**Isa. 32:7 The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.**

**Isa. 32:8 But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.**

For verse 8, the RSV has, “But he who is noble devises noble things, and by noble things he stands.” The “knave” is condemned, and the “noble” individual is commended. In other words, God takes cognizance of what people in the world are doing. There will probably be some distinctions and honors in the Kingdom for unconsecrated persons who manifest nobility and generosity in the present life.

**Isa. 32:9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.**

**Isa. 32:10 Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.**

Verse 10 in the Revised Standard Version is, “In little more than a year you will shudder, you complacent women; for the vintage will fail, the fruit harvest will not come.” If the RSV is correct, Isaiah could have been predicting a tremendous crop failure. He was also prophesying about the coming siege of the ten-tribe kingdom.

For the spiritual application, the “women” and “daughters” are the nominal churches. Verses 9 and 10 may pertain to harvest results expected by the nominal churches at the end of the age. If so, their efforts will be a failure and a disappointment. The same thought is expressed in Isaiah 26:18, “We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.” The false Church will reign briefly and feel flushed with power and authority, but this will come to *naught*. Their harvest expectations will not materialize.

**Isa. 32:11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.**

**Isa. 32:12 They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.**

**Isa. 32:13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; Yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:**

In verses 9-14, Isaiah predicted the captivity of the ten-tribe kingdom (not in one year but in the near future). Thorns and briers would overgrow the idle land. The women would be especially fearful as they thought about the desolate conditions to come on Israel. The men would not be as fearful because their preoccupation with the actual battle left less time for thinking. With God’s Word, we should sympathetically enter into the experiences and sufferings. The spiritual application pertains to the Time of Trouble. Mystic Babylon, once a place of joy, will become a place of sorrows.

Isaiah had a very long ministry—probably a minimum of 61 years of active preaching. He gave four time prophecies pertaining to different events and different people: a one-year period, a three-year period, a 65-year period, and a 70-year period. Unlike other books of the Old

Testament, Isaiah is a collection of prophecies *not in sequence*.

**Isa. 32:14** Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

Mystic Babylon will be abandoned forever in the Time of Trouble; it will cease to exist.

**Isa. 32:15** Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

The “spirit [will] be poured” out upon Israel immediately following Jacob’s Trouble when Jesus is recognized as Messiah. “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zech. 12:10).

The wilderness will become a fruitful field. While a reclamation work is already going on in Israel and the desert is blossoming like a rose in a few places, these are isolated incidents. About half of the land is still arid today. But in the Kingdom, the land must become fruitful in order to absorb the Holy Remnant in Israel, the surviving Jews elsewhere in the world, and the Jews coming out of the tomb. In fact, there will be so many that they will spill over into Jordan.

**Isa. 32:16** Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

**Isa. 32:17** And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

Justice will be enforced *everywhere* in the Kingdom under the iron rule of Messiah; it will be enforced in the wilderness and peripheral areas as well as in the cities. Verses 16 and 17 indicate the effectiveness of Jesus’ rule. First will come fruitfulness, then effective judgment, and finally peace, rest, and security as the result of his reign. We are reminded of the promise to the Christian in Hebrews 12:11, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are [rightly] exercised thereby.” Tribulation properly received results in the peaceable fruits of righteousness. In the Kingdom, the effects of the regulations and rod-of-iron rule will be a radical change. Many people will be uncomfortable, at least at first, for thinking, habits, and actions will have to be drastically changed.

**Isa. 32:18** And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

“My people” refers to Israel, the center of authority, the showplace of the Kingdom. Following the principle “to the Jew first,” the blessings and fruits of the reign will radiate out from Jerusalem (Rom. 2:10). The stone will start to grow in Jerusalem, and from there, it will grow and grow until it fills the whole earth. The nucleus of the Kingdom will be Jerusalem, and the authority of the Kingdom will expand from there.

**Isa. 32:19** When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

Very often a “tree” symbolizes maturity in either good or bad character development. A “forest” indicates a *multitude* of trees, that is, a multitude of developed characters. When the forces of Gog come down against Israel as a “cloud” covering the land, Israel’s heart will fail

within them, for they will realize the hopelessness of their situation, as viewed from a natural standpoint. Their case will seem to be utterly lost. So numerous will the invading host of Gog be that they are likened to a “forest” for multitude, but God will cut down the forest with strong judgments. He will beat it down with hail and subdue this threat to Israel’s survival.

“Hail” would be hard, cutting *judgments*—literal hail and/or hard truths that will subdue the evil forces. What happens in Israel will happen on a worldwide scale. All forces of evil that try to prevent the establishment of Jesus’ rule will be exposed and removed.

“And the city will be utterly laid low” (RSV). Babylon, the false religious systems, will be laid low and utterly abased.

In Israel, the “feet” of God (His authority) will be especially demonstrated, attracting the eyes of all nations to look to that spot (Zech. 14:4). Of course God’s authority will be demonstrated throughout the earth but not as pointedly as in Israel, where His fury will rise up into His face and He will make bare His holy arm to defend Israel.

**Isa. 32:20** Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

In other words, “Blessed are those who sow beside the waters and lead the ox and the ass to the waters.” While we live in a *harvest* period, we are to do *some sowing* among those with no religious affiliation. We are to sow the seed as we have opportunity because we do not know whither it will prosper.

What is the relationship of the sowing here in Isaiah? Notice verse 15: “Until the spirit be poured upon us [Israel] from on high.” And for verse 20, the RSV has, “Happy are you who sow beside all waters, who let the feet of the ox and the ass range free.” In the Book of Isaiah, four or five themes are repeated over and over, but because the themes and repetition are scattered, the connections are not usually made. The beginning of Isaiah (1:3) reads, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” Isaiah was sad—he had a feeling of pathos at the end of his life. At the end of his *long, long ministry*, he came to the conclusion that in spite of *all* that was done, the people did not understand. He summed up Israel’s condition by saying that the nation was sick from the top of the head to the sole of the foot. Nevertheless, even though the malady seemed to be *incurable*, there was *hope* for any who would repent and properly respond to the prophet’s message. The ass is a beast of burden with little understanding. The animal does what it is told, for it lacks initiative and originality. Generally speaking, the ass is the beast of burden of the poorer man. Isaiah 1:3 is saying that neither the ox (the wiser and more capable) nor the ass (the unwise and less capable) of Israel knew that God was the source of their blessings. That is true today as well. Regardless of individual capabilities, nominal fleshly and nominal spiritual Israel are all in the same category of not knowing their Maker.

Verse 20 seems to be suggesting that we are approaching a time when it is proper to instruct Israel on the *coming trouble*, on future events (Jacob’s Trouble), as well as to speak a message of comfort—we must give the bitter with the sweet. In the beginning of the Harvest, the comfort message was emphasized, but now the people need to be enlightened as to what lies ahead. Those who are properly exercised will realize what is expected of them: *contrition, repentance, seeking the Lord, renewing their covenant with Him, and heeding His Word*. The tendency of present-truth brethren is to go overboard in the attitude of “You will be blessed because you are a Jew.” But the Jew *must repent* in order to be spared in Jacob’s Trouble. God will answer those who pray to Him in that hour of direst need when complete extinction is threatened. The quicker they make that request to God, the better. Instead the Jews seek treaties, arms, comfort, and sympathy, but the real solution is prayer for forgiveness. At the end of the age,

some will have the blessed privilege of giving instruction to the Jews, to the few who will hearken. The door of opportunity will open for a message that will be helpful to the Holy Remnant when Jacob's Trouble comes.

**Isa. 33:1** Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

The RSV has, "Woe to you, destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed; you treacherous one, with whom none has dealt treacherously! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have made an end of dealing treacherously, you will be dealt with treacherously."

**Isa. 33:2** O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

The RSV reads, "O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for thee. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble."

This will be the sentiment of the Holy Remnant. "Be our arm every morning" indicates their hope of *survival*. They will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). "Be ... our salvation in the time of trouble" implies this class will have *some knowledge*. As the Holy Remnant see Jacob's Trouble conditions developing and realize what they portend, they will seek God, and not the United Nations, not the United States. They will realize their only hope is supernatural help, and they will pray to God for that salvation.

**Isa. 33:3** At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thysself the nations were scattered.

**Isa. 33:4** And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

The RSV has, "At the thunderous noise peoples flee, at the lifting up of thysself nations are scattered; and spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathers; as locusts leap, men leap upon it." Men will leap upon the spoil as locusts.

The Book of Isaiah gives certain fragmented details pertaining to the end of the age that are not found anywhere else in the Bible. "At the noise of the *tumult*," "at the *thunderous noise*," refers to the coming earthquake in Israel that will end the age. "Surely in that day there shall be a *great shaking* in the land of Israel" (Ezek. 38:19). "All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up" (Zech. 14:10). The hill of Zion, a 30-mile area, will be literally *lifted up high*, above the surrounding hills, by an earthquake of *tremendous proportions*. Although there will be a general lifting up, the center part will be in Jerusalem itself. The literal earthquake will be accompanied with *great noise*. When God *roars* in Zion, there will be *tumultuous sounds in nature*. The Lord uses POWERFUL language to describe the earthquake. "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah" (Zech. 14:5). In other words, the bugle note that announces the inauguration of the Kingdom will be, first, this tremendous earthquake. The blast and the thunderous noise will part the earth on the east side of Jerusalem. The earthquake will split the Mount of Olives north to south, so that the Holy Remnant can flee for safety through the valley that opens up and reaches all the way to Azal. At the same time, Gog will flee in panic in

all directions. The lifting up of the land is related to God's *standing up* in authority—and Jesus too. “At that time [of Jacob's Trouble] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel]” (Dan. 12:1). From that day forward, not only Israel but also all Gentile nations will know that God is God! The Kingdom will be formally inaugurated with GREAT POWER and GLORY for an emphatic beginning.

As caterpillars gather in cocoons in *great numbers*, so the number of the enemy will be *great*. In fact, so many will die in the area of Jerusalem that God has named the cemetery in advance: Hamon-gog (Ezek. 39:11-16). Vultures will feed on the carcasses. Subsequently, as bones of the enemy are found in the land, they will be taken for burial to the cemetery, which will be perpetuated as a memorial. Those going to Jerusalem will have to pass by the cemetery.

It will take seven years for the “spoil” to be gathered. “And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, ... and they shall burn them with fire seven years” (Ezek. 39:9). The armaments left behind when Gog perishes will be melted down and converted into farm implements.

**Isa. 33:5 The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.**

**Isa. 33:6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.**

The RSV reads, “The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness; and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is his treasure.” God will be exalted—recognized and worshipped. He will treasure the reverence people give to Him in that day.

**Isa. 33:7 Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.**

**Isa. 33:8 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.**

For verse 8, the RSV has, “The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceases. Covenants are broken, witnesses are despised, there is no regard for man.” Verses 7 and 8 are a general description of the havoc the Time of Trouble will cause in the earth. There will be no authority, no regard for life.

“Their valiant ones shall cry without.” The brave ones will cry out audibly, realizing the hopelessness of their situation. The uniqueness of the *worldwide* trouble will be so bewildering and so hopeless that all faces will be darkened and all knees will become as water. Commerce will cease.

**Isa. 33:9 The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.**

Lebanon, a place known for many cedars, will be hewn down. Formerly a fertile plain, Sharon will become a wilderness. (Sharon means “plain.”) The trees of Bashan and Carmel will have no fruit or leaves (RSV). These literal places are figurative, indicating that the productive areas of earth will become barren and unproductive in the Time of Trouble and that food will be scarce. Everything will seem to wither and die. Isaiah used terms and places in his day to describe the whole earth in the Time of Trouble. He was saying there will be no crops or shelter. The picture is one of general destruction. The land will be like the Garden of Eden before the Lord's great



army, and like a burned-out wilderness behind them (Joel 2:3,11).

**Isa. 33:10** Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

God will arise *with authority* in Jacob's Trouble, the climax of Armageddon. The end of Jacob's Trouble will also be the end of the *world's* Time of Trouble. God will be exalted and magnified by means of His deliverance of the Holy Remnant and His judgment on the forces of Gog.

**Isa. 33:11** Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.

**Isa. 33:12** And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

Christendom's plans for world conversion will fizzle. Those who labor for peace—both through the church systems and in the world (the United Nations, for example)—will meet with failure. There is even talk of a one-world government.

The time setting of verse 11 is prior to the Time of Trouble. First, one remedy is tried and then another, but all of them prove futile. Here the Lord was saying, "Your plans failed. In fact, they only made matters worse. Therefore, I will have to intervene, and the result will be disastrous."

**Isa. 33:13** Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.

In context, this verse has a specific application. From the perspective of His being in Israel, God will say to the Gentile world, "Hear, you nations who are far away, what I have done in Jacob's Trouble in Israel. And hear, you nations who are near Israel."

**Isa. 33:14** The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

This verse has two applications: nominal spiritual Zion and the Jews themselves. Consider this verse from the standpoint of faithless Jews in Israel at the time God causes the earthquake and other miracles. As they see the manifestation of *power* through nature and other judgments, it will begin to dawn on them that the God of nature is intervening. Then they will start to worry about their own position and how soon the trouble will engulf them. The right-hearted class will search themselves and their consciences. The godless class will not survive Jacob's Trouble.

The "devouring fire" refers to the earthquake. Verse 14 presents the thoughts and emotions of those who will witness this destruction. The godless, faithless Jews—those who do not obey the Law Covenant and have no regard for the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures—will try to hide out of fear, but God's judgments will find and destroy them. (Of course later, in the general resurrection, they will come forth to receive corrective judgment.) Thus the nucleus of God's Kingdom under the leadership of the Ancient Worthies will be a meek, contrite, and converted class, that is, the Holy Remnant.

**Comment:** The context of verse 14 is a reminder of Psalm 24:3-5, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

**Reply:** Everyone has a conscience, and the consciences of the disobedient Jews will tell them

they have been living astray from God and will cause them to be fearful. They will know they have ignored the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” They will sense that they should seek meekness and righteousness—but it will be *too late* for them to be of the Holy Remnant. Responding at the last minute in Jacob’s Trouble is not sufficient.

The Holy Remnant will respond earlier with the proper heart condition (verse 2). They will hearken to God’s instruction and try to conform their lives accordingly. Their reward for seeking meekness and repenting earlier will be survival in Jacob’s Trouble.

Dwelling with “everlasting burnings” pertains to Jehovah’s “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16). Imagine having the divine nature and dwelling in the presence of God forever! Those who obtain this reward will have a very high standard and a heart the Lord approves. They will be able to dwell right in the midst of the fire, in the very presence of God, who is light. Being of the divine family, they themselves will be “light which no man can approach unto.”

The Great Company will have to be off the scene by the time God delivers the Holy Remnant. After the feet members go beyond the veil, the Great Company will realize they have not made their calling and election sure. First, they will experience fear and weeping and gnashing of teeth; then they will console themselves at the prospect of life on the spirit plane as part of the Great Company. Their sentiments will be, “I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:18). Having to “wash,” or cleanse, their garments in the blood of the Lamb in the great tribulation will shock them into a realization of their indifference toward their consecration. They will share judgment with the hypocrites.

**Isa. 33:15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**

“He that walketh righteously ... stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.” The thought is to have *nothing to do* with anything that involves the murder of another individual. Verse 15 is not saying to close the eyes and the ears to what is happening but, rather, to avoid any kind of personal involvement in or responsibility for committing such a sin. For example, Paul held the clothing of those who stoned Stephen. Hence he incurred responsibility and had to be stoned himself—not because he actually did the stoning but because the coats of those who did were laid at his feet (Acts 7:58,59). Even though he did not realize the responsibility at the time, retribution was required. The thought is to have *nothing to do* with blood(shed) or the taking of bribes.

**Isa. 33:16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.**

Now comes the moral lesson. First, verse 14 said that the sinners in Zion will be afraid. They will ask, “Who can dwell with the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings?” Verses 15 and 16 provide the answer: “The one who walks and speaks uprightly, despising gain obtained by the oppression of others, etc., shall dwell on the heights.” For such individuals, their defense and their bread and water will be sure.

The Church will dwell at the very highest level, in the presence of God Himself. However, the same principle or standard will apply to all eventually. The difference is that the Church *voluntarily obeys now under conditions of duress*. In the Kingdom, the same standard will be required of those who walk up the highway of holiness. In the context of verse 16, the Holy Remnant are guaranteed that their bread and water will be sure. The principle is that those who serve the Lord will be taken care of. The Christian is told to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and

his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Needful things are provided in the present life, the prayer being, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Note, however, that circumstances can arise in our lives where we might not have “bread” every day. We will get through the experience, but we may have to endure suffering. The Lord will make sure that sustenance is provided *until we have had sufficient opportunity* to make our calling and election sure. God does not mollycoddle us or put a silver spoon in our mouths. We each have custom-made trials and testings.

**Isa. 33:17** **Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.**

Natural (primary) application: After Jacob’s Trouble, the Holy Remnant will “see” Jesus and the joys of the Kingdom. Since Isaiah was speaking approximately 1000 BC, the Kingdom in Israel was a “land that is very far off” in the sense of being way down the stream of time and still future even today.

Spiritual (secondary) application: The Church will behold Jesus in glory beyond the veil. They shall see Jesus “as he is,” that is, “in his beauty” (1 John 3:2). Heaven is “the [promised] land that is very far off.” The term “far country,” meaning heaven, is used in the Parable of the Pounds. There Jesus is described as “a certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12).

**Isa. 33:18** **Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?**

After Jacob’s Trouble, the Holy Remnant will reflect back on the trouble, which will be very fearsome to go through. However, in retrospect and from the standpoint of eternity, the trouble, though fierce, will seem like a dream, a brief moment. Things will be calm at this time of reflection.

The RSV reads, “Your mind will muse on the terror: Where is he who counted [the forces of the enemy], where is he who weighed the tribute? Where is he who counted the towers?” Jacob’s Trouble will not be a standard battle. Isaiah was saying that those who normally organized armies, planned strategies, and exacted tribute will not be able to operate in Jacob’s Trouble, for that will be *God’s* battle. God will fight for Israel as he did “in the day of battle,” that is, in the days of old (Zech. 14:3).

**Isa. 33:19** **Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.**

The RSV is helpful: “You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech which you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue which you cannot understand.” This verse can be understood in three ways, and all three were probably intended: (1) the Assyrians invading natural Israel in Isaiah’s day, (2) Papacy invading spiritual Israel during the Gospel Age, and (3) Gog invading natural Israel at the end of the age.

The Chaldeans of Babylon were similarly called a people of strange speech. Both the Assyrians of Armenia and the Chaldeans of Babylon (who picture the forces of Gog) had a strong, hard language that matched their cruel characters. For example, one who would shortly attack Israel in this book had a habit of decapitating his male captives and then making a pyramid of their skulls. Leaving behind this gruesome landmark was a form of psychological warfare.

While in a natural sense, Israel’s enemy had a different language and standard or code of conduct and was brutish, there is also a spiritual application. During the Gospel Age, Papacy

has been the “insolent people.” The language of Papacy to professed Christians is different from, or foreign to, that which is taught in the Bible. Papacy elevates its clergy to bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and popes and is very presumptuous in bestowing titles. The clergy are authoritarian, claiming that the interpretation of the Bible is a mystery that belongs to them, not to the communicants. The Latin language has helped to perpetuate the aura of mystery. In fact, the Bible in Latin is described as being “clothed in sackcloth” (Rev. 11:3). The doctrine of hellfire is an example of “strange speech” that is foreign to God’s character. When paganism and heathenism came into the Christian church (for example, with the doctrines of a triune God and Mariolatry), they were comparable to the heathen Babylonian enemy coming down into Israel with their strange language, customs, and habits.

In the third application, Gog is the “fierce people” with a “stammering tongue,” the foreign element, that will invade the Holy Land in Jacob’s Trouble. In Ezekiel 7:24, they are called “the worst of the heathen.”

**Isa. 33:20** Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

Verse 20 applies after Jacob’s Trouble, when the Kingdom is set up.

**Q:** Why is the word “tabernacle” used here instead of “temple”?

**A:** The word “tabernacle” is used many places in reference to the Kingdom, such as in Revelation 21:3, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.” Israel of old were the people God was dealing with. During the Gospel Age, He turned His back on them; they were alienated from Him with a great gulf in between. After Jacob’s Trouble, God will set up the “tent” as in days of old, but this time, it will be *permanent and immovable*. Acts 15:16 states, “After this I will return, and will build again the *tabernacle* of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.” God will reestablish a religious association with His people, natural Israel, in a very intimate sense. Their judges will be restored as at the first. Thus the word “tabernacle” is used figuratively to allude to the religious setup of the Kingdom and does not necessarily emphasize a literal tabernacle, for the literal structure will be the Third Temple.

Verse 20 also indicates that the relationship of God with men will be permanent. When the New Covenant goes into effect, it will not be terminated. From one standpoint, all during the Kingdom Age, the New Covenant will be in the process of being put into effect, for man’s at-one-ment with God will not be complete until the end of the Millennium. The purpose of the New Covenant is to bring two alienated parties together, to make man at one with God. When man is fully restored after the Little Season and God is “all in all,” there will be no further need for a Mediator, a go-between (1 Cor. 15:28).

**Isa. 33:21** But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

Jehovah is called “glorious” because at that time His power, His glory, His Kingdom, and His purpose will be fully revealed. The Lord of glory will be “a place of broad rivers and streams” to natural Israel. But why will “no galley with oars” go upon the “broad rivers and streams”? Galleys were ships with sails and long oars, which cruelly treated slaves were forced to man when the wind was slack. These ships were used for commerce, for selfish purposes, and for war. In other words, society in the Kingdom will no longer be geared for fear, aggression, war, and munitions. People will gently glide or float down the broad rivers and streams in PEACE. The water will be sufficient but without military traffic. “Nation shall not lift up sword against

nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4). Isaiah repeated certain themes in fragments—here a little, there a little. When these fragments are tied together, the book furnishes us with a lot of detail.

And why will no “gallant [stately—RSV] ship pass” upon the “broad rivers and streams”? In the spiritual sense, mystic Babylon will no longer be able to exploit the poor in either religious or civil matters. Babylon is pictured as a mercantile power controlling the souls of men, the people being slaves to that system. Babylon sits on the river Euphrates (the people) for her revenues; that is, the nominal system feeds on the poor like a bloodsucker or leach. Just as the “gallant ship” has ornamentation and rich trappings, so the Catholic Church has elaborate choirs, cathedrals, sculpture, ornamentation, etc., that cost money and labor. Hence the “gallant ship” is a symbol of Papacy’s splendor.

Verse 21 contrasts the slavery and hardship of the poor in the “galley” with the pomp and glory of the rich, proud, and powerful in the “gallant ship.” For example, the poor were pressed into service in armies that hunted down supposed “heretics,” and excommunication was used as a threat. All of the wrongs and inordinate practices of the Gospel Age will cease in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.**

Natural application: Prior to Jacob’s Trouble, the Holy Remnant will be enlightened to the extent that they will be looking to the Lord God for salvation. They are a believing element, and God will save them.

Spiritual application: During the Gospel Age, true Christians have suffered injustices but have looked patiently to the Lord for future deliverance. “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity” (Psa. 37:1). “According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay” (Isa. 59:18). True Christians have exercised confidence and trust in God that the time will come for their own reward as well as recompense to those who have persecuted and committed iniquity.

**Isa. 33:23 Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.**

Some of these verses change in the middle to hide their meaning. The picture deliberately switches back and forth, for if Isaiah’s message were coordinated, it would be so powerful and detailed that the world could understand it. Instead, there is little interest in the Book of Isaiah as a whole.

The illustration is of a boat. Tacklings were loosed when a storm arose; the sails had to be changed or taken down depending on circumstances. (Ships had different types of sails for different types of weather.) Here a great, strong boat was floundering. The storm could not be mastered no matter what was tried.

The spiritual picture is that in the Time of Trouble, Papacy will find all is going wrong, and its destruction will occur suddenly. Papacy will not be able to weather the storm. Its religious leaders will experience great confusion.

In the natural picture, Gog of Magog, whose purpose is the destruction of the Jew, will suddenly find that their strength is strangely diminishing, that peculiar things are happening to their strong ship. Divine Providence will cause the “tacklings” to come loose. The enemy will first come in and flood the land, leaving the poor Jew in a seemingly hopeless state. But when

God steps in to fight for Israel with powerful miracles of nature, Gog will panic and be in confusion and experience utter defeat. To Gog's surprise and dismay, their ship will break apart at the seams. The hordes of Gog will realize that the strange happenings could only be Divine Providence.

The Holy Remnant, too, will recognize that Divine Providence is operating to preserve them and to punish the enemy. As in the Red Sea crossing, the *same* "cloud" will be confusion and darkness to the enemy and salvation to the Jew. The same cloud that caused darkness to come upon the Egyptians to the rear was a barrier and protection to the Jews, shining light forward upon their path as they proceeded.

"Then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey." The Revised Standard Version reads, "Then prey and spoil in abundance will be divided; even the lame will take the prey." When Israel is increased with much "cattle and goods" and dwelling with "unwalled villages" (Ezek. 38:11,12), Gog will come down with the intention of taking a prey, not realizing that they themselves will become the prey. Just as Haman in the Book of Esther purposed to destroy the Jews and he himself was executed on his own gallows, so Gog's planned destruction of the Jews will backfire. Gog will come down to take a spoil but will be "divided" in that, in the final analysis, the Holy Remnant will take the goods and metal munitions left behind when the enemy forces are destroyed. For seven years, Israel will be able to use the booty of Gog and convert it into "plowshares" and "pruninghooks," that is, into *constructive* machinery and instruments of agriculture and peace (Isa. 2:4). The great, big, powerful ship that comes down will be humbled, and Israel will be a quiet and peaceful habitation.

"The lame [will] take the prey." A promise in Joshua 23:10 was that if the Jews kept God's covenant, "One ... shall chase a thousand." The principle is similar here. The "lame" (ordinary men, the Holy Remnant) will be like David when he fought the giant Goliath. Great consternation came on the foe when they saw David's strength and Goliath's defeat. The Holy Remnant will be like David, and the Ancient Worthies, who will arise in the "midnight" hour of Jacob's Trouble, will be as God (Psa. 119:62; Zech. 12:8).

Isaiah was quite different from the other prophets in that he described Jacob's Trouble from *many* angles. Ezekiel and Zechariah considered the trouble from one angle in primarily just one or two chapters, whereas Isaiah gave a great fullness to the prophetic picture, making it three-dimensional, as it were.

**Isa. 33:24** **And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.**

"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." This verse is used in regard to restitution in the Kingdom to say that people's skin will become fresher than a child's. That is true; however, the setting here is the establishment of the Kingdom *in Israel*. The health of those who survive Jacob's Trouble will be noticed. Not only will God's great power be manifested on behalf of Israel to overcome the enemy, but also they will become healthier medically. They will no longer get sick, and their flesh will become like that of a child. Physical sickness will cease in Israel first because the blood of atonement will be applied there, and the Jews will be brought into covenant relationship with God.

"The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Physical sickness will disappear much faster than sin sickness, for tears of the sorrow of the soul will be *gradually* wiped away. The entire Kingdom Age will be required to eliminate death and bad habits. The purpose of the Kingdom is to help mankind walk up the highway of holiness to peace and life.

In his day, the Prophet Isaiah was accused of talking like a drunk or an unintelligible baby, but

he purposely spoke this way to hide truth from the wrong element and, at the same time, feed the right-hearted class. His method was “line upon line” and “precept upon precept,” “here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:10). Speaking in fragments resulted in a garbled, confused, discordant message to the former class and wisdom, truth, and sense to the latter class.

**Isa. 34:1** Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

Notice the format of verses 1-7. The primary application of verses 1-3 is natural, and the primary application of verses 4-7 is spiritual.

**Isa. 34:2** For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

God is addressing the world. His purpose is to gather all nations to Armageddon and then to Jacob’s Trouble to pour upon them His indignation.

**Isa. 34:3** Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

There will be literal carnage in Jacob’s Trouble. In fact, so many will be slain of the forces of Gog that it will take seven months to bury the dead (Ezek. 39:12). A crew will be employed to bury bodies and bones in the designated cemetery.

**Isa. 34:4** And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

The ecclesiastical heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, Papacy and Protestantism being the two ends of the scroll.

“All their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.” Why is this illustration used? The purpose is to show a decadent condition. In the illustration, the leaves and the figs are dried up and ready to fall with just a little whisper of wind; they part easily from the vine or tree. In other words, the nominal systems are ripe (or overripe) for judgment.

**Isa. 34:5** For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

“Idumea” is another name for Edom. The “sword” is a symbol of judgment. God’s sword of judgment will be sated in the ecclesiastical heaven. Violence and trouble will result from Babylon’s fall.

Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage to satisfy his hunger, originally got Edom. “Esau” represents nominal Christianity, whose adherents are nominally the Lord’s but whose interest is more in pleasure and natural things. The nominal Church had the great honor and privilege of association with Christ in glory, but it pursued earthly things. Edom and Idumea allude to Esau’s and nominal Christianity’s selling the birthright.

**Isa. 34:6** The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

God's sword will drip with blood and fat. Bozrah (representing the Roman Catholic Church) is the capital of Edom or Idumea. The sword will be filled with the blood of "lambs" (tribulation saints) and "goats" (tares).

The expression "fat of the kidneys of rams" is sarcastic language. God will prepare a great sacrifice or feast for His enemies. Hence "fat" is used unfavorably here. In the favorable sense, "fat" indicates zeal. "Rams" (male sheep) symbolize leaders. In other words, the great leaders of Christendom will share in the bloodbath. When the nominal system crashes, the anarchists will make the leaders their targets. Some of the people will even "labour in the very fire" of anarchy, trying to hold up the structure, but the system will fall like a bag of wind (Hab. 2:13).

**Isa. 34:7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.**

"Unicorn" means one-horned and probably refers to the rhinoceros. Unicorns will come down with the lambs, goats, rams, bullocks, and bulls. Spiritually speaking, the animals represent various categories of hierarchical leadership in the Idumea ecclesiastical heaven. All will share a similar fate. The "land" (Christendom, the false kingdom of Christ) will be soaked with blood (violence). Suggestions follow as to what the animals represent. "Rams" are priests, "bullocks" represent bishops, "bulls" picture archbishops, and "unicorns" are popes, those on top.

"Their dust [will be] made fat with fatness." The implication is that good will result from the trouble. One might ask, "Why is all this slaughter necessary?" One reason is retribution. During the Inquisition, the banners of Papacy were soaked with blood. Revelation 17:5,6 states that in the harlot was found all the blood of the saints. All the atrocities committed during the Dark Ages at the hands of Papacy are to be visited upon that institution. Those who are still in that system share the responsibility, for they close their eyes and ears when they hear reports of the dark past. Instead they should investigate the matter honestly, and finding truth in the reports, they should leave the system—and thus be absolved of the responsibility. Association with an institution incurs responsibility.

The implication is that the land will be fertilized, as it were, with the blood that soaks into it and with "fatness." "Their soil [will be] made rich with fat" (RSV). How? When the people come forth from the grave in the Kingdom, seeing what was done in the past will help bring the former leaders to repentance. That period of shamefacedness and humility will be good "soil" for their recovery. The former attitude of superiority toward their fellow man must be broken in order for them to be receptive to the seeds of truth. Seeds that fall on good soil (hearts) in the Kingdom will be productive and bring forth good fruitage. The hard experience is needed to effect a thorough reform. The principle is that a surgeon must wound in order to heal.

**Isa. 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.**

The "day" is contrasted with the "year." In the spiritual context here with Christendom, the "day of the LORD'S vengeance" will be the day of God's indignation when the nominal systems fall. Of course the fullness of God's wrath, the time when His fury comes up into His face, will require His revelation, and that will occur in Jacob's Trouble. The trouble will start with the fall of Papacy followed by other judgments, and it will climax in Jacob's Trouble.

A "year" is longer than a "day." Sometimes in Scripture, the use of "day" and "year" together in a verse pinpoints a particular event. If that is the case here, it means that God has a specific timetable of a certain year and a certain day (or a very short period of time)—a date or an exact time—for doing these things. For example, in Revelation 9:15, the words "day," "month," and "year" refer to the exact day—October 31, 1517—when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to



the church door at Wittenberg.

**Isa. 34:9** And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

Verses 9-15 pertain to the judgment of Idumea, or Edom. This land was laid waste in the past and remains desolate today, yet it was once a very prosperous land with people and animals. The “dust,” or topsoil, became unproductive and so dry (like “brimstone” and “burning pitch” radiating heat) that it would not support either crops or animals. (This is also true of Ephesus, which was once a thriving, populated city in Turkey, or Asia Minor. No one lives there today.)

**Isa. 34:10** It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Verse 10 further describes the effect on the land.

**Isa. 34:11** But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

Birds of prey and, for the most part, darkness frequent the desolate land of Edom. In the RSV, the “cormorant” is the “hawk.”

God will stretch out “the line of confusion” upon Edom (Christendom). What happened to literal Edom in the past will happen to antitypical Edom (mystic Babylon). There is a relationship between Edom, Idumea, and mystic Babylon. Originally, “Babylon” meant the gateway or door to God, but with a different pronunciation of one syllable, its meaning changed to “house of confusion.” To say that God will stretch out a “line of confusion” is a form of sarcasm. That which was formerly the great Babylon became “confusion,” which suggests that it will come to naught.

In addition, God will stretch out upon Edom “the stones of emptiness” (“the plummet of chaos” in the RSV). Very often a line and a plummet (weight) are tied together to determine a perpendicular line. “Stones of emptiness” suggest the empty, boastful claims of Papacy. An example is the boast that the gates of hell will not prevail against Papacy, that Papacy can withstand any onslaught because it is the true church of God. Such claims of superiority will be reversed. Many archbishops, priests, etc., will be shamefaced when they come forth in the Kingdom and learn that the system was false. The “stones of emptiness”—their proud, boastful claims of security, fixity, vanity, and eternity—are nothing but hot air. God will show by the true “plummet,” His Word, that the whole house of Papacy is askew and not founded upon the proper basis of authority. Consequently, the structure is doomed to fall. The “line” and the “plummet” show that its future is eternal only in the sense of being desolate.

**Isa. 34:12** They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

**Isa. 34:13** And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.

**Isa. 34:14** The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

**Isa. 34:15** There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

There is an expression, “Birds of a feather flock together.” What an ill assortment of birds! It is like being in a desolate ghost town where only eerie sounds of the night are heard—vultures and wild beasts. In verse 12, calls of “Is anybody here?” go unanswered in the emptiness, in the lack of populace and rulership. The only occupants are those enumerated: screech owls, jackals, wild beasts, and vultures. The screech owl’s cry sounds like a woman being forcibly molested. Like the lion with its roar, the screech owl depends on its terrifying screech to paralyze its prey as it descends and viciously attacks at night. “Habitation of dragons” (verse 13) is the “haunt of jackals” in the Revised Standard.

One who happened to enter this desolate city at night was afraid of creatures lurking in the shadows. Jackals or laughing hyenas have a dreadful snarl on their faces; they are cowardly but very vicious and sharp-toothed, relying on packs for courage. Similarly, many people who have no courage as individuals are vicious when part of a gang. Jackals snip at the edges of a herd and feed on the remains left behind by other animals.

All of these wild beasts and birds of prey occupy dark places and are sneaky and vicious. This is the situation in Babylon. Jesus likened Babylon to a tree in which every unclean bird roosts on the branches (Matt. 13:31,32). Revelation 18:2 reads, “Babylon the great ... is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” A lot of birds in one tree or cage produce a lot of droppings. And so Babylon has embraced among its communicants the unregenerate of the world.

Generally speaking, wild beasts and birds of prey hunt the weak, the old, and the sick so that they themselves will not get injured or have a problem. Like human bullies, they are vicious but cowardly. The criminal human element similarly preys on the elderly and the lame.

The statement “There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather [her young] under her shadow” refers to the multiplication of owls and vultures. Like a nest of scorpions, they breed more and more.

With all of these beasts and creatures, verse 15 ends with the words “There shall the vultures also be gathered, *every one with her mate.*” Verse 16, although marked with a paragraph break, is really attached to verse 15. Both verses pertain to mating.

**Isa. 34:16** **Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.**

“Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read.” Isaiah was saying, “If you want information, if you want to know what will happen, read the Bible.”

“No one of these [prophecies] shall fail, none shall want her mate.” Whether favorable or unfavorable, these predictions *must be fulfilled*. An early article, *Reprint* No. 471, is entitled “Foretold and Fulfilled.” Until a prophecy is fulfilled, it lacks its “mate.” The Lord’s Word will not return unto Him void, but will accomplish its purpose (Isa. 55:11). In the illustration here in Isaiah 34, each bird must have its mate; that is, the dire, foreboding prophecies with regard to the destiny of Idumea must be fulfilled (primarily from the spiritual standpoint). Every jot and tittle of a prophecy will be fulfilled, and when it is, it has met its mate. In the game of chess, the expression “checkmate” is used. Pieces are maneuvered on a board with the object of capturing the other party, and the final move is called “checkmate.” Checkmate is defeat to one party and victory to the other. The doom and judgment of Babylon will bring shame and confusion of face to those who hold high positions in the system, but it will bring honor and vindication to the Lord.

The Song of Solomon shows a *favorable* fulfillment of prophecy, for the “song” pertains to the future wedding of the Church and the Bridegroom. The Bride is multitudinous, consisting of many maidens who look forward to being united in marriage with Jesus. The time of the wedding is the “time of mating of prophecies,” for it is then that all end-of-the-age prophecies will be fulfilled. Song 2:12 calls it “the time of the singing of birds.”

**Isa. 34:17** And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

**Isa. 35:1** The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

**Isa. 35:2** It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

These verses are addressed primarily to Israel in the Kingdom and secondarily to the world. Israel’s inheritance is mentioned: Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon. Lebanon will become part of Israel. The “glory” of Lebanon in the past was its great cedars and forests. Isaiah contrasted the majestic forested mountains of Lebanon and Carmel with the fertile, lush valleys or plains of Sharon. When the Kingdom is established, Israel will be fruitful, beautiful, glorious, and excellent—and a sample of what the rest of the world will become. It will be representative of the great transformation that is to take place all over the earth.

**Isa. 35:3** Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

**Isa. 35:4** Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

Characteristics of the Holy Remnant are that they will be meek, righteous, and full of faith. Here the feet members are being told to “strengthen” the Jew (especially the faithful ones, the Holy Remnant) and to give a word of encouragement. The Church class are to tell them to “be strong” and “fear not,” for God “will come and save” them. When the Church is gone, the Great Company will take up this message. Certain Scriptures indicate the Great Company will be given wonderful opportunities. And when the Great Company is off the scene and the Kingdom is set up, the Ancient Worthies will take strong, authoritative command.

“Behold, *your God* will come with vengeance ... [and] recompence.” The feet members will tell faithful Jews that *their God* will come. Since Israel as a whole is indifferent to God’s promises, it is not yet time to comfort *all* Jews but only the ones who manifest faith. Uncertainty and problems in the future when pressure comes on Israel will cause a separation among the people: desperation in the majority and great fear in the minority (the Holy Remnant) but also a hearing ear for encouragement. The minority will show an interest, first with the Church and then with the Great Company.

**Q:** If the Church and the Great Company are to be off the scene before Jacob’s Trouble, how could there be much time for encouragement?

**A:** There will be premonitions of Jacob’s Trouble *before* it occurs—just as we can see a storm approaching. We see a potential for trouble in the lawlessness of the people and their disrespect for authority. At present, however, people are still deluding themselves with pleasure.

**Comment:** The statement “God will come with vengeance” shows the trouble is yet future.

**Comment:** “He will come and save you” is a real promise to the Holy Remnant.

**Reply:** “He will come and save *you* [the fearful ones with the feeble knees].” God *will save* the Jews who are right-hearted, the Holy Remnant, the contrite and meek minority. That element will survive Jacob’s Trouble.

**Isa. 35:5** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

From the standpoint of the nation of Israel, this verse reminds us of the prophecy “Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25). Another prophecy ties in the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David as awaiting the completion of the call of the Church from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14-16). We are also reminded of Zacharias, who was struck dumb until John the Baptist was born and named (Luke 1:20). John’s birth represents the birth of a class, the Church, particularly the feet members, who announce the Lord’s Second Presence (“There standeth one among you, whom ye know not”) and the coming judgment (“whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his [threshing] floor”) (John 1:26; Matt. 3:12). John, who also said, “He [Jesus, The Christ] must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30), represents the Church in the flesh at the end of the age. Just as Zacharias, the father of John, could not speak until his son’s birth and naming, so the Church must be fully born beyond the veil before the promises given to the nation of Israel can be realized. Great joy will be the result (verses 6-10).

**Isa. 35:6** Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

The Kingdom will be a time of reclamation and opportunity for mankind, even though there will be stripes. Notice how water will burst out of the earth. Man will be able to accomplish great reclamation projects like the Jordan Valley Authority’s digging a canal through the plain of Esdraelon and boring a tunnel through a relatively short mountain range. This will allow (1) water from the Mediterranean to turn a turbine (as with Niagara Falls) to produce electricity and (2) water to be diverted for irrigation purposes. God was also indicating that He will miraculously open up new natural sources of water in the desert. For instance, it is known that a tremendous reservoir of water lies under Sinai. An earthquake could open up some of the water, and drills and pumps would do the rest. In other words, the Lord will lend a helping hand in the Kingdom, and men themselves will also be productive. Incidentally, the word “Mediterranean” means “middle of the earth.”

**Isa. 35:7** And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

**Isa. 35:8** And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

There shall be a “highway” in the Kingdom in contradistinction to the narrow way now, but it will be slightly uphill. Effort will have to be exercised to walk up the highway, but that effort will be different from the effort required to walk uphill in the present age. Now stones, wild beasts, and other obstacles make the way narrow, but in the next age, the obstacles will be removed. The highway will not be an escalator, however; the individual will have to bestir himself and make the effort to walk *up* the highway.

Notice, the highway will be called “The way of holiness,” for “the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those.” The unclean will not be permitted to travel this highway, but it will be

for them. Only those who separate themselves from uncleanness will be able to walk up the highway. Stated another way, the highway will be for the unclean, but they cannot walk upon it in their uncleanness. In other words, there must be progress.

“Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” A fool will not err in the way to holiness at that time. The requirements for walking up the highway will not be misinterpreted. There will be no language barrier, no generation gap, no difficulty in understanding between Eastern and Western minds, no misunderstanding of what truth is. Full explanations will be given. A voice behind the people will say which way to walk: “This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isa. 30:21). In the Kingdom, the Lord will walk *behind*; in this age he walks *in front*. Now Jesus is ahead and we follow him. When he walked with his disciples, he was always in the lead and they followed. The Gospels say he “turned” and said so-and-so (Matt. 16:23).

Consecration is *voluntary* in this age. Consecration will be *compulsory* in the Kingdom; then every knee *must* bow and every tongue *must* confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10,11). Refusal will mean Second Death. There is a difference between an invitation (“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden”) and a mandatory requirement where the people are told what to do and must obey (Matt. 11:28). Because of the difficulties of being faithful in the present life, the reward will *far exceed* the reward of life in the Kingdom. The sufferings of the present life are not worthy of comparison with the glory to follow (Rom. 8:18). And yet nothing can happen to us that does not happen to people in the world, who get no reward for all their suffering. Even in the *present* life, the joys of consecration far outweigh the joys of an unconsecrated life. When Peter said, “Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee,” Jesus replied that *even now*, in the present time, the consecrated “receive an hundredfold” (Mark 10:28-30). We have a bigger family, a larger fellowship, greater joys. The Apostle Paul said our afflictions are light and “but for a moment” in comparison with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). Consider what he suffered, but his thinking was very sound.

**Isa. 35:9** No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

“No lion [Satan] shall be there.” Of course there are other “lions” too, but Satan is the great one. “Your adversary the devil, as a *roaring lion*, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

**Isa. 35:10** And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Not only will the lame, blind, and dumb be healed (verse 6), but the returning of the “ransomed of the LORD” means resurrection. A large part of the “return” will be mankind’s coming forth from the grave, but it also implies that Jews who survive Jacob’s Trouble will return to Israel from the lands where they have been scattered. The dead shall return from the grave, and living, surviving Jews shall “come [home] to Zion.”

Of course these verses apply to the world of mankind, but they are addressed first to the nation of Israel, the pilot nation. The Kingdom will start in Israel and spread out into the rest of the earth.

**Q:** Does verse 10 allude to Isaiah 2:3, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD”?

**A:** Yes. Natural Israel will be the nucleus of the Kingdom. Gentiles will go to “Zion” for instruction, and Jews will go to “Zion” for both habitation and instruction. The principle is “to the Jew first,” then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16).

**Isa. 36:1** Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

The setting of this chapter is the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah. A few years hence the ten tribes went into captivity, but this setting pertains to the two-tribe kingdom centered in Jerusalem. Because of fear of King Sennacherib of Assyria, Hezekiah ordered a tunnel to be dug at the south end of the city. Hezekiah’s Tunnel was dug within the city walls so that the enemy outside the walls could not divert the water supply. The tunnel, which was dug under pressure, extended from the Pool of Gihon at the upper end through the hill.

Since Isaiah was put to death near the end of King Hezekiah’s reign, the fourteenth year of his 29-year reign was toward the end of Isaiah’s life. We are only in Chapter 36, so Isaiah did considerable writing in the days that remained. (However, four or five chapters with the same theme could have been recorded on one occasion.)

**Isa. 36:2** And the king of Assyria sent Rab-shakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field.

Rab-shakeh stood close to the Pool of Siloam but just outside the city walls. The king’s servants were on a higher level, looking down on General Rab-shakeh, who shouted up to them.

**Isa. 36:3** Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiyah’s son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph’s son, the recorder.

With the overseer of the king’s household, the scribe, and the recorder, this was a formal presentation. The “recorder,” as librarian, was in charge of housing the records. The “scribe” was the secretary.

**Isa. 36:4** And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

In verses 4-10, Rab-shakeh challenged Hezekiah to surrender unconditionally to Sennacherib. “What confidence can you have against my master, the great King Sennacherib? Surrender to him without terms.” Hezekiah knew that if he submitted to Sennacherib, the initial demands were only the start. The demands would become worse and worse.

**Isa. 36:5** I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

**Isa. 36:6** Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

Judah had a treaty with Egypt, but relying on Egypt was like leaning on a “broken reed” that would pierce the hand of a man who used it for support. Israel was counting on two factors: water supplying Jerusalem through Hezekiah’s Tunnel and the treaty with Egypt. Jerusalem was almost impregnable except from the north side. The Assyrian forces had approached from the south side, but they could move around to the north.

**Isa. 36:7** But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places

**and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?**

**Isa. 36:8** Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

**Isa. 36:9** How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

**Isa. 36:10** And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

**Isa. 36:11** Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

**Isa. 36:12** But Rab-shakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

Being very boastful, Rab-shakeh was trying to humiliate the king in front of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If Hezekiah unconditionally surrendered, he was promised 2,000 horses *if* he had enough skilled riders, the implication being that he did not. Such a promise could not be trusted.

Hezekiah's servants asked Rab-shakeh to speak in the Syrian language so that the common people could not understand what was being said, but Rab-shakeh wanted them to hear his derogatory words. He embarrassed King Hezekiah in front of the nation. Rab-shakeh also made a startling remark—that Jehovah had sent him to destroy Israel. Of course this was a lie. In addition, Rab-shakeh told the Jews on the wall that if they resisted, they would be made to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.

Hezekiah had properly removed altars to false gods, but to Rab-shakeh and Sennacherib, it seemed as if the king had removed Jehovah's altars. (A similar example would be for someone in the world or in the nominal Church to consider the Watchtower society of today to be the same as the Dawn, whereas there are great variances in doctrine and in spiritual versus earthly hopes.) This experience with Rab-shakeh worked out well for Hezekiah, for he did the right thing by consulting Isaiah, the Lord's prophet (37:1,2).

**Isa. 36:13** Then Rab-shakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.

**Isa. 36:14** Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.

**Isa. 36:15** Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

**Isa. 36:16** Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;

**Isa. 36:17** Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

**Isa. 36:18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?**

Instead of talking in Syriac as requested by the king's servants and addressing them directly, Rab-shakeh raised his voice higher and *shouted*, addressing the *people*: "You there up on the wall, do not let your king deceive you by saying God will deliver you. Spare yourselves the misery of what will befall you if we besiege Jerusalem. Submit now, for in the end, you will be taken captive anyway." Rab-shakeh was saying to submit voluntarily to going into captivity. Of course if Hezekiah had followed this advice, Sennacherib's stratagem was to destroy Jerusalem, take the booty, and kill many of the people, taking into captivity only those whom he wanted. Rab-shakeh was double-tongued, and he contradicted himself. On the one hand, he said he would give Hezekiah 2,000 horses for an unconditional surrender, and on the other hand, he told the people to submit voluntarily to going into captivity in Assyria, a wonderful land where every man could sit under his own vine and fig tree. Evidently Rab-shakeh was quite knowledgeable to be able to speak in Hebrew and quote Hebrew prophecy (Micah 4:4).

Sennacherib was the king of *Assyria*, not Syria. Larger than Syria and north of it, Assyria included Armenia (near Ararat in eastern Turkey, or Anatolia) and northern Iran.

**Q:** With Assyria picturing Gog, would Rab-shakeh's words apply to the antitype from the standpoint that the Bible has wonderful promises for the people in the Kingdom (economic security, the humble being exalted, etc.), but the communistic ideals claim to give equality and economic security to the people *now*? Communism says, "We will give you what you want now. Do not wait for pie-in-the-sky promises." The same temptation faced Israel back there: "Do you have faith in God's promises, or do you want what Assyria can give you now?" Moreover, Assyria's promises were false.

**A:** Yes, there is a tie-in. Back in the 1950s or so, an archbishop in the Church of England admired communism and actually said that communism was Christianity put into practice. An eloquent writer, he expressed high and noble sentiments, but he was preaching a social gospel. A number of brethren were impressed with his thinking and began to weave it into prophecy. Thus a temptation facing the Christian is to socialize the gospel, to divert efforts into doing good works for the poor, to be the conscience of the world, and so forth.

The communistic platform presented to the world in 1917-1918 sounded very much like the Kingdom with people sharing the wealth and every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree. And communism plans a world conquest. However, that cannot occur because the Daniel picture shows only five empires from 606 BC onward, the last being the Kingdom of Christ.

King Sennacherib promised the very things that Isaiah said God would bring to mankind in the Kingdom. He promised the Israelites their own private gardens and water supply if they would just surrender. Moreover, he tried to conquer the world, just like communism. However, Sennacherib contradicted himself. In one breath, he oozed promises and flattered with honey, but in the next breath, he uttered threats and thunder.

**Isa. 36:19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?**

Hamath, Arphad, and Sepharvaim were fortified cities north of Jerusalem and their suburbs that resisted Sennacherib but were defeated. Hamath was on the boundary line of northern Israel. Now Rab-shakeh was saying to Israel, "Are you any different?"

**Isa. 36:20 Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out**

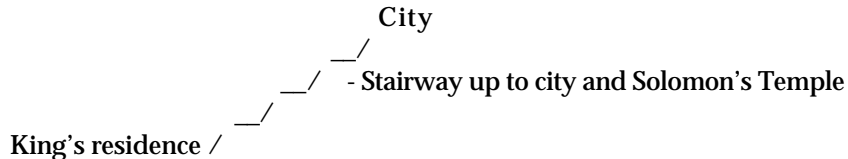


of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

**Isa. 36:21** But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

As King Hezekiah had commanded, the people did not answer Rab-shakeh. They had to wait to see how Hezekiah would reply to the demand for surrender.

**Isa. 36:22** Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.



Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, the king's servants, rent their clothes before going to Hezekiah. This emotional response was proper for shamefacedness. Today we do not use sackcloth and ashes, but the Christian equivalent is to prostrate oneself before the Lord in prayer on serious occasions. In Gethsemane, Jesus cast himself down on the ground in praying to his Father.

**Isa. 37:1** And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

**Isa. 37:2** And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

**Isa. 37:3** And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

Hezekiah rent his clothes and sent some of his chief men to Isaiah in humility and sackcloth to seek the prophet's advice. How admirable! In other words, Hezekiah did not presume to make a rash judgment or decision. (Here Isaiah was recognized. Later, still during Hezekiah's reign, Isaiah was sawn asunder according to tradition.)

**Isa. 37:4** It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

**Isa. 37:5** So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

**Isa. 37:6** And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

**Isa. 37:7** Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Isaiah said not to be afraid, for God would send "a blast" upon Sennacherib. The king would hear a rumor and return to Assyria, where he would be slain by the sword. For "send a blast upon him," the KJV margin has "put a spirit into him."

**Isa. 37:8** So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

**Isa. 37:9** And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

**Isa. 37:10** Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

**Isa. 37:11** Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

**Isa. 37:12** Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?

**Isa. 37:13** Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

Again Sennacherib sent messengers to Hezekiah advising unconditional surrender.

There was an Ethiopia near Iran and one in Africa. The Ethiopia in verse 9 was probably in Iran, for the cities mentioned in these verses were north and east of Israel—in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel.

**Isa. 37:14** And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

**Isa. 37:15** And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

**Isa. 37:16** O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

**Isa. 37:17** Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

When Hezekiah received a letter, or scroll, from Sennacherib listing the terms of surrender, he went to the Temple and spread it before the Lord and prayed for wisdom. This is a second instance of King Hezekiah's humbling himself in connection with the threat from Sennacherib. Now it became a higher issue—a confrontation between Jehovah and the heathen Assyrian king and his god.

What a beautiful prayer Hezekiah uttered! As the people's representative, King Hezekiah felt the decision was too weighty and difficult for him to make personally.

**Comment:** Just as God knew all about the contents of the letter but was pleased when Hezekiah spread the letter before Him, so God knows all about our experiences, yet we are to go to Him in prayer and tell Him what has happened.

**Isa. 37:18** Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,

**Isa. 37:19** And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of

**men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.**

**Isa. 37:20** Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

Hezekiah's prayer to Jehovah continued through verse 20. In addition to being beautiful, it was simple and well thought out: "It is true that Sennacherib has been successful in defeating his other opponents and in humbling their gods, but you and I know those gods are nothing but wood and stone. Now he has come and threatened *you*."

**Comment:** This same type of reasoning was used elsewhere in times of extremity. The prayer did not claim worthiness of the Lord's help but expressed a desire that His name would be magnified and known before others. Similarly in Jacob's Trouble, God will finally rise up so that all will know HE IS GOD.

**Isa. 37:21** Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

**Isa. 37:22** This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

**Isa. 37:23** Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

God's response through Isaiah is a little clearer in the Revised Standard: "This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him [Sennacherib]: 'She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you—the daughter of Jerusalem.'" Very derogatory terms had been used not only against Hezekiah and the people but primarily against the God of Israel. Now Isaiah was instructing Hezekiah to send a message of rebuke back to Sennacherib on behalf of the nation of Israel. The message was to be written as if Israel were a woman. The essence or spirit of the answer to Sennacherib was, "The woman of Israel refuses your message. She spits in your face. You have defied our God, and you will pay the penalty." Referring to the nation of Israel as a woman emphasized the fact that Israel (Judah) was not a warring people. They were not skilled in the arts of war.

Incidentally, Hezekiah had prayed *privately* before the Lord. Now he realized that for Isaiah to know about the prayer was a miracle in itself. The seers, or prophets, of the Old Testament had this capability.

**Isa. 37:24** By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.

**Isa. 37:25** I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

**Isa. 37:26** Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.

**Isa. 37:27** Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the

**housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.**

**Isa. 37:28** But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

**Isa. 37:29** Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

The language in verse 29 about putting a hook in Sennacherib's nose and a bridle in his lips to make him return home is similar to that used about Gog and Magog. God did this to Sennacherib—and He did it drastically! In Jacob's Trouble, the hooks, which will be put in the jaws, will turn Gog back to go down to the Holy Land for the final drama of this age. Notice Sennacherib's "rage" against the Jew and the Jewish God. Sennacherib was determined to vent his spleen on the Jews, and Gog's attitude will be the same.

**Isa. 37:30** And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

With this trouble with Assyria, the Jews were probably concerned about being able to observe their sabbaths. Hence God was assuring the Jews that their temporal needs would be amply provided for when Sennacherib besieged them.

Evidently this confrontation occurred in a sabbath year, and every seventh year the land was to rest. During the sabbath year, the people could eat whatever grew of itself, but they could not harvest and store food. "Ye shall eat this year" was a reference to that very year. The following year they could eat "that which springeth of the same," meaning they could again eat that which grew of itself. An example would be the olive tree. Whether or not the trees are pruned, olives will grow on them. (Pruning just results in a more abundant crop.) In other words, the Lord was telling Judah, through Isaiah, "You are going to eat that which grows of itself this year and next year. The third year you can sow, reap, and plant vineyards as in a normal year." With news of a siege coming, the people would normally rush to get all the food they could and bring it back to Jerusalem. They would fill the city with produce to withstand the siege. But God was saying, "Do not be disturbed that the enemy is powerful and is attacking you at a very inconvenient time. Go ahead and obey my laws and do not worry, even though conditions look bleak, for I will take care of you. Carry out your regular religious schedule for a sabbath year."

The Lord's provision for food would be "a sign" to the Jews, and in little more than a year's time, He would fight against and destroy Sennacherib without an arrow being shot in Jerusalem. The Jews would be the victors, and God was saying, "At that time, you will know the truthfulness of what I am telling you. A blast from me will cause Sennacherib to flee back to his homeland, and he will also hear a rumor that someone is attempting a political insurrection in the capital city." The "blast" destroyed Sennacherib's army, and the "hook" was the rumor (verse 7). Actually the rumor was true, for his sons assassinated him when he returned home.

**Isa. 37:31** And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

**Isa. 37:32** For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

Verses 31 and 32 have a future application regarding the Holy Remnant, who will be saved out

of Jacob's Trouble. Stated another way, terms such as the "hook" in the nose (verse 29) and the "remnant that is escaped" (verses 31 and 32) make a mental association with Jacob's Trouble. These two verses cannot apply to Sennacherib's day because Jerusalem was not captured back there. In fact, there was not even a battle. In the books of both Isaiah and Jeremiah, portions of certain prophecies have a natural application in the past, and other portions have a twofold application (either natural and spiritual or a double natural application). Here in Isaiah 37, two natural fulfillments are being compared.

"Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." In Sennacherib's day, the Lord delivered Judah so miraculously that this prophecy did not apply. But in the future when Jerusalem is taken, only the Holy Remnant will escape, and they will subsequently "take root downward, and bear fruit upward." In Sennacherib's day, all were saved. In the future, only a remnant will be saved.

From the point in the future when God goes into action and fights for Israel as in the day of battle, He will be the *only one* doing the fighting (Zech. 14:3). The statement in Zechariah 14:14 that "Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem" will be fulfilled in that time period but as a distinctly separate operation.

**Isa. 37:33** Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.

Some time—though very short—will be needed for Jacob's Trouble. In the antitype, Jerusalem will be captured and half of the city taken into captivity, so the statement in verse 33 about not an arrow being shot does not apply to the end of the age. However, the emphasis here that *God would fight* for Israel against Sennacherib is also true of the situation in Jacob's Trouble. Although Jerusalem will be taken, when God fights and the fury rises up in His face, He will miraculously defeat Gog and Magog with hail, pestilence, fire and brimstone, panic, etc.

The time period suggested here harmonizes with the prophecy of Jerusalem being taken. The situation will look very dark for Israel. Many Christians teach that God will fight for and deliver Israel, but they overlook the prophecy of the capture of Jerusalem first. The Jacob's Trouble "climax" feature of the three-year(?) Time of Trouble may take a year. Another hint of this time feature is the three-day search for Elijah's body by the sons of the prophets (2 Kings 2:15-18).

**Isa. 37:34** By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

**Isa. 37:35** For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

**Isa. 37:36** Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Just imagine, the angel of God killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's army in one night! Probably the king's immediate entourage was spared to go home to Assyria in order to justify the truthfulness of Isaiah's prophecy that the king would hear a rumor and return home. Those who accompanied Sennacherib back to Assyria would testify as eyewitnesses about the miraculous great slaughter. Here is another similarity to the Gog and Magog setting—that a remnant of the invading host would return to their homelands to give eyewitness accounts. This setting obviously has end-of-the-age features. The way to extract those parts that applied

only in Sennacherib's day is to be familiar with the details of the events both back there and in the future. Knowledge of other Scriptures helps to separate the meat from the bones regarding what will and will not happen at the end of the age, but the prophecy here in Chapter 37 is obviously meant to be a double picture.

**Comment:** Imagine looking over the wall and seeing 185,000 corpses! The account does not say what they were smitten with.

**Reply:** No. The high death rate is similar to when the destroying angel went through the land of Egypt and killed all the firstborn not under the blood. That, too, was a "blast." Both incidents occurred in the darkness of the night.

**Isa. 37:37** So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

**Isa. 37:38** And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

Two sons killed Sennacherib and then ran away when the coup was aborted. A third son, not involved in the plot, was made king. "Esar-haddon" is a title of office that was frequently used.

The names in this verse imply a history within a history. The countries that were absorbed by Assyria are reflected in these names. The condition was mixed; for instance, "Sharezer" is Babylonian or Chaldaic. Gog and Magog will also be a *mixed* multitude, Gog being the leader of Gomer, the house of Togarmah, etc. The names in verse 38 indicate the future mixed condition.

**Isa. 38:1** In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

Hezekiah was "sick unto death"; that is, he was dying. Isaiah instructed him to "set ... [his] house in order" in preparation for his death. Some King James margins indicate this expression is a Hebraism for "make out a will."

**Isa. 38:2** Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,

Hezekiah's prayers are very moving—not only this one but also his prayer when he was confronted with the threat from Sennacherib (Isa. 37:16-20). Here Hezekiah "turned his face toward the wall" for privacy in prayer. As king, he was evidently served and watched by many others, but he wanted privacy for his prayer. Prayer is the heart's sincere desire.

**Isa. 38:3** And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Hezekiah had served God with a "perfect heart" in removing high places and altars to false gods.

**Isa. 38:4** Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

**Isa. 38:5** Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

Hezekiah's tears moved the Lord to compassion. This indicates that God can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities and trials. His answer might be different from what we would expect, but He does answer in His own way and time. Christians sometimes testify that they have sure indications of death and then a reprieve or opportunity comes for them to demonstrate what is in their heart to do for the Lord.

God answered Hezekiah's prayer not direct but through Isaiah. It was a comfort to Hezekiah to know that God had heard his prayer, and it was a comfort to Isaiah to be able to give such good news, namely, that the king would live 15 more years. Moreover, in answering the king's prayer, God rescinded the earlier statement that Hezekiah would die (verse 1). The additional 15 years approximately doubled the length of his reign.

**Isa. 38:6** And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

**Isa. 38:7** And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;

**Isa. 38:8** Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

The sign was given not only that Hezekiah's life would be prolonged 15 more years but also that the shadow on the sun dial would move backward 10 degrees. (When asked if he wanted the sun dial to go forward or backward as a sign, Hezekiah said backward because that was more difficult.) "And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees" (2 Kings 20:9,10). Probably there is a spiritual significance to the additional 15 years and the subtraction of 10 degrees.

The Lord indicated that Hezekiah's prayer would be heard in another way too. Not only did the king receive an answer about his personal physical condition, but God promised to defend and deliver the city of Jerusalem (and hence the nation), which was under siege. God said, "I will defend this city [Jerusalem]." In other words, He would do it *single-handedly!*

In 2 Kings 20:5,6, God called Hezekiah "the captain of my people." "Tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

Half the Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40 through 66, is *ALL prophecy*. Nothing in these chapters applied back in Isaiah's day; there are no dual applications. Because of this change, some erroneously think the Book of Isaiah had two authors.

**Isa. 38:9** The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

**Isa. 38:10** I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

**Isa. 38:11** I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall

**behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.**

**Isa. 38:12** Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

**Isa. 38:13** I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

**Isa. 38:14** Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

**Isa. 38:15** What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

**Isa. 38:16** O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

**Isa. 38:17** Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

**Isa. 38:18** For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

**Isa. 38:19** The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

**Isa. 38:20** The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

After Hezekiah miraculously recovered from the illness, he wrote down his earlier feelings when he had thought he would die. Hezekiah was saying that just at the time in his life when he was ready to really praise the Lord, he was dying. He wanted to serve God "in the land of the living." Hezekiah wanted to live so he could praise God, but the gates of death were before him. The Revised Standard Version is good for these verses.

In verse 13, Hezekiah wrote, "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones." This is strong language, for a lion can eat an animal larger than itself, and its teeth are so strong that they just scrunch right through the bones.

When God gave Hezekiah the reprieve, the 15-year extension of his life, the king was humble and submissive. He said he would "go softly" with a remorseful attitude all the rest of his years "in the bitterness" of his soul (verse 15).

Reflecting back to a low point in his life while under heavy trial, David said he once thought all men were liars. So frequently had he been disappointed in people that he drew this conclusion, but later he found some sterling characters he could trust. Some examples are Zadok the priest, Jonathan, Nathan the prophet, and the soldiers who brought him water at Bethlehem (2 Sam. 23:15-17). Psalm 116:8-11 reads: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars."

As here with Hezekiah and previously with David, there may be low points in our lives when we magnify our sufferings and experiences. In calmer moments, we can reason, like the



Apostle Paul, that our “sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). While we are in the midst of a trial, it is hard to reason this way, but afterward we can, for Paul also said, “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are [rightly] exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11). Eventually afterward—sometimes years later—we can see why we were permitted to go through certain experiences, and we can see that they worked for good.

In retrospect, after Hezekiah’s life was prolonged, he said that all of his previous complaints were like vain “chatter” (verse 14). In his complaining attitude, he had momentarily forgotten the depth of the Lord’s interest in him as a person, and particularly as the “captain” of the host of Israel. Hezekiah said, “Mine eyes fail [are weary—RSV] with looking upward.” He was weary from continual prayer. The Apostle Paul earnestly besought the Lord three times for improvement in his eyesight, for the removal of his “thorn in the flesh,” but these prayers were answered in the negative (2 Cor. 12:7). Paul had to bear with that experience for the rest of his life. However, that very experience helped him to attain the chief position in the Little Flock.

To be part of the 144,000 requires more than just character development, for all of the Little Flock will have sterling characters. For example, temperament and capability are two other factors. The position one has in glory will be related to the number of talents he has and *faithfully uses*. Of course one can have relatively little talent and still be in the Little Flock, but those who have leadership qualities and who faithfully sacrifice them for the Lord (wealth, position, education, talents, etc.) will get a better reward. Stated another way, the one who sacrifices the most will be given the higher position, all things being equal. The Parable of the Talents teaches this lesson.

“The living ... shall praise thee, as I do this day” (verse 19). Hezekiah had been feeling sorry for himself, but now he realized how God had spared his life. As a result, he wanted to praise and please God even more—and to continue to praise Him for the remaining 15 years of his life.

“We will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD” (verse 20). Like David, Hezekiah said he would be singing his songs “in the house of the LORD,” accompanied by stringed instruments.

**Isa. 38:21** For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.

Hezekiah told of the remedy for his recovery. God had instructed Isaiah to tell Hezekiah to place a poultice of figs on the boil (carbuncle, ulcer). Notice how careful Hezekiah was to record in the official archives *Isaiah’s* part in the miraculous healing. He did not want to omit the name of the messenger the Lord had used. Hezekiah’s character was admirable on the whole.

**Isa. 38:22** Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

The “sign” was the sun dial going backward 10 degrees. It is true that cloud formations can cause certain phenomena, but having this happen at this particular time was a *miracle* along natural lines.

**Isa. 39:1** At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

Notice the name “Merodach-baladan.” Actually Babylon had seven or nine kings depending on

which record is read, but the Lord recognized only Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, and Belshazzar (father, son, and grandson, respectively). *Baladan* was related to “Bel,” the god of the Babylonians. Since various translators worked on the Bible, differences crept in, and *Baladan* could just as easily and correctly have been translated *Beladan* or *Baladon* because no one subsequently knows what the original vowels were, and they had to be supplied. “Bel” is really “Baal” (a form of “Lord” or “God”). At one time, the name “Baal” had a better connotation, but later in history, the Lord discredited that name and disassociated His title from it. “*Baladan*” means “God is judge” in the Syriac language.

Assyria was a world empire at this time. Babylon was a separate province of Assyria and did not become a *world* empire until some years prior to 606 BC. From the standpoint of Scripture, Nebuchadnezzar is the particularly significant Babylonian king, but other Babylonian kings reigned before him. *Baladan* was one such king. The “bad man” in the prophecies of Isaiah is called the “Assyrian” because Assyria was the supreme Gentile power during his ministry. In the days of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, the ascendant Gentile power was Babylon.

**Isa. 39:2** And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

King Merodach-baladan sent letters and a present to King Hezekiah, saying he was glad Hezekiah had recovered from his illness. Hezekiah was so pleased that he unwisely showed the king of Babylon everything in “the house of his [personal] precious things,” “the house of his armour,” and “all his dominion.”

**Isa. 39:3** Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.

**Isa. 39:4** Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.

**Isa. 39:5** Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

**Isa. 39:6** Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

**Isa. 39:7** And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

The Lord pronounced a judgment through Isaiah because Hezekiah had shown *all* that was in his house to the heathen king of Babylon. The judgment was that the sons of Hezekiah’s lineage would be taken captive to Babylon. When a king was taken into captivity or exile, the customary practice was to castrate his offspring (make them eunuchs) so that they could not later contend for the crown. Moreover, a conquered king was usually killed. If spared, conquered kings were humiliated in various ways, such as having their ears and noses cut off or being made eunuchs.

The lesson is that the *unregenerate* are not entitled to all the privileges of the consecrated. They should not be recognized in the same intimate terms. Had the king of Babylon become a proselyte to the Jewish faith, then certain liberties would properly have been extended to him.

While God may answer *some* prayers prior to consecration—and even dramatically—He is not obligated to answer *all* prayers. The unconsecrated can offer earnest prayers and hope for an answer, but an answer is not guaranteed. On the other hand, honest, sincere prayers of true Christians must receive an answer, even if in the negative.

King Hezekiah was wrong to let down the bars and show everything, including his armor and weapons. He allowed a *personal* relationship to jeopardize the security of the nation. The lesson is that there should be *reserve* from both a natural and a spiritual standpoint.

**Comment:** It is interesting that later, in 606 BC, the vessels of the Temple were taken to Babylon and, still later, desecrated. Sport was made of these gold and silver vessels at Belshazzar's feast.

**Isa. 39:8** Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

Hezekiah was glad to be spared personally. However, his not being more concerned for the welfare of the nation was a weakness. A secular king is responsible for what he does, and since Judah was the Lord's representative kingdom, Hezekiah was even more responsible.

**Isa. 40:1** Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

From Chapter 40 to the end, the Book of Isaiah consists of prophetic sermons and prophecies. There is a definite character change in the book. Dates are not pinpointed, and the words are not tied down to any one king's reign. Based on Isaiah 1:1, we know the prophet's public ministry extended from King Uzziah's reign into Hezekiah's reign, but whether Isaiah's death occurred before or after Hezekiah's death we do not know. Because the nature of the book is considerably different in the 40th through the 66th chapter, these wholly prophetic chapters may have been written when Isaiah was in "retirement" from actively going before kings. At any rate, they seem to be the result of one who was in meditation and of one who was giving considerable thought to the subject. (Of course the Lord helped to exercise Isaiah's mind in the proper channels so that the results would be an expression of the mind of God.)

Verse 1 is a directive, a mandate, to the Church to comfort natural Israel: "Comfort ye my people."

**Isa. 40:2** Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

This message of comfort was to be given when Israel's warfare was accomplished, when she had "received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." One of the ingredients of the Harvest message at the Second Advent is related to this message. Based on certain parallelisms, the Pastor explained the fulfillment, or expiration, of this mysterious "double" of disfavor as occurring in 1878.

Verse 2 tells the nature of the message of comfort for natural Israel. "Speak ye comfortably" suggests a softer, more private approach, whereas "cry unto her" implies a more public message, or pronouncement.

"Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished [ended]." What "warfare"? Israel's punishment, her "appointed *time*" (KJV margin), her "*time of service*" (RSV footnote). In other words, Israel's "warfare" is not merely a date but a *period of time* that terminates with a date.

The "appointed time," or "time of service," is the "double"; that is, it is the time period of

Israel's *punishment, or sentence*. A "double" is a fixed period of time having a beginning and an ending that correspond to a previous beginning and ending. The first part of the double was a period of *favor* of 1,845 years, and the second part of the double was a period of *disfavor* of equal length, or 1,845 years. The turning point in the double was the year AD 33, the middle of the 70th week. (Messiah was cut off in the midst of the last week of the 70-week prophecy in Daniel.) The 1,845-year period of favor began with the death of Jacob, for at that time, God began to deal with Jacob's 12 sons as a nation (of 12 tribes). The blessing that had previously been on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob passed on to the 12 sons of Jacob. From Jacob's death through AD 33 was the period of favor when God dealt *directly* with Israel and *only* with Israel out of all nations (Amos 3:2).

Why is this period of 1,845 years called a period of *favor* when, throughout its duration, Israel was punished many times with defeats in battle, including the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the 70-year period of Babylonian captivity? God dealt directly with Israel as a parent deals with a child. While there were occasions in which He temporarily withdrew His face from them (for their own good), it was for a relatively short duration of time compared with the 1,845 years of disfavor or rejection. In AD 70, Herod's Temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed, the surviving Jews were sold into slavery and dispersed throughout the nations, and God no longer communicated to them through prophets. During the 1,845 years of Diaspora, the Jews seemed to be wandering aimlessly, and their lot was a very forlorn one.

Another ingredient of the message in verse 2 is to inform Israel that a change in dispensation occurred in 1878 and that God is now dealing differently with them. In 1878, a Jewish colony was established in Israel called Petatikva (meaning "Door of Hope"). Disraeli, the first Jewish prime minister of England, negotiated a treaty with Turkey that was favorable for Jews to return to Israel and purchase real estate. Only a handful of Jews went back, however. After World War I, the Balfour Declaration helped open up Israel for the Jews. Other nations began to recognize Jewish rights regarding Israel. Hence the fig tree began to put forth green leaves, but the fruitage is *still future*.

Also, the directive was to "cry unto her ... that her *iniquity is pardoned*." This element of the message has not been sufficiently emphasized. The Diaspora was *due to sin*, and we should not compromise this fact. Israel's sin is now pardoned because she has received of the Lord her "double" of punishment. As regards the *nation* (not as regards the people, their flesh), there has been a radical change since 1878—even though since that date, millions were put to death under Hitler, pogroms were carried out in Russia, etc. After all, during Israel's earlier double of favor, Jews were brutally treated and massacred such as in Nebuchadnezzar's day. In Israel's earlier period of favor and now since 1878, the nation is being divinely guided. The people have been weaned from the various countries where they were scattered to yearn for a homeland. God is disciplining and instructing the Jew as a father would discipline and instruct a child. Herzl, Weizmann, Pastor Russell, and others have been raised up to give direction and guidance. Therefore, Israel's experience since 1878 should not be confused with disfavor any more than trouble in a Christian's life. Jesus was crucified, but he still had God's favor. He was being dealt with as *the Son of God* in preparation for his future office. And so some of the experiences of Israel since 1878, though very harsh, have been disciplinary to prepare the Jews for their role in the Kingdom as the blesser nation. The weaning and whittling down will continue until eventually a Holy Remnant emerges. This dealing with the Jew is quite different from the previous aimless experiences, and the land of Israel has been developing and growing in material prosperity since 1878, when the double of favor began. Each of the World Wars resulted in further progress toward a Jewish homeland. In 1948, the nation of Israel was officially recognized. Although it will not be a recognized nation from God's standpoint until after Jacob's Trouble when He institutes His own government under the Ancient Worthies, we do, nevertheless, see a government and rulers there as preparatory work. (However, the individual people should not be confused with the nation, for many Jews are becoming more

ungodly and even atheistic.)

The prophecy states that “*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*” (Luke 21:24). This prophecy applies to *Israel* (to the *land* or the *nation*), and not to the people. Jesus spoke of this occurrence as being future to his day. Therefore, even though the double of disfavor started in AD 33, the trodden-down condition did not commence until AD 70. In AD 70, the *land* suffered, and Jerusalem was suppressed. Liberties were no longer enjoyed in Israel.

**Isa. 40:3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

At the First Advent, John the Baptist was “the voice” crying in the wilderness. In referring to John, Jesus quoted this prophecy in Isaiah (Matt. 3:1-3), and John also so identified himself (John 1:23). However, that does not end the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Pastor showed that John the Baptist represents a class, the Church in the flesh at the end of the age. The difference between John the Baptist and Elijah is that John represents only the feet members and Elijah represents the Church over a longer period of time, from 539 to the end of their experience. John the Baptist’s ministry occurred during the days of Jesus’ First Advent. The feet members, the antitypical John the Baptist, are on the scene during the days of Jesus’ Second Advent. Or it could be stated that the antitypical John the Baptist class represents *only that segment* of the Elijah class who are living at the end of the age.

The Voice Introducing Jesus

At First Advent:	John the Baptist
At Second Advent:	Feet members

Bro. Russell is the one who called attention to the end of Israel’s double of punishment. His role is pictured back in Israel’s history in connection with Moses, Aaron, and the plagues. When God instructed Moses to go back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites, He commissioned Aaron as Moses’ mouthpiece. In the audiences with Pharaoh, Moses was the representative of God, and Aaron was the representative of Moses. (Incidentally, contrary to the usual thought that Moses had a speech impediment, he spoke very well and was the mouthpiece of God on many other occasions.) When Moses was originally in Egypt, he represented Jesus at the First Advent, who manifested interest and love for the Jews, for example, by weeping over Jerusalem. When “his own” rejected him, he had to go away—to heaven. And Moses, whose heart was burdened by the injustices and suffering of his people under the Egyptian taskmasters, manifested his love for the Israelites when he killed one of the taskmasters. However, his brethren rejected him for this act and he went away for 40 years. When Moses returned to Egypt, when he went to Egypt the *second* time, Aaron was his mouthpiece. And so when Jesus returned at his *Second* Advent, Bro. Russell was his mouthpiece. This reasoning harmonizes with Matthew 24:45-47, which shows that at his Second Advent, Jesus would select a servant to feed his people.

Type: Moses’ second going to Egypt. Aaron was his mouthpiece.  
Antitype: Jesus’ Second Advent. Bro. Russell was his mouthpiece.

(It could also be said that the Pastor was the most prominent mouthpiece and that others associated with him in the Harvest work are pictured by Aaron.)

Notice: “Prepare ye the way of the LORD”; that is, “Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH.” We should keep this thought in mind throughout the 40th chapter of Isaiah.

“Make straight in the desert a highway for *our* God.” The word “our” indicates that “the voice” who will utter this cry is a *class*. While John the Baptist was “the voice” at the First Advent, his

work was only a miniature picture or fulfillment of what the feet members will do at the Second Advent. The John the Baptist *class*—that is, the feet members—are to prepare the way of God.

Trinitarians use this verse to prove that Jesus is Jehovah. They quote Scripture to prove that John the Baptist was “the voice” who introduced Jesus at his First Advent. Next they reason that if John the Baptist, “the voice,” introduced Jesus at his First Advent and verse 3 here in Isaiah says that “the voice” will prepare the way of Jehovah, then Jesus and Jehovah are synonymous terms. Fortunately, many other Scriptures show that Jesus is not Jehovah, but his representative. He came at the First Advent as the *messenger* of God; he came to earth to die in harmony with *God’s* plan. Therefore, in regard to the First Advent and John’s role, the implication is, “Prepare ye the way of Jehovah’s *representative*,” “Prepare ye the way of the one who is coming in the name of Jehovah.”

**Isa. 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:**

This is another part of the message to Israel. Ingredients of the message so far are (1) Israel’s warfare is accomplished, (2) her iniquity is pardoned, and (3) she has received double of the Lord’s hand for her sins. Notice that iniquity and sins are a part of the message. Of course this portion can be handled tactfully with a statement such as, “We have all sinned. All are born in sin and shapen in iniquity.” Caution: we must be careful not to be so exuberant and enthusiastic in speaking comfortably to Israel that we forget to say Israel’s *iniquity* is pardoned and she has received double for her *sins*. In preaching the *whole* message, we are preparing the Jews for their future experiences in Jacob’s Trouble and for their need to seek meekness and righteousness to be part of the Holy Remnant. A fourth part of the message, therefore, is that God is seeking and preparing a faithful remnant.

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.”

“The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.”

Notice the *contrasts*: (1) valley vs. mountain and hill, (2) low vs. exalted, (3) crooked vs. straight, and (4) rough vs. plain.

What is the difference between the valley and the mountain? Both are large and/or on a large scale. A “mountain” is a symbol of a kingdom. In other words, the present and past *exalted* kingdoms of this world, the large autocratic governments, will be *lowered*. Governments will be adjusted to be subservient to Christ. The great ones (individuals) of earth are the leaders of these nations. On the other hand, the “valleys” will be *exalted*. “Valleys” represent the common people, those who are ruled and oppressed (racially, financially, in castes from birth, etc.). Thus the mountains and valleys pertain to *rulership*—a rulership adjustment.

“Crooked” and “straight” pertain to *character*—a moral or character adjustment. That which is crooked in this life will be made straight. What is immoral and dishonest will be made right. In the Kingdom, the laws and the government will be righteous, and conformity thereto will be required. The mountains and the valleys are a *vertical* adjustment. The crooked and the straight are a *horizontal* adjustment.

“The rough places [shall be made] plain.” Stumbling blocks will be removed. These are still finer adjustments to level the remaining little bumps. In other words, adjustments will be made in the life of *each individual*. Each person must individually bow the knee.

**Isa. 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

The glory of *Jehovah* will be revealed to *all flesh* during the Second Advent. (This verse does not refer to the First Advent, for Christ was humiliated and rejected as the messenger at that time.) Beginning with the conclusion of Jacob's Trouble when God miraculously defeats the forces of Gog, delivers the Holy Remnant, and resurrects the Ancient Worthies, His glory will be revealed to all nations. And all of the living generation will "see it [God's glory] together," not piecemeal. All peoples will be apprised of the fact that God reigns.

**Isa. 40:6** The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

**Isa. 40:7** The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

See the RSV: "A voice says, 'Cry!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?'" First, God instructs the consecrated to comfort Israel. Now He tells them to "Cry," and the inquiry is, "What shall I cry?" The rather long answer that follows seems strange, for it starts as a dirge. What is the purpose of such an instruction? The answer to this question will be given after subsequent verses are discussed.

Verses 6 and 7 continue, as paraphrased: "Flesh is as grass, and the beauty of the grass is the flowers that are intermingled among it. In due time, both the grass and the flowers perish." Decay normally occurs because of seasonal changes; grass and flowers wither and die in the fall, and winter levels them. However, in this case, the grass and the flowers of the field wither not because of a seasonal change but because "the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it."

**Isa. 40:8** The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Verses 7 and 8 both begin with the refrain "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth," but why do they wither and fade? Because the spirit of the Lord God blows upon them—just as in winter, a blast of wind comes and causes the decay. What is the lesson? The permanence, the *enduring* quality of God's Word, is contrasted with the *transience* of the grass and flowers of the field. How different God's Word is—it is not like the grass that withers but is an *eternal* hope, a *sure* promise. We would do well to wait patiently for its fulfillment.

Why is this type of reasoning embedded in this prophecy? Chapter 40 began with God's instruction to comfort natural Israel in three ways. Next came the prophecy about "the voice" of one crying in the wilderness, followed by a Second Advent application where not only would the mountains and valleys be adjusted, etc., but the glory of God would be revealed. Then comes this mandate to cry that all flesh is as grass, that the beauty of the flower will fade, but that the Word of God endures forever. (We should keep in mind that the segments of this prophecy are all related, notwithstanding the paragraph indication of the translators.) So again the question is asked: Why was the reasoning of verses 6-8 introduced into this prophecy?

**Comment:** It is somewhat like the situation prior to Noah and family entering the Ark. The rest of the people, preoccupied with their daily affairs, were oblivious to the coming Flood. But what God had predicted regarding coming events was a sure thing.

**Reply:** That reasoning is somewhat related to the prophecy here. At the end of the age, the great Time of Trouble will humble man and prepare him for the Kingdom. When, in the Time of Trouble, God blows on the earth, as it were, the people will realize that all of their dreams, hopes, joys, sports, and pleasures are *ephemeral*. When there is no food on the table and no heat in the furnace, people will radically change their values. The *basic* rudiments of life, which have been taken for granted—food, shelter, etc.—will then be seen to be all important. Lacking these

in the anarchy, the people will curse *their* god and *their* king and look up to the Lord God for deliverance and pray to Him as the only hope. They will recall having heard that God's Kingdom is coming, that God's purpose is to humiliate man, and that thus there is a reason for the trouble. As the people see society crumble and anarchy prevail, they will be encouraged when they remember having heard not only that the trouble would come but that it would be cut short lest all flesh be destroyed.

We must preach the *whole* Word. Our message should be that trouble is coming because of sin and iniquity as well as that the Kingdom, restitution, and blessings will follow. As we near the Time of Trouble—and since 1914 has come and gone, ending Gentile Times—the message of the Day of Vengeance is becoming more important. The time is coming for a stronger message. In the earlier part of his ministry, Jesus gave beautiful sermons, such as the Sermon on the Mount, but his message got stronger toward the end of his ministry, as when he cast out the money changers. And so restitution was a prominent theme earlier in the Second Advent, but as we near the Time of Trouble, the message should correspondingly change or adjust. Restitution should not be omitted, but the tenor of the message should change because it will help people more to tell them of the coming trouble. The feet members will have to give this message before they die, as shown in the next verse.

**Isa. 40:9** O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Here “Zion” and “Jerusalem” are *spiritual*. This is a message for the *Church* to give. The instruction for the feet members is to “get thee up into the high mountain.” In other words, they are to take the initiative and to “*be not afraid* [to give the message]”! The message will be given on this side of the veil and *under great pressure*. The Zion class are to get up into the mountain and *shout* this message of “good tidings” as if they are *shouting it from a mountaintop*. “Lift up thy voice *with strength*; lift it up, be not afraid.”

As we near the very end of the age, we are to *boldly and energetically* preach this message. We are to get to a vantage point and *shout* down to the people. We must seek opportunities to preach far, wide, and near.

Notice the instruction: “Say unto the cities of *Judah*, Behold your God!” This message is to be given not to the world but to *Israel*. The feet members are told to preach to *Judah*.

**Q:** How will the message given to Israel by the feet members differ from that given later by the Great Company?

**A:** The feet members will have an opportunity to give this message to Israel, perhaps on television to a worldwide audience, but the opportunity will be *very brief*, possibly only two or three minutes. The Great Company will subsequently have more time to speak (and with clarity of detail) because they will enter *into* the Time of Trouble.

First, a general popular message will be given by both Elijah and Elisha. All the workers will be active in the vineyard just before the penny is given. They are to speak to many nations, peoples, and tongues (Rev. 10:11). At his First Advent, Jesus became popular with thousands following him up to five days before his crucifixion. The height of his popularity occurred the very week of his death and rejection. When he rode into Jerusalem on the white donkey, the people hailed him and spread palm branches. Next a hard, smiting message will be given by the Elijah class. In smiting the Jordan, they will reprove Babylon, Christendom, and give a message to Israel.



**Comment:** The KJV margin has, “O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion” and “O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem.” Therefore, it would seem that in both cases, either Zion and Jerusalem are *doing* the speaking or Zion and Jerusalem are *receiving* the message.

**Reply:** Zion and Jerusalem (synonymous terms) would have to be either both natural Israel or both spiritual. If Zion and Jerusalem are the recipients of the message, they would be natural Israel (KJV margin). However, if Zion and Jerusalem give the message, the terms are spiritual (KJV as it reads) and would be the feet members. There is one other possibility: that Zion and Jerusalem, as the speakers, are a broader term that includes both the feet members (Little Flock) and the Great Company. If so, the terms would be used in the same inclusive way as the church of the firstborn.

At any rate, the good tidings will be given to natural Israel, and the one delivering the message will do so on this side of the veil and is to lift up the voice and not be afraid. The bringer of the good tidings has to be a *spiritual* class, and it is probably the Little Flock. In that case, Zion and Jerusalem are spiritual and Judah is natural.

The only question is whether Zion and Jerusalem are the *giver* or the *recipient* of the message. If they are the recipient, the implication is broader, namely, that both the Little Flock and the Great Company can give this message.

The reason for the alternate reading in the KJV margin is probably based on Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” The only problem is that Isaiah 52:7 applies to a different time period; the fulfillment is future when the Church is complete beyond the veil.

The instruction to “be not afraid” suggests that a period of depression will come on the feet members but that they will be given a dispensation of the Holy Spirit to overcome the depression. Similarly in Gethsemane, Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and questioned his own relationship to the Father. He agonized with tears until an angel came and comforted him. After that, he was calm, and when Judas entered the garden, Jesus submitted. A second wave of great depression came upon Jesus on the Cross when he said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But he finished his course triumphantly when he cried in a very loud voice, “It is finished!” It was necessary for Jesus to feel forsaken in order to pay the price of Adam, who hid naked behind a tree when the Logos went through the garden. A person can be completely innocent of a crime and yet psychologically feel guilty because of circumstantial evidence, false witnesses, and extreme pressure. Innocent victims can be brainwashed by evil powers into feeling guilty. And so, like their Master, the feet members will have periods of depression and strengthening. Peter’s experience in the storm on the Sea of Galilee illustrates their experience. When they hear the roar of the wind and the waves, they will begin to sink, but then the Lord will put out his hand and save them. Momentary fear is not necessarily an indication of unfaithfulness of any kind.

**Isa. 40:10** Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

The title “Lord GOD” (*Adonai* followed by “God”) belongs to Jehovah. He will “come with strong hand” at the time of Jacob’s Trouble to save Israel, the Holy Remnant. “His arm [Jesus] shall rule for him [God].” In the Old Testament, Jesus is frequently referred to as the “arm” (instrument) of Jehovah.

“His reward is with him.” God’s reward will be with Jesus at that time. The emphasis is on God’s role. God’s Kingdom will be set up in power and glory through Jesus, God’s agent and

representative. Isaiah is describing the setting up of *God's Kingdom*. *God's promises* are to be in the custody of Jesus, who will dispense them.

“His work [is] before him.” *God's work* is before Jesus. Possibly this clause can be understood as Jesus' work being before God. Either way the primary credit goes to *God* because of the previous part of the verse.

What “reward”? What “work”? The reward can be considered two ways. Since Jesus died for the Church and for the world, dispensing the blessings will be his pleasure and privilege. It will be a blessing for the Church to be associated with Christ, and it will be a blessing for the recipients of the reward. The reward that Jesus has is one that all will enjoy. “For the joy that was set before him,” Jesus endured the Cross (Heb. 12:2). That “joy” includes the Kingdom, restitution, and especially having a Church class to divide the spoil with (Isa. 53:12). Thus the reward can be considered two ways: from the standpoint of Jesus' own personal satisfaction of being able to dispense the blessings and from the standpoint of those who receive the blessings. Jesus will joy over his Bride as well as over dispensing restitution blessings—what he originally came to earth to prove worthy to be able to do. The reward will be a great radiating happiness *for all* who are involved.

**Isa. 40:11** He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Why is the illustration of a shepherd's role introduced here? From the natural standpoint, out of Jacob's Trouble will come deliverance to a remnant of Jews. Through Jesus, God will gently succor them as a Shepherd in three ways: (1) He will feed them, (2) He will hold them close to His bosom, and (3) He will gently lead those who have young. A shepherd would be very careful with all types: with a ewe heavy with young lest she be hurried and have a miscarriage, with the lambs, and with all the sheep to help them find food. In other words, God, through Jesus, will treat gently, as a Shepherd, individuals as well as all, like a flock. “The Father himself loveth you” is the principle, even though that text refers to the Church (John 16:27). God is the Great Shepherd, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

**Isa. 40:12** Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Verses 12-31 give a reassurance of God's GREAT power so that there will be courage to SPEAK OUT! What is man but a drop in the bucket? But when the ALMIGHTY GOD, who created the planet, says to lift up the voice, do so and MAKE IT HEARD!

The “voice” at the Second Advent (verse 3) may have started in 1878 with the Pastor, but the context shows that there will come a time when God's providence enhances the volume of the message so that it enlightens the Holy Remnant. The *primary objective* of Chapter 40 is to *comfort Israel* (verse 1). The Church should try to comfort Israel even now, but the effective comfort will come later through the Great Company. The comfort message will be successful when the Church is gone. In fact, one of the responsibilities of the feet members is to enlighten the Great Company class, who will be giving this message.

Verses 12-17 are not exaggerations. From a materialistic standpoint, all the nations are *less than nothing* before God! Negative (minus) values, used in mathematics, are very real. No matter how impressive natural phenomena and scenery are on both land and ocean, the earth is tiny compared with the rest of the universe; it is like dust on the scale.

Because of God's love and compassion (His Shepherd qualities), He can be approached and sees

our smallest need. If He lacked this attribute and were just intellectual and powerful, sinful mankind would not be of interest to Him.

The Jews need to be depressed so that they will cry to God for help instead of to the United States and other nations. God will then truly be before them. Israel is being weaned away from earth toward God. When the time comes that they cry to Him alone, He will answer them.

The universe is held together by gravity. The moon stays in orbit because it is attracted to the earth. The earth, in turn, stays in orbit because it is attracted by the sun. All of the heavenly bodies are moving through space, even the sun. They were twirled at a certain speed, and they were thrust in a certain direction or orbit, and they all maintain their speed. Moreover, the planets and the stars had to be weighed accurately, down to the last atom, in order to stay in their orbits and fit in God's plan. Even the seas were measured. God manifested *such care* with these tremendous heavenly bodies—the measuring, the meting, the weighing. He measured the seas, He meted out the heavens with a span, and He weighed the mountains in a scale.

**Comment:** Similarly the Lord very carefully weighs every inch of the cross that each of us must carry. Our trials (crosses) are weighed exactly to what we can bear.

**Reply:** Yes, the same principle applies to Christian life. A Christian's trials and experiences are tailor-made.

**Comment:** If the Lord took such care in preparing the planets, the seas, and the mountains of earth, then He also took care as to where He placed earthquake faults.

**Reply:** Yes, certain eccentricities were intentionally calculated or built into the earth to cause events to happen at exactly the right time. Examples are the collapse of the last water ring to cause the Flood in Noah's day and the earthquake and volcanic eruption that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Mathematics is generally the root of trees of knowledge. That is true here as well, but love is the soil in which it grows.

**Isa. 40:13** Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

**Isa. 40:14** With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

**Isa. 40:15** Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

**Isa. 40:16** And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

**Isa. 40:17** All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

**Isa. 40:18** To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Verses 13-22 contain many questions. There is a sequence that pertains to the making of images. "To whom then will ye liken God?" Man tries to make a likeness of God. First, gold (the king of the metals) is used, then silver, then wood (descending order). The wealthy had gold and silver images; the ordinary, poor people carved images out of wood. The point is that man wants to create with his own hands a likeness of God.

**Isa. 40:19** The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

**Isa. 40:20** He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.

The “graven image ... shall not be moved.” The statue was placed in a spot where it was not to be moved; it was to be a permanent memorial in a permanent place of worship and veneration. But trees *will rot*, and statues or images *will crumble!*

**Isa. 40:21** Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

**Isa. 40:22** It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

The expression “circle [sphere] of the earth” revealed back in Isaiah’s day that the earth is *round*.

**Comment:** What a powerful picture! Just think of Jehovah sitting on the earth and the inhabitants appearing as grasshoppers in comparison.

**Reply:** God condescends to picture His greatness, majesty, and power in comparison to our smallness as “grasshoppers.” We do not realize just how tiny we literally are. And in order for God to measure out the Atlantic and Pacific oceans *in His hand*, He would have to be much larger than is expressed by His sitting on the circle of the earth. In fact, even the whole heavens cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). One purpose of the expression is to show that the earth is under His control.

**Comment:** Size-wise, as the grasshopper is to the earth, so the earth is to God. These are staggering proportions!

**Isa. 40:23** That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

**Isa. 40:24** Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

**Isa. 40:25** To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

**Isa. 40:26** Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

The fact God created the host of the heavens should give us some idea of His size, power, and intellect. He has a name for *each* of the heavenly bodies, and *not one fails*. Science, astronomy, tells us that the stars are failing, that they are exploding and dying, but astronomers are seeing things that occurred billions of light-years ago. (Light travels at 186,000 miles per second.) They have many unproved theories, such as the black holes. Also, much of what they see can be vapor or gases, or even the creation of new planets. The Apostle Paul said the things that are not seen can be more real than the things that are seen (2 Cor. 4:18). The majestic verses in Chapter 40 furnish keys for other thoughts.

**Isa. 40:27** Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Jacob (Israel) is saying, “My way is hid from the LORD.” This sentiment will be felt more in the future, just before Jacob’s Trouble and after a period of respite, peace, and prosperity when they are increased with cattle and much goods and dwell with unwallled villages, having relaxed their preparedness for warfare (Ezek. 38:11,12). With anarchy prevailing in other parts of the earth at that time, including Magog (Ezek. 39:6), the booty in Israel will attract the forces of Gog. With no transportation, no police or fire department, no supermarkets, etc., those with guns and ammunition will band together and head for Israel, robbing and pillaging as they go. In this common circumstance, all distinctions of race, nationality, and religion will cease. Anarchy will be a leveler among the forces of Gog, the unifying factor being a common animal instinct of survival. Their intention will be to seize food and control from the strategic location of Israel.

**Isa. 40:28** Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

**Isa. 40:29** He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

**Isa. 40:30** Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

**Isa. 40:31** But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

In context, this prophecy applies to the Holy Remnant. (A secondary application, or at least the principle, is for the Christian too. One might experience depression, sorrow, or fear, but strength comes after praying to God.) This verse applies to the very end of the age and Israel’s extremity, and the Jewish element who have the hearing ear at that time will survive. Their names are written in a book and *nothing* will kill them (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). They will be strengthened and encouraged *as individuals* as they realize God is on their side.

Chapter 40 begins with the thought of giving comfort to Israel, and this thought continues throughout the chapter. It can also be considered in a secondary sense as a *broad* message to *all* the right-hearted everywhere. We should urge people to seek righteousness and meekness so that they may be hidden in the Time of Trouble (Zeph. 2:3). In other words, the same principle applies in a general way to all those who have a right heart attitude. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people” (first the Jew and then the Gentile who wants to do the Lord’s will). They should get out of the way of the Lord’s steamroller. The difference is that the obedient Jew *will* be hid and the Gentile *may* be hid, so the message of Isaiah 40 is especially for the Holy Remnant.

**Isa. 41:1** Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

“Keep silence before me, O islands [republics and the more distant nations from the Middle East].” What is the setting? God, the Holy One of Israel, gives the command: “Keep silence ... O islands; let the people ... speak.” The people respond, “Let us come near together to judgment.”

Isaiah 2:3 is similar to this verse: “Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” In the Kingdom, there will be a *joyful* coming to judgment to

learn of God. Realizing they cannot judge themselves, the people will draw near, and in humility seek help and instruction from the Lord to walk up the highway of holiness.

“Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near.” After Jacob’s Trouble, when mankind are in awe of God’s power, He will address and assure them that He does not intend to destroy them. It will be to their benefit to come to His counsel; they will “renew their strength.” And in joy, the people who hear the message will invite others to come with them and share the blessings and knowledge (Isa. 2:2,3). The principle was the same when Philip met Jesus. He left immediately to get Nathanael, who was praying under the fig tree, to share news of the Messiah.

“Keep silence before me.” The exercise of divine authority will be so definite and so manifest in that day that God will be exalted and known as the Holy One of Israel. His counsel to the people to come near and renew their strength will be made known through The Christ in glory and through the Ancient Worthies down here. The Law will go forth from Zion, but the word of instruction will issue forth from Jerusalem through the Ancient Worthies (Isa. 2:3).

**Isa. 41:2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.**

Jesus is the “righteous man from the east.” The Tabernacle entrance (pertaining to Jesus and the Church) was on the *east*. In Ezekiel’s vision of the Third Temple, the glory of the Lord God entered the *east* gate and went through the various courts into the Temple structure itself. In Revelation 16:12, the Church are called “kings of the *east*.” In Revelation 7:2, Jesus is the angel “from the *east*.” Isaiah 41:25 reads in part, “I have raised up one from the *north*, and he shall come: from the *rising of the sun* shall he call upon my name.” Two points of the compass are mentioned: *north* and *east*. The “righteous man” who comes from the east also comes from the north (Pleiades, the seat of divine government or control). In connection with setting up the Kingdom in glory and power, Jesus will manifest his presence in Israel with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. He comes from the north, but to harmonize the deliverance down here with other prophecies, it is pictured as coming from the east.

God will call Jesus “to his foot,” to Mount Zion, to Israel. Zechariah 14:4 tells that God’s feet will be seen on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem; that is, God’s presence or authority will be manifested in the rescue of the Holy Remnant through miraculous physical phenomena: earthquake, pestilence, flood, etc. In other words, Jesus, the “righteous man from the east,” will make manifest the deliverance of the Holy Remnant at Jehovah’s *footstool*, which is Jerusalem. In Psalms 99:5 and 132:7, the Third Temple is mentioned as God’s “footstool.” Thus the earth (Isa. 66:1), more specifically Jerusalem, and even more specifically the Temple Mount within Jerusalem, are all considered God’s footstool.

The “east” is the way of sacrifice, and the “kings of the east,” those who are faithful unto death, will get crowns, for those who suffer with Christ will reign with him. The Tabernacle pictures the calling of the Church. The Tabernacle is the way of the Church, which was opened up by Jesus, the forerunner. The objective is the Most Holy, which is entered progressively through the gate on the *east*, the Court, and the Holy.

Of the various gates in Ezekiel’s Temple, the east gate is to be closed forever because the Church will be complete when the Kingdom is set up. A *Reprint* article mentions that the appearance of Jehovah entering the Temple in Ezekiel 44:1,2 pictures the closing of the door to the high calling. The north and south gates will be kept open for the world of mankind. Those who enter the north gate must exit the south gate and vice versa so that all who enter will pass the altar.

God will give “the nations before him [that is, before Jesus],” and make him “rule over [or among] kings [the Church].” Jesus will also be King in authority over all the earth. He will be King of kings in both senses of the word.

In this picture, we are gradually being introduced to Cyrus the king. Remember, the chapter divisions of our Bibles are arbitrary, and in subsequent chapters, which are the *same* context, Cyrus will appear.

**Isa. 41:3** He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.

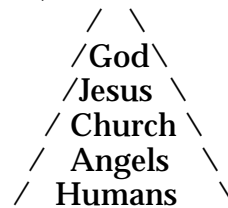
As The Christ in glory (referred to as “saviours” plural in Obadiah 21) pursue the enemy forces of Gog, they will use supernatural judgments, not human methods. An example of a supernatural judgment is the literal earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives so that the faithful remnant can flee for safety in the resulting ravine. This same earthquake will help to slay Gog. Similarly, the Red Sea opened an avenue of escape for the Israelites to flee dry-shod and, at the same time, created a grave for their Egyptian enemies.

“He” (The Christ) will pursue the enemy forces of Gog and pass on safely. As divine beings, they will not be confined to the mechanisms of our three dimensions down here. They will fight the battle in a supernatural way that is unfamiliar to man.

**Isa. 41:4** Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.

The “LORD” would be Jehovah, who is “the first” and “the last.” In Revelation 1:11, Jesus is also called “the first and the last” but in a different sense. The distinction is that the honor and the prerogatives of His office God will give to none other. He will always be preeminent over all other beings in the universe. The principle is expressed in Isaiah 42:8, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.” God does not share coequal honor with Christ.

Jesus is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, as (1) the first and only directly begotten Son of God and (2) the first and last head of the Church, the head of the body. That headship Jesus will not share with another. Thus there are two headships, one subordinate to the other. God is the head over Christ, and Christ is the head over the Church. Underneath are all other beings, both angelic and human. This hierarchy of headship is well illustrated by a pyramid.



**Q:** Why does verse 4 use “with”? “I the LORD, the first, and *with* the last; I am he.”

**A:** The expression “the first and the last” is used without “with” elsewhere in Isaiah. “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel ... *I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God*” (Isa. 44:6). “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; *I am the first, I also am the last*” (Isa. 48:12). Inserting the word “with” is another way of saying, “I was, I am, and I shall be.” That position He will never give to another. He is the great I AM; He has always existed, from everlasting to everlasting, whereas Jesus did not exist either prior to his creation or during the parts of three days and nights that he was dead. Jesus’ title in Revelation 1:11 as “the first and the last” pertains to his office in the Church. Jesus even stated this in Revelation 1:8 when he said, “I did not give myself this title. The ever-living God gave me this authority.” “I

am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Here in verse 4, the word “with” signifies *continuity*. “I am the first, and with the last” means there is *no interruption* in Jehovah’s role. God always was the Creator and always will be.

**Isa. 41:5 The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.**

“The [far-off] isles [islands—verse 1] saw it, and feared.” What will they see and fear? God’s miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant. The surviving Gentile eyewitnesses of Jacob’s Trouble will go back to their homelands and report what they actually saw and heard. Some of those eyewitnesses will be part of the Gog forces (only one sixth of them survive), and some will be helpless onlookers (those from Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish).

**Isa. 41:6 They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.**

**Isa. 41:7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.**

There is a strange break here. The description of a condition of idolatry is foreign to the earlier verses. From Chapter 40 on, the Book of Isaiah is *all prophecy*. Prior chapters concentrated on historical events. From now on, allusions to historical events, such as those regarding Cyrus, will be spiritualized.

Here everyone is helping his neighbor in craftsmanship (see RSV) and foundry work. But what are they doing? They are making idols. First, before tying in verses 6 and 7 with the rest of the chapter, we will discuss the making of idols.

Jeremiah 10:3-5 reads, “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.” Someone cuts a tree out of the forest, removes the bark, and carves it into the shape of an idol. The wooden idol is overlaid with gold and silver to give it a metallic appearance. Spikes are then driven into the feet to fasten it onto some kind of platform.

Psalms 115:3-12 states, “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.* O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.” The italicized words are humorous—dumb idols and dumb idol makers! This Psalm is prophetic, but it brings in instructional points about idols and making them, and then ties in the points with the nation of Israel. Most of the people in the world make and worship idols. These idols, the product of *man’s hands*, can do nothing of themselves. God, the great Creator, the great I AM, made the maker of idols; He made man. “I am the great Creator. Who made me?” He was trying to shame the idol makers, those who make dumb little images of birds and other creatures as their conception of God.



In Psalm 115, God identified Israel's salvation with Him: "O Israel, trust thou in Jehovah." *God* is Israel's shield. Not only is Israel to be restored, not only is a New Covenant to be made with the house of Israel, not only will there be a new Temple arrangement and Temple, but He will restore their judges as at the first (Isa. 1:26). In fact, as Ancient Worthies, many of the *same* individuals will again be Israel's judges. Hence many features of the old Mosaic Law Covenant will be reinstated, but with a better Mediator and some modifications and additions. The house of Aaron will again be involved in Temple services, but the priesthood will be restricted to the Zadok line, who were loyal to King David under adverse circumstances. (In other words, the sons between Aaron and Zadok will *not* be priests in the Third Temple arrangement.)

All down through history there have been false gods and literal idols. Catholicism has statues of saints, for example. An image of Mary is carried around on a platform at certain festivals so that dollar bills can be pinned to her. Thus even today the majority of religious people have idols. Idols can also be human beings who are revered or worshipped, money, honor, power, etc. We should not bow down to, worship, or use anything or anyone as a means of approaching God. Jesus is our only means of approach.

Revelation Chapter 18 shows that many industries profit from their connections with mystic Babylon (for example, makers of statues, candles, incense, and vestments). Here in verse 7, Isaiah was saying that many receive their employment directly or indirectly from the false systems. Gentiles will have to learn that they have been following and supporting dumb idols. The God of Israel, who will speak in Jacob's Trouble, will show that He is a LIVING God, a POWERFUL God, a TRUE God, and a VERY INTELLECTUAL God. Verses 1-5 show that those who were previously employed in the worship of sticks and stones will come for instruction. Mankind needs to be instructed by God.

The fulfillment of verses 1-5 *follows* the time setting of verses 6 and 7. This technique of reverse-order prophecies is intentionally used in places in Scripture to make the meaning more difficult to discern.

**Isa. 41:8** But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

**Isa. 41:9** Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Verse 8 indicates that *Israel* is the *place* of instruction. After Jacob's Trouble, when the Kingdom is established, there will be a second regathering of Jews back to Israel, so that all surviving Jews in lands other than Israel will be shipped back by the Gentiles. They will be "taken from the ends of the earth, and called ... from the chief men thereof" back to Israel.

**Isa. 41:10** Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

**Isa. 41:11** Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

**Isa. 41:12** Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

**Isa. 41:13** For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I

**will help thee.**

Verses 10-13 (and succeeding verses) are an allusion to Jacob's Trouble and the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. The enemies of the Lord shall be scattered. The confusion and noise will be like a nightmare, with fire, earthquake, pestilence, other demonstrations of nature, and the destruction of the enemy. Then, all of a sudden, the trouble will be over, and calm will prevail in a new era.

Verses 10-12 can be paraphrased as follows: "Fear not because the time will come shortly in which those who are now at war with you will be as nothing. Those incensed against you will become ashamed and confounded." This message will help to prepare the Holy Remnant for their coming experiences in Jacob's Trouble. They will listen to this counsel and reform their ways so that they pass under the rod and live into the Kingdom. This chastened element will be the nucleus of the Kingdom.

Even now some Jews are listening and are somewhat knowledgeable, but they do not feel the inner urge to consecrate and follow the high calling. As with Jacob, who heard Joseph tell his dreams, these Jews hear and keep the message in their hearts. The feet members will have an opportunity to give a message to Israel, but the Great Company will perhaps be more successful in giving the message after the Little Flock is complete. And at that time, even some of the Holy Remnant may try to give this counsel to help their fellow Jews, who will not heed them. The Elijah-Elisha type indicates that three years will be the time interval between the completion of the Little Flock and the establishment of the Kingdom. (The sons of the prophets searched three days for Elijah's body.)

Israel will be ashamed and crushed when they realize that Jesus, one of their own, is the true Messiah and that they lost a golden opportunity. This experience will make them more merciful in dealing with their enemies in the Kingdom. As the Apostle Paul said in Romans 11, if by the casting off of Israel, the Gentiles have been richly blessed, then they should not be high-minded, for the Israelite olive branches could easily be grafted back into the tree. If the casting away of Israel is the reconciling of the world, what would receiving them back be but life from the dead? The Church will have mercy on the Jew, and the Jew will have mercy on the Gentile. Both the Church and the Jew have had the similar experience of being persecuted in the Gospel Age. Under the Kingdom arrangement, both will exercise mercy on behalf of others. With the Holy Remnant, the horror of persecution, coupled with the shame of recognizing Jesus as Messiah, will make them a people whose repentance is so manifest that others will desire to take hold of the skirts of those who are Jews (Zech. 8:23). Certainly that is not the condition today, for the Jews think that all of their persecutions were injustices against them, whereas the Lord's Word says that some of the persecutions were punishments. The changed, repentant attitude of the Holy Remnant will be similar to one who, during the Gospel Age, is converted from the world and becomes a true Christian.

"I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." This highly prophetic passage tells that God will figuratively hold the hand of the Holy Remnant in Jacob's Trouble. He tells tiny Israel to "fear not" when the confederacy of nations invades from the north, coming like a cloud to cover the land. (This confederacy is called "Gog" in Ezekiel and the "Assyrian" in Isaiah.)

**Isa. 41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**

"Thou worm, Jacob." Psychologically, the Holy Remnant will feel small and helpless. No other nation will be able to assist them because of the prevailing anarchy throughout the earth. A worm is known for its nakedness. Hence Israel will receive no aid, armaments, or help from

others at this time. A worm is defenseless, slow, and vulnerable, and that is how Israel will feel.

“I will help thee, saith the LORD, and [even] thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Despite the odds, Israel will be victorious because God will help the Holy Remnant. Notice that Jehovah calls Himself the “Redeemer,” or Savior, of Israel. He is the *great* Savior, the great Shepherd, and Jesus is the under-Shepherd. Throughout this book, Isaiah emphasizes the Father’s role, the primacy of His position in the universe as the Author of creation. Jesus is repeatedly shown as God’s agent or prime minister.

**Isa. 41:15** Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

**Isa. 41:16** Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

God will make Israel (the Holy Remnant) “a new sharp threshing instrument ... [with] teeth” that will “thresh the mountains [the kingdoms, or nations, that attack Israel in Jacob’s Trouble].” A threshing machine not only mows or cuts down the wheat but also levels the soil. In other words, God will use the Holy Remnant as a “sledge” (RSV) or threshing machine to cut down the nations and “beat them small.”

The old-fashioned way of threshing was to beat the wheat with a rod to separate the wheat from the stalk, but a lot of chaff was mixed in with the wheat. Therefore, the next step was either to fan the mixture into the air and let the wind carry away the chaff or to beat the grain small on the ground and then fan the ground to blow away the chaff. In this case, the type of fanning, or threshing, was the latter type, that is, that which took place on the ground. Not only will a wind blow the chaff away locally in the neighborhood, but a *whirlwind* will violently blow the chaff completely away.

This is strong language. The Holy Remnant is to “thresh the mountains [nations],” “beat them small,” “make the hills as chaff,” and “fan them”; then the wind will carry them away, and the whirlwind will scatter them. After that, the Holy Remnant will “rejoice in the LORD” and “glory in the Holy One of Israel.”

How will these actions be accomplished? Will they be done militarily? Just what will the role of the Holy Remnant be? We must look at all the facts lest we jump to a wrong conclusion. In the parallel account in Micah 4:11-13, the prophet took up the refrain of Isaiah: “Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the [threshing] floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”

The many nations gathered against Israel will “look upon Zion” sadistically, wanting to see her defiled and destroyed. Similarly, people gather to watch a firing squad. However, when the nations come against Israel in Jacob’s Trouble, Jehovah will gather them as sheaves of wheat on the threshing floor. “They know not the thoughts” of God; that is, the nations will be unaware that His plan is to gather them to Israel (Micah 4:12; Zeph. 3:8). The events will be like a game of chess. There will be confusion and turmoil, but the Almighty God above will cause everything to coalesce into the great drama that closes the age. “Others do not realize that my purpose is to gather these nations like bundles and bring them to my threshing floor in Israel” (paraphrase). There the nations will witness God’s *glory* when He establishes His Kingdom.

“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people.” This clause in Micah is much like Isaiah’s verse 15, “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small.” Micah continues, “And I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD.” The “gain” is called “spoil” elsewhere in Scripture. In other words, when the many nations come down to execute and exterminate Israel, they will come down as a military people with weapons and armaments, which Israel will take as spoil.

The “horn,” or antler, of an animal is its offensive weapon, its instrument of attack. Although the horn protects the animal up to a certain point, it can break, so for the “daughter of Zion” to have an “iron horn” signifies an effective, deadly weapon of attack.

“I will make thy hoofs brass.” In a bullfight, for example, the bull will use its hooves to trample a fallen matador. Hence this little, defenseless, powerless nation (called a “worm” in verse 14) will become the opposite at the end of Jacob’s Trouble. With *God’s* help, it will become a *mighty* threshing instrument, a weapon of *offense*, that will beat the enemy nations into pieces.

“O daughter of Zion ... I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.” This information is very explicit. “O daughter of Zion” would be natural Israel here, that is, the Holy Remnant. (Of course The Christ in glory will be operating *invisibly*, but the description is presented according to the *visible* scene down here.) From the tremendous retaliation blow of little, insignificant Israel will come God’s Kingdom.

**Q:** Will the Holy Remnant do the fighting?

**A:** The detail presented is powerful, but it is actually the *Lord God* who will defend and fight for Israel as He did in the days of old. Gog’s intent will be to exterminate Israel, but the next minute a TREMENDOUS POWER will come out of this little nation, for the spiritual realm (The Christ, the “saviours” that come up on Mount Zion—Obadiah 21) will effect destruction and victory. Earthquake, fire and brimstone, torrents of rain, hail, disease, the darkening of the sun and the moon with eclipses, etc., will all occur to save Israel, and none of these phenomena are literal weapons. The only way weapons will be used to defeat Gog is when they slay one another in fright, panic, and confusion. Thus it will not be an armed Israel that beats the nations into small pieces. When the multiple simultaneous miracles take place, the Holy Remnant will realize God is with them.

In the past, God’s miraculous help for Israel occurred as *isolated* incidents over *many* years. The opening of the Red Sea was one event. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a separate event hundreds of years earlier. In Jacob’s Trouble, everything will seemingly happen *all at once!* The evidence of God’s intervention on behalf of Israel will be overwhelming for the eyewitness onlookers and survivors. The world will be convinced that Jehovah has manifested His feet (His presence) in Israel. One of the first miracles to occur in nature will be the earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives, allowing the Holy Remnant to flee in safety to a town called Azal (Zech. 14:4,5). This event will be like the opening of the curtain to the great drama that closes the age.

In summation, the Holy Remnant will not “thresh” through military might. Through God’s miraculous deliverance of them, the world will see that the great God of nature is really the “Holy One of *Israel*.” Now we understand the drama behind Israel’s being called a “worm” and the startling subsequent events. God is drawing a *powerful* picture in His Word.

**Isa. 41:17** When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

**Isa. 41:18** I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

**Isa. 41:19** I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

**Isa. 41:20** That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

Here is a picture of Israel as a poor and needy class who are hungry and thirsty, yet the Scriptures indicate quite clearly that at the time the forces of Gog come down, Israel will not be in this condition. It is from a *military* standpoint that Israel will be defenseless. The other nations will be in anarchy, so little Israel, dwelling in the navel of the earth with unwalled villages and having gotten *much* cattle and goods, will be attractive as a booty. With the rest of the world in dire straits, only Israel will have a relatively stable economy.

In what sense, then, will Israel be hungry and thirsty? The setting is *after* Jacob's Trouble. When the other nations realize what miracles God has wrought there, they will quickly send back to Israel all surviving Jews in their own lands. Great will be the sudden influx of homeless, poor, and needy immigrants, and here God is promising sustenance for them by fructifying the land. He will "open rivers ... and fountains" in valleys and deserts, and He will plant trees in the wilderness. In other words, He will turn deserts, including the Negev, into fertile gardens with greenery and trees. Not only will the trees provide shade, but they will attract clouds that bring rain.

What has occurred in Israel thus far in reclaiming and cultivating the land is nothing compared to what is yet future. Even today Israel is not nearly as fertile as in the ancient past when it was called "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8). Therefore, when the land bursts forth with crops and fruitage, *all will know that the Lord God Almighty has done this*. When God blesses the Holy Remnant, a truly converted element, the whole world will sit up and take notice.

*All will "see, and know, and consider, and understand TOGETHER, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."* The word "together" is to be emphasized. Today there is trouble in the world, but it is not *the* Time of Trouble. What is happening at present is a drop in the bucket compared with the trouble that is coming. In fact, in the past, there has been much greater trouble than what is being experienced today. The Time of Trouble will be worse than that which occurred at the time of the Flood, when the angels materialized and took wives as they chose and the earth was filled with violence and lust and all men's thoughts were evil continually (Gen. 6:13). For this very reason—that is, in order to make the earth even more violent, terrible, and oppressive than it was in the days of Noah—another mass materialization (a flood) of fallen angels will take place. When the four winds are loosed, there will be an inundation of fallen angels here on earth. And the fallen angels will temporarily be deadly in deceiving the people into believing that they are superior helpful beings from outer space. One of their motives will be to discredit and undermine the Bible. Because the fallen angels are more intelligent than human beings, have greater power, see more, and have lived much longer, they are deadly in their deceptions.

The miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant and their conversion, the fruitfulness of the land of Israel, and the instruction and wisdom of the Ancient Worthies will cause the Gentiles to take hold of the skirt of the Jew and say, "God is with you." That is not true of Jews today, for they are unrepentant. They do not see that as members of the human race, they are fallen and have sinned. It is "for the *fathers' sakes*" that God is recognizing them and blessing them as a people, not because of individual personal merit (Rom. 11:28). The attitude of the Holy Remnant will be completely different, and seeing this change—seeing what God has done to

that land and that people—will melt the stony hearts of the rest of mankind who live through the trouble and will voluntarily cause them to say, “We want the same thing to be done in us, for we are sinners too and in need of help and instruction.”

**Isa. 41:21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.**

The Lord now returns to what He previously discussed about the making of images and idols (verses 6 and 7). Various types of people are employed in this work. The lumberjack cuts down the trees. Another person takes the tree to the mill for pruning and preparation. Another carves the idol or makes a mold. The product, the *dumb* idol, cannot walk or talk—yet the nations bow down and worship it. In other words, the people bow down to the work of *their own hands*. Although those in Israel today are not literally making idols and images, this characteristic is inherent in fallen man. For example, incense, candles, and little glass cups are used in their religious services much as in the Catholic Church. And Jews worship the Torah, but they do not study it. In fact, people of all nations worship the product of their own hands, thinking, and activity in various ways: money, profession, sports, ability, etc. To a philosopher, the product of his thinking can be his idol. Some derive great satisfaction from building a financial empire and wielding influence over others. Thus idol worship goes beyond the literal making of an idol to include any product of one’s own hands that is worshipped. In looking for a panacea, man is seeking everything *other than God, the great Creator, the Holy One above*—the United Nations, Eastern religions, hypnotism, etc. If we were in His stead looking down, how foolish man would appear! God’s patience, mercy, and compassion in granting fallen man an opportunity for salvation in the Kingdom will greatly magnify His character. Man’s foolishness will be manifested and contrasted with God’s supreme knowledge. In fact, in the Kingdom, man’s present foolish, aimless hurrying and scurrying will be viewed and laughed at.

**Isa. 41:22 Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.**

In continuing the sarcasm of verses 21 and 22, God rhetorically said, “Produce your cause; bring forth your strong reasons; tell what will happen in the future; state your case.” God had been telling the people through Isaiah what will happen in the future—and with great detail. But what do the people do? They go to all other extremes and to great lengths to speculate on the future, but the answer is in God’s Word. Isaiah uttered these prophecies almost 3,000 years ago, yet today, when Israel is so much nearer the climax, the people do not know what will happen because they do not set their hearts to understand God’s Word. Whereas the Lord tells not only about the trouble but also about the coming salvation through Jesus in the Kingdom, man dwells only on problems, trouble, and hopelessness (such as nuclear extermination, population explosion, and chemically poisoned food). There is *much* to fear from the natural man’s standpoint and no real answers, no solutions. Only God has the answers. Only He can purify the air, the language, government, the heart, etc.

The Lord continues, “Show the *former things*.” Very little is actually known about human history, about the past. But God can state the exact *year and day* the Flood came, for example. The Bible contains *much* ancient history. Thus the Scriptures not only foretell in great detail what will happen in the future but also record in great detail what has happened in the past. And in His Word, God even tells us some things that happened before the earth was ordered for man. The Bible is a marvelous book of *bottomless depth*—a mine, aye, deeper too than mortal man can ever go! The more we study, the more we realize its *inexhaustible wisdom*.

Today people are generally unaware of the prevalence of oracles or gods in the past. The fallen angels were associated with these oracles, such as the oracles at Delphi. For example, people

stood before a hole in the ground and asked a question. Voices of fallen angels came forth from the hole, uttering great wisdom at times and predicting events. Although they did make mistakes, the superior vantage point of the fallen angels enabled them to fool and deceive the people.

The lack of understanding of God's Word is pathetic! He promises that those who hunger and pray and knock and seek will be fed, but unfortunately, there is not sufficient hunger for truth. Pride can inhibit the asking of questions.

**Isa. 41:23 Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.**

Verses 22 and 23 indicate there is an audience in heaven viewing what is going on down here on earth and seeing the foolishness. In addition to God and Jesus, the holy angels are watching and look on mankind as drunk, drugged, and blinded by Satan. Poor, pitiful humanity!

"Yea, do good, or do evil." God was saying, "Produce *your* cause. Tell me what will happen, or make something happen, good or bad, on such and such a date." Man cannot accurately predict far ahead, but the fallen angels can give some prognostications because they are able to first prophesy and then to manipulate and fulfill the prediction or because they, with superior sight, can actually see what will happen (such as a car crash). But *only God* is reliably *infallible* with regard to the future. For others, all kinds of uncertainties, quirks, and foibles interfere. The fallen angels can be and often are wrong, and it is dangerous to listen to them.

**Isa. 41:24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.**

God was saying, "Your work is *nothing*, and those who seek an idol or the maker of an idol—that is, a source or 'altar' other than God—are an abomination!"

**Isa. 41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.**

Who was raised up from the north? "I [Jehovah] have raised up [beckoned] one [Cyrus] from the north[east]." This prophecy was given more than 100 years before Cyrus invaded Babylon (that is, more than 100 years before 536 BC). The effect of this invasion was to liberate the Jews who were in Babylonian captivity. The New Testament uses Cyrus as a symbol of Jesus and the Church, who come from the north (Pleiades). "Cyrus" means "sun," and he was called "from the rising of the sun." Revelation 16:12 calls the invaders of mystic Babylon the "kings of the east," and the sun rises in the east.

Isaiah had not yet identified Cyrus by name but said that this individual whom God would stir up would trample underfoot opposing nations or powers. A relatively insignificant captain, Cyrus rose in the ranks to become a world-renowned general and the head of the Persian Empire, which succeeded the Babylonian Empire. Babylon was taken during the reign of Darius the Mede, and Cyrus was his general. The two-pronged second universal empire, Media-Persia, is described in Daniel 8:3,4 as "a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one [Persia] was higher [greater] than the other, and the higher came up last." The Mede aspect of the kingdom predominated at first, and later the Persian portion under Cyrus gained the ascendancy. The Media-Persian Empire is also described as the two arms and breast of silver of a great image seen in vision by King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:32). Jesus, the antitypical Cyrus, is the Sun of righteousness, who shall arise with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2).

**Isa. 41:26** Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.

The rhetorical question was asked, “Who has declared these things?” About 150 years before Cyrus came on the scene, the Prophet Isaiah not only predicted that he would come from the north but even gave his name (Isa. 44:28). “Who else among you is a prophet? Let him tell something comparable.” NO ONE but GOD could have predicted that this conqueror would come *long before he was ever born!*

“He is righteous” should be, “He is *right*,” as in the RSV: “Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforetime, that we might say, ‘He is right’? There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed, none who heard your words.” In other words, “Where is *your* prognosticator? Let *him* tell of someone way in advance so that you can say, ‘He is right.’”

**Isa. 41:27** The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

The RSV has, “I first have declared it to Zion, and I give to Jerusalem a herald of good tidings.” God informed Israel through the Hebrew Scriptures that such a one as Cyrus (Jesus) will come. Hence God revealed His Word to His people back there in Isaiah’s day; He revealed the coming of Cyrus. To the Christian, God reveals the coming of Messiah—in antitype particularly the Second Advent aspect in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom. The coming of Cyrus was good news (“good tidings”) to the Jews in Babylonian captivity. Isaiah warned the Jews to get out of the city lest they be slaughtered when Cyrus invaded Babylon, and those who obeyed were not killed. The call to “come out of her, my people” applied literally to Jews back there and now spiritually in the Harvest to Christians still in the nominal systems. They must come out of mystic Babylon to escape her plagues and her fall, which will occur shortly after the pouring of the seventh plague. When Cyrus invaded literal Babylon, no mercy was shown. The heads of babies were dashed against stones, and all in sight were butchered. The fall of mystic Babylon will also be sudden and violent.

**Isa. 41:28** For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

**Isa. 41:29** Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

“I” in verses 27 and 28 would be Jehovah. He saw no counselor with answers, for the people were deceived by their false gods and claims. Take Papacy, for example. Earlier in the 20th century, the Pope issued annual encyclicals deploring the dangers of communism and telling the people that if they did not do so-and-so, then such and such would happen. These were repeated declarations of *faithlessness*. We know that what the Lord declares in His Word will come to pass and that the future is not in jeopardy. Only God can shape the future; He has His own timetable and plan.

“Their molten images [false systems] are [empty] wind and confusion.” When they consult their own leaders, nothing of substance comes forth. All is vanity.

Isaiah was the last notable prophet before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel came on the scene as contemporaries. Isaiah’s contemporaries were Micah and Hosea. In the earlier part of Isaiah’s ministry, the ten-tribe kingdom had not yet gone into captivity. The captivity occurred in the latter part of his ministry (about now, Chapter 41). Therefore, the Jews living at that time thought the coming deliverer would deliver the ten-tribe kingdom. The liberation did not take



place, however, until after the two-tribe kingdom had been in captivity for 70 years. And the primary fulfillment is yet future in connection with Jesus and mystic Babylon.

**Isa. 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.**

“My servant” would be Jesus, God’s servant or agent. Matthew 12:18-20 furnishes proof: “Behold *my servant*, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”

Jews think this “servant” is the nation of Israel, but that interpretation makes them distort other prophecies. Isaiah 49:3-6 is one such prophecy, and verse 3 does seem to teach that Israel is God’s servant: “And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” Moreover, verse 6 seems to say that Israel will be a teacher nation to the Gentiles, and that is true based on other Scriptures but not on this text. Verse 6 reads, “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” However, verses 4 and especially 5, the in-between verses, introduce another personality, who brings Jacob and Israel back into restored favor with God. “Then I said, I have laboured in vain: ... yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.”

The Jewish interpretation that the “servant” is the nation of Israel forces them to say that they are the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, but the whole chapter contains many personal details about an *individual*. The Jews continue to reason that they have suffered indignities and been persecuted by the Gentile nations but that in the end, God will restore them to favor and they will be His agent. Some of the Orthodox Jews admit a personality is involved, but they say Isaiah 53 is describing a *false* Messiah. Thus there are two Jewish interpretations of the “servant”: (1) the nation of Israel is the Messiah, and (2) a false Messiah is being identified. Both interpretations are faulty because (1) an *individual* is being described, and (2) God views this “servant” *favorably*. The only honest interpretation is that Jesus is the true Messiah.

**Isa. 42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.**

Verse 2 refers to Jesus at his First Advent. Some parts of this prophecy refer to Jesus at his First Advent or during the Gospel Age, and other parts refer to him at his Second Advent during the Kingdom. When Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection, the two angels described him as “*this same* Jesus” (Acts 1:10,11). Paul said of the resurrected Jesus that he is “*the same* yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). In other words, those parts of this prophecy that pertain to Jesus’ character are the *same* in both ages, but certain techniques pertain to just one of the two ages.

Here Jesus was being described at his First Advent. He did not come in an ostentatious fashion with proud manners and haughty bearing. His demeanor was humble, and he befriended the sick and the meek. He came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, particularly those who felt they were sick, for those who considered themselves whole did not recognize their need of a physician, their need to respond to the ministry of Christ (Matt. 9:12). In reality, he did not attempt to convert the nation at his First Advent. In the Kingdom, his technique will be different; he will raise his voice, and the whole world will know that he is the Messiah and will have to bow the knee to him.

The prophecy of verse 2 gave a little clue, long in advance, as to the disposition of the promised Messiah at his First Advent. He had to come first as a suffering, humble Messiah to give his life as a Ransom for all. Later, at his Second Advent, he would come as King to rule and to restore.

At his First Advent, Jesus did not lift up his voice or cry but was meek and gentle and even said, “Do not tell anyone about the miracle I have done.” He did not want to excite the people into making him King, but in spite of his efforts, his ministry grew in popularity to such an extent that near the end, they spontaneously hailed him as King.

**Isa. 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.**

Verse 3 refers to Jesus in both the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age. This is a description of how he deals with those who need his help. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax. What is the difference between the two? If a reed, or stem, is bent in a floral arrangement, the temptation is to prune it out because it detracts from the beauty, but Jesus allows *time* for those with weaknesses and failures (those who are like broken reeds) to be restored and to become whole. He is not hasty because a person’s *life* is involved, and he is concerned for the destiny of that party.

A reed can be hollow like a stalk or it can be leafy, but either way, it is rather stiff. Hence if it were not broken or bruised, it would be upright, *proud*, and glorying in its own strength. A “bruised reed” is one who is brokenhearted, broken in spirit. Jesus’ desire is to heal or restore such a one to wholeness, and his ministry was directed to such: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Jesus invited the weary to come to him, promising comfort and peace to their very souls.

The “smoking flax” represents another class: “the smoking flax shall he not quench.” A smoking flax is a fluttering, dimly burning, smoking wick. The wick smokes and burns improperly and feebly because of a lack of oxygen. Like the bruised reed, the temptation is to cut it off and get a new wick or flax that will provide a better light. But Jesus waits, desiring to restore the flame. “Smoking flax” pictures one who has already been enlightened but is backsliding because of the flesh and/or other problems. The individual is still alive and trying to hold forth the light, but the light is too feeble. Rather than snuff out such a one into Second Death, Jesus wants to save the individual if possible, and so he again allows *time*.

In summation, verse 3 refers to two classes that Jesus tries to help in *both* the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age, for his character is always the same. The two classes are as follows:

1. The penitent and brokenhearted are encouraged to come to him.
2. Those once enlightened and in the way who begin to backslide are given opportunity for restoration.

But notice that Jesus *does make a judgment*: “he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” In other words, these classes will be cut off if, after sufficient time is allotted, they *remain* bruised or smoking and do not bring forth fruit. Unless the bruised reed responds, it will die. Unless a change takes place, the light of the smoking flax will go out. Jesus illustrated this principle with a branch: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he [the Heavenly Father] taketh away” (John 15:2).

As a physician, priest, judge, and lawgiver, Jesus wants to bring forth judgment unto truth, unto a condition of righteousness, unto *victory* (see Matthew 12:20). Until one shows he is

incorrigible, Jesus continues to give aid. He is not hasty but allows time.

**Isa. 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.**

Now the emphasis shifts to the Kingdom Age. From Israel, the Gentile nations afar off will be converted by the work of Messiah in the Kingdom. They will wait to hear his law, his instruction, for he is the Messiah not only of Israel but also of the whole world.

Jesus will “not fail nor be discouraged.” This is a play on words, as shown by the RSV footnote: “He will not burn dimly or be bruised.” Jesus will neither quench smoking flax nor burn dimly himself. He will neither bruise a broken reed nor be bruised himself. The point is that Jesus *will not compromise or lower his perfect standard in order to heal a sinner*. When one deals with sin, the temptation is to compromise. One is so desirous of helping the sinner that he comes down to the sinner’s level, but such is not the case with Jesus. His heart condescends to the person being afflicted, but he does not lower his standard. (Of course we must be careful in matters of judgment that we do not criticize the splinter in another’s eye and fail to see the plank in our own eye. The danger of hypocrisy and false judgment is ever present with the Church in the flesh, but nevertheless, we are to judge certain matters.)

Even when Jesus was among publicans and sinners, he kept his standard inviolate. Having trodden the narrow way on earth himself, he is aware of the weaknesses of fallen man and is sympathetic, but his perfect standard is never lowered. “The isles shall wait for his law” “till he have set judgment in the earth.” For Jesus to “set judgment in the earth” means he will set the perfect standard, the standard for attaining life in the Millennial Age, but he will be merciful and allow time for mankind to come up to that standard *as long as the heart attitude is right*. A “bruised reed” signifies a repentant attitude. A “smoking flax” realizes he is backsliding and asks for help. As long as both classes remain in that condition of heart, they will be helped.

Jesus’ dealings with sinners and the poor in spirit were radically different from what Israel’s religious leaders were doing. Even his disciples were surprised when he gave a long sermon to the Samaritan woman at the well, but he took time with the ones who felt the need of spiritual help. He wants to save those who desire to be saved.

One reason the Father’s soul delights in Jesus is his concern for others (verse 1). The Father Himself said, “The choice between life and death is before you. *Choose life* that you may live. I have no desire to put anyone in Second Death, so choose life” (Deut. 30:19). The Son, the Servant, has the same disposition as his Father, and he will do just what the Father wants. “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,” for “I have put my spirit upon him,” and “he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,” saith Jehovah (Isa. 42:1; 52:13). Then verses 2 and 3 show that when Jesus came as Messiah at his First Advent, he would not be recognized. In fact, Isaiah emphasized several times that Jesus would not be recognized, and the climax is Chapter 53.

**Isa. 42:5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:**

The Heavenly Father called attention to the fact that He is the Creator God. He stretched out the heavens and spread abroad the earth, and it is He who gave the breath of life to mankind. In view of the subject matter of the chapter, why did He emphasize His role as Creator here? Part of the answer: God was saying that just as past predictions came to pass, so He was making future predictions and they, too, would be fulfilled. His Word is sure.

**Isa. 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will**

**keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;**

**Isa. 42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.**

The Lord God was telling about the call of His Son. He will give Jesus “for a covenant of the people”; that is, God will make Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Father selected Jesus to establish and successfully conclude the New Covenant. “I have selected you to bring about the successful completion of the New Covenant on behalf of the people and to enlighten them” (paraphrase).

God will also give Jesus “for a light of the Gentiles [*nations, peoples*]; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison,” etc. Because of the context, the word “Gentiles” in verse 6 should be “nations,” for Jesus will be a “light” not just to Israel but to the whole world.

Verses 5 and 6 remind us of Isaiah 45:18, where God said that He created the earth to be *inhabited*. God’s purpose is to have a *living* race, a race of *undying* people. Therefore, the work of Jesus at his Second Advent is to reclaim the fallen race, and all the willing and obedient will inherit the earth. It would be strange for the great Creator to make a place called “earth” and to have His Son come here to die if He were not sure His plan would succeed. God would not go to all the trouble of setting the stage, preparing the earth, and creating mankind only to have His plan fizzle. He was saying, “I am the One who created the heavens, and I have set the earth in space. I have appointed Jesus as Messiah to make sure I have a *living* race to dwell on the earth, not a *dying* one.” Jesus will bring forth from the prison house of death a *regenerated* race. He is to be the Father of a regenerated race (not a new race but a *reclaimed* one), for he will bring forth judgment unto victory.

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for his disciples. He prayed that all whom the Father had given him would be saved. During his ministry, he did his utmost to help them make their calling and election sure, and he lost only one apostle out of the Twelve. That is a successful percentage, for through trials and tribulation, the consecrated have minds of their own to serve God or not to serve Him, to obey or not to obey. At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus said to his Father, “I know I will die on the Cross shortly. To the best of my ability, I have tried to do everything you instructed me to do. As proof, I have lost none whom you gave me except one.” And that is also his mission for the world as Savior—to save as many of mankind as possible, as many as are willing.

Suppose the same ratio of 11 out of 12 applies to the saved of the world of mankind in the Kingdom. Out of 96 billion people then, 88 billion would live and 8 billion would die. Thus when Revelation 20:7-9 indicates that a large number will go into Second Death at the end of the Kingdom, the percentage can still be small. “And when the thousand years are expired [expiring], Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And ... fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

**IMPORTANT:** Chapter 42 is telling us that if a person fails to get life, it is because of his *own willfulness*, for the Savior will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax, until he brings forth judgment unto victory. There is a time limit, but he will be slow, not hasty, in his dealings with the consecrated now and with the world of mankind in the Kingdom.

Prisoners of death will be brought out of the darkness of the prison house into light, but not into everlasting light. “God ... will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” but only those who *obey* that knowledge will inherit everlasting life (1 Tim. 2:3,4).

All in their graves shall come forth to an *opportunity* for life, but only those who hear and obey will actually get life. Being awakened from the tomb is one thing; hearkening unto life is another. There is a limit to what Christ can do; the rest is up to the individual.

**Isa. 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.**

**Isa. 42:9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.**

“Behold, ... new things do I declare.” Later on in this chapter, there will be some clues as to what the “new things” are that God will declare. The “former things” have already happened, but what “former things”? Verse 6 shows that God has already selected Jesus to be His agent, His servant, His mediator, in the recovery work yet future; that is, Jesus will later open the blind eyes. Other “former things” that have come to pass are the selection of the apostles and the seven messengers of the Church. Of course in Isaiah’s day, the application was more limited. The next generation after Isaiah saw Cyrus as a fulfillment of prophecy.

The chapter opened with Isaiah viewing the future as if it had already occurred. God had already predetermined in His mind the selection of Messiah, but he had not yet come.

Before Cyrus was born, God gave him a name (Isa. 44:28). Cyrus is a type of Jesus, and before the world was ordered for man—long before Jesus was born of Mary—God gave him the name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14).

**Isa. 42:10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.**

**Isa. 42:11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.**

A little time after the Kingdom has been in operation, the people will rejoice and speak with real conviction of their experiences and blessings. This is figurative language with all nature rejoicing in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom: wilderness (desert), sea, and isles. For verses 10-12, the RSV has, “Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the coastlands.”

A “new song” will be sung by the world in the *new* order in the Kingdom. (The old song is sung in the present life.) Psalms 96 and 98 both begin similarly to Isaiah 42:10, “O sing unto the LORD a *new song*.” All segments of society will ultimately express appreciation and joy for the benefits of the Kingdom.

“Kedar” is related to Edom, an area south of the Dead Sea that at one time went all the way down to Aqaba. In this territory is Petra, a center of activity in ancient times but a wilderness today with just a few Arabs. The point is that in the past, Edom was a *very fruitful* land teeming with people and hundreds of thousands of sheep. Because of Edom’s barrenness today, the prior prosperity is hard to believe. Prophecy said that Edom would become desolate and it has.

Verse 11 is saying that the people who formerly lived in Edom will be resurrected there—and they will rejoice! The “rock” is Petra (Hebrew *sela*). (*Petra* is the Greek form of the word *sela*.)

The land of Edom that was once filled with flocks, people, and activity is now silent, desolate, and (relatively) void. In fact, Petra is called “the lost city” because it was forgotten for centuries and just rediscovered in the 1800’s when an explorer going through the deserted ravines found the ruins of a Roman amphitheater. This barren place will again be inhabited when those who formerly lived there are raised from the tomb. When these generations return to the lands of their nativity in the resurrection, they will sing with happiness because God remembered them and awakened them out of death. In their *rejoicing*, they will “*shout* from the top of the mountains”—they will shout with the exuberance of happiness, health, and vitality.

**Isa. 42:12** Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

In Scripture, “islands” usually represent republican or democratic governments in contrast to dictatorships. An island is offshore, away from the mainland, and hence is isolated. Since the prophets lived in Israel, they viewed land and geography from the standpoint of Israel. Therefore, the “islands” of Scripture are the United States, England, etc.—lands far from Israel. Verse 12 is saying that all the ends of the earth, all the people who are isolated and live in remote areas, will be remembered. When the influence of the Kingdom reaches them, they will rejoice and “declare his praise.”

**Isa. 42:13** The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

The rest of Chapter 42 is a flashback to Jacob’s Trouble, the beginning of the Kingdom. Jehovah “shall go forth as a *mighty man ... of war.*” He will “stir up jealousy [*his fury—RSV*]”; that is, His zeal will be stirred up. He will “cry, yea, roar”! This is not the cry of defeat, pain, sorrow, or even joy, but a roar expressing *anger*, *fury*, and *indignation*.

When God stirs up His jealousy, He will cry and roar and “prevail against his enemies.” The word “prevail” reminds us of the text about Jesus in Revelation 5:5, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah ... hath prevailed.” The animal that roars is a lion, the king of beasts. Combining these thoughts (roaring like a lion, the king of beasts, and prevailing) shows that the roar is a *battle* cry of indignation and fury.

**Isa. 42:14** I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

For a long time, God has held His peace and been still. He has refrained from His “roar,” His anger, because the due time has not yet come. Meanwhile, He has hated the injustices, the blasphemies, and the misrepresentations of His character. In addition to the time factor, another reason for delaying the trouble is that the “husbandman” (God) is waiting until the “precious fruit” (the Church) is complete (James 5:7). God has not yet revealed Himself lest the world be converted before the Church is beyond the veil, and the Church class must walk by *faith* in this age to prove their worthiness of the divine nature.

God has been still—He has “restrained” (RSV) Himself—but when the time comes for His fury, He will not only roar like a lion but also “cry like a travailing woman.” Multiple descriptions of the roar and cry help us to see how God will “stir up jealousy” as a “man of war.”

The thought of “travailing” does not mean *spasms* of trouble and indignation. Neither is that the thought in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” The Greek word translated “travail,” being in the *singular*, means the *one sudden birth pang*; i.e., “Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as the [*singular*] pain [comes] upon a woman.” (When the same Greek word is used in the *plural*, it means the *series* of spasms or pains of travail.)

“A travailing woman” might have a series of cries—a spasm of pain followed by a scream, a lull, another spasm of pain followed by a scream, etc.—but that is not the thought in verse 14, for notice the rest of the verse: “I will destroy and devour *at once*.” The reference is to *one* outcry. Hence the account stresses the *suddenness* of the outburst. Jehovah has been patient a long time, so when the outburst comes, when His wrath is revealed, it will be SUDDEN.

Some say that God never does anything suddenly, but the Scriptures say otherwise—and emphatically! For instance, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was SUDDEN. The hail that came down in Joshua’s day to destroy the host was SUDDEN. The start of the torrential rains in the Flood of Noah’s day was SUDDEN. God can expand or contract an activity. He can make something telescopic or microscopic. According to 2 Peter 3:8, He can compact a thousand years of activity into *one* literal day (or He can do the reverse by making one day as a thousand years). Jehovah can do things as fast or as slow as He wants, and we cannot speed up or delay Him. Time is relative, so what seems long to us is short to God. In considering a Scripture, we must check the context to see which viewpoint of time (ours or God’s) is used.

Verse 13 emphasizes the *anger* and the *power* of God’s cry. Verse 14 emphasizes the *suddenness* of that same cry. Daniel Chapter 2 shows that the smiting of the image will be sudden and complete; it does not occur in gradual phases. As a dry clay vessel is *shattered* to pieces, so the trouble will come *suddenly*. As the wind blows the chaff away, so the crash will be *thorough*. Here in Isaiah, God purposely described His future “cry” from several standpoints to aid our understanding.

**Isa. 42:15** I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

**Isa. 42:16** And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Verse 15 sounds unfavorable, but God means it for *good*. The world, the people, the governments, will get light instead of darkness. In a drought, the brooks shrink, leaving rocks and higher parts as islands in the rivers, and then in time, the pools dry up too.

God’s reason for doing these things is not to forsake the people but to bring blessings to them. He will use this technique to make them ashamed and convert them. As their Creator, He will bring about a change of heart. Trouble brings people to their knees. When they do not know where their next meal is coming from, they are more apt to pray to God for help. On the other hand, those with wealth tend to feel comfortable and satisfied, and hence do not search for God; thus they remain blind. The object of the trouble is to make the people ashamed so that they will repent and can be recovered.

**Q:** Are the mountains, hills, islands, and rivers literal or spiritual?

**A:** Partly literal but mostly spiritual. “Mountains” of difficulty, trouble, sorrow, confusion, etc., prevent one from thinking (or even praying) straight. God will remove these burdens so that the people can think normally, thank Him for deliverance, and receive instruction.

God will “dry up all their [bitter] herbs.” Instead of softening the people, the bitter trials might have previously distracted and embittered them, but the trials and trouble will be removed. As Christians, we sing the hymn “Send sorrow, send pain; sweet will be thy messengers, sweet their refrain.” In asking for trouble, we are really asking God to help us get a balanced and proper outlook on how to serve Him. We are asking for trying experiences that will open our

eyes and help us to grow in appreciation, character, and understanding. To people in the world, such trouble and severe experiences are crushing and overpowering, but Christians are to expect them and to be rightly exercised thereby (Heb. 12:11). The unconsecrated have as much sorrow as we do, but they do not realize the experiences can be stepping-stones to a relationship with God. In stopping the Time of Trouble, God will remove enough of the severe experiences to enable the people to see straight and receive instruction in their weakened condition. He will not forsake the world but “will bring the blind by a way that they knew not” and “will lead them in paths that they have not known.”

God will make “crooked things straight” and “darkness light.” The “darkness” of not understanding will be removed and changed to light. For example, making “crooked things straight” could be the application of divine help to extricate an individual from a crushing environment or to help one overcome an overpowering bad habit. In the Kingdom, the world will have to surmount the same things the Church must overcome now. The people will have to consecrate and walk *uphill* (that is, *exert effort* to walk *up* the highway of holiness), but unnecessary stumbling-stones will be removed (Isa. 35:8).

**Isa. 42:17** They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

“Graven images” are worshipped today by Catholics. Examples are statues in gardens, on car dashboards, and in churches; crosses at the head of a bed; candles in a glass cup; images of the Virgin Mary being carried through the streets; medallions that are carried to protect from injury, etc. High Protestants (Episcopalians) do this in principle too. And there are other types of “idols.” Isaiah’s words applied to those in his day as well as to the generation living today. The Apostle Paul said that the main thrust of what happened to Israel was for our instruction and admonition, for those “upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

Evidently, the worship of graven images was prevalent in Isaiah’s day. Those who trust in idols and images today, as well as back there, will be “greatly ashamed.”

**Isa. 42:18** Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

**Isa. 42:19** Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD’S servant?

**Isa. 42:20** Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

**Isa. 42:21** The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Who is this “servant” that is blind and deaf to certain things? He may see, but he does not observe or obey. The nation of Israel is sometimes called God’s “servant,” and Jesus is the “servant” of verse 1 of this same chapter, but it is difficult to identify the “servant” here.

**Comment:** If this “servant” is Jesus, it would mean that he focused on his mission and did not let other things interfere. In this sense, he was “blind” to all that would have distracted.

**Reply:** Paul summed up this principle as, “This one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13).

**Comment:** Isaiah seems to be contrasting the “deaf” and “blind” of verse 18 with the “servant” of verse 19.

We are inclined to think the “servant” is Jesus, but we cannot harmonize all the details in the



context. Verse 21 is the strongest reason for identifying Jesus as the servant, but verses 19 and 20 seem to nullify this suggestion. There may be a *double play on words* in which the *true* servant Jesus is contrasted with the *professed*, supposed servant Israel. Subsequent verses apply to the nation of Israel (Jacob). God punished Israel very severely at various times (606 BC and AD 70, for example), but the experiences did not convert the nation. A paraphrase could be: “Who is blind? My servant Jesus or Israel?” God is pleased with Jesus and displeased with Israel.

This technique is used a number of times in the Book of Isaiah. Earlier the people criticized the prophet for speaking in babblings, and they accused him of having imbibed strong drink, for he spoke in dribs and drabs and they could not understand what he was saying (Isa. 28:10-13). Possibly Isaiah had some kind of impediment, for the people ridiculed him and likened him to a drunkard, yet the manner and content of his words were *the Lord* speaking through him. God explained elsewhere that this technique was intentionally used so that the people would find fault and be oblivious to the fact Isaiah was a true servant. Yet by that same technique of “here a little, there a little,” God revealed His plan to babes. Similarly, when the Lord has revealed the divine plan to individuals during the Harvest, not many learned have accepted the truth. The wise regard the truth as foolishness. It is to the poor, the sick, and the weak that the plan and its deep wisdom are revealed. The Apostle Paul praised God for His wisdom in revealing truth selectively in this way. Jesus said, “I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast revealed these things unto babes and not to the wise and the prudent of this world” (Matt. 11:25).

**Isa. 42:22** But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

**Isa. 42:23** Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

**Isa. 42:24** Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

**Isa. 42:25** Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

Verses 22-25 pertain to natural Israel. There is a play on tense here. (In Hebrew phrasing, it is sometimes difficult to know whether the tense is past, present, or future, and this difficulty helps to hide the meaning until the due time.) Israel’s dispersion was a period of chastisement for past sins. When the Jews’ eyes are opened at the end of the age, they will realize the reason for their trouble and not think all their sufferings were simply the result of being persecuted for righteousness’ sake. The Jews must come to the realization of past sins and guilt before God will accept them fully back into His favor. When they mourn for Jesus as for an only son, God will pour upon them the spirit of consolation.

The Jewish people have not understood the “seven times” of punishment for disobedience (Lev. 26:18,21,24,28). The reason for their persecution down through the Gospel Age is twofold: (1) for disobedience, as set forth in Leviticus 26, and (2) for crucifying Christ. The Jews who lived at the time of the Crucifixion said, “His blood be upon us, and on our children” (Matt. 27:25).

“It burned him [Jacob, that is, the nation of Israel], yet he laid it not to heart.” The Jews feel they have been made the scapegoat, and they consider the nation itself to be the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Religious-minded Jews interpret the persecutions as coming upon them

because they are the sin *bearer*. This concept is wrong, for the Scriptures state that the persecutions are punishments *for their sins*. We must have *God's mind* toward Israel—that is, be kind as He is kind and blunt as He is blunt.

“Therefore he hath poured upon him the *fury of his anger*, and the *strength of battle*.” The Jews were violently dealt with in 606 BC, AD 70, and AD 135, and that will happen again in Jacob’s Trouble. God said through Moses, “When you find that the heavens do not bring rain, your women do not bear children, and everything seems to be going wrong, you will know that I am speaking to you” (Deut. 11:17 paraphrase).

The calamities that came on Israel were *visible* evidences of God’s displeasure with them. At those times, the Jews should have prayed for forgiveness for their sins and fasted as Daniel did. God deals differently with the Christian, but both Israel and the Christian must be careful not to misunderstand providences. Providences may be punitive or instructive or both, or we may suffer for righteousness’ sake (for *obedience* instead of for disobedience). We are to rejoice if we suffer for truth or for righteousness’ sake. That is why Paul and Silas sang for joy when they were beaten and imprisoned. With hard experiences, we should not always assume they are punishments and feel guilty. We should ask, “Did I do something *wrong* (this would bring a corrective punishment), or did I do something *unwise* (this would bring an educational experience)?” If not, the experience is being permitted because of *obedience* and *faithfulness*.

The Jews err because they cannot see that they have sinned. Hard experiences will be necessary in Jacob’s Trouble, but God will grant forgiveness.

**Isa. 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.**

What is the setting of verse 1? It is progressive, leading up to the end of the age.

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.” God has redeemed the nation of Israel by providing a covering (Christ) for the Jew. He also redeemed them in other ways, such as when He delivered them from Egypt. Redemption can be considered as a purchase with money. For example, a slave could be redeemed out of bondage to freedom.

**Isa. 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.**

Isaiah wrote this prophecy seven or eight centuries before Christ. Therefore, the use of future tense (“when you pass through the waters, I will be with you,” etc.) can be taken from two standpoints:

1. Down through history in the Diaspora, various nations tried to eliminate the Jew. (The true Christian and the natural Jew had somewhat similar experiences.) Jews were severely persecuted (they were touched with the “flame” in some respects), but *they survived as a people*. This survival as a people, without losing their identity, is a miracle.
2. In Jacob’s Trouble, the Jews will have severe experiences. Two parts (classes) will be cut off previously, but a third part (the Holy Remnant) will pass through the fire of Jacob’s Trouble and *survive* because their names are written in the book of life.

The same principle applies to the Christian. We might get sick according to the flesh, be in an automobile accident, etc., but the Lord guarantees we will be preserved as new creatures as long as we remain faithful and have the right heart condition. Severe trials and trouble in the

flesh are stepping-stones for the rightly exercised new creature to develop added character, grace, and knowledge.

Isaiah, more than any other prophet, repeatedly throughout his book spoke of the Holy Remnant and how God will deal with them. In regard to their passing through the waters and rivers and walking through the fire, they will be protected from literal torrential rains, a flood, plagues, an earthquake, molten lava, etc., in Jacob's Trouble. Verse 2 can also be taken figuratively.

**Isa. 43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.**

In what way did God give Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba for a ransom? The word "ransom" has several meanings: "freedom," "purchase," "covering," and "corresponding price." In Proverbs 21:18, which reads, "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright," the word "ransom" does not mean a corresponding price from the standpoint of a perfect man for a perfect man. Rather, it has the thought of *retribution* upon the opposing or offending class. An example of such retribution is when someone wrongs us, and then under Divine Providence, something happens to that person to teach him a lesson.

To understand why Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba were brought into this picture, we need some history. Isaiah was saying that these nations would be requited for what they did to Israel. A century later, Jeremiah wrote about what Egypt did to Israel and predicted that Egypt would be taken into captivity just like Israel and that the land would lie desolate without inhabitant. Formerly a glorious land, Egypt was reduced to poverty and nothingness. Ethiopia and Seba were also involved, being situated along the Nile. Therefore, "ransom" in verse 3 is used in the sense of retribution.

Egypt had a hard experience under King Nebuchadnezzar, yet there is no record of this in Egyptian art and records. (What happened is attributed to later Persian monarchs, such as Cambyses.) The Pharaohs of Egypt had a habit of hiding any information they did not want remembered. Another example is Moses, for nothing is written about him in Egyptian history. Pharaohs characteristically erased their predecessors' cartouches and replaced them with their own. They even turned upside down, blocks of stone containing cartouches that could not be erased; then they used the same stone for their own hieroglyphs. For these reasons, historians cannot coordinate Egyptian and Jewish history—unless they have faith in and use the Bible. The Bible is the only stable, accurate history that can bring order out of chaos. As a side note, the Proverbs are short, terse statements usually without continuity, whereas the Psalms have continuity.

**Isa. 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.**

The Holy Remnant—contrite, meek Jews with a changed heart condition—will be the *true* Israelites. At the end of the age, this humble element that goes through the trouble will be like the faithful Jews of Old Testament days. Hence they will be "precious" in God's sight, and He will love them and set up His Kingdom in Israel with the world capital at Jerusalem. God's program, recorded in advance, includes the Third Temple, the layout for Jerusalem and its suburbs, and the government or cabinet with the Ancient Worthies. He will be very happy to use the contrite Holy Remnant as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

If the apostles were in our midst today, they would be giving strong sermons to professed Christians, including Bible Students. We are so soft physically, mentally, and morally that it is hard for us to realize our true Laodicean condition and our need for correction.

**Isa. 43:5** Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

**Isa. 43:6** I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

This regathering of Jews from the north, south, east, and west—a worldwide calling—will take place *after* Jacob’s Trouble. The bulk of the regathering to Israel will occur then. To date, most of the returned Jews have come from the north (Europe). When the Kingdom is established, there will be a universal exodus to Israel of those Jews who survived Jacob’s Trouble in Gentile nations. Notice that it is *God* who will call the Jews to Israel: “I will bring thy seed ... and gather thee ... [and] I will say ... Give up; ... Keep not back; bring my sons ... and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” This calling will last through the Millennium as the various generations come forth from the grave.

And what about all the Jews in the tomb? They will be resuscitated in whatever country they died—and then go to Israel. First, however, it will be necessary for them to identify with their former estate and to realize what has happened.

Thus far a nucleus, a remnant, has been regathered, whereas verses 5 and 6 refer to the gathering of *all* Jews—of “every one that is called by my [God’s] name” (verse 7). God purposes that redemption for the world will be through the nation of Israel under the New Covenant. Later chapters of Isaiah will treat the second regathering of Jews in great detail.

**Isa. 43:7** Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

The regathering of “even every one that is called by my name” pertains to the fulfillment of a *natural* promise to the house of Israel. This second regathering will be mandatory. When the Kingdom is set up, all Jews in foreign lands will have to return to Israel.

“For I have created him [natural Israel] for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” God speaks of the Jews who will be called back to Israel as if they are a special creation. How will they be to His “glory”? One aspect is that Jacob’s Trouble will be God’s opportunity to dramatically save the Holy Remnant and, at the same time, to manifest *His* glory. Thus will God magnify *His* name and sanctify *Himself* and “be known in the eyes of many nations” (Ezek. 38:23). The *collective* aspect of God’s manifestation of His glory on behalf of Israel is testified by many Scriptures, but here in Isaiah, the *individual* aspect is shown, for “even every one” who is brought through Jacob’s Trouble will be handpicked and given special providential care. The names of all Jews who comprise the Holy Remnant, being marked for survival, will be found in God’s *book of the living* (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1), which is different from “the book of life.”

**Q:** Since verse 7 follows verse 6, is the thought that not only in Israel but *worldwide* all Jews who survive Jacob’s Trouble (and Armageddon) will be handpicked?

**A:** Yes, they will be handpicked even in the other countries—in the east, west, north, and south. The Jews who survive outside of Israel will be called back “from the ends of the earth” and specially honored by God. In other words, this will be a regathering of *changed, contrite* Jews. They will be handpicked to be of a character that is in harmony with the setting up of the Kingdom. Even though the government will be in the hands of the Church in glory and the Ancient Worthies will be the representatives of the spiritual invisible Kingdom, the individual Jews who survive the trouble throughout the world, the *Holy Remnant*, will be in heart harmony with the Kingdom when it starts. In verse 7, the Lord takes credit for changing them,

for “forming” them, not in the womb but in the character transformation that will take place in connection with the trouble. “I have *formed* him; yea, I have *made* him.” The class of Jews who die will be hardened by the trouble; the class who survive, the Holy Remnant, will be *tenderized* by the trouble.

**Q:** Can the phrase “even every one that is called by my name” be related to the similar phrase in Amos 9:12, “That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, *which are called by my name, saith the LORD*”? Rotherham has, “They upon whom my name is called.”

**A:** Yes, there is a relationship, and Acts 15:16,17 is the other reference: “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, *upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.*”

**Isa. 43:8** Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

Who are these “blind people” who have eyes (but cannot see) and ears (but cannot hear)? They have the organs to see and hear but cannot do either. Verse 8 refers to the world, to all who are skeptics, both Jew and Gentile—to those who are identified in verse 9 as “all the nations.”

**Isa. 43:9** Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

The people are to be gathered together and assembled. “Who among them can declare this”—declare what? This chapter of Isaiah tells what will happen in the future and how God’s glory will be manifested in the Holy Remnant. After that occurrence and the setting up of the Kingdom in Israel with Jerusalem as the capital, etc., God will say to those who previously were blind and deaf, to those who felt they could predict the future, “Who among you could have predicted *these future things*?” (This rhetorical question is not expected to have an answer, for of course none can predict the future as God does.)

**Q:** Why is the question worded “Who among them can ... show us *former things*”?

**A:** This chapter presents a little different slant than we are accustomed to. The setting is *future*—it is when the Kingdom has been established and after God has manifested His glory on behalf of Israel. At that time, God will ask the world, “Who among you was able to explain in great detail the former things that just happened, which I predicted thousands of years earlier in my Word?” God will figuratively lecture the world in this manner after Jacob’s Trouble.

God continues to speak: “Who among them [the people] can declare this...? let them bring forth their witnesses, ... *or let them hear, and say, It is truth.*” After Jacob’s Trouble, He will say, “Now come forth. Bring your witnesses if you can—all who could do the predicting. Or, if there are no witnesses, admit the truth. Admit that I testified these events in advance and that my glory was manifested. Acknowledge my ability.” The people’s attitude should be, “God’s authority is supreme, and we are convinced that His Word is truth. We have nothing to say except that God is right.” The next step would be to bow their heads and consecrate.

**Isa. 43:10** Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant.” In the future, when the second regathering takes place and the New Covenant is made with Israel, the Jews (that is, the Holy

Remnant) will be God's "witnesses" and "servant." (Note: Although here the "servant" is the nation of Israel—that is, the Jews—who will enlighten and instruct other nations, elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah, the "servant" is Jesus.)

Today most Jews do not know what their own Torah (the Old Testament) teaches, for it is kept under lock and key in the synagogues. Only the half Torah (select, noncontroversial fragments of the Old Testament) and the Pentateuch are used.

God has chosen the Jews (the Holy Remnant) to be His witnesses and servant so that they will *know and believe Him*. He wants a pure nation, a holy lump, for the start of the Kingdom. God will take a certain segment of the Jews who are living at the time of Jacob's Trouble and tenderize them to be a suppliant, obedient people by saving them out of the trouble. At that time, they will know, believe, and understand that God is God!

"I am he: *before me* there was no [other] God formed." Why did God make this statement? One reason is that many do not realize the Jewish religion *preceded* all other religions; it is older than Islam and Hinduism; it is the progenitor of all religions. The world has been so indoctrinated with false information about the antiquity of other religions that even Jews believe this and fail to appreciate the fact that Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, is *the God*.

"I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." This is another way of saying that God is a jealous God and that He will never give His glory to another. Even though Jesus is to be greatly magnified, Jehovah will always retain His position as Emperor of the universe.

Verse 10 is one of the verses improperly used by JW's to say they are God's witnesses.

**Isa. 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.**

God is the Author of the plan of salvation. Several chapters here in Isaiah, one after the other, emphasize and extol Jehovah (the LORD God), the Creator. Some of the earlier chapters magnify Jesus.

**Isa. 43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shown, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.**

"When there was no strange god among you," God declared, saved, and showed. When was that? From the time that Adam and Eve were created through the Flood in Noah's day, the people had no god by any other name. "Strange gods" came subsequently.

The Jews have gotten away from the Word of God and have listened to the teachings of other nations to such an extent that they think perhaps the others are right. *If sure of God's omnipotence*, they would pray to Him, fast, and beseech Him for deliverance, and not look to the United States for aid. If they would just think about their own history, they would realize the *God of Israel* appeared to them. Their entire history starts and ends with Him. If they would return to the Word, their faith would be reestablished. Some Jews are turning to the Word now, and this will happen to a greater extent in the near future as the Holy Remnant is prepared. (The preparatory work is already occurring and will become more marked in the future.) Of course both Jews and Gentiles need repentance, for *all* are guilty before God.

**Isa. 43:13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?**

"Before the day [of creation] was[,] I am he," saith the LORD. "The earth was without form,

and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light ... and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:2-5). The earth was formed long before God’s spirit began to move “upon the face of the waters” to prepare the surface of the earth for man’s habitation. “In the beginning,” the world was *for a long time* without form, dark, and void. In other words, God existed *long before* He said, “Let there be light,” *long before* He created Adam. Then 48,000+ years ago He began to order the surface of the earth for the eventual creation of Adam.

Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and [now] I work” (John 5:17). God worked for six (7,000-year) days, and then, on the seventh day, He rested from His creative works. He will resume His creative work again in the future.

“I will work, and who shall let it?” is rendered in the RSV, “I work and who can hinder it?” In other words, when God sets something in motion, no one and/or nothing can stop it, slow it down, or reverse it. Isaiah devoted about five chapters to this theme because although the concept is easy to understand, we easily forget.

**Isa. 43:14** Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

This verse is past tense in the King James, but it is future tense in the Revised Standard Version. The Hebrew grammar is difficult, so context will determine which tense is correct.

Isaiah’s reference to God’s visiting a judgment on Babylon and the Chaldeans is an indication of when he was writing this chapter. Chapters 1-39 of the Book of Isaiah are historical; they contain a lot of current events, telling what various kings did. However, Chapter 40 through the end of the book consists of prophecies, principles, and soliloquies—of sermons that are not geographically pinpointed. The fact that the specific name Babylon is thrust into this context as an exception is a clue that when Isaiah wrote this chapter, a goodly portion of the ten tribes had already been taken captive to Assyria. Another exception in Chapters 40-66 is the mention of the specific name Cyrus. Otherwise, personalities do not appear in this latter part of Isaiah.

“I ... have brought down ... the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.” The RSV reads, “And the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentations.” Since the Chaldeans are not normally thought of as a seagoing nation, the Revised Standard wording is better. The thought is that God will change the shouts of joy in mystic Babylon into lamentations. At Belshazzar’s feast, the people were rejoicing and drinking out of the silver and gold vessels of the Lord. When the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus, the sounds of happiness were abruptly changed to sounds of mourning.

“For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars” (RSV). The prison bars will be broken down, as it were, when the time comes for Israel’s liberation. God will deliver His people from bondage to mystic Babylon. In the Book of Isaiah, the communist power is pictured by the Assyrian, and Christendom is pictured by Babylon and the Chaldeans. However, in the Book of Habakkuk, the Chaldeans represent communists, socialists, and nihilists—the “bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs” (Hab. 1:6). The Chaldeans were a very fierce, brutal, and ruthless people in Babylon.

Some general guidelines for Scriptural interpretation are as follows:

1. In those contexts where Babylon represents the communist element, Israel pictures Christendom, and Jerusalem represents *false* Christians, the nominal system. A number of times in the Bible, the Lord called Babylon to come down and visit judgment on Israel, and Babylon got the victory. God even called King Nebuchadnezzar “my servant” (Jer. 25:9). The Israelites were taken into captivity, and their city and Temple were destroyed.
2. From a *natural* standpoint, the king of Babylon, who came down as a “lion” from the north, represents the forces of Gog and Magog, whose intent will be to destroy natural Israel (Jer. 4:7). The time element is later than the fall of Christendom. In that setting, the king of Babylon (Gog and Magog) will be defeated, and the Holy Remnant will be rescued.
3. Old Testament references to Israel can be natural (nominal or true) or spiritual (nominal or true). Thus there are four possibilities. The context must be studied carefully to determine which application is intended. Where possible, we should see both a spiritual and a natural application.

**Isa. 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.**

**Isa. 43:16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;**

God made “a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters” at the time of the Exodus and the opening of the Red Sea to defeat the Egyptians and deliver the Israelites. He will do this again with similar mighty demonstrations when He defeats Gog and Magog and delivers the Holy Remnant. God opened the Red Sea and made a dry path for the Israelites to walk on, but when the Egyptians foolishly pursued the Israelites, God caused the “mighty waters” to drown them. And so Gog will be defeated by similar miraculous power while the faithful remnant is being saved. Natural Israel will again be saved.

The primary application in this chapter of Isaiah is *natural* Israel. God said of the Jews, “Ye are my witnesses.” The *spiritual* application, which is secondary, is that all Christians down through the age have had a witness and could thus testify as to God’s dealings with them. This witness will be a reproach to the world of mankind, who will not be able to gainsay God when they come forth from the tomb.

**Isa. 43:17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.**

Verses 15-17 pertain to God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant and the defeat of Gog. God will again exercise the mighty power He used for the Israelites and against the Egyptians in the Red Sea crossing. Except for the one-sixth who will be spared to be eyewitnesses to their homelands, the threat of Gog will be snuffed out. They will be “extinguished, quenched like a wick” (RSV). Similarly God snuffed out the pursuing Egyptians and Pharaoh by covering them with a wave.

**Isa. 43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.**

A new technique was used for the rest of this chapter. Verse 18 should be a question: “Do you not remember the former things, or consider the things of old?” In other words, “Israel, you should realize that I can do this,” saith the Lord. The Jews of today do not realize God’s great power, for otherwise, they would be calling upon Him.

**Isa. 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.**



**Isa. 43:20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.**

God continued to address Israel. He will do “a new thing” in that He will establish the *New Covenant*, the implication being a fresh start and forgiveness. Moreover, the dry, arid wastelands will receive water and become fruitful; they will teem with produce and animal life. Water will reach all areas.

The wadis, now dry, will become riverbeds with steady streams of water. For this to happen, there will have to be very remarkable changes in the land through forces of nature (such as earthquakes) triggered by the Lord. The levels of different parts of the land could be altered so that water from a far-away source could be brought near. Also, hidden subterranean springs will break forth to the surface to irrigate the land. The Lord was saying, “I am going to make a way or path in the wilderness that will supply the land with abundant water.” This abundant moisture in the arid wilderness will be “a new thing.” For example, Beer-sheba, which, for all intents and purposes, is the last outpost of Israel, the southernmost extremity, has always been arid, even in the days of Solomon.

The “beast of the field,” dragons, and owls will honor God by becoming subjugated to man. Under the new arrangement, those beasts that were once wild will be changed so that the wolf and the lamb will dwell together peaceably, the lion and the asp will be tame, and so forth. In the RSV, the “dragon” is a “jackal,” a vicious scavenger that represents animals living in waste places. Both beasts and man will be changed in the Kingdom.

Many animals fight one another for survival, that is, to get food. However, when the food supply becomes more plentiful in the Kingdom, the animals will live together more peaceably. Eventually, through changes in metabolism, their tastes will change to desire “straw,” a vegetarian diet (Isa. 11:7). Similarly, at the end of the Kingdom, man will eat the fruit of the tree of life and no longer need meat.

**Isa. 43:21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.**

God has “formed” the Israelites to show forth His praise. It is remarkable that in spite of Israel’s sins, in spite of their waywardness, God uses skill, ingenuity, providences, and hard experiences to change them, for He purposes that they shall be His specially chosen vessels. This is a lesson for us too, for who are we? God does not take drunks out of the gutter to comprise the Little Flock, but with few exceptions, He does not take the noble, the rich, or the mighty either. He is making a New Creation out of ordinary people. The same principle applies to Israel. He can miraculously change ornery, stiff-necked people without interfering with their wills by causing them to go “under the [chastening] rod” (Ezek. 20:37). The Jews who react favorably to the discipline of Jacob’s Trouble will be a chastened, contrite, meek Holy Remnant. Since God knows who they will be and is recording their names in advance, it can be said that He “formed” the Holy Remnant to show forth His praise.

**Isa. 43:22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.**

**Isa. 43:23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.**

**Isa. 43:24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me**

**with thine iniquities.**

God was rehearsing some of the things that displeased Him about Israel. The nucleus of the Kingdom will not consist of Jews who have this disposition of improper and deceptive sacrifice.

The word “cattle” is a broad term to mean all domesticated animals, particularly those used by man for food. “Small” cattle would be those domesticated animals that are smaller than the steer—the lamb and the kid, for example.

The Israelites did not bring willing sacrifices. Certain offerings were mandatory, but the great bulk were to be voluntary, or freewill. What God really appreciated were freewill offerings from a grateful heart (thank offerings, peace offerings, etc.). The Israelites sacrificed grudgingly, and sacrifices brought grudgingly were worse than not bringing any sacrifice at all. Grudging sacrifices did not honor God (“neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices”). “I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.” In other words, God was saying, “I did not command you to bring these sacrifices. When you bring them with the wrong attitude, it would be better for you not to bring any sacrifice.”

An additional problem was the bringing of lame, sick, and imperfect sacrifices (Mal. 1:13,14). Such sacrifices were deceitful, for the Jews who brought them pretended they were healthy. For example, when an offering was to be completely burnt, sick animals were knowingly brought. As soon as the animal was killed, skinned, flayed, and prepared, no one but the offerer and the Lord could tell that it had been sick. In the confusion of numerous sacrifices, the sick animals seemed perfect, but those who offered them knew they were being deceitful.

Spiritual Israel can be guilty of similar deception in not giving the Lord their best. In the past, natural Israelites thought they were getting away with their deception, but in the Kingdom, those Jews will be shamed and dealt with harshly. The *invisible* Lord, the *great* Creator and King, was aware of their heart condition and practices. Jews who died in these sins without repentance incurred responsibility that must be faced when they come forth from the tomb. The Holy Remnant will repent and be changed *before* the Kingdom is established, whereas most Jews will come forth in the resurrection with stripes for sins unrepented of and have no special honor just because they are Jews. The Holy Remnant will *voluntarily* repent and not wait for *forced* righteousness.

**Q:** With the Christian, what is the difference between being lame, halt, and sick?

**A:** The conditions are lameness of walk, haltness of speech and perception, and sin-sickness.

“Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money.” “Sweet cane” is incense, which consisted of frankincense and other sweet spices that were used for the Tabernacle or Temple services or for the personal consumption of the priests and their families. Tithes were used to support the priesthood, but these spices were not brought by the unrighteous class. Malachi 1:13 tells of their attitude toward tithing and sacrificing: “What a *weariness* this is!” (RSV).

Our God and His principles and the information in His Word *far transcend* in nobility of thought and in purity of character that of any other religion. There is explicit detail in the Bible on creation, history, chronology, etc. In view of what we do understand of God’s Word, when we come to a portion of Scripture that we do not understand, how do we react? We should not say we are weary of it, yet Israel, who could understand the Law and God’s righteous principles and saw great wisdom and justice in the Word, got weary over the repetitive sacrifices they did not understand. They were told to bring sacrifices for sin year after year, but with their lack of understanding, they grew tired of following the procedures and felt the sacrifices were an economic drain. However, the sacrifices taught the necessity for the shedding of blood for the

remission of sin. Instead of getting weary, the Israelites should have thought, “Why is God constantly requiring these sacrifices? Why is He teaching this lesson over and over again? I do not understand, but I know there is a reason, and I would like to understand.” The right-hearted, who recognized their own shortcomings and God’s greatness, found the Law to be a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:24). In Malachi, the people were weary. In Isaiah, God was the weary One—He was weary of Israel’s sins, their imperfect sacrifices, and their slowness of heart. Nevertheless, in *God’s* time, the proper number will be obtained for His plan, whether that number pertains to the Holy Remnant, the Ancient Worthies, or the Little Flock. It has taken 2,000 years to obtain just 144,000 Christians for the Little Flock (70 a year on the average), yet *millions* of believers have consecrated.

**Isa. 43:25** I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

God was speaking.

**Isa. 43:26** Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

“Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified” sounds like Romans 3:4, “Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” “Let *God* be true and everyone else a liar” (paraphrase); it is *God* who is to be justified, not man. But man has a quirk in his thinking; namely, he judges God by asking: “Why does God do this?” “Why does God do that?” “If I were in charge, I would do such and such.” High-minded man thinks he finds flaws, but the fault really lies with man. In the final analysis, God will be thoroughly vindicated and honored.

God was speaking in verses 25, 27, and 28. Verse 26, which seems to be a parenthetical interpolation, indicates that a time will come, yet future, when the people will realize the true circumstance of what has happened. In the past, the Israelites offered sick, lame, weak animals over and over and forgot about them. Similarly Christians may have murmured and done things in the past that they did not recognize as being wrong, or if they did realize the wrong, they forgot about it as time went on. But in the future, when this class of Israelites are made aware of their past sins, they will want to make amends. When the Kingdom is established, there will be a national mourning in Israel. The Holy Remnant will mourn for Jesus as for a firstborn son, smiting their breasts and separating themselves from their families. When they realize they crucified Christ, they will cry *collectively* in recognition of their need for repentance and God’s counsel.

Acts 3:19 reads, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” In the *present* life, the Church’s sins are not blotted out but are covered by Jesus’ merit. However, when they are changed in the first resurrection, the sin and imperfection in their bodily organisms will be gone, for they will be raised perfect. Stated another way, the Church’s sins will be immediately blotted out when they are raised.

Although the Holy Remnant, as a changed people, will be the nucleus of the Kingdom, they will not be perfect until the end of the Kingdom. They will be forgiven, but it will require the whole Kingdom for their sins to be completely blotted out. In other words, their blotting out will be gradual. Later chapters of Isaiah will furnish more information. The obedient of the world of mankind will also have their sins gradually blotted out in the Kingdom. “God shall [gradually] wipe away [eradicate] all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Verse 26 can be understood as follows: “O Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults by revealing them to me. Call them to mind.” “Let us plead together” can be thought of as communal or national pleading—or as individuals asking God to disclose their faults. The words “declare thou, that thou mayest be justified” can be stated as follows: “Speak, Lord, and I will hear. You are justified in your sayings. Previously I did the speaking without understanding the sinful condition that existed. Now I want you to speak to me, O God.” Note: The Hebrew word translated “plead” means “be judged”: “Let us be judged together.”

The Apostle Paul used the same slant in the early chapters of Romans when he tried to show that God is just when He punishes for sins. God is not harsh or inconsiderate but is *justified* in requiting sins with punishment. The time is coming when mankind will realize that God has *always* been just in His judgments.

**Isa. 43:27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.**

Who is the Jews’ “first father”? The *world’s* “first father” who sinned is Adam, but not the Jews’. From the standpoint of being first *in time*, Jacob is thought of as the father of the Jewish nation, but not from the standpoint of being first *in primary importance*. Here the “first father” is based on Malachi 2:11, “Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.” Of the 12 tribes, Judah was the most important, for the Messiah was to come out of Judah, it occupied a much larger land area than any of the other tribes, it was first in military matters, etc. But why did Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, condemn Judah as profaning the holiness of God? The same principle is illustrated in Zechariah 12:7, which says that God will honor Judah by saving its tents first. “The LORD also shall save the tents of *Judah* first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.” Moreover, the Lawgiver comes out of Judah: “The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10).

The promises are true as regards Judah, but sometimes the best of God’s people can have the worst character traits if they do not overcome. Stated another way, depending on the individual, the *same* conditions can result in righteousness or unrighteousness. Jacob’s son Judah, the progenitor of the tribe of Judah, had a mean streak in his character that was revealed in different ways. For one thing, he married a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shuah. Of their three sons, Er and Onan were cut off for being very wicked. Nevertheless, the Savior came from this tribe.

With fallen mankind, God has purposed a people for His name (both naturally and spiritually). But that does not mean, for example, that those comprising the Little Flock, who come mostly from the Western nations, are intrinsically better than Asian and African people. God directed that the gospel go westward. Accordingly, the Bible has uplifted and enlightened the people in those nations, but if the gospel had gone eastward, the enlightening influence would have accompanied it in that direction. Hence the honor and the credit belong to *God* for the selection and development of the Little Flock. Of course to be a member of this class of ordinary people, one must be *rich in faith* and must *hearken to the Lord’s Word*. By grace through *faith*, one is led to hope, love, and the first resurrection.

The gospel is like a magnet that went westward, attracting those who had *natural faith*. Natural faith (faith that there is a God and that God will reward those who search for Him) comes first, but it *must be accompanied by spiritual faith* in order to be productive. *Spiritual faith* comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Of the class in the world, especially the Western world, who have *natural faith*, the gospel reaches some, and they respond and develop *spiritual faith*

through the Word.

“Thy teachers have transgressed against me.” Israel’s “teachers,” or interpreters, were its priests (who explained or interpreted the Law) and its prophets (who made declarations and predictions). The priests transgressed by misinterpreting and warping the Law and thus misapplying it to favor the wicked.

**Isa. 43:28** Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

The “princes of the sanctuary” were primarily the priests, but they were also the prophets. The reason God cast off Israel and gave the nation hard experiences was that they ignored and disobeyed the Law Covenant. If obedient, they would have been a kingdom of priests, that is, the Church.

**Isa. 44:1** Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Israel was being addressed.

**Isa. 44:2** Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

God “made” and “formed” Jacob “from the womb.” When did He do this? Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, meaning “the people of God.” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were individuals, patriarchs. When Jacob, the last of the patriarchs, died, God dealt with his 12 sons and their progeny. Stated another way, Jacob’s 12 sons inherited the position he had occupied as a patriarch. Just before Jacob died in Egypt, he gave a blessing to each of his 12 sons. This act marked the beginning of the nation of Israel. Since the nation grew and developed in Egypt, Egypt was the “womb.” When Israel was called and led out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, the nation was baptized in the sea and under the cloud. The Apostle Paul linked the beginning of Israel with the Exodus rather than with the death of Jacob, and that would be true from a certain standpoint. Israel labored in the womb under Egyptian taskmasters for 215 years and then was born or baptized in the Red Sea in the Exodus to begin a new life. Elsewhere the picture is carried forward, and Israel is likened to a babe still attached to the umbilical cord. Then God dried up the baby and nurtured Israel as an eagle stirs up her nest and cares for her young (Deut. 32:11,12). Eventually, after 40 years, God led Israel into the Holy Land. Thus He was instrumental in forming the nation and in causing the name Jacob to become significant.

Jesurun (or Jeshurun) is usually defined as “the darling upright one,” referring to Israel. However, depending on the vowels, it can mean “the one in whom God delights.” Jesurun is a term of endearment and forgiveness that includes the thought of “happiness.” Before his death, Moses gave two prophetic talks to the nation of Israel in which he used this term (Deut. 32:15; 33:5,26). He prophesied how Israel would go astray like a spoiled child and ultimately be brought back into favor. Moses pointed out that the Israelites did not realize how favored they were and hence they needed lessons.

**Isa. 44:3** For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

**Isa. 44:4** And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

God said that He would “pour” water upon the thirsty and “pour” His spirit and blessing upon their seed, their offspring. In other words, God would multiply their offspring. Near the end of this book, Isaiah spoke of this blessed offspring as a class that will be born in the earlier stages

of the Kingdom, for the begetting of children will not immediately cease when the Kingdom is established.

Verses 3 and 4 must have a future fulfillment, for God did not pour out His spirit on Israel in Isaiah's day or in any time up to the present. In fact, shortly after Isaiah uttered this prophecy, the ten-tribe kingdom was taken captive, and a century later the same thing happened to the two-tribe kingdom. And when Israelites returned to their land in 536 BC, they were under Gentile dominion.

Zechariah 12:10 shows that the spirit God pours out on Israel will be a spirit of mourning. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit of grace and of supplications*: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." After the Holy Remnant repents, God will bless them abundantly as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

**Isa. 44:5 One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.**

This verse is future; it will be fulfilled at the introduction of the Kingdom. When the Holy Remnant are saved, they will *all* be religious and dedicated, or consecrated, to the Lord. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that *they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent*" (Zeph. 3:9). "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for *they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD*"; this will be particularly true of the nation of Israel when the Kingdom begins (Jer. 31:34).

One will say, "I am Jehovah's." Another shall say, "My name is Jacob." Still another will say, "I am a Jew." They will all be proud to be Jews. The Holy Remnant will openly profess their religion at that time, whereas now Jews generally try to hide or lose their identity.

*In principle*, "orthodox" Muslims do this now, for they must have "Muhammad" in their name as one, two, or three syllables in any order. Especially in former times, Catholics had to have saints' names or Biblical names.

**Isa. 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**

Jehovah is Israel's King and Redeemer. He is the "first" and the "last," and beside Him there is no other God. In other words, *He alone* is the Chief One worthy of worship.

**Isa. 44:7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.**

The RSV reads, "Who is like me? Let him proclaim it, let him declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be." The force of verse 7 will not be recognized until prophecy is fulfilled. When the Kingdom is established with the capital at Jerusalem, with Messiah ruling, and with the Ancient Worthies on the scene, it will CLEARLY be seen that God foretold 4,000 years in advance what would happen. Who else could prophesy in this manner?

**Isa. 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared**

**it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.**

A message will be given to the Holy Remnant *before* Jacob's Trouble. While that message will make Israel cognizant of the fact that the horde of Gog and Magog will come down and would annihilate them if God did not intervene, they will not necessarily know about Jesus until around the time the Ancient Worthies appear on the scene in the midst of Jacob's Trouble. The message will be one of comfort in which the Holy Remnant realize that God has purposed to save those in the right heart attitude and bring them through the fire.

While the *first message* of general reassurance will be given *prior* to Jacob's Trouble, the *second message* of reassurance will take place *after* Jacob's Trouble and will be something like Joseph's revelation of his identity to his brethren. The brothers' first reaction was fear and shock that the one they had left to die was now the prime minister of Egypt. And so the Holy Remnant will experience guilt and shock at the realization Jesus is their Messiah. In their remorse, they will mourn for Jesus as for an only son. God will then pour His spirit of supplication upon this contrite remnant class. Verse 8 seems to be the message *after* Jacob's Trouble.

In summary, there will be two messages of "Fear not":

1. A message *before* Jacob's Trouble: "Fear not; a Holy Remnant will be saved."
2. A message *after* Jacob's Trouble, when the Holy Remnant is chastened, fearful, and mourning: "Fear not; Jesus is your Savior."

**Isa. 44:9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.**

Why is the subject of graven images inserted here? Not today but back in Isaiah's day, idol worship was practiced by Israel. The Lord was quite displeased at the stupidity of *man* to worship things made with *human* hands. Man should be able to see *God's* handiwork all around in nature. The foolishness of idol worship is mentioned several times in the Book of Isaiah.

"They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit." Why will they not profit? Because "they [the dumb idols] are their [man's] own witnesses." Men are *dumb* to worship *dumb* idols that cannot speak, hear, or move! God was saying to Israel, "I brought you out of Egypt and nurtured and blessed you, and what are you doing now? You are worshipping sticks and stones. What is the matter with you? To form a thing yourself and then worship it is ridiculous." God gave Israel a tongue-lashing, yet He was merciful to them. Sometimes it is necessary for hurt to precede blessing and true mercy.

**Isa. 44:10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?**

**Isa. 44:11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.**

**Isa. 44:12 The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.**

**Isa. 44:13 The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.**

**Isa. 44:14** He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

**Isa. 44:15** Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

**Isa. 44:16** He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

**Isa. 44:17** And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

What sarcasm! To make a metallic god, for example, the blacksmith heats the metal and then laboriously shapes and beats it with muscle. As he gets tired and thirsty, he stops in *weakness* to rest, eat food, and drink water (but God *does not tire!*).

Then the picture changes to the maker of a wooden idol. He waits years for the tree to grow just right. (The various trees used to carve statues are listed: cypress, oak, cedar, and ash.) Meanwhile, he prunes the tree to encourage the shape he has in mind. Finally the day comes when he cuts down the tree and lops off the branches and wood that are not needed to make the idol. Then, using a compass, he begins to draw the figure of a being on all sides. As the temperature drops, he uses the surplus branches to build a fire. When he gets warm, he says, "Aha, I am warm."

What a farce and foolishness! *Mortal* man tries to make an *immortal* statue that will give him advice when he prays to it. Mortal man puts considerable thinking into making the dumb statue, and as soon as he puts it on a pedestal, he prays and bows to it as if it underwent a miraculous change. But the idol cannot talk or hear; it is *powerless*. Such worship and obeisance show just how thick-headed the human race can be!

This principle of fashioning an object for worship with one's hands is larger in scope than just a literal statue or idol. Some make an idol out of an evangelical work. In effect, they consecrate to an organization and look to that organization for direction. They forget that a *personalized consecration to God* is the main thing. Jesus said to the Church of Ephesus, "I know your labors and your works, but you do not love *ME* as you did at first." There is a tendency to lose the personal relationship with God by straying into activity (social or otherwise) and there seeking advice and comfort. Activity has its place *if it is subservient to the supreme worship of the Creator and His Son Jesus*. We must not let either activity or an organization supersede such worship.

The maker of the statue "falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." The statue is his god, yet it is the product of his own hands.

**Q:** In certain instances, wouldn't Satan do some strange things through these gods?

**A:** On occasion. When a "miracle" occurs, we should weigh the *moral circumstances* and the *moral atmosphere* in which it is performed. The Lord does miracles for His people through His holy angels, but since Satan also does supernatural things to deceive, we must reason on the nature of the miracle and pray about it to discern whether it is of God or of Satan. Deceptive "miracles" are performed by Satan and the fallen angels for selfish purposes and not for the



good of the individual. Healings that are done in an atmosphere where nothing edifying is preached from the Word should immediately be suspect and avoided. “Miracles” that do not lead to a study of the Bible are deceptions. The question should be asked, “What would following and accepting this atmosphere do to me in time?”

**Isa. 44:18** They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

**Isa. 44:19** And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

**Isa. 44:20** He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

These verses point out the need to inspect *motives*. If the maker of the statue had analyzed his motive, he would have seen that there was a “lie” in his right hand, that worshipping the statue was not true reverence for God. An example of an improper motive would be the worker’s wanting others to see and admire his skill in workmanship and the beauty of the statue. After a while, the worker becomes enamored, as in self-hypnosis, and begins to believe his product is truly wonderful. A person’s heart could be deceived into making and worshipping an idol through the influence of another human being or the suggestion of a fallen angel or even by his own thinking.

“He feedeth on ashes.” When all is said and done, when no answer is forthcoming from the idol, it ends up in “ashes.” We use the expression “gone up in smoke.” “Your dream has gone up in smoke”; that is, “Your dream has deteriorated.”

**Isa. 44:21** Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

**Isa. 44:22** I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

**Isa. 44:23** Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

**Isa. 44:24** Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

**Isa. 44:25** That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

**Isa. 44:26** That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

The setting of verses 21-26 is after Jacob’s Trouble. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your [the Church’s and Israel’s] sins may be blotted out [at Christ’s Second Advent], when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). While Isaiah Chapter 44 gives Israel a tongue-lashing, it also

gives the Jews a strong message of *hope*. The sins of Christians are only temporarily covered now; sins will be permanently blotted out when they receive their spiritual change. Israel's sins will be blotted out after Jacob's Trouble.

“Thus saith the LORD, ... I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.” Sometimes a person who is under the influence of the fallen angels will cut open an animal and read its organs like tea leaves and prophesy of the future. Many such prophecies were true back there because angels have superior capabilities of knowing things that are happening a thousand miles away. But when God had a particular purpose in mind, the fallen angels could not operate in that area. When God so desires, He intervenes in Satan's occult dealings and causes them to go awry. Back in Isaiah's day, those who were regarded as being wise in their counsel suddenly could not reason straight.

“I am the LORD ... that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers.” God uttered various prophecies through the Old Testament prophets, but now, in the time setting here in Isaiah, predictions materialize, confirming the prophetic word. Now is the time for the establishment of the Kingdom. In the rescue of the Holy Remnant, Jerusalem will be leveled, and verse 26 is saying that the time has come for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. “I am the LORD ... that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.” This prophecy will be fulfilled when Jerusalem is rebuilt. “Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof” (Jer. 30:18). God will then have confirmed His former predictions—His predictions made thousands of years ago.

“I will raise up the decayed places thereof [the wastes of Jerusalem—KJV margin].” Isaiah wrote these prophecies in the days of King Hezekiah, which was about 150 years before Cyrus came on the scene. Jerusalem was still intact, for this was prior to 606 BC. Isaiah's prediction was that Jerusalem would be leveled and then rebuilt, and that Cyrus would somehow be identified with a reconstruction work. In time, Isaiah died. Later the city and the Temple were destroyed, and the Israelites went into captivity, leaving the land desolate for 70 years.

**Isa. 44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:**

**Isa. 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.**

When the 50,000 Israelites returned from Babylon after Cyrus's decree, they rebuilt the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. At that time, they read this prophecy of Isaiah and thought its fulfillment had come; they even thought that their transgressions had been blotted out. They expected all of these blessings at that time and did not realize the fulfillment was more than 2,000 years in the future, at the end of the Gospel Age.

The deep river that would become dry is the Euphrates River. When Cyrus was irritated and frustrated at the strong, entrenched position of Babylon with its high, strong wall, the Lord somehow put into his mind the thought of digging a channel to divert the water. (Since Isaiah had already recorded Cyrus's name in Holy Writ years before he was born, someone may have pointed out that prophecy to him.) When Cyrus diverted the river, he was able to enter the city under its gates and to capture it.

Did Cyrus say to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built”? No, but Isaiah 45:13 seems to say that he did: “He shall build my city.” In the *Second Volume* chapter that discusses the date of Jesus' First

Advent, the Pastor answered this enigma by saying the Hebrew word *ir* can be applied to an enclosed place, such as a court. From that standpoint, Cyrus did build the enclosed place, or court, of the Temple. However, the Pastor did not answer the statement of verse 28, which is even stronger: “Jerusalem ... shalt be built.” According to the Hebrew, there should be a change in verse 28. The words “even saying” should read “and saying to”; namely, “I am the LORD ... That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: *and saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*” It was not Cyrus but *Jehovah* who will say to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built.” This thought can be traced from verse 24: “Thus saith the LORD [verse 24] ... that frustrateth [verse 25], ... that confirmeth [verse 26], ... that saith [verse 27], ... and saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built.”

2 Chronicles 36:22,23 verifies that Cyrus was to build the *Temple* (“house”), not the city: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an *house* in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.”

Ezra 1:1,2 also shows that Cyrus was to build the *Temple*: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an *house* at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” Succeeding verses in Ezra also emphasize the *Temple*, as follows:

“Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the *house* of the LORD which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:5). The Jews who returned to Jerusalem went there to build the “house” of the Lord.

“And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the *house* of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests’ garments” (Ezra 2:68,69). The Temple had not been erected yet; neither had the foundation been laid. Some of the returning Israelites went to the desolate Temple site and began to donate freely.

Ezra 3:1-6 reads, “And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the *temple* of the LORD was not yet laid.” The Temple was still not finished; in fact, even the foundation had not yet been laid. A *temporary* altar was built so that offerings could be made.

In the second month of the second year, workers were appointed to lay the foundation of the Temple: “Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel ... and Jeshua ... and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the *house* of the LORD. And when the builders laid the *foundation* of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel” (Ezra 3:8,10).

Ezra 5 tells that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy. Then Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, rose up and started to build the Temple with the prophets encouraging and helping them (Zech. 6:11). Next some outsiders began to find fault: “At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this *house*, and to make up this wall [of the Temple]?” Both Tatnai and Shethar-boznai wanted to know the names of those Jews who were responsible.

Then Tatnai wrote a letter to Darius the king: “Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them. And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up. But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.” Tatnai summed up his letter as follows: “Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king’s treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.” Notice that the Temple was still not finished and that nothing was mentioned about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. Notice, also, the humble attitude of the returned Jews.

Ezra 6 continues the narrative. When King Darius found that Cyrus had made a decree years before for the “house” (Temple) to be built, he told Tatnai to *cooperate* with the Jews and to supply them with animals for sacrificing. Even some of the tribute (tax) money was to be given to assist with building expenses. Those who would not cooperate with the Jews were to be hanged with timber from their own houses. Under these conditions, the work began to prosper, and the Temple foundation was finished. Finally the Temple itself was completed.

As the Book of Ezra continues, we are told that there was a second exodus (much smaller than the first) of Jews from Babylon. They returned to Israel with freewill offerings of silver and gold, but again the work was frustrated—this time when they began to build the walls of the courtyard. (The next step was to build the city walls, making Jerusalem defensible, and the objection was that the Israelites would then no longer pay taxes.)

In the month of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which was long after Cyrus, Nehemiah was given permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city wall (Nehemiah 2). Critics of the Pastor's chronology say that if the 70 weeks are applied from Nisan, then the 69 weeks would have to end in Nisan, and the one-half additional week (69 1/2 weeks until Messiah was cut off) would terminate in October. However, Jesus was not crucified in October. The following explanation is offered.

While it is true that Nehemiah got permission to rebuild the city wall in the month of Nisan, he needed some time to prepare for the four-month journey. (We know the journey took four months because that is the time Ezra needed for his return.) Even when Nehemiah reached Jerusalem, he stayed incognito for three days so that he could secretly examine the city at night. The account tells that it took 52 days to rebuild the wall. Adding the 3 days to the 52 days gives a total of 55 days. On the 25th day of the month of Elul (Neh. 6:15), the wall was finished. This month is not mentioned again in the Bible, but the Book of Maccabees and other places declare it to be the sixth month, which would be late September. The Pastor thought Jesus returned on October 1, 1874, for his Second Advent, but he said that the return had to be in the range of September 25 to October 5. The earlier date seems reasonable, for September 25 would match exactly the date given in Nehemiah for the completion of the city wall.

In antitype, Cyrus, whose name means "sun," pictures Jesus and his work in the Kingdom. God's Kingdom will be established with Jesus as His agent, or representative.

**Isa. 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;**

God called Cyrus, a *Persian* king, "his anointed" and His "shepherd" (Isa. 44:28). Cyrus is the king who issued the decree to build the court walls of the Temple. Jehovah held the right hand of Cyrus "to subdue nations before him."

How did God "loose the loins of kings, to open before him [Cyrus] the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut"? This action was the opposite of girding the loins. The thought is that Cyrus subdued many nations without a battle. Because he was so victorious, the very fear of him so intimidated and unnerved the populace of various cities that they often beseeched him for a truce and thus surrendered without a battle. Without warfare, they opened their gates and acknowledged Cyrus as their conqueror. As for those who opposed him, God strengthened the hand of Cyrus in a way that he could miraculously overtake them.

At Sardis in Turkey is a high, very steep mountain that served as an impregnable fortress, yet Cyrus was able to conquer King Croesus, who sat in this citadel. (Croesus of Sardis is the fabled king who had so much money.) Sardis was the capital of the Lydian Empire.

**Isa. 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:**

No matter how strong, the fortifications of those who resisted Cyrus were to no avail, for God broke "in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

**Isa. 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.**

**Isa. 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.**

What “treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places” were given to the literal Cyrus? The cities stored their wealth in *underground* vaults. Croesus was supposed to be the richest king at the time Cyrus marched on Sardis, but the accumulated wealth of Babylon was superior to even that of Sardis. History tells that when Cyrus captured Sardis, he got \$600 million, or 20,000 pounds of solid gold, plus artifacts and vessels of gold and silver. Thus Cyrus emptied the “treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.”

Notice that Jehovah, the God of Israel, called Cyrus by name *before he was born*.

**Isa. 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:**

God “girded” Cyrus in two ways: (1) He gave Cyrus supernatural power in overcoming his enemies. (2) God prepared Cyrus as a child and fashioned him for his future work; He trained him for his position as general and renowned conqueror. Not only was God’s providence over the victories Cyrus later attained, but that providence operated from his earliest youth—even from his baptism, as it were, when he was given the name Cyrus. Thus God’s remarkable foreknowledge was displayed 150 years before the events occurred.

**Isa. 45:6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.**

The thought in the Hebrew is “from the rising of the sun, and from the setting of the sun,” that is, from east to west. What does this suggest? What did Cyrus do in regard to Israel? After Cyrus conquered Babylon, he issued the decree that Jews could return to Israel to rebuild the Temple, and he also decreed how large the Temple could be because he did not want the resultant structure to outdo what he contemplated building.

Actually, Darius the Mede is given the credit for conquering Babylon because the Median Empire superseded the Persian Empire at that time. Cyrus was the general and military planner, or strategist, of King Darius. The prophecy in Daniel 8:3 shows that the Median horn came up first, and after that, the Persian horn under Cyrus came up higher. “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.” The same principle operates in our country. Even though the President is higher in office and is called the Commander-in-Chief, the actual battles are planned by a general or generals.

What is the spiritual significance of Cyrus’s capture of Babylon? Cyrus, whose name means “sun,” pictures Jesus, and Babylon pictures mystic Babylon. Jesus will overtake mystic Babylon. Revelation 16:12 is pertinent: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” In the symbolic Book of Revelation is the prophecy that the symbolic “great river Euphrates” will dry up. This prophecy is based on the actual event in history when Cyrus diverted the waters of the river Euphrates into another channel so that they would not go through the center of the city of Babylon but would leave the riverbed dry. Thus Cyrus and his armies were able to march into Babylon under the gates and capture the city. In Revelation 16:12, the word “kings” (*plural*) is used to indicate The Christ; that is, the water of the great river Euphrates will be dried up to prepare the “way of the kings of the east [The Christ].” Hence Cyrus represents The Christ in this picture, for the Church will be part of “The Sun.” A proof text is Daniel 12:3, “And they that be wise [the Church] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [the sun].” “The Sun” is a composite Sun, that is, The Christ, The Messiah, in glory. Bro. Frey used the illustration of a daisy; its yellow center is composed of 144,000 tiny pollen nubs, which, altogether, form one golden crown. In the literal picture, Jesus and the

Church can be represented either (1) by Cyrus alone or (2) by Cyrus and his followers.

The allegory follows through. Long before Jesus was created, Jehovah named or appointed him as His agent, as the Anointed One. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). In the Old Testament, Jesus was predicted in advance as the Messiah. Therefore, prophecies that pertain to Cyrus are analogous to the experiences of Jesus. Cyrus was called God’s “shepherd” before his birth (Isa. 44:28), and Jesus was predicted to be God’s Anointed prior to birth. And Jesus’ preexistence, his birth as a human babe, and his childhood through his adulthood were all part of his being fitted or “girded” for his future role as King of earth. Moreover, Jesus will be victorious as King of kings; all of his foes will be vanquished.

Not only will Jesus be instrumental in the fall of mystic Babylon, but the Church beyond the veil will be associated with him. When Babylon falls, those of the consecrated who remain behind in the flesh will know the Church is complete and glorified.

Now we will read a little more to see how Israel reacted to this prophecy about Cyrus. An interesting and helpful observation is made in verses 9 and 10.

**Isa. 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.**

God did not create moral “evil” but *natural* evil such as storms—the opposite of peace. He makes peace, and He makes trouble. In other words, He blesses and He punishes.

**Isa. 45:8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.**

Verse 8 will be fulfilled in the Kingdom. The skies pouring down righteousness like water are sometimes referred to as “showers of blessing” (Ezek. 34:26). God has long held these blessings in reservation until the Kingdom.

**Isa. 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?**

**Isa. 45:10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?**

**Isa. 45:11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.**

**Isa. 45:12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.**

All of a sudden, God asked Israel, “Does the pot say to the pot maker, ‘What are you making?’ Do you ask the father, ‘What are you doing?’ Do you ask the mother, ‘What have you brought forth?’” What is the relationship between the deeds of a king named Cyrus, the rising and the setting of the sun, peace and trouble, light and darkness, and the Lord God as Creator? Why was Israel asked these questions? Why was God (through Isaiah) criticizing Israel? Because the Israelites were questioning God’s providence in bringing punishment and trouble upon them. They never thought they deserved punishment.

Imagine being a Jew back in Babylonian captivity and hearing that Cyrus, a *heathen* king, was

coming to conquer Babylon. Wouldn't we have asked how a heathen king could be the Lord's "anointed" and Israel's "shepherd"? Jews would have questioned the authenticity of Isaiah's prophecy. Thus God was asking Israel, "Are you criticizing ME, the MAKER not only of Israel but also of the *whole* world, from the east to the west? I created light and darkness; I formed the earth. Are you questioning ME as to why I called this man Cyrus and surnamed him my shepherd and my anointed? Who are you to speak to ME?" This method seemed strange to the Israelites, and they reacted the same way toward Jesus, saying he was a false Messiah and of the Adversary. When the nation realizes Jesus truly is the Messiah, it will be a shock to them.

**Isa. 45:13** I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

The decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple was made not with "price" or "reward" (tax or toll). They were allowed to return in *liberty*. And so in the future, Jesus' message will go forth without price: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life *freely*" (Rev. 22:17). In both cases, the opportunity is freely offered to all, but not all exert themselves to take advantage of it. With Cyrus, only 53,000 Jews went back to Jerusalem.

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways." This prophecy of Cyrus sounds like Isaiah's earlier prophecies of Messiah in Chapters 9 and 11.

**Isa. 45:14** Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.

This verse has a twofold aspect. Probably Daniel and the three Hebrew children showed Cyrus and other officials in the Persian Empire that the name of Cyrus was in their religious writings. As a result, the great emperor was compassionate toward the captives of the tiny nation of Israel and granted them liberty to go back to the Holy Land. He did not regard their liberation as a potential threat because their own prophets had predicted his overcoming. No doubt Cyrus had noticed many unusual (and seemingly miraculous) providences in his life that resulted in so many victories, one after the other. Then along came several Jews who told him that ever since he was named as a babe, their God had prepared him and loosed the loins of kings before him to assure victories. Cyrus realized this was the answer to what he had observed. In gratitude and appreciation, he first granted the Jews liberty, and then a year or so later, he gave liberty to other peoples. In the Kingdom antitype, God's miraculous deliverance of Israel and destruction of Gog will open the eyes of the Holy Remnant to Messiah and will also help to open the eyes of other nations.

Regarding Egypt, the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans, Isaiah 43:3 is pertinent: "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Seba is difficult to locate, but it is associated with Africa (Ethiopia and Egypt). Therefore, the Sabeans may be the Nubians, a strong, courageous black people of large stature. In the future picture, the other nations will recognize that God is with Israel in the deliverance from Jacob's Trouble. The captives of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba will go to the Jews in their chains and prostrate themselves and acknowledge that the God of Israel is the true God (Isa. 2:3). Thus the destruction of literal Babylon prefigures the destruction of not only mystic Babylon (the *religious* standpoint, as shown in the Book of Revelation) but also the *political or civil* aspect of Babylon (as shown here), which will occur later. The political aspect will fall in connection with the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel.



The Nubians are in Upper Egypt, above the cataracts of the Nile. Ethiopia was Cush's country (that is, the land of Cush), whereas Egypt was the land of Ham. Seba was a child of Cush. Thus Ham's lineage included Canaan, Cush, and Seba. Canaan went to Palestine, Japheth went to Asia Minor, and Shem went to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and part of Turkey.

**Isa. 45:15** Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

**Isa. 45:16** They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.

**Isa. 45:17** But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Israel will be saved with an "everlasting salvation" in a "world without end." In other words, after the deliverance from Jacob's Trouble, Israel will never again be destroyed or overcome by a foreign power.

**Isa. 45:18** For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

God was saying, "Since I am the One who created the heavens and formed the earth, no one will thwart my purpose. All of these predictions will surely be fulfilled."

**Isa. 45:19** I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

God repeatedly called attention to His being the Author of Israel and of the whole world and to the reliability of His Word. He speaks righteousness with constancy and lies not.

**Isa. 45:20** Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

"Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are *escaped of the nations*." Verse 20 refers to an assembly, or a convening, of the *spared* attackers (Gog), the onlookers (Sheba, Dedan and Tarshish), and the Jews (Holy Remnant) *after* Jacob's Trouble. When God fights for Israel as in the day of battle with pestilence, disease, fire and brimstone, a flood, confusion that causes the enemy to slay one another, a plague of blindness, etc., many will die. Only one sixth of Gog will survive.

God prophetically addresses the surviving Gentiles: "Come, I want to talk to you. Your gods and religions are a form of worship but without definiteness or any prophetic particulars. Haven't I predicted events long in advance? What have your gods of sticks and stones told you? Whether you are of the enemy heathen nations or of the spared onlookers, note this point: *What happened this day in Jacob's Trouble was predicted long ago with great detail and clarity.*"

Earlier in Isaiah, Gog was pictured by the Assyrian. Here Cyrus and his defeat of Babylon are co-related to the experience of Gog and Magog. Thus certain incidents of the past, such as the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus, help us to understand prophecy, for they are informative and illustrative of the climax at the end of the age. Following the fulfillment of the antitype, in which the real salvation occurs, Israel will not be confounded anymore, "world without end."

**Q:** Will the instruction to “assemble yourselves and come” be addressed to all who “escape”?

**A:** Yes, to all who “escape” *in Israel*—Gentiles as well as the Holy Remnant. Before the New Covenant is established, God will lecture and instruct the Gentiles to return to their homelands to give eyewitness reports. The Ancient Worthies, who will be on the scene at this time, will make sure the Gentile eyewitnesses are transported back. (Perhaps the same boats or planes that are used to ship the eyewitnesses back to their homelands will be used to send the Jews who survive the trouble in other nations back to Israel.) The Kingdom will be in process of establishment, and the booty, the armaments of Gog, will be melted down and converted into farming equipment. In addition, the corpses of the forces of Gog will have to be buried.

**Q:** Will the sequence be as follows? God will stop the trouble in Israel, and very shortly afterward the trouble will be stopped worldwide. However, there will be a little pause before the Gentile survivors return to their homelands. In the anarchistic conditions, communications will be adversely affected, but will some news of the situation in Israel filter back to the nations prior to the arrival of the eyewitnesses?

**A:** Communications will be momentarily disrupted in the anarchy, but the nations will first hear a report about conditions in Israel. Then they will receive eyewitness accounts from the survivors. The resurrected Ancient Worthies, the holy angels, and the Church in glory will bring order out of chaos.

**Q:** Won't the earth be so devastated by anarchy that when the final battle of Gog and Magog takes place, the people elsewhere will already have stopped fighting?

**A:** The worldwide anarchy that will be occurring during Jacob's Trouble will end when God delivers the Holy Remnant, not before. Psalm 45:16 tells that the Ancient Worthies will be made “princes in all the earth.” In other words, the Ancient Worthies will come forth in Israel and be instructed by the Church in glory. The Church will then, as divine beings, instantly place the Ancient Worthies in (that is, translate them to) the various nations. With each Ancient Worthy having a jurisdiction under his or her control and authority, the people will be instructed, and order will be brought out of chaos. The Ancient Worthies will tell of Gog's defeat and the Holy Remnant's deliverance. Subsequently the eyewitness survivors will tell what they actually saw.

The anarchy will be brought on by man's inhumanity to man. All the bestial instincts of man will surface in the Time of Trouble.

**Isa. 45:21** Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

**Isa. 45:22** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

**Isa. 45:23** I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

**Isa. 45:24** Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

**Isa. 45:25** In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

The Lord repeats and repeats this lesson because the nations of earth are so insensitive. “Wake

up out of your stupor! Come to your senses and realize what has happened for your own good. Turn to me.” In connection with the Kingdom, God will tell the nations to repent. “Look unto me, and be ye saved.... unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” This message of repentance is in the same chapter as the mention of Cyrus, who pictures Jesus.

The feet members will be spoiled *before* the fall of Babylon, as shown in the type of Belshazzar’s feast. With the fall of Babylon will come the release of the Great Company class.

“Look unto me [for salvation], ... all the ends of the earth.” Isaiah lifted his discussion from Israel to all people on earth. Not only will the world, the people, obtain righteousness, but they will consecrate in the Kingdom (“every tongue shall swear”—verse 23).

“All [Jews] that are incensed against him [Jesus] shall be ashamed.” The Jews will be ashamed of how they reacted toward Jesus. In fact, very strong language has been used against him. Verse 24 proves Israel will come to the knowledge that Jesus is the true Messiah. Verse 25 adds, “In the LORD [Jehovah] shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

**Isa. 46:1** Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

**Isa. 46:2** They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Verses 1 and 2 are a separate unit referring to Babylon and its false gods and statues. Bel, the chief god of Babylon, represents the pope in mystical Babylon. Bel is the equivalent of Baal. Nebo and Bel were both gods, Nebo being the son of Bel. (Note: Bel represents Papacy and Nebo pictures Protestantism.) *Nebuchadnezzar* is a derivative of Nebo. The names of kings *Nabopileser* and *Nabonidus* were based on Nebo. King *Belshazzar* took the name of the god Bel, to whom the statue on the plain of Dura was dedicated. Hence Babylonian kings took the names of their gods. Daniel’s Babylonian name was *Belteshazzar*.

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle.” What was the relationship between these two primary gods and Babylon and beasts? In a vision, Isaiah saw a panorama of Bel and Nebo being transported by beasts and cattle into captivity. In other words, 150 years *before* 606 BC, Isaiah was mocking the Babylonians, who would hold the Israelites in captivity for 70 years. As is told elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah, when Babylon fell, both the Babylonians and their captives were taken out of the city in chains, and the prophet was telling how the tall Nubians, who were prisoners in fetters in this procession, would turn to the Israelites and praise their God. Of course Cyrus was the one who liberated the Israelites from Babylonian captivity. When he learned that his victories and name had been prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures long before he was born, he was very generous to the Israelites and allowed them to return to their homeland.

Verses 1 and 2 are somewhat the same relationship. When Cyrus came, the Babylonians and their captives tried to leave Babylon and were loading their possessions, including statues of these two chief gods, on beasts of burden, but the load was too heavy. The beasts were panting and laboring under the weight and burden of carrying these two gods. Even though the statues had a wooden core, they were covered with gold and thus were very heavy. As the beasts struggled along, the statues on their backs were ready to topple. Isaiah was saying, “Your heavy-laden carriages will be a burden to the weary beasts. They will stoop and bow down together. They will not be able to deliver the burden and will themselves go into captivity.” The mockery was that these *great gods*, who were supposedly the *power of Babylon*, would be hastily transported under conditions of duress. Isaiah was mocking this scene, which he “realistically” saw in vision. The gods could not help (1) themselves, (2) the people (the

Babylonians), or (3) the beasts.

The people knew God was speaking mechanically through the Prophet Isaiah. God gave him this realistic scene 150 years in advance of Israel's captivity. When the captivity actually occurred, the Israelites read this prophecy with much greater interest and realized it showed the startling foresight of God.

Higher critics say this prophecy does not comport with the cylinder of Cyrus, which says that he had a liberal attitude toward the religions of others. That was true later, when Cyrus became the ruler, but not during the period of siege. Darius the Mede captured the kingdom of Babylon under the command of Cyrus, his general. (History usually erroneously reverses the roles of these two individuals.) When Darius died two years later, Cyrus ascended the throne and was then liberal toward the religions of his captives.

**Isa. 46:3** Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

**Isa. 46:4** And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Notice the play on words, the analogy, and the reversal of verses 1 and 2. In the first two verses, the beasts carried the false gods (idols), and now the true God carried the people of Israel. How did Jehovah bear the nation "from the belly" and carry them "from the womb"? And He would carry, bear, and deliver them even to their "old age." God began to deal with Israel as a nation when Jacob died (they were *begotten* in Egypt). As time went on, they struggled as slaves and with heavy burdens under Egyptian taskmasters. The Israelites' being in Egypt was somewhat like their being in the womb and undergoing travail and labor. When they were delivered in the Exodus, they were exalted as a people. From the Israelites' role as menial slaves in bondage, God miraculously delivered them by the hand of Moses. That deliverance can be considered their *birth*. Thus Israel was begotten in the womb in Egypt, born in the Exodus, and nurtured by God in the wilderness like a baby. He bore the Israelites on eagles' wings for 40 years (Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:9-11). By miracles and startling events, God carried, nurtured, and rescued them, whereas false gods and dumb idols do nothing.

"Even to hoar hairs will I carry you"; that is, God will bear Israel to the end of their destiny. Similarly, Jesus said to the Church, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). At that time, the Church's career will terminate, and faithful Christians will receive the crown of life (their promised destiny). Here God was saying that He will carry the Jewish nation from inception to the victorious end of their career, from birth to their destiny.

**Isa. 46:5** To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

**Isa. 46:6** They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

**Isa. 46:7** They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Verses 5-7 are a different scene, but they are related to the previous. Isaiah was soliloquizing on the same subject matter, telling how idols are made. The base, or core, is wood, and the features of the idol are carved into the wood. Gold and silver are heated until they become molten. Next they are poured out into thin sheets, which are hammered onto the wood to

form gold and silver plating. Isaiah was telling of the diligence and care of the goldsmiths, the workers, as well as of the generosity of those who furnish the gold (“they lavish gold out of the bag”). Such work was done to *manufacture* a god, an idol, an *inanimate* thing!

In verse 7, Isaiah was especially mocking the efforts of the idol makers. A finished idol was carried—it could not walk!—to a previously planned place, such as a temple, and placed upright upon a base or pedestal. And there the idol stood, rigid and dumb. It could not move or speak, yet the people worshipped and prayed to it. This shows the *stupidity* of men, for *dumb idols cannot help them*. (Praying to patron saints in the nominal Church is in the same category.)

**Isa. 46:8 Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.**

**Isa. 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,**

**Isa. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:**

Verses 8 and 9 both start with “remember”: “Remember this” and “Remember the former things.” What is the lesson? The Israelites were to remember (1) what God had just told them through the Prophet Isaiah and (2) what God had done to help and protect the nation in the past. For example, He had opened the Red Sea for their passage, He had fed them manna in the wilderness, He had prevented their shoes and clothing from wearing out for 40 years, and He had covered them with a cloud to protect against sandstorm and flood. In contrast, what had the dumb idols ever done for them? Nothing! The Israelites were to recall, on the one hand, the *impotence* of the false gods and, on the other hand, the *power* of Jehovah as exercised on their behalf in the past. Now He was testing their faith.

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.” God gave numerous prophecies. Specifically, He prophesied about Cyrus, even giving him a name in advance, and predicted he would defeat many enemies and have many victories. When the man Cyrus actually appeared on the scene, the Jews must have followed his progress and successes with great interest, for they would have heard about his victories and should have meditated on the prophecies about him. As captives in Babylon, they would have been joyful to hear he was coming down to Babylon.

Faithful Jews would have left houses and some possessions to follow the admonition to come out of literal Babylon, that is, the city proper. The unfaithful Jews who remained in the city were slaughtered by Cyrus’s armies because they did not obey the call to leave. (Thus there are both literal and symbolic interpretations to the text to come out of Babylon so as not to partake of her plagues. The chief reason for the literal picture is to be a spiritual lesson to us upon whom the ends of the age are come—1 Cor. 10:11.) In time, Cyrus gave the favorable decree permitting the Israelites to go back to Jerusalem and build the Temple.

“Remember this, and show yourselves men.” As the Jews back there saw these prophecies being fulfilled, they realized that they were transgressors and that their captivity in Babylon was a punishment. (When Daniel knew the end of the 70 years was drawing near, he prayed earnestly to God and, putting himself in the place of the nation, admitted, “We have sinned”—Dan. 9:2-5.) The lesson here in Isaiah was to remember what God had done in the past, so that as the Jews saw the prophecies reaching fruition, they would get courage and strength to obey and leave Babylon. They were to recall these prophecies, encourage one another, and have rekindled hope. Instead of being forlorn and dejected captives with no hope, they should have been reinvigorated by remembering not only God’s mercy but also His ability to declare “the

end from the beginning.” They saw the utter impotence of Babylon’s gods, for when the time came for liberation through Cyrus, no one could thwart the Almighty God.

**Isa. 46:11** Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

The “ravenous bird from the east” was Cyrus, God’s “shepherd” and his “anointed” (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). This verse shows that God can use *worldlings* to help His people. Although Cyrus, a heathen king, prefigures Jesus at the Second Advent when he liberates the “captives” from mystic Babylon at its fall, the description of Cyrus as a “ravenous bird” refers to the literal event only (and not to Jesus). Another picture showing the use of worldlings is the feeding of Elijah by ravens.

Seventy years earlier, in 606 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar was called God’s “servant” when he captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. The Lord told Nebuchadnezzar, “Since you got no wages for your services, I will see that you capture Egypt and obtain its wealth.” Now the Lord would pay wages to Cyrus in two ways: (1) through the “hidden riches” of the city of Croesus (Isa. 45:3) and (2) through the wealth of Babylon. These riches helped to satisfy the “ravenous” qualities of Cyrus.

God said, “*I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*” We do not realize how many times the Lord has brought to pass things that He has spoken. To reflect on history to a certain extent is profitable and rewarding, for tracing God’s dealings provides a basis for faith. Faith is not credulity but the exercise of the mind on real and established truths. The Word of God is truth, and we can rely on future prophecies *to be fulfilled* because we see that past prophecies *were fulfilled*. The Bible removes the cobwebs and confusion of historical legends and tells the real truth of history in great detail. Fulfilled prophecies and historical accounts are designed to be springboards to higher planes of faith.

Verse 11 describes the literal Cyrus. The Revelation 16:12 picture of the way being prepared for the kings of the east is a spiritual picture only, but it is based on the literal account of Cyrus in the Old Testament. The beast of Revelation is based on the Daniel beast but is a little different. The Cyrus of Revelation 16 is a little different from the Isaiah Cyrus, for Revelation 16 shows the Church associated with Christ. The capture of Babylon in Jeremiah 50 and 51 is both literal and spiritual in some verses, only literal in other verses, and only spiritual in still other verses.

The Christ in glory will use earthly agencies for the actual destruction of Babylon. The Lord’s army, composed of the discontents of mankind, will help to tear down mystic Babylon. This element can be pictured by ravenous birds, for all the fowl of heaven will be called to a feast (Rev. 19:17). Fowl will also be invited to a feast, sacrifice, and slaughter at the time of Jacob’s Trouble (Ezek. 39:17).

**Isa. 46:12** Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:

**Isa. 46:13** I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

“Hearken to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from deliverance: I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off” (RSV). These verses were recorded 150 years in advance of the actual event, yet God said that His deliverance was “near” and that it would “not tarry,” but in what sense? Salvation would occur at a *fixed date*, or point in time. The land of Israel was to lie fallow and desolate without inhabitants for 70 years, until it had fulfilled its sabbaths, and then, in 536 BC, the salvation *would come on time!* God purposed the salvation, and He would do it!

There have been many disappointments in the past with regard to prophecy, but as we come to the very end of the age, the Lord's people will know it—and will know the outcome. For instance, when mystic Babylon actually decrees that the mark be put on everyone's hand or forehead, the Lord's people will know that the end of the age has arrived.

These verses have an antitype in regard to Israel's deliverance from Gog in Jacob's Trouble. "I will place [appoint] salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." God has a *fixity* of purpose with regard to Israel's great deliverance; He has a *fixed time and place*. In *Jerusalem*, God will manifest Himself, His POWER, on behalf of Israel. The salvation will be for *Israel's glory*.

**Isa. 47:1** Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

**Isa. 47:2** Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

**Isa. 47:3** Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

By picturing Babylon as a woman, Isaiah 47 ties in with Revelation 17. She is supposed to be a virgin in Revelation 17 but is the mother of harlots instead. "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground" indicates she will be dethroned. She will be removed from her position of honor as a queen and made to sit on the ground as a peasant. Verse 1 shows how Papacy will be humiliated, defrocked, and brought down to the ground from its exalted position of prominence, glory, honor, praise, and adornments.

In what sense is Papacy "tender and delicate"? Its clergy receive honor but do not work hard; they are in a position of receiving honor, praise, wealth, etc., and not of giving. Hence the system, pictured as a woman, is tender and delicate in its life of comfort and ease; cardinals, bishops, and priests are furnished with temporal needs and honor. They do not work like the rest of humanity.

**Comment:** At the time of the French Revolution, the clergy and nobility rubbed dirt in their hands to try to develop calluses and look like hard workers, thus hoping to avoid persecution.

"Uncover thy locks." A woman's hair is her glory, and she coiffures it to attract men. As a delicate and genteel woman, Papacy was dressed in glorious robes and had a regal bearing. But at the time of the woman's destruction, none of her former attractions will remain. Her hair will be shorn when she is exposed as a false or apostate Church.

"Take the millstones, and grind meal" indicates retribution. Previously Papacy caused others to grind with the millstones and then took the spiritual food and diluted it: three measures of barley to one measure of wheat (Rev. 6:6). In time of famine, Papacy doled out the food without doing the work. This condition is a reminder of Samson. When he was in captivity, the Philistines made him grind meal with a millstone like a paired yoke of oxen. Papacy will receive retribution. The system was on the throne, but here it is shown off the throne, stripped of garments and honors and having to work like the common man.

"Make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers" refers to an unfavorable exposé of Papacy. When the queen stepped out of a carriage, Sir Walter Raleigh removed his rich tunic and used it to cover a puddle so that the sole of her foot would not get wet or dirty. Here, in this picture, the harlot will have to lift up her petticoat and wade through the stream as an

ordinary person. In other words, instead of being worshipped, Papacy will be brought down to a common level with all the people.

The retribution indicated in verses 1-3 is a reminder of Revelation 18:6, “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.” Papacy’s “nakedness” will be exposed—its false position as the vicegerent of Christ and its lack of Christ’s robe of righteousness. The people go to the system for forgiveness of sins and for harmony with God, but Papacy cannot provide these.

It is *sarcasm* to say that Papacy is a “virgin daughter.” Verse 3 implies she is a harlot. The sarcasm used in regard to dumb idols is used here for Papacy.

**Isa. 47:4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.**

Verse 4 is a parenthetical verse, an insert. Who would be the speaker? The chapter has been discussing the “virgin daughter” of both literal Babylon and mystic Babylon. In one application, natural Israel is the speaker from the standpoint of Papacy’s anti-Semitism down through the Gospel Age. Verse 6 gives credence to natural Israel’s being the speaker.

**Isa. 47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.**

The Chaldeans were an especially ruthless people in the Babylonian Empire; they were “bitter and hasty,” “dreadful and terrible” (Hab. 1:6,7). An early *Reprint* article (No. 622, “Habakkuk’s Prophecy”) says the Chaldeans in Habakkuk represent communists, nihilists, etc. However, in Isaiah 47, the term “Chaldeans” applies to Papacy (mystic Babylon). “Babylon” is similarly used to represent sometimes the communistic element and sometimes the papal element. The context determines which meaning to use.

Papacy is called the “daughter of the Chaldeans” because of its ruthlessness during the Holy(?) Inquisition. The system was just as ruthless as the most ardent anarchist. The persecutions could not have been longer or more devilish, cruel, and bitter than those endorsed and sponsored by the papal system.

Isaiah was sarcastic in saying that this delicate, tender lady on the throne calls herself a “virgin daughter” (verse 1). The Roman Catholic Church considers itself to be a *virgin* church yet uses the title “*mother*” church, which is a contradiction. The true Church will not become a “mother” until the marriage and the Kingdom. The Roman Catholic Church improperly appropriates to itself now, in the present life, *Kingdom* titles, prerogatives, and principles. “Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life [and the throne]” is the correct principle (Rev. 2:10). “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50).

“Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans.” “Darkness” and “silence” are descriptions of *sheol*, the unconscious condition of death. “The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into *silence*” (Psa. 115:17). “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in *darkness*, in the deeps” (Psa. 88:6). “For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in *darkness*, as those that have been long dead” (Psa. 143:3). There is no remembrance in the grave. “For in death there is *no remembrance* of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” (Psa. 6:5). There are two stages with Papacy. First, the system, pictured as a “lady,” is in the forefront where she dictates and rules. Then she will be dethroned and sit in the dust, being relegated to the background, to a position of silence and darkness, the implication being *death*. Progression is shown: from a position of elevation to a position of humility, from a position of humility to a position of death, or oblivion. The papal system is doomed for destruction.



“Thou shalt no more be called, The lady of *kingdoms* [plural].” Now Papacy is called the Catholic (universal) Church, that is, the church of many nations, or kingdoms. There is the Roman Church as well as the Irish Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, etc.

**Isa. 47:6** I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

“Upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.” The Jews, whom Papacy persecuted, were God’s people in “ancient” times. They lost exclusive favor because of disobedience, but Papacy should have been more merciful to them, for much Christian understanding of Scripture comes from the Old Testament. In fact, studying the Old Testament should make Christians more sympathetic to Israel in spite of the latter’s stiff-necked attitude and going astray. There should be some sympathy for Israel in that the Jews lost the chief favor. Instead Papacy not only supplanted Judaism but hated and persecuted the Jews.

**Isa. 47:7** And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

Papacy says, “I shall be a lady for ever.” She boasts that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her and that the rock confession about Christ represents Peter as the first pope in the Roman Catholic Church (Matt. 16:18). The claim is that the papal system will endure forever and that (papal) Rome is the “eternal city.”

**Isa. 47:8** Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

“Thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly.” The Catholic Church and its clergy amass riches, honors, and adoration.

“I am, and none else beside me” is another boast of Catholicism. The Catholic Church has claimed in the past to be the one and only true Church; only in the last 50 or 60 years has this claim been softened. Now, in the ecumenical spirit, the Catholic Church speaks of Protestants as her *fratelli separati*, her “separated brethren.”

“I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” This, still another boast, is quoted in Revelation 18:7, “She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.”

**Isa. 47:9** But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

**Isa. 47:10** For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.

**Isa. 47:11** Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

The SUDDENNESS of Papacy’s humiliation is emphasized. “But these two things shall come to

thee *in a moment in one day*, the loss of children, and widowhood: ... and desolation shall come upon thee *suddenly*.” This chapter is too emphatic to apply only to literal Babylon. The fall of literal Babylon in the type was preceded by a siege, but the actual destruction took place in a matter of hours when the river Euphrates was diverted.

Two things will happen to Papacy suddenly, “in a moment”: (1) the loss of children and (2) widowhood. Papacy’s death is not mentioned in these three verses, but that will also occur suddenly. What these verses are saying is that *before Papacy’s death*, she will be defrocked, taken down from the throne, and humbled like a slave grinding at the millstone. Consider Samson, who was blinded and then used to turn the millstone. Delilah (Catholicism) caused the eyes of Samson (the blinded masses) to be put out, and in past ages, the Catholic Church kept the masses in ignorance. Just as Papacy was instrumental in the cruelty of the Inquisition, so retribution will come on that system. Before death will come humiliation. In other words, there will be enough time prior to her death for her to feel shame: silence, darkness, and grinding at the millstone (verses 2 and 5). No longer will the people support her.

“The loss of children, and widowhood ... shall come upon thee [Papacy] in their perfection [in full measure].” Papacy will lose *all* of her children (the Protestant churches). Papacy is not a widow today, for she is still recognized by the nations. Representatives of the Vatican even address the United Nations, and the hour of strong power is yet future.

The loss of children and widowhood will occur suddenly; that is, the world will witness these developments in a *very brief period of time*. Revelation 18:8 is related and yet a little different: “Therefore shall her plagues come *in one day*, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” Revelation 18:8 and Isaiah 47:9 both indicate *suddenness*: sudden death and the sudden loss of children and widowhood, respectively.

Incidentally, the seven plagues of Revelation 16 are not the same as the three plagues of Revelation 18. One proof is that even when the seventh plague is poured, the death of Papacy is not mentioned, whereas the three plagues start with death: “Therefore shall her [three] plagues come in one day, *death*, and mourning, and famine” (Rev. 18:8). With regard to the second plague, which is the plague of mourning, who will mourn? Kings and merchants—those who benefited financially from that system—will mourn the death of their source of revenue (Rev. 18:9-11,15-19). The third plague, famine, will result from Papacy’s death. Papacy’s being “burned with fire” signifies complete destruction with no hope of resurrection.

In regard to “loss of children,” the other church systems will become disenchanted and try to disassociate themselves from Papacy, but they, too, will be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone (Gehenna). Catholicism (the beast), Protestantism (the false prophet), and civil power (the dragon) will unite in the hour of power, but after that, the great city Babylon will break up into three parts. Of these three parts, the Lord will deal quickly with two of them; Catholicism and Protestantism will be destroyed forever. The dragon will be dealt with later. The kings and merchants of the earth will stand afar off, witnessing the burning of the religious systems (Rev. 18:9-11).

Papacy will experience retribution for past atrocities. During the Inquisition, Papacy tortured and executed true Christians, but prior to execution, their children were raped or killed in front of them. Here Papacy is seen to suffer the loss of her children (they will be put to death too), and she will be forsaken by her friends and lovers (kings and merchants), leaving her a “widow.” Isaiah 47 and Revelation 18 present two different aspects. Isaiah 47 emphasizes the *experience of Papacy*; that is, she will witness the “loss of [her] children” and “widowhood” before her destruction. Revelation 18 emphasizes the *experience of the kings and merchants* who witness the destruction, that is, how they will react to the destruction of Papacy.

Papacy's humiliation and desolation will come because of "the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments," and because "thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: [and] thou hast said, None seeth me."

Papacy is known for its diplomacy, for keeping a foot on both sides of the fence until the victor is apparent; then Papacy supports the victor solely. If one side caves in, Papacy has enough representation on the other side to appear as the champion of the successful side. Diplomacy is having a forked tongue; it is speaking out of both sides of the mouth at the same time. This type of political savvy has enabled Papacy to weather the storms of centuries, but it will be to no avail when the Time of Trouble comes upon that system.

"Therefore shall evil come upon thee; [and] *thou shalt not know from whence it riseth.*" How startling! Papacy will not know whence the trouble arises. "Thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which *thou shalt not know.*" The picture of the Medes coming in suddenly and unexpectedly under Babylon's city gates presents one aspect. King Belshazzar was put to death the very night that Daniel was explaining the handwriting on the wall to the overconfident king and entourage, who were having a drunken orgy and drinking from the gold and silver Temple vessels. Daniel's message was, "Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin"; that is, "God has numbered the kingdom and finished it. You are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

**Q:** When Jezebel painted her face to seduce Jehu, was she aware of the coming trouble?

**A:** Yes, and the two pictures harmonize. King Belshazzar was aware of the siege, of the danger without, but he was confident that the city walls would protect the kingdom and that he would not be taken. Jezebel realized Jehu's intent, but she was confident that applying her rouge and cosmetics would effectively charm him, for that method had worked in the past. She thought that by making herself attractive to Jehu, he would change his mind, but this time her attempts to charm were not successful. In antitype, Jehu's attitude of coming to destroy Jezebel is shown by the text "I will take vengeance [and destroy you], and I will not meet thee as a man [seeking wanton pleasure]" (Isa. 47:3).

**Isa. 47:12** Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

**Isa. 47:13** Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

**Isa. 47:14** Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

**Isa. 47:15** Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

Verse 12 shows Papacy using her beguiling charms and putting on her enchantments: "Stand [up] now" ties in with the picture of Jezebel, who stood in the window and showed herself to Jehu. The fact that she saw him riding furiously indicates she knew his intent, but she was confident she would disarm him with her charms.

Verse 13 is related to Belshazzar's feast. When the handwriting appeared on the wall, the king

called for the astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, but they could not interpret the writing. “In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king’s wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof” (Dan. 5:5-8). The aged Daniel, picturing the feet members, will interpret the handwriting; that is, the feet members will give a message and then be changed into their garments of glory and beauty beyond the veil. In other words, they will die just before the fall of Babylon.

The type of John the Baptist adds more details. During the early part of the hour of power of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, the feet members will be imprisoned. A little later, when the occasion is propitious, the antitypical Queen Herodias will arrange a feast and get King Herod drunk. When the daughter Salome dances, the king will be so pleased that he will make a rash promise to give her whatever she asks. At the queen’s behest, Salome will ask for the death of the feet members. The message that resulted in John’s imprisonment was his denouncement of King Herod’s illegitimate marriage to Herodias, his brother’s wife. Herodias subsequently arranged John’s death.

“Behold, they [the astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators] shall be as stubble.” Papacy will suddenly see that destruction is imminent and in panic will seek counsel, hoping to stop the trouble. However, the counsel will not make sense; her advisers will be “as stubble.”

**Q:** Who will destroy Papacy?

**A:** A radical, anarchistic element (communists, nihilists, etc.) will be responsible. In addition, Jehu called to Queen Jezebel’s own eunuchs to throw her out the window. Thus Papacy will be betrayed from within by those who previously consecrated themselves to the Roman Catholic Church, e.g., priests and nuns. Just as Salome, Herodias, and Herod were involved with John the Baptist’s death (picturing the death of the feet members, the true Church), so various ones will be responsible for the death of the false Church, such as Jehu, eunuchs, and dogs.

Verse 14 in the RSV reads, “Behold, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!” Papacy will not be able to control this fire; it will destroy her, raging out of control like a forest fire. Trees in the forest are cut down and used for various purposes, and so, in the past, Papacy harnessed the masses to be her servants. However, at the end of the age, the masses will become an uncontrollable opposing force that cannot be manipulated.

**Q:** What about the Gog element that will destroy Papacy and subsequently have hooks put in their jaws to redirect them down to Israel? “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, ... And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth” (Ezek. 38:3,4).

**A:** That is another picture, a picture of the communist element. Isaiah 47 discusses the clerical element.

In her dilemma and fear, Papacy will summon various “wise men”—even theologians with whom she was at loggerheads in the past—but to no avail.

“They shall wander every one to his [own] quarter; none shall save thee.” Papacy’s former supporters will forsake her and look after their own interests. When Papacy is destroyed, they will try to hide their former identity and association with that system.

**Isa. 48:1** Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.

Chapter 48 was addressed to the nation of Israel, the progeny of Jacob. God was giving them a tongue-lashing. He was finding fault because the great majority were the nominal mass and thus were not really His people in the sense of loving Him with all their hearts.

Israel came forth “out of the waters [loins—RSV] of Judah.” While the word is literally “waters” in the Hebrew, the Revised Standard translators felt that God was speaking of the development from the male (rather than from the womb of the female) and thus properly used the word “loins.” Four women were identified with Jacob: Rachel and Leah (the two wives) and Bilhah and Zilpah (the two handmaids). However, the 12 children who were born of these women are called the sons of *Jacob, the father*, the one whom God dealt with.

**Isa. 48:2** For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.

The people of Israel called themselves “the holy city,” that is, “Jerusalem.” The Temple there was the house of prayer—and it will ultimately be the house of prayer for all nations. They had so many blessings, but they did not worship God in truth or in righteousness. In other words, they were not the people of God that they professed to be.

**Isa. 48:3** I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

God “declared [prophesied] the former things [in Leviticus 26] from the beginning [of Israel’s being a nation].” Jacob was the father of Israel (his name was changed to “Israel”). His children were called the children of Israel, and God began to deal with them when Jacob died. God miraculously called the Israelites out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Through Moses, He gave them a Law, which they promised to obey. God said He would bless them if they obeyed and punish them if they disobeyed. In Leviticus 26, Moses prophesied that the Israelites would go astray and receive punishments. Then God said, “If after all of these punishments, you continue to disobey, I will give you a strong lesson: ‘seven times’ of punishment [7 x 360 = 2,520 years, the Times of the Gentiles].” In other words, God prophesied these things long in advance—and even details such as Israel’s wanting a king like other nations. Therefore, using Moses, God predicted long in advance, “from the beginning,” what would happen, and it came to pass “suddenly” in 606 BC after a short siege. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.

Incidentally, the children of Israel sojourned a total of 430 years. The time period breaks down as follows: 215 years in the land of Canaan and 215 years in Egypt.

When Jacob was about to die, he called his sons together and blessed them (Gen. 49:1). In doing so, he prophetically told of their characteristics, both good and bad. Later Moses gave a prediction about the characteristics of the progeny, both favorable and unfavorable. Piecing together the two prophecies yields much information about the history of the Israelites centuries before the actual events took place. When they occurred, however, they seemed sudden to the contemporary Israelites who were not studying the prophecies. God patiently dealt with them for many years but finally gave the lesson prophesied “from the beginning.”

**Isa. 48:4** Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

Because God knows about our genetic background, our problems, our family history, the traits we must fight against when we become a Christian, and our environment, He knows what experiences and lessons we need in order to develop and grow (and He even knows, in advance, whether or not we will be successful in overcoming). Even though Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and without sin, he needed to be perfected through sufferings in order to become a sympathetic High Priest. His being born on earth helped him to have sympathy for the human race. Thus there are different types of perfection: moral, physical, and qualification for office. Jesus' experience fitted him for the office of High Priest over the world.

Similarly, God knew the weaknesses of the Israelites (they were obstinate, stiff-necked, and stubborn), and He knew what experiences would humble them. "Thy neck is an iron sinew" was a way of saying they were stiff-necked. Being stiff-necked—that is, having "iron sinew," or iron ligaments, in their necks—meant their necks would not bend to the yoke of servitude. The brittleness of iron makes it inflexible and unyielding. And what experience did God give the Israelites to try to humble them? They were slaves in Egypt for a long time and even performed the menial task of making bricks out of *mud*, among other things. But were they humbled by that experience alone? No.

The same is true with us. God instructs us through providences and gives us experiences, but we do not always get the point, the lesson. We may misinterpret providences and give them a slant and meaning that God never intended. Sometimes our lessons are not understood until later. We grasp them in retrospect and then become repentant and desire to change—but not until after many hard knocks. God judges us by the sincere desire of our hearts, not by perfect performance.

The great Roman Empire was infuriated by the obstinacy of tiny Israel; the leaders regarded the nation as a thorn. The most qualified Roman general was sent down to Israel to teach the people a lesson. As prophesied, Israel received a threshing. The point is that Israel's history has shown this quality of obstinacy. However, if a combative nature is converted to Christ *and schooled*, the result is firmness and strength in serving God. Thus obstinacy can be turned into a good trait. (Conversely, there is little to train or channel in a wishy-washy person.) The Christian is like a diamond; there is a firmness of character, but it requires direction, polishing, and re-forming. And so Israel needed instruction just as we do. A proper response to that instruction results in a better person. The same principle is true with a horse. The wilder and more spirited the horse is originally, the better the animal is when broken and trained for war or racing. When a horse's spirited resistance is broken to the master's will, the animal becomes invaluable; it develops a bond of obedience, friendship, and loyalty toward its master.

"I knew ... thy brow [is] brass." A "brass brow" indicates a bold, brazen attitude, one that will not hearken when wrong is pointed out. Here, of course, the connotation was negative, but this quality can be good *when it is set for doing God's will*. In fact, an ordinary person does not have the guts to obey in the face of adversity. An example of this quality being used for good is what God said to Jeremiah: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak ... all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. *For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land*" (Jer. 1:17,18).

A great shock still in store for Israel—God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant in Jacob's Trouble—will produce the full conversion that has not occurred in the past. And "iron" is used in a good sense to describe the rule in the Kingdom, for to say Jesus will rule with a "rod of

iron” means that he will not tolerate any back talk.

**Isa. 48:5** I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

**Isa. 48:6** Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shown thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

**Isa. 48:7** They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

**Isa. 48:8** Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Verses 1-4 emphasize one slant of God’s predicting things in the past. Verse 5 continues in the same vein to a certain extent, but it is preparing for another slant that becomes apparent by the end of verse 8. Way back in Israel’s beginning as a nation, God predicted certain things that would come to pass many centuries later, and they did occur as predicted. In verses 1-4, God was reminding the people of these fulfillments of prophecy so that they would see His divine foresight and sagacity. Now, in verse 6, God said He would tell “*new things*” they had not heard before, so that when those things came to pass, the Israelites would be aware of God’s foreknowledge. Jesus illustrated this principle in Gethsemane when he said to his apostles, “These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them” (John 16:4). In other words, “I am telling you these things now so that when they happen, you will know I was not taken by surprise but went voluntarily. You will not comprehend my words at this time, but after I am raised from death and the Holy Spirit comes, you will understand.”

One of these “new things” was the startling prophecy about Cyrus *150 years before he was born*. God told Israel He was raising up a servant, Cyrus by name, who would be a king and defeat enemy after enemy. Cyrus would also liberate the Jews from Babylon and allow them to return to Israel to build a Temple. Now Isaiah was beginning to hint about something else that would happen; namely God would defer His anger (verse 9).

**Comment:** In verse 5, God said He had told the Israelites all of these things in advance so that they could not get away with the excuse “My idol, my graven image, has done it.”

**Reply:** Yes, God had informed them in advance so that they could not blame their graven images and thus shirk their own responsibility. Just as Adam tried to justify his sin by blaming the woman, so there is a tendency in fallen man to blame others. All of us must struggle against this weakness.

“Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.” To a large extent, the people of Israel, like the Greeks, went to famous oracles such as the Oracle of Delphi. For instance, a king with a problem either went in person or sent a trusted individual to consult with a temple oracle about the future. The fallen angels used these situations to give advice (often in the form of a lyric poem) that the king would act upon. Instead Israel should have consulted *God and His prophet* (Isaiah in this case). Then Israel put the blame on the misinformation received from the oracle, or “idol,” whereas they should have blamed themselves. God knew in advance that Israel as a nation would have this weakness, that they would “deal very treacherously”; hence He called them “a transgressor from the womb” (verse 8). In other words, God knows the weaknesses of a people (their national traits).

The remarks in this study are not anti-Semitic, for God speaks strongly in Scripture. Many Jews find fault with the Gospel of John, claiming that it promotes anti-Semitism, but the Old Testament speaks just as strongly. All of Scripture must be read and considered, not just part, and the truth is the truth. For proper instruction, both the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, must be revealed. Israel is the “apple” of God’s eye, but the Bible is honest and true (Deut. 32:10).

**Isa. 48:9** For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

“For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger.” Although Israel deserved instant punishment, God delayed His anger because He has His own times and purposes when His name will be vindicated and glorified through them. This prophecy was uttered prior to 606 BC, which was one time God did not defer His anger. In 606 BC, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. Another time God did not defer His anger was AD 70.

**Comment:** God’s anger was also deferred when Moses pleaded the cause of the Israelites.

**Reply:** Yes, and even under the judges. When the nation prayed for God to be merciful, He raised up a judge to deliver them. After the judge’s death, the nation lapsed back into disobedience. When problems again occurred, the nation prayed and God gave them another judge, etc. Thus the judges were really deliverers. They may have spoken hard things, but they actually helped the nation.

Under the judges—and under the kings too—Israel was spanked. When Gentile Times began in 606 BC, God turned His back on Israel, and their long 2,520-year period of punishment started to count. But even under this period of Gentile supremacy, God showed the Israelites some favor. For example, they were allowed to return to Israel at the end of the 70 years, God gave them prophets both during and after the 70 years, and Messiah came at the First Advent. However, when Israel rejected Messiah, their house was left desolate, and their punishment (of a different kind) lasted until 1914.

Israel’s period of favor was followed by an equal period of disfavor, as follows:

The 1,845-year period of *favor* extended from Jacob’s death in 1812/1813 BC to Jesus’ crucifixion in AD 33.

The 1,845-year period of *disfavor* extended from the Crucifixion in AD 33 to 1878.

The Times of the Gentiles lasted 2,520 years from 606 BC until 1914. When Messiah came at the First Advent, Israel was a captive people under the Roman yoke. After his rejection, they went into Diaspora until 1878.

Thus there are different time cycles in the Bible. The point is that when God spoke harshly and angrily to His people, the words were meant to be constructive, edifying, and instructive. Those of fleshly Israel who responded properly were blessed.

**Isa. 48:10** Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

**Isa. 48:11** For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.



“For my name’s sake ... will I refrain” (verse 9). “For mine own sake ... will I do it” (verse 11). Moses pleaded with God not to kill the Israelites for the sake of His own name. Moses reasoned, “What will the Gentiles think if, after you brought the nation of Israel miraculously through the Red Sea to the desert, you kill them there? They will say you were able to bring them out with a high and mighty hand, but now you cannot take them any farther.” God reasoned this way too, but the incident shows how wonderful Moses’ character was.

**Comment:** Many prophecies elsewhere in Isaiah show that God will destroy Israel’s enemies at the end of the age to vindicate His name.

**Reply:** Yes, the Holy Remnant will be greatly changed when they are converted. It will be somewhat comparable to a lifetime reprobate suddenly realizing Jesus is his Savior and giving his heart and soul to the Master. Other Christians beholding the conversion know that it is genuine because of the great change in the individual; they know that divine power effected it. And so, when Israel is converted as a nation to realize that Jesus truly is their Messiah, their anguish over their former attitude will be so deep and heartfelt that the world will know their conversion is genuine.

In the Apostle Peter’s case, after he had followed Jesus for 3 1/2 years, the Master said to him, “When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Peter was already converted, so this statement indicates that there are two types of “conversion.” (1) The individual gives his heart to the Lord. (2) The individual has a certain weakness or causes a certain harm, so the Lord gives him an experience that brings a *thorough* conversion. Similarly, all of the Lord’s people need lessons after consecration. Hopefully, all will be thoroughly converted.

Verse 10 reads as follows in the RSV: “Behold, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.” Ezekiel 22:17-22 helps to clarify the meaning of this verse:

“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

“Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

“As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you.

“Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.

“As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.”

First, God said Israel was like *dross*, the trace of foreign particles, and not like silver. Then He said He would refine them as silver by gathering them together, blowing on them, and burning them with His anger. The dross would be consumed, and Israel would be purified.

In summary, whereas Ezekiel 22:17-22 is discussing the outcome of Israel’s experience, Isaiah 48:10 is talking about God’s dealings with Israel *prior* to 606 BC. Isaiah was preparing a people to receive Jesus. While the nation was not converted at the First Advent, God’s plan prospered through the little element who did accept Jesus as their Messiah. The same is true in the literal

refining process, for the objective is to end up with a small pure amount out of a large quantity of ore. The process is considered successful when a tiny pure ingot is obtained.

In verse 10, the Lord was telling Israel (through Isaiah), “I have refined you [in previous experiences], but you are still dross.” Leviticus 26:3-18 tells of the seven times of punishment that would come on Israel if they disobeyed:

*“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;*

**“Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.**

**“And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.**

**“And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.**

**“And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.**

**“And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.**

**“For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.**

**“And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.**

**“And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.**

**“And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.**

**“I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.**

*“But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;*

*“And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:*

**“I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.**

**“And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.**

*“And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.”*

If Israel obeyed, they would get blessings. If they disobeyed, they would receive punishments. And that is what happened: Israel did disobey and they did receive punishments—but these punishments were not yet the refining of silver. If, after receiving punishments, Israel still did

not hearken unto God, they would be punished yet seven times *more* (that is, for an additional period of 2,520 years). In other words, God did refine Israel (in the “furnace of affliction” in Egypt and later, prior to 606 BC), but He had *not yet* refined them *as silver*. They remained stiff-necked and unconverted after their trials in Egypt.

In 1878, the fig tree put forth blossoms, and 1914 marked the end of Gentile Times. Israel has had some favorable experiences since 1878 but is not yet converted as a nation. During Gentile Times down through the Gospel Age, the Jews suffered much like true Christians, the difference being that Christians suffered for right-doing, whereas Jews suffered because God had turned His face from them. The Jews’ past severe experiences have prepared a remnant for conversion in the near future. The “silver” is potentially in Israel and will be revealed when the eyes of the Holy Remnant are opened. Their conversion will be thorough, real, remarkable, and dramatic.

All Jews know their past history—that Jesus was a Jew and that he was crucified—but they disclaim any responsibility. Yet in the meantime, they have experienced much suffering. Of Jesus’ crucifixion the contemporary generation said, “His blood be on us, and on our children”—and that has been the case (Matt. 27:25). They lost Jerusalem, they were pushed out of Israel, they were the victims of pogroms, etc. Although the Jews did not get the lesson, they did get the experience. They know about the circumstances and events that led up to their having a homeland again, but they attribute the success to their *own* efforts. Today they still do not see their punishment or their reestablishment as a nation as being ordered *of God*. When in trouble, Israel turns to the United States and the UN for help instead of having a national repentance in sackcloth and ashes and calling upon God as in olden times. But the Jews will be enlightened in Jacob’s Trouble as to their responsibility in crucifying Jesus—and then they will be converted. Their long history of suffering in Diaspora has been necessary, and it has been deeply impressed in their national mind.

**Comment:** The account of Jesus’ crucifixion is repeated year after year by Christians right in Jerusalem.

**Reply:** Yes, the drama of Jesus carrying the Cross along the Via Dolorosa is reenacted every year.

There is much needful repetitious instruction in these chapters of Isaiah, but the people of Israel still do not get the point.

**Q:** After the purification takes place in Jacob’s Trouble, will the nation be likened to silver?

**A:** Of the time when Gog and Magog come down, the Scriptures say, “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire [of Jacob’s Trouble], and will refine them *as silver is refined*, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” (Zech. 13:8,9). Jacob’s Trouble will be a short, sharp “birth pang” experience that produces a Holy Remnant to be the nucleus of the Kingdom under the Ancient Worthies; it is not the long Diaspora, the long seven times of punishment.

**Isa. 48:12** Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

Jehovah is “the first” and “the last” in this verse. If the supplied words are deleted, the last portion would read: “I he; I the first, I the last.” Jehovah is the first and the last in that He will always be the Emperor of the universe. Throughout eternity, His glory will never be given to

another. Deuteronomy 32:39 brings out another perspective: “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.” In other words, whatever God decides, there is no being to say Him nay. He has sole supremacy, and He will do what He will. If He desires peace, it is peace. If He desires war, it is war. He holds those prerogatives in relationship to His authority as Emperor of the universe.

Jesus is also called “the first and the last” but from different standpoints (Rev. 1:11,17; 2:8). (1) He is the only *directly* begotten or created Son of God; that is, he was created out of nothing, as it were, with no intermediary power being involved. His primacy underneath Jehovah, his being the Prime Minister of God’s universe, will exist throughout eternity; he will always be the head *under God*. “The head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3). (2) Jesus will always be the head of the Church, the head of the body.

But why did God address Israel in this manner in verse 12, which is in the context of the creation and/or foundation of the earth, the heavens, Babylon, and the Chaldeans (verses 13 and 14)? One reason was to give the Israelites hope when they were captured by the Babylonians. Verse 12 is a break in thought, a new paragraph. “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, *my called*.” God is “the first” and “the last” in the sense that He begat Israel; He formed them from the womb. God created other beings with free moral agency. Based on their own decision to obey or not to obey Him, some will get life and some will not, but He will not interfere with their free moral agency. The decision is the responsibility of each individual. But here in Isaiah 48, God was assuming a responsibility for Israel, and He will not shirk it. What is that responsibility? *As a national entity, they will be preserved.* God has determined that Israel will be His representative nation on earth, that Jerusalem will be the capital of the world, and that Israel will be honored above all other nations. That promise started with Abraham and it continues. God will remain constant regarding His purpose to *preserve the nation of Israel*; that future is assured. As for individuals, that is another matter.

Now the title “I he; I the first, I the last” brings out a different significance. God was the first and the last in that He began Israel’s calling and He will finish it. Just as Jesus is the Beginner and Finisher of our salvation, so God is, as it were, the Starter and the Finisher of natural Israel’s preservation. He formed or created Israel, and He will bring His purpose through them to fruition. God was saying, “Pay attention, Jacob and Israel. I, the great Creator, am He who called you and gave you this assurance in the beginning. Call to mind my purpose with regard to you as a people. I am the first and the last, I am the supreme Emperor of the universe, and *nothing will thwart my purpose.*”

Verse 13 is related to verse 12. In verse 13, God called attention to His authority and power in connection with the creation of the earth and the spanning of the heavens.

**Isa. 48:13** Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

God said, “When I call unto them [the heavenly bodies], they stand up together.” In other words, when God calls, the constellations, stars, etc., obey Him. He is like a drill sergeant. When He calls “Attention!” these inanimate heavenly bodies “stand up together” *like an army* of animate, intelligent beings *and obey Him*. This principle is the basis of His title “Lord of hosts” (plural). In their pageantry or progression through the heavens, the heavenly bodies are obeying the divine law. At all times, they are underneath His control. Israel would have implicit faith if they would consider this GREAT POWER of God, who talks to His *little pygmies* down here—the tiny nation is nothing compared with the expanse of the universe! It should not be necessary for the GREAT GOD to condescend and come down to reason with puny, mortal man, but fallen humanity—we and they—needs to be reminded of God’s power. How can man

question the outcome?

“Mine hand also hath laid the *foundation* [singular] of the earth.” Compare “foundations” (plural) in the following two texts: “Whereupon are the *foundations* thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof” (Job 38:6). “Who laid the *foundations* of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever” (Psa. 104:5). The “foundations of the earth” are portrayed by the four socket stones of the Great Pyramid, which is a mathematical symbol of the earth. Isaiah 48:13 uses the term in the singular. The KJV marginal reading for Psalm 104:5 is, “He hath founded the earth upon her bases.”

**Isa. 48:14** All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.

**Isa. 48:15** I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

The Almighty God, who controls all inanimate heavenly bodies, now condescended to say to Israel, “All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear.” He humiliated Himself, as it were, to come down to the level of fallen human beings on earth and say, “I, the One with these prerogatives, will talk to you. *Pay strict attention and listen to what I am going to say!*” And how many assembled themselves? Very few.

“Which among them hath declared these things?” Here God picked up the thread of previous remarks and continued to tell what He purposed to do. Earlier He had prophesied about Cyrus, a future great deliverer who would free Israel from the yoke of bondage in Babylon, and about the rebuilding of the city and the Temple. At the time of this prophecy, the city and Temple were still intact. Isaiah assured the Israelites that when the city and Temple would be destroyed, they should not be utterly dejected because God’s ultimate purpose is to restore Israel.

“The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.” At the time Isaiah wrote this prophecy, the ten tribes were about to go into captivity, and the defeat of the two tribes was still 150 years in the future. Nevertheless, God told about Israel’s deliverance from Babylon and the Chaldeans. Therefore, some very important thinking was presented here.

Notice verse 15: “I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him [Cyrus].” The end of verse 14 and all of verse 15 refer back to the prophecies about Cyrus that were given in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. Isaiah kept returning to the main theme, which is that after God punished Israel, He would deliver them from Babylon and restore them. He even named in advance the human agent (Cyrus) through whom the deliverance would be accomplished and told that this heathen king would prosper. All of these prophecies were given in advance.

Now imagine being back in Babylon in captivity. All of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the scrolls of Isaiah, would have been taken into captivity with the Israelites. For 70 years, they were in captivity in a foreign land, knowing that their capital and Temple had been destroyed. While in Babylon, they would have wondered if God was dealing with them or if He had cast them off forever. As 536 BC neared and the Israelites read Isaiah’s prophecies about their deliverance, they would be encouraged. God had these prophecies recorded for their benefit.

The point to be made is that the Bible is not written for the Church alone but for God’s people *in any age*. The Bible was written primarily for Israel and for the Church at the beginning and at the end of the Gospel Age.

Verses 12-15 were a very important prophecy for natural Israel. God has likewise given information to Christians as to what will happen in the future, but we must study God's Word in order to be informed. In fact, the great amount of detail about events for both natural and spiritual Israel in the near future is shocking. As God provided this encouragement for natural Israel in their Babylonian captivity, so He furnishes His people in other ages with similar encouragement. Therefore, verse 14 can be spiritualized as mystic Babylon. Those who are in captivity in mystic Babylon should be encouraged by this prophecy.

**Isa. 48:16** Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me.

Verse 16 is rather touching: "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this." The GREAT GOD spoke to natural Israel, who was *way below Him* in station. He said, "Come here and sit beside me. I would like to give you some intimate counsel." God spoke in a demonstrative way that can be visualized. It is like having a friend who is in need and saying to that friend, "Come here and sit close to me so that I can confide in you."

"I [Jesus] have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me [Jesus]." God was originally and primarily referring to natural Israel, but Cyrus, whom the Lord called and prospered to overthrow Babylon, prefigures Christ, who, as God's agent, will deliver both natural and spiritual Israel. And so Jesus entered the picture in verse 16 and tried to give special counsel. Previously God was reasoning, and the Prophet Isaiah faithfully pronounced His words. Now, all of a sudden, another personage, Jesus, mysteriously entered the conversation to give counsel.

In Old Testament times, Jesus (as the Logos) was involved, making sure God's prophecies were transmitted through the prophets. He was also called Michael, "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (Dan. 12:1). Michael, the archangel, was God's special guardian or prince of natural Israel, whereas Satan was the prince of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

**Isa. 48:17** Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Jesus gave counsel in this verse. Isaiah recorded the words, but Jesus was speaking. He was telling what Jehovah, Israel's Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, said. The instruction and counsel were for Israel's own good.

**Isa. 48:18** O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:

**Isa. 48:19** Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

If Israel had obeyed, their offspring would have been very prolific. "His [Israel's] name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me." When did this happen? In 606 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and he took just 832 captives to Babylon. Jeremiah 52:28-30 mentions three captivities in Nebuchadnezzar's day. Verse 28 pertains to an earlier captivity, but verse 29 describes the captivity in 606 BC when Jerusalem was destroyed and Gentile Times began. Out of 7 or 8 million people, only 832 survived from the city of Jerusalem and were taken captive to Babylon. That was a tiny remnant indeed! All the rest were put to death except for Jeremiah and two others who were spared and allowed to

go free. Of course when the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem, there were other people living elsewhere in Israel, but of those in Jerusalem, only 832 were taken to Babylon. Those outside of Jerusalem were hunted down and killed except for the few who were left as vinedressers. However, when the vinedressers rebelled and assassinated Gedaliah (the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar), they knew it was only a matter of time until a Babylonian general would be sent to Israel to put the people to death. In an effort to escape, they fled to Egypt.

And what was the net effect of all this? It was as if the nation of Israel had been cut off without a seed. If the nation had hearkened to God's commandments, they would have prospered continually and not have gone into captivity. The year 606 BC marked the beginning of the seven times of punishment of Leviticus 26. True, some of the Israelites did return from Babylon 70 years later in 536 BC and had some respite, but they were a tributary people without all the liberties they had previously enjoyed. The implication in verse 19 is that there would be a great decimation of the people, but that God would not allow them to be entirely and permanently cut off.

**Isa. 48:20** Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Verse 20 starts a new theme, but one that is related to the previous verses (notice the mention again of Babylon and the Chaldeans). Earlier God indicated that the Israelites would be taken captive to Babylon but that in time, the Lord would prosper a mysterious person called Cyrus, who would deliver them. As a result, they would be reinstated in their land.

Now verse 20 says, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans." When did this take place? When was this message obeyed? The words "flee ye" point to an exodus from Babylon that took place earlier than the actual fall of Babylon in 536 BC. This instruction was directed to those Jews who were living in the city of Babylon as the time was nearing for Cyrus to enter the city gates. The Jews in Babylon were beginning to hear about the outstanding victories of Cyrus in neighboring lands. Those in the city who knew the Scriptures would say with excitement, "Cyrus is the one Isaiah prophesied would deliver us from Babylon." Of course they realized that when Cyrus entered Babylon and conquered the city, there would be a great slaughter. Therefore, knowing in advance that the bloodshed was coming and that Cyrus would be victorious, the faithful Jews fled from the city just prior to his attack.

The same thing happened just before AD 69-70. Jesus said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with [Roman] armies, then know that the desolation thereof [of Jerusalem] is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-22). Vespasian had already laid siege to Jerusalem when the emperor in Rome died. Vespasian, who was one of the contenders to become the next Caesar, rushed back to Rome, directing his son Titus to be in charge. During this brief period, the siege around Jerusalem was relaxed, and faithful Jewish Christians obeyed the counsel to get out of the city. They left their goods and fled to Petra and elsewhere. A short while later when Titus resumed the siege, no one could leave Jerusalem.

The same principle of supplying information, counsel, and instruction in advance, before the trouble comes, applies to mystic Babylon. The warning to come out of her was given *before the plagues began*.

**Comment:** And again at the very end of the age, the warning will be sounded to "Come out of her, my people," but this time it will be "lest ye partake of the seventh plague."

God even told the Jews what to sing (or chant) when they left the city of Babylon prior to 536 BC: “*With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.*” What a slogan!

**Isa. 48:21** And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Isaiah reminded the Israelites how God cared for them in the Wilderness of Sinai and provided for their needs. But why did he twice mention water coming out of the rock? *Two times* God miraculously gave the Israelites water from the rock (Exod. 17:5,6; Num. 20:2-11). There was a practical lesson here for the Israelites. If water was not provided in a *natural* way, God would cause it to come forth. In other words, God’s *authority* was shown. In both instances, He gave the Israelites water, and they got it *in abundance*. How dramatic to see water suddenly *gush forth* from the smitten rock in a *dry, barren land!*

**Isa. 48:22** There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

The chapter ends with this seemingly isolated verse, but it is a lesson from God, a summation of the previous verses. Lesson: There is peace to those who are righteously inclined and willing to be led by God, even though they have trials. While God is committed to preserving the nation of Israel, who the saved *individuals* will be is up to each person. God’s authority and power guarantee the restoration of Israel, but only the obedient will ultimately get life. The advice in Chapter 48 is not meant to encourage the wicked and disobedient.

The same principle applies to the Church. God guarantees there will be 144,000 in the body of Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth will defeat His purpose as regards the Bride class, who are called to be rulers with Jesus in the next age. But as to who the members of that body will be depends on the faithfulness of each individual.

There is still another emphasis. If the supplied words are deleted, verse 22 reads: “No peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.” The Israelites went through the desert, and God fed and provided for them so that they survived (that is, the second generation and Joshua and Caleb survived). But did those who entered the land of Israel 40 years later have peace in connection with all of their wilderness experiences? No. Those who were faithful had *mixed* experiences. They had trials, battles, and discomforts, but to counterbalance their hard experiences, they had the cloud, God’s instruction, victories, manna, etc., and they did enter the Promised Land. For the faithful, it was not a peaceful way, but one cannot say they had “no peace.” Those who faithfully serve and obey the Lord have mixed experiences, but “the wicked” have no peace. (The term “the wicked” refers not to the world but to the Lord’s people who willfully disobey.)

**Isa. 49:1** Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

“Listen, O isles, ... hearken, ye people, from far.” The “isles ... from far” would be republics that are a great distance from Israel, that is, the Western world.

Who is the speaker, the one who was called from the womb by Jehovah? There are three applications in Chapter 49, although not every word applies in each case. Jesus is the speaker in a primary sense, the Church in a secondary sense, and natural Israel in a third sense.

If Jesus is considered the speaker, the one whom God called from the womb, then who would his “mother” be? “From the bowels of my mother [the Sarah Covenant] hath he [God] made mention of my [Jesus’] name.” Sarah is the “mother of us all”; that is, Sarah in her covenant relationship to Abraham pictured Jesus and the Church (Gal. 4:26). In a lesser sense, Jesus was



called from the womb of Mary, for after he was born of Mary, his name was particularly recognized. God mentioned that this Son to be born of Mary was to be called Jesus, the one who would save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

**Isa. 49:2** And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

God made Jesus' "mouth like a sharp sword." Jesus spoke with *power*. With the scribes and Pharisees, he had a sharp, penetrating tongue. Jesus had a fullness of the Holy Spirit, and Hebrews 4:12 tells that the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, is "quick, and *powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword*, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And out of Jesus' mouth "went a *sharp twoedged sword* [the Word of God]" (Rev. 1:16). (The two edges of the sword cut the user of the sword as well as those it is used against, and Jesus was in perfect harmony with the sword of Holy Writ.)

"In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me." Why is this illustration of an archer inserted here? The words that come forth from Jesus are like arrows from a quiver. The shaft, or main stem, of an arrow with its rightly aligned feathers is polished for a smooth, straight flight to the target. The Father made Jesus "a polished shaft"; in other words, He prepared and schooled Jesus for his ministry. As the Logos at the Father's side, Jesus received schooling. As a human being during the First Advent (from his youth as a perfect boy through his manhood and crucifixion), all the experiences of life prepared him for his future work.

"In his quiver hath he hid me." The time setting of this chapter is primarily future, when all will hear of Jesus (verse 1). In the future in the Kingdom, Jesus will reveal his power and authority, but at present he is still hidden in the quiver. Jehovah has been preparing Jesus for his work in the Kingdom. In the meantime, this "polished" individual, with his wonderful background of divine power, wisdom, love, and justice, is still in preparation.

Psalms 45 is a prophecy of the Kingdom. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's [God's] enemies; whereby the people fall under thee" (Psa. 45:3-5). When Jesus takes unto himself his great power and reigns, when he manifests his authority in the earth, when the world sees that he truly is the Messiah, then his words, his arrows of conviction, will be very penetrating. When all who previously were his enemies are figuratively shot in the heart with arrows of conviction, their consciences will be affected and they will cease to be enemies. They will fall prostrate and die as enemies. (The incorrigible will "die" literally; the sincere will die figuratively. In both cases, they will cease to be enemies.) Unto Jesus shall every knee bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10,11). Jesus will then "ride prosperously."

**Isa. 49:3** And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

God was speaking. Of course when He fights for Israel, He will be glorified in them. But the word "Israel" has a variety of meanings; that is, it can refer to a group of individuals, to spiritual Israel (nominal or true), to fleshly Israel (nominal or true), to the nation, or to Jacob (the individual whose name was changed to Israel). Hence "Israel" is like the word "sheep" in that both terms can be singular or plural depending on context. "Israel" means "prince of God"; this title of honor was given to Jacob because he contended for the blessing (Gen. 32:28). Similarly God will reward the Christian in the next life for trying to do His will and fighting the good fight of faith in the present life. In one sense, Jesus as an individual is also a "prince." For

example, Daniel 12:1 calls him Michael, “the great *prince* which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel].”

**Isa. 49:4** Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

Jesus said, “I have laboured in vain.” The most perfect one ever to live on this earth had a Gethsemane experience. Jesus feared death (permanent extinction) in that he wondered if he had obeyed God perfectly (Heb. 5:7). Therefore, he did have doubts and even asked, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But this was not his general attitude. He had an inner peace except when God was testing him to the core. At times, the Church also feels that labor has been in vain, and so does natural Israel.

Isaiah 65:23 uses the word “labour” in the sense of a woman in travail: “They shall not *labour* in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.” If a woman goes through all the birth pangs and has a stillborn, her efforts are for nought. All the rigors connected with childbearing do not result in the birth of a healthy baby. That basic thought is extended to the farmer who labors for weeks harrowing the ground, planting seed, cultivating the ground, etc., and then something occurs to destroy his crop. Thus his labor in bringing forth is in vain. With agriculture, therefore, the thought of laboring in vain pertains to not bringing forth fruitage. Isaiah 65:23, being a Kingdom promise, states the opposite: mankind will *not* labor in vain.

We will consider some verses in Isaiah 53. The same thought of labor in the sense of a woman in travail is expressed in verse 11: “He [Jesus] shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Verse 10 shows that God tested Jesus with suffering: “It pleased the LORD to bruise him [Jesus]; he [God] hath put him [Jesus] to grief: ... thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” Chapter 53 describes the last moments of Jesus’ earthly life when he was made a spectacle before the nation. He grew up as a tender plant and was comely, wise, and outstanding as a natural man, but at the end of his earthly career, he appeared to be the opposite. He looked like an outcast, a sinner; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, wounded, given stripes, spat upon; he was crucified and forsaken by his followers (“we esteemed him not”—verse 3). “He opened not his mouth” while being led to the slaughter (verse 7), for he knew it was his time to die; he did not try to brilliantly defend himself but submitted to the humiliation. He made his grave with the wicked. It pleased God to reveal to us (and later to the world of mankind) what a wonderful, obedient Son Jesus was—and that *he was worthy* to be elevated to the right hand of power (Rom. 8:34; Matt. 26:64).

The statement “he shall see of the travail of his soul” shows how deep Jesus’ sorrow was. In fact, it was so deep that he began to wonder if he had been faithful (Heb. 5:7). During his ministry, he did not doubt, but he experienced this anguish and loneliness briefly at the end. Many Christians have similar experiences of loneliness and doubt as a final test before they die. The Adversary tries to convince them they will never make their calling and election sure; discouragement is one of his chief weapons. At times, Jews have questioned if their struggle is worth all the suffering, and the temptation is to lose their identity as Jews and to become Gentiles. Once again, all three—Jesus, true Christians, and natural Israel—have similar experiences.

“Yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.” Jesus’ attitude, expressed in advance, was “into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Even though at that time, Jesus did not fully understand the reason for the experience, he left the matter with his Father. Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Job did not know the purpose for his sufferings, but he showed faith, trust, and patient endurance by trusting

God and not giving up.

**Isa. 49:5** And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

**Isa. 49:6** And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

**Comment:** Verse 5 seems to tie in with the mention of Jacob in verse 3. “And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring *Jacob* again to him....”

**Reply:** But verse 5 is a little different, and that is the clue along with verse 6. These verses reveal that the mysterious personage will be a “light to the Gentiles” and that he will restore Jacob and Israel. Therefore, the mysterious personage of verses 1-6 cannot be natural Israel, for Israel will not restore itself. God appoints this “Israel” as “his servant.” The “servant,” or mysterious personage, is Jesus, the “messenger of the [New] covenant” (Mal. 3:1).

Isaiah 49 is primarily a prophecy of Jesus and his schooling and preparation for the future work God has set before him. In a secondary sense, it can be considered a prophecy of the body members, for in their association with Jesus, they will participate in his work and be a light to the Gentiles. In a third sense, the prophecy has a bearing on natural Israel. Jesus, the Church, and natural Israel all have some similar experiences. Down through history, it has been a paradox that the true Christian and fleshly Israel have suffered.

As an example of the prophecy being primarily of Jesus, secondarily of the Church, and in a third sense of natural Israel, consider the statement in verse 2, “in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.” All three fulfillments are hidden truths today, as follows:

1. Jesus’ role as Savior is hidden.
2. The identity of the true Church—and particularly the mysterious calling of The Christ during the permission of evil—is hidden.
3. Israel’s future prominent status in the earthly phase of God’s Kingdom is hidden.

How many today believe that natural Israel will become the capital of the world and that orders will go forth from Jerusalem? Those will be startling events and/or revealments. Most forcibly and pointedly, however, the hidden truth applies to Jesus.

God said, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved [the Holy Remnant] of Israel.” As a people, Jews have a lot of doubts and hard experiences, but basically they do not want to lose their identity. At times, it seems to them that God has hidden Himself.

God continued, “I will *also* give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” In other words, He was saying to His Son, “It is too little an honor for you to just save Israel. My plans for you are much grander, namely, the conversion of the *whole world*.”

**Isa. 49:7** Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

God identified Himself as the Redeemer and the Holy One of *Israel*. He was talking “to him

whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers.” In the primary sense, God was addressing Jesus, who was “despised and rejected of men” (Isa. 53:3). Jesus is the one whom the Jewish “nation abhorreth.” Even today some Jews spit or curse when his name is mentioned. During his earthly ministry, it was particularly the religious leaders who hated him and were jealous of his popularity with the common people.

At his First Advent, Jesus was “a servant of rulers.” He instructed his followers to be meek and humble servants, and as an example, he washed their feet. Jesus said the Gentiles wanted to be lords and rulers, and their greatness was measured by the number of servants they had, but the Christian would be great in the Kingdom if he was the servant of all in the present life. Except where conscience would not allow, Jesus was submissive to the authorities. He paid taxes to Caesar, obeyed his mother until he came of age at 30 and was baptized, etc.

In the Kingdom, “kings shall see [Jesus] and arise, princes also shall worship [him]” when they see that he really is the Messiah. They shall worship Jesus “because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel.” “He [God] shall choose thee”; that is, God will choose Jesus because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, because he humbled himself even to the death of the Cross, etc.

**Isa. 49:8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;**

Verse 8 is primarily addressed to Jesus. (With slight changes but similar principles, all of these verses apply first to Jesus, secondarily to the Church, and in a third sense to Israel.) God will give Jesus for the New Covenant in that Jesus will mediate and administrate the covenant to make sure the people come into harmony with God’s wishes. As queen, the Church will share in that mediatorship with their King. God will give Israel “for a covenant” in the sense that they will be the blessing nation under the New (Jewish) Covenant.

“I will preserve thee.” As God preserved Christ, so He preserves The Christ and the nation of Israel lest they be wiped out.

**Isa. 49:9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.**

The “prisoners” of death, the “prisoners” of the grave, will be awakened out of “darkness,” out of the shadow of the tomb, into light.

**Isa. 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.**

This verse applies to the world of mankind because the context (verse 9) pertains to all coming forth from the grave. In the Kingdom, the people “shall not hunger nor thirst.” In the present life, the world has had unsatisfied longings (“hunger” and “thirst”). The permission of evil has been a time of affliction, misery, and much unhappiness for those who do not know Christ. Another application would be a “hunger” and “thirst” for the Word of God, for a hope of salvation, life, and relief from problems. These longings will cease in the Kingdom when the “desire of all nations shall come” (Hag. 2:7).

“Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them” in the Kingdom. In Scripture, the “sun” can picture persecution (Matt. 13:3,5,6,21). The “sun” can also be a symbol of God’s searching Law. A person who is looking for God feels his or her own shortcomings and undone, sinful condition. “Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa. 33:14).

“For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” In the Kingdom, God will lead the world with truth, with “springs [plural] of water.” More than just the Bible will be available at that time. The spoken word will be used as well as the written Word. For example, the most serious problems will be taken to Jesus, somewhat lesser ones to the Church, and other problems to the Ancient Worthies. In other words, those on each level of instruction will recognize any deficiency they might have and refer the problem to the next higher level for light and guidance.

Revelation 22:17 is related: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” The water that will come from under the Third Temple teaches the same lesson. Water symbolizes not only truth and instruction but also life, health, and refreshment.

**Isa. 49:11** And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

In the next age, God will make all *His* kingdoms (“mountains”) and all *His* highways a way to holiness. In the present evil world under Satan’s control, all the “highways” are broad roads to destruction. In the Kingdom, all the media will be conducive to uprightness and instruction in holiness. All the stumbling stones will be removed. “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there” (Isa. 35:9). The “way” will be for the redeemed. “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8). There will be no such thing as a wayfaring man who does not know where he is going. In the Kingdom, there will be no danger of lack of knowledge.

**Isa. 49:12** Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

“Sinim” is a mysterious word that appears in this form only once in Scripture. “North” and “west” are mentioned, but two points of the compass are missing. Is Sinim to the south or to the east? There are two theories, neither of which can be proved conclusively.

1. Sinim is to the *south*. Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 mention Syene, which is near Aswan, the outpost of civilization in Isaiah’s day. Ezekiel 30:15,16 suggests that the root word “Sin” is related to a city of Egypt. Sinai is also related, being the Wilderness of *Sin* (*Sin* means moon and refers to the moon god). Sinai, Egypt, and Aswan are all to the south.
2. Sinim is to the *east*. The prefix “sino” refers to China and the Orient.

“These [the dispersed Israelites] shall come from far” back to Israel after Jacob’s Trouble. If this verse refers to the Holy Remnant from other lands returning to Israel, they will be shipped back from the north, west, and *east* (India, China, etc.). Later the Gentiles will also go to Israel for instruction and enlightenment. Thus there is hope for Israel when the Lord takes control, and the sorrow of both Jew and Gentile will be assuaged.

**Isa. 49:13** Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Verse 13, although a related subject, is somewhat a change of pace. (Note the paragraph mark in the KJV.) “Sing, O heavens; ... O earth; and ... O mountains.” In the Kingdom, the powers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will be under divine control and authority. While to a certain extent, the various nations will retain their identities, they will all be under the New Covenant.

**Isa. 49:14** But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

“Zion” being natural Israel here, verse 14 is a throwback to Israel’s thoughts during Jacob’s Trouble—that is, prior to the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. Specifically, the fulfillment of this verse will be when Jerusalem is captured, the houses are rifled, the women are ravished, and half of the inhabitants are in exile (Zech. 14:2). During this interim of time, the Lord’s deliverance will be delayed, resulting in much discouragement. The Jews will think they are forsaken when they are not delivered suddenly and gloriously according to their expectations. With their situation appearing to be a defeat, they will feel helpless and hopeless and cry out to God for help. God will delay the deliverance temporarily until they reach the utmost point of their extremity. Why the delay? To demonstrate conclusively that the destruction would have been complete and final if God had not intervened. In no sense of the word will Israel’s own arm of flesh or the arm of flesh of the Gentiles be involved with the deliverance.

**Isa. 49:15** Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

A woman, a mother, hardly ever forgets her nursing child, but God will *never* forsake Israel.

**Isa. 49:16** Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

Israel means so much to God that the nation is engraved on His palms. Thus a remembrance of them is in His sight continuously.

“Thy [Israel’s] walls are continually before me [God].” God was saying that He is deeply involved with Israel’s circumstances. Their safety is always on His mind, even when the nation needs punishments. Of course in Jacob’s Trouble, God will be a wall, a means of protection, to Israel (the Holy Remnant), but in His own due time. “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee [severely] in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jer. 30:11).

**Isa. 49:17** Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.

The RSV reads, “Your builders outstrip your destroyers, and those who laid you waste go forth from you.” The NIV has, “Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you.” When Gog (Israel’s “destroyers”) is defeated, the one-sixth survivors will return to their homelands. Surviving Jews in other countries will return to Israel.

**Isa. 49:18** Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

Israel was told to lift up her eyes and look about her. What will she be experiencing at this time? She will see other nations coming to her to worship God. “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side” (Isa. 60:3,4). These verses in Isaiah 60 harmonize with Isaiah 49:12, already considered: “Behold, these shall come from far.” There will be two parts to the “coming from far”: first, the “sons” and “daughters” (the dispersed) of Israel will come back, and then, right behind them, will be Gentiles, “strangers,” to help rebuild Israel in the

Kingdom. “And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee” (Isa. 60:10).

“As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.” In the Kingdom, God will “clothe” Israel with material goods. “The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee” (Isa. 60:5). The “forces” are the same as the “clothing.” The armaments used against Israel in Jacob’s Trouble will be melted down into farming implements. It will take seven years for this conversion of “swords into plowshares” and “spears into pruninghooks” (Isa. 2:4). In addition, Gentiles from other nations will send gifts and wealth.

What blessed promises for the Jews if they only knew their Scriptures! Great faith would be inculcated to endure hardship and to wait for the Lord and His promised Kingdom. The Holy Remnant, though relatively few in number, will have such faith to sustain them to go through the trouble, but that faith will be greatly tried, just as with the Christian. The Holy Remnant may be given a lot of light, but they also have crucial experiences that test them to the core—in God’s time and way, and when they can take it, by His grace.

Incidentally, Ezekiel 20:37 about passing “under the rod” refers to the practice of every tenth animal being a tithe for the Lord: “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” This verse seems to indicate that only *one out of ten* Jews will survive as the handpicked Holy Remnant.

**Isa. 49:19** For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

The “waste” and “desolate places” in Israel have not yet been developed; they remain desolate even today. An example is the Negev Desert. That is one type of desolation, whereas “the land of thy destruction” refers to the desolation that will occur when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble—desolation from earthquakes, great hailstones, etc. Jerusalem will be leveled by an earthquake, for example. All this land will be reclaimed and built up.

As the Israelites come forth from the grave (as well as from other lands), the borders of Israel will be too small, “too narrow by reason of the inhabitants.” The land will seem like a straitjacket to them. Hence they will want more land, and they will get it.

“They that swallowed thee up shall be far away.” Israel’s enemies and oppressors will be off the scene in this peaceful time of reconstruction under God’s direction in the Kingdom.

Although mankind has been on the earth for more than 6,000 years, several factors affect the multiplication of the human race and, therefore, the total number that will be resuscitated in the general resurrection. For instance, relatively few will be resurrected from the period of 1,656 years before the Flood for two reasons: (1) many were of the hybrid race that will not come forth from the tomb, and (2) the people lived much longer prior to the Flood. Other factors are famines, captivities, plagues, and wars.

Zechariah 10:10 provides information about Israel’s future expanded borders: “I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.” The people will come forth from the grave either to the place of their nativity or in the area in which they formerly lived. This will be true of Jews also, except that they will subsequently be transported back to Israel. But notice that two places (Gilead and Lebanon) are mentioned in Zechariah 10:10 as being part of Israel in the Kingdom. Since Gilead is located in present-day Jordan,

much of Jordan will be within Israel's borders in the Kingdom.

Assyria embraces eastern Turkey (Anatolia, Armenia), Syria, and part of Iran. Of course the boundary lines of many countries have fluctuated throughout history. Hence in the Kingdom, the Lord will determine national boundaries.

**Isa. 49:20** The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

God was speaking to the nation of Israel. Who are “the children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other [previous children]”? In the time setting of the Kingdom, children will have been lost in Jacob's Trouble and/or the Diaspora. But after Jacob's Trouble, Israel will have more children, and they will say, “The place [Israel] is too strait [too small] for me.” The “children” after Jacob's Trouble include both (1) the surviving Jews in other lands who will be shipped back to Israel by the Gentiles and (2) those who will be raised from death. In verse 21, the question is asked, “Where did these [Jewish] children come from?” Verse 22 gives a partial explanation: from Gentile lands.

“Strangers” who settle in Israel in the Kingdom will be Gentiles who, in the present life, were born in Israel. These strangers will be given an equal inheritance in Israel, even though the land was especially deeded to the Jews. Hence *truly dispossessed* Palestinians will get an inheritance.

**Isa. 49:21** Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

The general experience of Israel over the centuries is that they have been dispossessed from their homeland by Gentiles. However, Jacob's Trouble will epitomize that circumstance. Here Israel reflects back on that experience, for at that time, they will feel forsaken and unwanted. From a glorious beginning, their state will be pitiful. But in their extremity, those with faith will pray to God for help—and receive it.

Unfortunately today, the nation of Israel looks to the United States and the United Nations for help instead of to God. Based on Old Testament history, they should have had two or three days of national fasting with earnest prayer.

**Isa. 49:22** Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

“The Lord GOD ... will lift up ... [His] hand to the Gentiles, and set up... [His] standard.” Just as Christians are attracted to the Cross in the Gospel Age, so in the Kingdom, the Jews who are miraculously delivered will want to return to their homeland. God's standard is a rallying point. The illustration of an army helps to explain the concept of a “standard.” Men may be sitting in the field at rest and having their dinner, but when the time for battle arrives, standard bearers put down markers (a pole with an emblem on top). Each battalion or company then rallies to its particular insignia and performs the assigned task. When God sets up His standard, it will beckon the Gentiles to come. But what is that standard, and how will He lift it up?

Isaiah 60:1,2 enunciates the principle from one standpoint: “Arise, shine; for *thy* light is come, and the glory of the LORD [Jehovah] is risen upon *thee* [Israel]. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon *thee*, and his glory shall be seen upon *thee*.” Just as the plagues in Egypt were literal, so the plagues that God will use to deliver Israel at the end of the age will be every bit as literal and marvelous.



Pestilence, the eyes of animals and people burning in their sockets, the slaying of one another in confusion like the Midianites in Gideon's day, hailstones like those in Joshua's day, etc.—all of the past deliverances will be used (on a smaller scale, of course) in the land of Israel.

The Israelites were baptized by Moses in the Red Sea with the cloud as a covering. When Moses lifted up his rod, the waters parted, the depths of the sea congealed, or froze, to provide a pathway, and the Israelites walked over dry-shod, going through a tunnel, as it were, with the cloud as a canopy over their heads. That tunnel was God's providential protection as the nation went through the Red Sea. (At Succoth in Egypt, the cloud first began to cover the entire host of Israel like a blanket and the pillar of the cloud started to lead them.) As the Israelites entered the Red Sea, the pillar withdrew and, instead of going in front, went behind them, providing light ahead for them all night but darkness and confusion behind for the pursuing Egyptians. As a result, the Egyptians were slowed down until the Israelites safely reached the far shore—and then the Lord allowed the waters to come together and drown the Egyptians.

The point is that just as God previously used miracles in nature to deliver His people, so at the end of the age, *the miraculous deliverance of Israel in Jacob's Trouble will be the "standard," or sign, which the Gentiles will recognize and rally to.* Just as other nations witnessed how God protected Israel during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings (Josh. 2:9-11), so nations will (representatively) witness what happens in Israel at the end of the age, and the Gentile survivors will return to their homelands with eyewitness accounts. Therefore, as the cloud over the nation was like His presence on behalf of Israel, protecting, shielding, and saving them in the Red Sea experience, so His glory will again be manifested. "Then [in Jacob's Trouble] shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle [in Old Testament times]" (Zech. 14:3). *God's glory on behalf of Israel will be the ensign, or standard, that will cause the Gentiles to ship the surviving Jews in their lands back to Israel after Jacob's Trouble.* "I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people [saith the Lord God]: and [then, as a result] they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders [back to Israel]."

**Isa. 49:23** **And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.**

It will not be just the common people who are sympathetic and appreciative of what has happened and want to be instructed of the Lord in the Kingdom, but former great leaders will be ashamed and put their faces down in the dust in humiliation and the realization of their nothingness. The word "kings" includes particularly prominent individuals in all realms of activity: political, religious, financial, sports, business, etc. (Psa. 72:10,11). Psalm 72 is a prophecy of the Kingdom, as are a lot of the Psalms past the middle of the book (many earlier Psalms are prophecies about Jesus).

Notice that the Gentile leaders will "*lick up the dust of thy feet [the feet of the Jews]*" in the beginning of the Kingdom. How different from conditions today where, for instance, the United Nations voted almost unanimously to equate Zionism with racism! (They even spelled Zionism with a lowercase "z.") Hence we know that God's deliverance of Israel will be MOST STARTLING in order to make present-day "kings" and "queens" so penitent! They will realize that the very God of nature, the God of heaven, has manifested Israel as His people. Jehovah's demonstration will be SO STRONG AND SO CONVINCING that the great ones who currently despise Israel will grovel in the dust before the Jews, bring presents, and provide free transportation back to the Holy Land.

"And thou [O Israel] shalt know that I am the LORD." Imagine Israel's humiliation too when they realize the one they rejected is truly their Messiah! They will recognize Jesus and know

that he is God's Son. Not only will God lift up His hand to the Gentiles and set up a standard for them, but the surviving Jews will be dumbstruck with the turn of events on their behalf.

Verse 23 ends with an interesting clause: "for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." In other words, the Holy Remnant will not be ashamed to recognize Jesus. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa. 110:3). This clause in verse 23 suggests a measure of enlightenment to the Holy Remnant. Those Jews who exercise faith and obedience will live through Jacob's Trouble. But even with this faith and obedience, the Holy Remnant will be startled and dumbfounded when the miraculous events actually occur. In a somewhat similar vein, suppose we die and wake up as one of the 144,000. That is the lifelong hope of the consecrated, but to actually end up as one of the Little Flock would result in great surprise and joy. Imagine KNOWING that we made it! Therefore, for the Holy Remnant to "wait" and not be ashamed does not mean they will not be startled with the revelation. The reality of the experience will be one of wonderment.

**Isa. 49:24** Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

**Isa. 49:25** But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

**Isa. 49:26** And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

These verses show that Chapter 49 is one coherent, harmonious theme. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the *lawful* captive delivered?" For example, when a lion captures a lamb and is holding the lamb in its mouth, who would suppose that the weak prey could be rescued? No one! The lion simply has to close its mouth and the lamb will be dead. But God will save *little* Israel, the weak prey, from a seemingly hopeless state in the hands of *mighty* Gog.

At first, it will appear that God has forsaken Israel, for Gog will be victorious in capturing Jerusalem. It will seem as if the Jews are no longer God's people. If there is a God, and if He is the God of Israel, it will seem that He is not interested in them and that they are going to be extinguished in their own land. The enemy host of Gog will go right up "to the neck" (Jerusalem) and be temporarily victorious (Isa. 8:8; 10:27). Can Israel be delivered under that circumstance? "Yes, surely," saith the LORD. "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children [the Holy Remnant]. I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (RSV and NIV).

How will God feed Gog with their own flesh? Every man's hand will be against his neighbor in tremendous confusion as those of the enemy try to save their own lives. It will be like the consternation that resulted when Gideon and the 300 men broke their pitchers. The Midianites slew one another, devouring themselves in a panic and frenzy. "Sweet wine" confuses the mind, and so Gog will act "drunk," that is, without reason.

The theme of Jacob's Trouble is repeated over and over in Scripture. We often say that restitution is spoken of by the mouth of *all* God's holy prophets (Acts 3:21), but Jacob's Trouble is spoken of by *nearly all* of God's holy prophets. And just like restitution, the theme is veiled with "here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10).

**Isa. 50:1** Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have

**put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.**

Why did God ask Israel, “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement?”

**Comment:** The question was asked because the Israelites had left God and gone to worship other idols.

**Reply:** Yes, both the ten tribes and the two tribes went astray.

The question was next asked, “To which of my creditors did I sell you?” The verse ends with, “You sold yourselves, and for your transgressions, your mother was put away.” When did the Israelites sell themselves? At this time, only the ten-tribe kingdom had received judgment and been taken into captivity by Assyria, for Isaiah wrote this message more than 100 years before 606 BC. Therefore, Isaiah’s dispensational message was primarily directed to “Judah and Jerusalem” (Isa. 1:1). (Hosea prophesied at the same time but to the ten tribes, who went into Assyrian captivity.)

**Comment:** God said to Jeremiah in the days of King Josiah: “Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a *bill of divorce*; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also” (Jer. 3:6-8).

**Reply:** Notice, a bill of divorcement was given to Israel, the ten tribes, the northern kingdom. Judah, the two tribes, witnessed this “divorce” but did not heed the warning. Therefore, at the time of Isaiah’s writing in Chapter 50, Judah had not yet been put away with a formal bill of divorcement.

The prophet continued with God telling Judah, “For your transgressions is your mother put away.” Ezekiel 16:1-3,28,29,45,46 furnishes information about Judah’s “mother,” as follows:

“Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

“Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

“And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and *thy mother an Hittite*...

“Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.

“Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith....

“*Thou art thy mother’s daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.*

“*And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.*”

The covenant was originally made with the whole nation of Israel, but subsequently in their development, the kingdom was divided into ten and two tribes (Ezek. 16:8). Then, in this same chapter of Ezekiel, the “mother” was pictured as having three daughters: (1) Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom, was the oldest; (2) Judah, the two-tribe kingdom, was the middle daughter; and (3) Sodom was the youngest.

Ezekiel 23:2-4 discusses two of the daughters: “There were two women, the daughters of one mother: And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.” Samaria, the older daughter, was called Aholah. Jerusalem (Judah), the younger daughter, was called Aholibah.

In Isaiah’s day but prior to Chapter 50, estrangement began when the northern ten-tribe kingdom was carried away captive to Assyria. The Lord asked Judah, “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?” The “mother” was the land of Israel. The people on that land (the ten tribes and the two tribes) were the product of the “mother”; they were underneath the “mother,” which was also the covenant. God had made the covenant with the entire nation, with both houses of Israel (the ten tribes and the two tribes). The ten-tribe kingdom was nominally called “Israel,” which was the name of the whole nation, in contradistinction to Judah, the two tribes. In Isaiah’s day, God divorced, or put away, the ten tribes, the older sister or daughter, whereas Judah’s divorce did not occur until 606 BC, long after Isaiah had died. Isaiah was telling Judah that they should realize the situation. Although they had not been divorced yet, they were drifting away from their covenant relationship because of their sins; a divorce was pending.

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah used different illustrations. The Jeremiah citation did not mention the “mother,” whereas Ezekiel mentioned both the “mother” and her daughters and Isaiah 50:1 spoke of just the “mother.”

Note: This first verse is difficult to understand. Therefore, the comments presented above are incomplete and may not be accurate. In the next week’s study, it was suggested that the fulfillment of the question “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement?” might be along the following line.

“Where is the divorce document? Let us examine it and read the details. I did not put you away. Rather, you put yourselves away through your iniquities.” Therefore, verse 1 would not be talking about the ten-tribe kingdom’s going into captivity or about 606 BC, but about Jesus’ day, or AD 70. In AD 70, the two tribes were put away because of their sins, but all down through history, the Jews have blamed the Gentiles for their sufferings. The Jews think they have been unjustly persecuted, and they fail to see that the Diaspora occurred because of their own iniquities. In the climax in Jacob’s Trouble, however, the Holy Remnant will repent and admit their sins and call on God.

**Q:** Is this prophecy referring to Jesus’ day?

**A:** No, it refers to our day, but it is telling that the nation was put in Diaspora and cast away because of sins and transgressions. Even today there is trouble. This prophecy is a separate explanation of why Israel has had such a long period of hard experiences all during the Gospel Age—because they sinned. God was reluctant to punish them but was forced to do so.

**Isa. 50:2** Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?

**behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.**

God said, “When I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” Neither the nation nor individuals answered or responded when God issued an invitation through His prophet. There are two applications.

1. Jeremiah 3:13,14 states the principle that iniquity must be acknowledged in order for one to be forgiven. “*Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.*” In other words, although Israel went astray into harlotry and other things, God called out to the nation that if even one of a city or two of a family would repent from their backsliding condition, He would forgive and bless them. Jesus also issued an invitation, but how many responded? “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

2. The prophetic application pertains to Jesus’ day and the Diaspora. In AD 70, Israel’s polity was destroyed, and the survivors of both the ten and the two tribes were taken to other lands. The same is true of AD 135 and throughout the long period of the Gospel Age. Therefore, both houses of Israel had to experience the Diaspora because of their sins and their crucifixion of Jesus. When Jesus came at his First Advent, God was appealing to the lost sheep of Israel, but only a handful of people responded. (The 500 who truly responded out of the multitudes who followed him for the loaves and the fishes and out of 7 or 8 million Jews in the entire nation would be considered as nothing.) Consequently, the nation was cast off from God’s favor.

Here in verse 2, God was pleading, “I have the ability to use great power on your behalf. As Jews, you all celebrate the Passover and the Exodus as a marvelous demonstration of my power, so why do you not answer me?” God even went into the drama and provided an interesting detail—when He dried up the Red Sea to enable the nation to go over dry-shod, a lot of fish died and the stench was very apparent.

Isn’t it strange that despite all of Israel’s experiences and despite all that God has done, hardly anyone really believes in His power? Even when viewing a movie about the Exodus, the people regard the dividing of the Red Sea as just an exciting story. But this event actually happened, and He who wrought such miracles in the past can repeat them in the future. God’s hand is not shortened—He has the POWER to deliver Israel. The Time of Trouble is needed like a spanking to make mankind realize their need for the Redeemer.

Today Israel, as a nation, does not pray together to God as the people did under Ezra, Nehemiah, and King Josiah. No national fast has been declared. As the Israelites reflect on their past history and their being back in their land, the fact that peace still eludes them brings them anguish of spirit. But as a nation, they have not called on God for His forgiveness, help, and explanation.

**Isa. 50:3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.**

Verse 3 should be coupled with verse 2. Just as God opened the Red Sea, so He caused a plague of darkness (and “sackcloth”) to come upon Egypt. God has such capabilities; He has used them in the past, and He will use them again in the future. He will repeat this POWER in Jacob’s Trouble: plagues, pestilences, and miracles.

**Isa. 50:4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to**

**Speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.**

Verses 4-9 refer to Jesus and give his innermost thoughts prior to his crucifixion. Daily in prayer, Jesus sought God's instruction and help. In fraternizing with fallen human beings, Jesus learned many lessons. He was thankful God taught the meek and humble rather than the wise and learned (Matt. 11:25). As a result of being down here, he understood more fully the depth of the Father's wisdom.

"That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." The wisdom of Jesus was superhuman in speaking the seemingly simple parables. He was given "the tongue of the learned" to be able to illustrate deep principles in this manner. He knew how to speak "a word in season" and to give help and comfort to the sin-sick and weary.

"He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Every morning Jesus prayed to his Father and then waited and listened for guidance and wisdom, and every day he learned more.

**Isa. 50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.**

**Isa. 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.**

Many demeaning things happened to noble Jesus: obscenities, slanders, spitting, etc. Even the hairs of Jesus' beard were plucked out by the roots. He yielded to all of these indignities and did not resist, submitting to the Father's will and wisdom in permitting them. He reasoned, "Since God did not interfere, He wants me to have these experiences." As his experiences continued, Jesus developed more and more wisdom as to how to deal with fallen humanity.

When the smiters did not listen to Jesus, he gave his back to them. In the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, when the householder sent various servants to the husbandmen to whom he had let out his vineyard, they killed the servants (Matt. 21:33-44). Then the householder sent his son, but they killed him too. In the parable, Jesus was pleading with the nation, but they ended up killing him. This parable illustrates the questions in verse 2: "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?"

"I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Jesus was immovable when spat upon; he did not turn away but kept his composure and let his persecutors do these demeaning things. He was like a lamb dumb before its shearers. "I gave my back to the smiters" shows Jesus' submission to the scourging.

Remember, Isaiah was prophesying of things that had not yet happened—of things that would occur at the First Advent. Although these prophecies were recorded many years prior to their fulfillment, they were stated in the past tense.

**Isa. 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.**

After using past tense, Isaiah now spoke as if the experience were actually happening to Jesus. It is as if Jesus were actually on his way to the Cross. Trusting that God would help him, he set his face as a flint, knowing he would not be ashamed. He knew he would be vindicated, so he did not rebel against these shocking experiences.

**Isa. 50:8** He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

“He who vindicates me is near” (RSV). Jesus has not yet been vindicated in the eyes of Israel or of the world at large.

**Comment:** These verses will help the feet members at the very end of the age.

**Reply:** Imagine being in Jesus’ place with all the responsibilities he had faced as the Logos—he was involved with the making of the Law Covenant, he was on Mount Sinai, he dealt with Moses (God gave Moses the instruction through Jesus), etc. Then all of a sudden, he came down here to die for the human race, but the incidental experiences in connection with that death came as a shock. He would have expressed the thoughts to the Father: “I am willing to die, but are these experiences necessary? Nevertheless, I know that you will soon vindicate me. My justification is near.” Jesus was not rebellious.

Notice how Jesus got courage. After having shocking experiences and setting his face as a flint, he asked, “Who will contend with me?” He got bolder and more determined. In *Pilate’s Report*, Pilate asked Jesus, “Don’t you know that I have the power to free you?” Jesus replied, “There is nothing you can do. My whole experience is in the hands of God. Can you say to that water, ‘Back up and go up that hill’? No, that water is to flow down the hill. And so I am determined to do God’s will, and you have nothing to say in the matter.”

“He is near that justifieth *me*; who will contend with *me*? let *us* stand together.” Why is there a change in pronouns from singular (“me”) to plural (“us”)? Jesus was speaking in verse 7: “For the Lord GOD will help me.” Therefore, Jesus was also speaking at the beginning of verse 8: “He [God] is near that justifieth me [Jesus].” “Let *us* stand together” is almost a parenthetical statement, for Jesus again spoke at the end of verse 8: “Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.” The time setting is Jesus’ last hours. Hence this prophecy of Jesus’ innermost thoughts at the time of his crucifixion was written 700 years prior to its fulfillment. Moreover, the prophecy of this chapter in Isaiah is recorded in different tenses: past, present, and future.

In the prophecy, Jesus talked as if his experience at the Cross were currently going on. Then the account says, “Let *us* [therefore] stand together.” This clause is a prophetic indication or commentary that a *class* (the whole Church) would have a somewhat similar experience. In other words, “Let *us* [the Church, therefore] stand together [as Jesus stood alone at the time of his Crucifixion].”

There could even be a further indication, as in the Second Psalm, that what happened to Jesus will happen to the last members of the body of Christ as a class. The Holy Spirit is telling the feet members to take strength, comfort, and consolation in recalling what Jesus had to go through, how he remained steadfast, and the victory he attained. Present tense is used to show what will happen in the future.

What point is being made in the rest of verse 8 and on into verse 9? “Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me [Jesus]. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me.”

**Comment:** It is as if Jesus were saying, “Who would dare oppose me when God is on my side?”

**Reply:** God did ultimately vindicate Jesus’ death.

Notice the strength of Jesus’ character leading up to his death. He steeled his nerves against the Adversary. At first in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, but afterward he was strengthened, so that he was calm when he went to his disciples.

(He had prayed for assurance that his sacrifice would be acceptable, and he got that assurance.) When his enemies came to apprehend him, he said, “Let these others go. I am the one you want.”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Satan was not allowed to interfere with Jesus’ prayer. But when Jesus finished his prayer and was strengthened, it was time for him to be led forth to be executed. He spoke with confidence, for what appeared as a dark, bleak situation would ultimately be revealed in light and God would vindicate him.

“Let him [Judas] come near to me.” When Judas came, Jesus said unto him, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Jesus submitted to all the circumstances of the experience: to Judas, the mob, Caiaphas, etc. (Satan used various human agents to bring Jesus to the Cross.) However, Jesus was reconciled to what had to take place, and *now was the time*.

**Isa. 50:9** Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

“Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?” Jesus was condemned at the trial with the two false witnesses, but this verse assured him that his cause would ultimately be justified. Notice his contrasting experiences. First, his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death and to the point where he sweat blood and tears. After that, he was strengthened with assurances so that he was calm and kept his composure and senses with his disciples. (“It is me you are after. Let my disciples go.”) He submitted to his apprehenders. In other words, strength was followed by introspection in the Garden of Gethsemane (“Have I been faithful?”). Again he was strengthened, but on the Cross, he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” At his death a short while later, he called out triumphantly, “It is finished!” Just as Jesus had contrasting experiences of strength, followed by momentary weakness, strength, weakness, strength, so that is the experience of the Christian—and especially of the feet members leading up to their death. Jesus had feelings, and so do we. He was not afraid of man, but he had moments of introspection when he wondered if he had been faithful. He was both bold as a lion and meek as a lamb.

Even John the Baptist had mixed feelings and emotions. After boldly preaching repentance to the whole nation and giving a strong message to Herod and Herodias, he experienced some doubts about his reasoning regarding the identification of Messiah. Yet he was the one who had said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The point is that we must be very careful in viewing our brethren and not judge by sight how faithful a person is when discouragement and/or depression occurs. We must look at the examples in Scripture to develop an understanding and to get a proper perspective of judgment. We must realize that a Christian’s walk is not that of a stoic, not always immune to suffering.

“Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.” Not only all of Jesus’ enemies but also all enemies will fade away by the end of the Millennial Age. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:25,26). And what happens after that? There will be no more enemies; all evil will have been eradicated.

As a garment decays with age and is eventually discarded, so those of Jesus’ enemies who are incorrigible, although permitted to stay on the scene for a while, will wax old and eventually go into Second Death. The elimination of evil will be a *gradual process* throughout the Kingdom. It takes time for a moth to eat a garment; it will take time for the enemies of Christ to be removed permanently. His enemies may seem to prosper, but their days are numbered. Stated another way, the days of the Adversary himself and of adversaries (plural) are numbered.



**Isa. 50:10** Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Paraphrased, the question is, “Who among you fears Jehovah and obeys the voice of His servant Jesus?” This verse is addressed to those who reverence God and recognize Jesus as the one sent of God—and thus try to obey Jesus’ voice and follow in his footsteps.

“Who among you walks in darkness and has no light?” (paraphrase). Normally we say that God has called us “out of darkness into his marvellous light” and that He has “delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13). But the words of the hymn give the proper slant here: “I’d rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light.” This class fear the Lord and trust and obey Him yet walk in darkness. Things looked dark for Jesus at the time of his crucifixion, and they do for the Christian at times too.

“Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” This advice is given to those who fear (reverence) God, obey the voice of His Son, and walk in darkness during a difficult experience and trial. The instruction is to *continue to trust God*, to continue steadfast in this trust and hope, to continue to be of good courage.

**Isa. 50:11** Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

This verse refers to a different class, a class who are *self-deceived* and *self-illuminated*, as opposed to those who trust God and walk in darkness. This class think they are walking in light, but the light is *self-manufactured*. (They have “sparklers,” as it were, as on the Fourth of July.) The light they manufacture *themselves* creates an aura or charisma about them.

“This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” While this class derive a measure of satisfaction, pleasure, and security from their *own* doings, eventually a day of reckoning, shame, and disappointment will come. The *short-lived* sparks, which *briefly* create a spectacular display, popularity, and *temporary* pleasure for this class in the present life through disobeying God and cultivating their own manufactured light, will result in *age-lasting* shame. Even if they are forgiven and get life, their shame will be preserved for posterity.

**Isa. 51:1** Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

This verse is addressed to a class who “follow after righteousness.” Isaiah 50:10 is a somewhat similar verse.

“Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.” The allusion is to a stone quarry. What is the “rock”? We say that a son who is like his father is “a chip off the old block.” There is a double picture here with (1) spiritual lessons for the Church and (2) a message for natural Israel. Christ is the Rock for the Christian. Peter (*petras*), whose name means “stone,” was a piece of the larger mass of Rock (Christ). And the Israelites “drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them [in the wilderness]: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). Thus the context was speaking of those who “follow after righteousness” and have Abraham as their father and Sarah as their mother (verse 2).

The instruction is to look back to the Rock whence we were hewn, to the beginning of our Christian development. The Apostle Paul said there are times when we, as Christians, get

discouraged. When such discouragement momentarily occurs, we should not be ashamed, for we all have fluctuating thoughts. “Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” in a hard experience, it helps to consider Jesus, who “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself” (Heb. 12:3). In other words, we are to look back to the example of Jesus for comfort and strength and to know that we are not alone in the trial and that God is not unreasonable to permit us to have the experience. We are being schooled and developed, as was Jesus. In fact, he asked the Father in Gethsemane, “Is it absolutely necessary that I drink this particular cup of experience? If not, please let it pass. If so, I am willing to drink it.”

At times, we have difficulty interpreting God’s providences. In a trial, we are to reflect on the Rock whence we were hewn and on God’s previous leadings. If we cannot understand the reason for present providences, we should review God’s leadings of the past and then *trust Him*. Consider the Apostle Paul, who was blinded by the vision of the risen Lord. He prayed three times for the full restoration of his eyesight, thinking he could serve God more efficiently with good eyesight. But the answer was no because God’s strength could be perfected in Paul’s weakness. Paul was so brilliant that a full restoration of his eyesight could have been a deterrent to making his calling and election sure. Poor eyesight apparently kept him humble and constantly aware of his circumstance and dependence upon the Lord.

**Isa. 51:2** Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

We are to look back to the beginning of our existence as a new creature, to the beginning of our identification with the high calling, to the Lord’s early dealings with us that led to consecration. Miraculous things were done on our behalf whether or not we realize it. In the spiritual analogy, Abraham pictures God, Isaac represents Jesus (and the Church, for we are, like Isaac, the seed of promise), and Sarah is the Grace Covenant, the mother of the Church.

Why is there the need to look back to Abraham, to the source, to the beginning of our course? Because God directed Abraham and He directs us too. When we are in doubt as to God’s current leadings, we should reflect back to the time when we were positive He was leading us. The easiest way is to review how God first called us, and then to consider in chronological order His subsequent leadings up to or close to the present. If we never reflect back, we may begin to doubt we truly are Christians, especially if we cannot understand current experiences.

**Q:** How can Abraham represent God in this setting, for God said, “Look unto Abraham ... for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”

**A:** The context has a double application, applying also to natural Israel. There is a principle here regarding both the spiritual and the natural application. Consider natural Israel. The Jews feel forsaken and are sorry for themselves, thinking they have done nothing wrong to deserve such persecution, but if they reviewed their history from the days of Abraham, reexamining themselves as a people and their original calling, they would have increased faith and be reassured. They would fast and pray as a nation to again have God’s leadings as in the past.

**Q:** But are there Jews who “follow after righteousness” and “seek the LORD”?

**A:** The Holy Remnant will be reached.

“For I [God] called him [Abraham] *alone*, and blessed him, and increased him.” Why was this thought inserted? The promise was given to Abraham: “Get thee out of thy country [Ur of Chaldees], and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Gen. 12:1,2). Only Abraham was called, not Sarah, not Lot, etc.

Sarah shared in the relationship as Abraham's wife, but the promise was to *Abraham* alone. He left Haran as an *individual* ("alone"), and God blessed and increased him. The account shows that Abraham was called out of a multitude of people who were living in darkness and were not following after righteousness. Abraham alone had a consuming faith, a consuming desire both to know God and to do His will. Because of Abraham's act of obedience, God will not only bless him but also increase (multiply) him exceedingly.

If we tie in the thought of verse 1, we see that Abraham had to *walk out by faith* and "*follow after righteousness.*" He had to *leave Haran and go* to the place where God directed him. Thus *movement* is shown.

Consider Jesus and the spiritual aspect. At the time of his death, everyone forsook him, and he went through the experience alone; however, he has been exceedingly rewarded for taking that stand for his Father. The Christian, too, seems to be "alone" in trying to serve God, especially as the time approaches for Christ to reveal his Kingdom. The Master himself said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The implication is that the closer we get to the end of the age, the less faith there will be, proportionately speaking. Not only will there be fewer and fewer grains of wheat, not only will the salt of the earth depart, but eventually the Great Company will leave the scene too. Of the faithful ones, only the Holy Remnant will remain—a very small number in a limited sphere of influence.

If the Holy Remnant class look back to the beginning of the Jewish nation and God's dealings with them (for example, in the Red Sea crossing and the miraculous feeding of the manna), they will be greatly strengthened. Thus, for both Jew and Christian, looking back to God's original dealings with them when they became followers of righteousness is beneficial.

**Isa. 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.**

Verse 3 pertains to natural Israel. "The LORD shall comfort Zion" along natural lines. As Isaiah often did, he switched to the promises to natural Israel in connection with the Kingdom. (An earlier example is Isaiah 11.)

God will make Zion's (natural Israel's) "waste places" like the Garden of Eden, the "garden of the LORD." "Waste places" are deserts, barren hills without verdure, etc.

Consider Genesis 13:10, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." At this time in Lot's (and Abraham's) life, there was no Dead Sea. Up until Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the "plain of Jordan," which is now under the Dead Sea, was a "well watered" plain with some slime pits here and there. The *mighty* earthquake that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (and several other cities) and changed the contour of the land also formed the Dead Sea. The shallow, well-watered valley was opened up into a great defile with a dead end. Prior to the earthquake, the Jordan River probably had many tributaries that just petered out in the desert. After the earthquake, the river began to fill up the Dead Sea because there was no outlet.

The fresh water of the Jordan River carried minerals, so when the earthquake created the depression for the Dead Sea and the water began to back up into it and evaporate in the sun, the remaining water became more and more saline from the minerals that were left behind. Eventually the freshwater lake became a saltwater lake. The Dead Sea will undergo another change in the future when God miraculously delivers the Holy Remnant.

Incidentally, Genesis 13:10 indicates that part of Egypt, the part along the Nile, was once very *fertile*. The plain of Jordan “was well watered ... like the land of Egypt.”

**Isa. 51:4 Harken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.**

Israel (“my people,” “my nation”) was being addressed. “A law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.” In the Kingdom, God’s law will go forth from spiritual Zion, and the word of the Lord (His judgment, or justice) from Jerusalem.

**Isa. 51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.**

“My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth.” The time setting is near Jacob’s Trouble and Israel’s deliverance. There is no question about Israel’s deliverance, for God’s “salvation is gone forth”; it is part of His plan, and it shall come to pass *in due time* and *on time*. God’s “deliverance draws near speedily” (RSV).

What is the thought of “mine arms [plural] shall judge [rule—RSV] the people” versus “on mine arm [singular] shall they trust”? The plural “arms” are The Christ, Jesus being one arm and the Church the other. The singular “arm” is Jesus, the important arm in whom the people will trust.

**Isa. 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.**

“The heavens shall vanish ... and the earth shall wax old ... and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner.” When this chapter is finished, the context will be understood better. The Prophet Isaiah was not being addressed here. Rather, the instruction was addressed to no particular personality, and neither were other chapters in the last third of this book. The old heavens and earth are being described. In the new order, unrighteousness will not be tolerated. Isaiah 35:8 is a proof text: “An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those [for the unclean].” In the Kingdom, the “unclean” will be instructed, and they will have to obey and bow to Jesus. The righteous, not the wicked, will predominate and flourish.

For the portion of verse 6 that reads, “They [the inhabitants] that dwell therein shall die in like manner,” the RSV has, “They who dwell in it will die like gnats.” In other words, the wicked who prosper today and get away with their evil will be stopped in the Kingdom. There will be swift justice as well as opportunity for repentance and reform. In the new order, both the civil and the ecclesiastical control of the people will be changed; these are described as the “new heavens” and the “new earth” (Isa. 65:17).

In the present age, religious and civil institutions are more or less controlled by Satan, and the people underneath that control are adversely affected by the atmosphere. In fact, it is a miracle to survive in the truth today, for everything is poisoned—as in a gas chamber. Our protection is the armor of truth. The world, not having truth, gets worse and worse.

Verse 6, then, is a figurative impersonal directive to look upward (and not a literal personal directive to Isaiah). The setting is the end of the Gospel Age when deliverance is near. The wicked flourish now, but the present order is waxing old and decaying.

**Isa. 51:7 Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.**

**Isa. 51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.**

Verses 7 and 8, which are addressed to the Church, are properly a separate paragraph.

**Isa. 51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?**

The new picture that begins here is based on the deliverance of Israel in the Exodus. In connection with that deliverance, God cut “Rahab” (Egypt) and wounded the “dragon,” the crocodile (also a symbol of Egypt). Prior to the “wounding,” Egypt was a great power. (Egypt was a world empire prior to the four universal empires from 606 BC through today.)

“Art thou not it [the arm of Jehovah] that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” God’s arm is told to “awake,” that is, to “put on strength” and to fight for Israel as in ancient days.

**Isa. 51:10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?**

Notice that “the waters” were a “great deep.” In other words, the parting of the Red Sea had nothing to do with tides and the Israelites’ crossing on a sandbar. In fact, the Scriptures indicate the opposite. Not only did the Israelites cross on dry land, but the sea is described as *high* walls of congealed water. The opening of the Red Sea occurred in a relatively deep portion of the Red Sea. The phrase “waters of the *great deep*” is not an exaggeration, as the following texts show. “He [God] divided the sea [miraculously], and caused them [the Israelites] to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap” (Psa. 78:13). “Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness” (Psa. 74:13,14). God divided the sea by His *strength*. He broke the heads (plural) of the dragons (plural) in the waters and broke the heads (plural) of leviathan and gave them to the people to eat. (The reason that “heads” and “dragons” are plural would make an interesting study.)

The arm of Jehovah “made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over.” Who are the “ransomed” in this picture? The Pastor likened the people going through the Red Sea to the redeemed in the next age making their transit through the Kingdom. Those who reach the other side and look back (at the end of the Kingdom) will sing the song of great deliverance. If the night of the eating of the Passover lamb refers to the Gospel Age, then the subsequent deliverance of the Israelites through the Red Sea pertains to the deliverance of those who get life in the Kingdom. The passing over of the destroying angel in connection with the death of the firstborn occurred earlier and was not related to the crossing of the Red Sea. The destroying angel passing over the households of Egypt pictures a judgment that will occur at the conclusion of the Gospel Age. In summary, the “ransomed” in verse 10 are the ransomed of the world.

**Isa. 51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

Isaiah told more about restitution than any of the other prophets. “And the ransomed [Jews and Gentiles] of the LORD shall return [from the grave], and come to Zion with singing” (RSV).

Jews will return to Israel to live there, and Gentiles will go there to be nurtured, healed, and counseled. “In those days ... ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Representatives of nations from all over the earth will have to go to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles to obtain a blessing, or there will not be any rain in the homeland (Zech. 14:16,17).

**Isa. 51:12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;**

**Isa. 51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?**

God is the One who comforts Israel. The salvation He has predetermined is a foregone conclusion, and it is coming nearer. But notice how the picture changes from happiness to sadness. The context has been describing what God did for Israel in the Exodus and the Red Sea crossing, and it has been telling about the joy and singing in the Kingdom. Now the picture, which is sobering and depressing, reverts back to incidents leading up to Jacob’s Trouble. When the inhabitants of Israel see the trouble coming, when they see the large invading host entering the land, PANIC will seize them. The Lord is saying (paraphrase), “Do not be afraid of men. It looks very ominous, but these men are like gnats [verse 6, RSV]. Even the fiercest, strongest, most wicked man is like grass, like a gnat, like nothing.”

The theme of Jacob’s Trouble is interwoven in the Book of Isaiah perhaps 30 or 40 times. Putting all of the descriptions together furnishes an IMMENSE amount of knowledge. Collectively, the other prophets said a lot about Jacob’s Trouble, but Isaiah, as *one* prophet, gave abundant information.

“Where is the fury of the oppressor?” Gog, the invading host, will be very violent. Both the numbers and the ferocity of Gog will be frightening. Houses will be rifled; women will be ravished; Jerusalem will be taken. In fact, Israel will be temporarily defeated by Gog so that it will be apparent to all that the deliverance is *God’s*.

**Isa. 51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.**

The half of Jerusalem that will be taken “captive” will be afraid they will perish (Zech. 14:2). Verse 14 is a clue that the prisoners will not be treated well.

**Isa. 51:15 But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.**

What does this verse tell us about the literal Exodus? When Moses stood before the Red Sea and lifted his rod, the sea was stormy and boisterous (the “waves roared”). (We are reminded of the two storms on the Sea of Galilee, one when Jesus was in the boat and one when he was not.) Just as it looked very bleak to the Israelites who were hemmed in with the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh and host behind them, so it will look utterly hopeless for Israel in Jacob’s Trouble. At the *height* of the trouble in the Exodus, God simply chopped the Red Sea in half and let the Israelites go over dry-shod. And at the *height* of the future Time of Trouble, God will cut short Israel’s trouble by delivering the Holy Remnant.

Isaiah’s information will be over the heads of most Jews. Only the Holy Remnant will receive, understand, and heed this comforting message. Even though all hope is lost, God is telling

them to be of good cheer and not to fear man.

**Isa. 51:16** And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

Just like verses 7 and 8, verse 16 is addressed to the Church. Most of this chapter is related to Israel, but interjected in the message are occasional verses addressed to the Church. Proof that this verse is directed to the Church is the clause “say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” God speaks unto Zion, the Church.

**Comment:** This verse in the RSV sounds as if the Holy Remnant is being addressed. By the things God is doing and will do for the Holy Remnant, He is really saying to them, “You are my people.”

**Reply:** Yes, that could be. However, it seems more likely that God is addressing the Church, the *instruments* of salvation. Moses was used in connection with the Red Sea deliverance, Jesus was used in regard to the deliverance of the disciples in the boat, and The Christ will be the instruments of salvation at the end of the age.

Psalm 45:16 speaks of the Ancient Worthies: “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou [The Christ] mayest make princes in all the earth.” The Ancient Worthies will be the “children” of The Christ; they will be “princes in all the earth.” The “fathers,” the Ancient Worthies, preceded the Church in time development, but in the Kingdom, the Church will be over the Ancient Worthies. A similar reversal is shown in the prophecy about Jesus’ being “the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). When Jesus was made flesh, he was the offspring of David. In the lineage, he was the son of David born to Mary, yet at the same time, he was David’s Lord, his “root”; in other words, Jesus preceded David in time.

Jesus and the Church will be the Father and the mother, respectively, of the regenerated human race, or children. The most outstanding of the children will be the “princes,” the Ancient Worthies. God will “plant the [new] heavens” (Jesus and the Church), and He will also “lay the foundations of the [new] earth” (the Ancient Worthies, the civil aspect).

Isaiah 59:21 reads, “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” Just as the Church has gotten the Holy Spirit during the Gospel Age, so the time will come when God will pour out His Holy Spirit on the world. Isaiah 59 incorporates both the Church and the Jewish people.

The Holy Remnant, having previously been informed, will be instrumental in helping Israel see their situation *after* Jacob’s Trouble. Verse 16 is presented from the standpoint that there will be a message to Israel telling them what they are to do *in* the extremity of Jacob’s Trouble. That message will come basically from the Lord’s people (“my people”). The Holy Remnant will be the nucleus of the Kingdom, and at the head of that nucleus will be the Ancient Worthies. An interesting point to ponder is that when the Ancient Worthies are raised at the height of the Time of Trouble, they will need instruction. Being perfect men, they will grasp the information quickly, but they will require instruction. Other Scriptures indicate they will subsequently receive daily instruction from the Church on how to rule, but initially, the Holy Remnant will be more informed than the Ancient Worthies.

**Isa. 51:17** Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

**Isa. 51:18** There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

**Isa. 51:19** These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?

**Isa. 51:20** Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

In one sense, Israel has been drinking the “cup of trembling” all down the Gospel Age during the Diaspora, but the bitter dregs of the “cup of his [God’s] wrath” will be Jacob’s Trouble (RSV). Who will guide and comfort Israel when she drinks the bitter dregs of the cup of trembling and fury in Jacob’s Trouble? None of her own leaders or people will be able to comfort her.

How can this trouble in the near future be harmonized with the fact that Israel is now in her period of favor? What is the purpose of this manifestation of the Lord’s fury in Jacob’s Trouble? The purpose is to vindicate God’s name and *especially to purge out* the unfavorable element so that only a Holy Remnant will remain. All Jews will share in this experience in order to weed out the wrong-hearted ones.

Isaiah 66:15-17 describes the purging out of Jews not in heart harmony with God: “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.” The Jews who eat “swine’s flesh” are those who have violated their covenant; many are even atheistically inclined. They will be purged out, consumed, by fire and by sword. Although the term “all flesh” includes Gentiles here, other portions of Isaiah using similar language are particularly addressed to the Jew.

Verse 20 is better in the RSV: “Your sons have fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God.” The antelope, a more docile animal, is the correct thought, not a wild bull. Israel’s “sons” will be like an antelope in a net. Realizing their situation in Jacob’s Trouble, the “sons” will be pining and repenting; their hearts will be changed and softened by the experience. As Christians, we should, for the most part, bring our sorrow and problems to the Lord and not unnecessarily burden other people. We pray and commune privately with the Lord. But verse 20 is talking about a more public situation. Today many Jews do not convert because of the family opposition that would result, but in Jacob’s Trouble, the right-hearted Jews will not care what others think. Elsewhere we are told that in connection with their change of heart, they will be like mourning doves; in sorrow and contrition, they will cry to God for deliverance.

Verse 19 mentions two things that will befall Israel: (1) desolation (“famine”), i.e., a forsaking, no help, and (2) destruction (the “sword”).

**Isa. 51:21** Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

**Isa. 51:22** Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:



**Isa. 51:23** But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

At the height of Jacob's Trouble, at the moment of their direst extremity, when they have drunk the cup of woe to its dregs, God will say to the Holy Remnant, "No more will you have this experience." God will remove the cup forever and turn the destruction against Gog (the Assyrian, the hammer or battle-ax), as shown when the gallows Haman designed for Mordecai were used on himself. And so the "gallows" that Gog and Magog plan to use to exterminate the Jews will boomerang. Note: The cup *must be drunk to the dregs* before it can be removed.

**Isa. 52:1** Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

**Isa. 52:2** Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

"Zion," "Jerusalem," "the holy city," and "captive daughter" all refer to natural Israel. What an encouraging picture! "Awake, awake" is a call that will be given in the future. This dramatic, exhilarating wording will probably be set to music.

"Loose the bonds from your neck" (RSV). The shackles will be broken and the prisoners set free from the experience of Jacob's Trouble. Natural Israel (the Holy Remnant) will be released from their hopeless plight.

**Isa. 52:3** For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

"Ye have sold yourselves for nought." God overruled conditions so that the Israelites went to Egypt to get food during the famine. After Joseph's brothers realized that he was in the high position of prime minister, the entire family was invited to Egypt as guests and to live in the land of Goshen.

God told Abraham that he and his posterity would be afflicted by another nation (Egypt) for four generations. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; ... But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (Gen. 15:13,16). Hence Abraham died not receiving the promise; the only land he got was a little piece of ground in which to bury Sarah and himself. But he knew that four generations hence, they would be liberated. Abraham passed that information on to Isaac, Isaac passed it on to Jacob, and Jacob passed it on to his children. Thus Joseph knew and had great faith.

**Isa. 52:4** For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

The first part of the verse is one time setting: "My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there." The last part of the verse is a different (and later) time setting: "The Assyrian oppressed them without cause." The statement about the Assyrian is a form of sarcasm, for the Jews were so despised by the Assyrians that they were not even sold but were given away. The Jews were treated worse than cattle. Their families were divided as a spoil, and no compassion was shown for the family unit. When God redeems Israel in the future, He will do the same in reverse fashion. He will not require a price of the antitypical "Assyrian" for their redemption. In other words, God has purposed to redeem Israel, no matter what.

In past ages, the Egyptians and the Assyrians both oppressed Israel without proper justification. The Israelites were permitted to have suffering experiences because *God* saw they needed them. During the famine, Pharaoh invited the Israelites into Egypt, but in time, when they began to multiply, a succeeding Pharaoh got nervous, thinking it was just a matter of time until the Israelites would outnumber the Egyptians. As a result, taskmasters were instituted.

**Isa. 52:5** Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

**Isa. 52:6** Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

When God delivers Israel from Jacob's Trouble, He will speak in an authoritarian voice, "*Behold it is I,*" and Israel will *know* that they are *God's* people and that *God* has spoken.

**Isa. 52:7** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Down through history, Bible translators (Catholic and Protestant) have put a paragraph break here in order to spiritualize verses 7 and 8, but there should be no break. These two verses are related to and connected with previous verses. "Zion," mentioned in verses 1, 2, and 7, is *natural* Israel. Although "Zion" often refers to spiritual Israel, the context determines the usage, and the context here is about natural Israel.

Through experience and study, when we find that a certain application is true in Bible interpretation, we tend to use that precedent as a hard-and-fast rule for other passages. For example, let us consider Isaiah 40. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1,2). "Jerusalem" is natural Israel, who had "received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" in 1878, when the time period of disfavor was fulfilled. This message has been given and is being given in the Harvest period. Now to continue on in Isaiah 40: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 40:9,10). This message is also being given, but it has *not yet been fulfilled*. Verses 9 and 10 are *good news* about what *will happen*, whereas from one standpoint, verses 1 and 2 are *good news* about what *has already happened*. God has not yet come with a "strong hand"; His arm does not yet rule for Him. The purpose of this advance information is to encourage and strengthen the right-hearted Jew.

Nahum 1:15 is also pertinent: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." Again this is *future* good news (but spoken of as having occurred in the past). At this time, the wicked shall no longer be in Judah. This message will be given in the future after Jacob's Trouble.

**Q:** What is the thought behind "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts"?

**A:** The New Law Covenant will have many features that are similar to the Old Law Covenant. Ezekiel spoke about the changes in sacrifices. Although slightly different, they will pertain to

the Feast of Tabernacles, etc.

In regard to Isaiah 52:7, the following portion of that verse merits careful consideration: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him.” In Revelation 1:10-15, the Apostle John heard a great voice saying, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: ... What thou seest, write in a book.” John then turned to see the voice that spoke with him, and he saw a personage “like unto the Son of man” clothed with priestly garments. “And his feet [were] like unto fine brass.” Whose feet? The feet of *Jesus*, the Son of man, the one who identified himself as “Alpha and Omega.” Moreover, lessons about Jesus’ feet were given to the Church of Thyatira: “And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass” (Rev. 2:18). Since the message was given at the *beginning* of the Gospel Age, and since it applies to the *fourth* period of the Church—that is, long before the feet members of The Christ are on the scene at the *end* of the Gospel Age—the “feet” are likewise the feet of Jesus.

Consider 1 Corinthians 15:27,28. “For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” “All things” will be put under Jesus’ feet. The “Son” is Jesus.

Zechariah 14:3,4 uses “feet.” “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” Verse 3 clarifies that the “feet” here are God’s. In that day, *God’s* feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. The “feet” cannot refer to the last (or feet) members of the body of Christ because the *whole* Church will reign with Christ and, in setting up the Kingdom, will establish their authority on the earth as the representatives of God. Therefore, *The Christ* are the feet of Jehovah in Zechariah 14:4.

This order of authority is shown in the Tabernacle where the supernatural light, or Shekinah glory, over the Ark of the Covenant pictures God; the lid, or mercy seat, of the Ark pictures Jesus; and the coffer underneath pictures the Church (the lid and the coffer being *one* article of furniture). Jehovah will not actually come down to Jerusalem, but He will cause the Mount of Olives to *literally* split for several reasons, one being that it will produce a theatrical and psychological effect on the Holy Remnant. (Of course there is a spiritual meaning as well, but the literal is very forceful and should be given the primary emphasis.) God will establish His authority on the earth through The Christ. He will purge away ungodliness out of Jacob through the “Deliverer,” called “saviours [*plural*]” in Obadiah 21: “And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.” The figurative “feet” of Jehovah that will come down on the Mount of Olives are a picture of God’s authority. He will make the earth His footstool.

When Jehovah puts His feet on the Mount of Olives, He will establish His authority in the earth and say, “Be still, and know that I am God.” In the day when the Mount of Olives is split by a great earthquake and all kinds of miracles occur in nature, the people will know it is God who is saying, “Behold, it is I.” They will realize that the God of nature, the God of Israel, is speaking and that they must be still and listen.

The point is that the word “feet” does not have to apply to the feet members. When we see the word “feet” in Scripture, we must analyze *whose* feet they are and what time period is being discussed. Jesus’ feet? God’s feet? The feet members?

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that *publisheth* peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that *publisheth* salvation.” “Publishing” can be done in many ways, not just with a printing press. For example, a message can be announced on television, on radio, or in person.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that ... saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” The *Third Volume*, entitled *Thy Kingdom Come*, contains a chapter title that uses this Scripture: “Thy God Reigneth.” In explaining this text, the Pastor spoke of it as being fulfilled. He said the Lord’s Prayer is answered, but is it? Has the Kingdom come? Is the Lord’s will being done on earth today? Does God reign now? If the Kingdom is already here, why do we continue to pray for it? The Pastor, as a pioneer, was bubbling with such enthusiasm over this gem of present truth that he wrote like a poet, and in his idealism, he put that which is future in the present. God does this too; He sees future events as if they are present. For example, He says He is not a God of the dead but a God of the living and then uses Abraham as an illustration. The implication is that Abraham will be called forth from the tomb. Because of the certainty, or surety, of that event happening, God speaks of it as having already occurred.

Verse 7 is addressed to the nation of Israel. When will their God reign? The reign will be when Israel is delivered from Gog. At that time, the nation *will immediately know* God is reigning, and they will know *Him* from that day forward. In other words, at a specific date in history, the nation will be converted and know that their God has delivered them. “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward” (Ezek. 39:22). How blessed are the feet of God that will make this announcement: “Behold, thy God *reigneth!*”

**Isa. 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.**

Israel’s “watchmen” will sing and “see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion,” that is, *after Jacob’s Trouble*. This phrase is sometimes wrongly applied to the early years of the Harvest period. Proponents say that the brethren all saw eye to eye back there, that they were in mental agreement and they cooperated enthusiastically with each other. While that may have been true for a while, it was not characteristic of the whole period of the Pastor’s life. Since the brethren knew that the Scriptures declare, “Blessed is that servant,” many were afraid to say anything else. But as soon as the Pastor died, mayhem developed (of course he had some very difficult experiences during his life too).

To refute this wrong application, notice the context and time setting of verse 8. The watchmen will see eye to eye *when God delivers Israel* and brings her out of captivity (“when the LORD shall bring again Zion”). “Zion” is *natural* Israel here; it is not a reference to when the sleeping saints were raised.

The following are examples of how the word “watchman” or “watchmen” is used in Scripture:

Isaiah 21:11,12 reads, “The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, *Watchman*, what of the night? *Watchman*, what of the night? The *watchman* said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.” In these verses, the “watchman” (singular) is the Pastor.

Daniel 4:13,14,17 has, “I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a *watcher* and an *holy one* came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.... This matter is by the decree of the *watchers*, and the demand by the word of the *holy ones*: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and

setteth up over it the basest of men.” The “watcher” and “holy one” (singular) is the Logos. The “watchers” and “holy ones” (plural) are the holy angels. Down through Israel’s history, God stationed watchers to make sure His plan was carried out and not spoiled by the Adversary. God allows evil to seemingly triumph, but it can go only so far.

Daniel 12:1 states, “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [that is, for Israel, Daniel’s people].” Michael will stand up—in other words, he will *watch out* for them.

Song 5:7 reads, “The *watchmen* that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.” These “watchmen” are natural Israel, who will smite the Great Company in the future.

As can be seen from these examples, we must consider the words “watchers” and “watchmen” in context in order to properly identify them. The “watcher(s)” (singular or plural) can be in heaven or down here, and in the present life or beyond the veil.

Now to return to Isaiah 52:8, the verse under discussion: “Thy *watchmen* shall lift up the voice; ... together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.” Who are these “watchmen”? Prior to the Gospel Age, God’s people were natural Israel. (“You only have I known of all the families of the earth”—Amos 3:2.) Now God’s primary people are the Church. When the Little Flock is complete, the Great Company will be God’s chief concern. After that, His people will again be natural Israel, and that is the time setting of Isaiah 52:8. Verses 1 and 2 tell when God will “bring again Zion”; it will be when the shackles and bands are removed from natural Israel, that is, when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. Natural Israel will then return to the seat of God’s favor, which is the position that was occupied but lost when the crown was taken off Zedekiah (Ezek. 21:25,26). When God thus reinstates Israel, the New Covenant will be in operation (Jer. 31:31-33). Thus verse 8 is talking about the resurrection of Zion to the position previously lost.

The “watchmen” are The Christ, who will be concerned for Israel. But will Jacob’s Trouble occur the moment the feet members are taken into glory? No, a period of time (about three years?) will elapse between the change of the last members in persecution and God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. And the Great Company must be completed during that time. Satan will be in a frenzy—like a person out of control with a bad temper or a temper tantrum. When he realizes he is losing the battle, he will want to bring the house down with him.

**Comment:** Since Satan will again try to deceive the people at the end of the Millennium, that means he will not have given up even at that point. Therefore, he certainly will not surrender peaceably at the end of the Gospel Age.

**Reply:** During the Kingdom, Satan will be incarcerated, but he will not reform. Only those with the divine nature will be able to contend with him.

When the Time of Trouble is occurring down here, the members of The Christ (as the “watchmen”) will be careful not to let matters get so out of control that they interfere with the divine plan. Nevertheless, the Lord wants the people to be humbled and brought to their knees, so He will not rescue them right away. First stationed like guards to keep things from getting out of control, the watchmen will subsequently be given a free hand. At that point, the Adversary will be summarily dispatched and imprisoned. The Church will perform a defensive act until the signal is given to overwhelm Satan and the fallen angels. Kingdom blessings will follow as The Christ assume their roles as kings and priests.

“When the LORD shall bring again Zion” is the time when the reign of Christ will begin, the New Covenant will go into effect, and the Kingdom will be established. All of the living shall then KNOW that the time has come.

In our own little localities, we are like miniature “watchmen” now, in the present life. In judging us to see whether we are fit for His Kingdom, the Lord, among other criteria, looks to see if we are concerned (if we are watchmen) about His Word, His truth, His people, His cause.

In summary, a number of events must take place between the going of the last members and the establishment of the Kingdom. During this interim, The Christ will watch—but they will break forth in joyful singing when the Kingdom comes and they can get involved as kings and priests.

**Isa. 52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.**

“Jerusalem” is natural Israel here. These sentiments will be said to the Holy Remnant at the time of their deliverance in the near future. The great horde of Gog will cover the land right up to the “neck” (Jerusalem), capture the city, and be victorious long enough to take half of the people into exile, but the Adversary will be stopped at that point, for God will then fight for Israel as He did in times past (Isa. 8:8; Zech. 14:3).

**Isa. 52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

“The LORD [Jehovah] hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD [Jehovah] hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (verses 9 and 10). The fulfillment of these verses is FUTURE. God has not “made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,” let alone in the eyes of His people, the nation of Israel. Jesus is the “arm” of God, His *mighty* power. Only a fragment of that power has been exercised in the past. Jesus is the arm, the branch, of God.

When Jesus raised the dead, healed lepers, opened blind eyes, etc., he did it by the “finger” of God (Luke 11:20). All of these miracles pertained to *individuals*. When *national and international* events are involved, God’s wrist or hand is used. But the use of His arm will end all discussion. All will know it! The age of faith will be over, and the Kingdom will be in operation.

**Isa. 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.**

**Isa. 52:12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.**

Verses 11 and 12 are a different, new, and separate message from the beginning and end of Chapter 52. In other words, verses 1-10 are one picture, verses 13-15 are another picture, and verses 11 and 12 are a separate message.

The command was to depart out of the midst of “her,” a *symbolic woman*. This woman is related to Revelation 18:4, “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her [mystic Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Jews were captives in the ancient literal city of Babylon for 70 years, from 606 BC until 536 BC. All of a sudden, God sent word through His prophet to the captives in the city to get out, for the enemy was coming. Those who had faith obeyed the call to leave, forsaking homes, furniture, etc. Since the Jews who lived in the city were generally more prosperous

than those in the suburbs, leaving the city of Babylon required *sacrifice* as well as *faith*, and relatively few responded. The Jews who waited too long to leave the city were killed.

The woman is Papacy, the international “mother” church, which considers Protestant churches to be her alienated “daughters.” The papal system reasons that Protestants like Luther left the *true* fold to establish the Methodist, Baptist, etc., churches. It is the desire of the Roman Catholic Church to have the *fratelli separati* come back into the one fold again, thereby having only one church of Christ. The international woman of Revelation 17 is pictured as sitting on many waters (nations, peoples, and tongues).

In proportion as we are enlightened, we are responsible to hearken to the Lord’s message and to come out of the nominal system. God is calling His people: “Come out of her, *my people*.” To be enlightened in regard to mystic Babylon is a blessing and an indication of God’s favor. Therefore, it is an *individual* responsibility to come out of Babylon, and we should not rant and rave about others.

“Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.” In other words, do not be involved in the plagues that will come upon Babylon.

“For the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.” God guards in the front and protects at the rear. This statement is an allusion to the Exodus. God was both *in front of* and *behind* the Israelites when they left Egypt. When Moses led the Israelites down to the water, the Egyptians said, “Oh, those fools! They have hemmed themselves in between the mountain ranges on each side.” With the sea in front of them and the pursuing Egyptians behind them, the Israelites appeared trapped. At that point, Moses said, “Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” When he lifted up his rod and beckoned to the water, the Red Sea miraculously opened up before them. Thus what Pharaoh thought was a deathtrap became a means of salvation.

The cloud canopy, which had been over the 2 million Israelites as they walked from Rameses to Succoth, to Etham, to Pi-hahiroth, to Migdol, and to the Red Sea, continued with them. A pillar extended downward from the cloud so that the host would know the direction of travel. This pillar (called “the angel of God”) was in front of Moses, and Moses was in front of the Israelites. The host could not see Moses, but they could see the pillar. At the Red Sea, the cloud lifted up and changed position; that is, it moved from in front of the Israelites to behind them and there dropped like a curtain. As the pursuing Egyptians with their chariots entered the Red Sea to chase the Israelites, the cloud acted like a black curtain that the Egyptians could not see through. Thus, as the front part of the cloud curtain reflected light *ahead* for the Israelites, the back side of the cloud curtain reflected darkness *backward* to the Egyptians. Exodus 14:19,20 reads, “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

**Comment:** The implication is that it took all night for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea.

**Reply:** Yes, and they crossed a major part of the Red Sea, not at a narrow point or on a sandbar.

The Exodus was ancient history at the time of Isaiah’s ministry, but he alluded to this event in Israel’s past in connection with the Harvest of the Gospel Age. Just as back there when Israel left bondage in Egypt, God miraculously assisted and delivered them, so those who by faith obey His voice at this end of the age and leave mystic Babylon will be miraculously

safeguarded as new creatures.

There is a difference, however. “For the LORD will go before you [the spiritual Israelite]; and the God of Israel [the same God who delivered the nation at the time of the Exodus] will be your rearward.” Back there the Israelites left Egypt *in haste* following the tenth plague with the death of the firstborn of all those not under the blood. The Egyptians beseeched Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave lest they all perish. Pharaoh, whose own household was affected, said, “Be gone!” The very next morning, after the Israelites had eaten the Passover lamb, they rallied at Rameses and left from there according to Moses’ instructions for an orderly march. Isaiah 52:12 states that those who leave mystic Babylon during the Harvest *will not go in haste*: “For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.” In literal Babylon, the prophet’s warning gave the Israelites almost a two-year notice to think about leaving, but even so, the sacrifice of worldly goods was involved. However, for the truly consecrated who do not leave mystic Babylon voluntarily during the Harvest, there will be a forced flight *in haste* at the time of Babylon’s fall. Although the Great Company will be rescued, they will suffer loss. By leaving earlier, they would have had the full favor of God with many compensatory blessings.

The Lord gives the *advance* warning, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of ... her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). He reasons with the Christian: “Do you want to be loyal to *me* or to your family or to some other man or institution? Which do you prefer?” Jesus said that no man could be his disciple if he loved father, mother, etc., more than him. That is the price to consider when counting the cost of consecration. If our relationship with God would be impaired, we would have to forsake that person and not just obey what he or she told us to do. In regard to forsaking Babylon, those who delay and hesitate to leave the system will experience some suffering.

**Q:** Does the admonition to “not go out with haste” mean there should be some deliberation about leaving Babylon?

**A:** Yes. At the present time, one should consider the cost, but once the decision is made, there should be no dillydallying. However, when Babylon is about to fall, one should get out in haste in order to receive any blessing at all. Those who wait will suffer loss.

All of us will die sometime, and for most people, death entails suffering and is not pleasant. Which is better—to die suffering *for God* in the knowledge that we tried to live, serve, and obey Him, which brings peace of heart, soul, and mind, or to die with uncertainty?

Verses 11 and 12 are instructing God’s people that to please Him, they should not dillydally in leaving Babylon, but they should carefully consider the step they are taking. For those who obey this commandment, God has promised to be both in front and in back of them.

God said, “Come out of her, *my people*.” He did not say, “Come out of her, *everybody*.” In other words, He was instructing those with a hearing ear to leave. And to even *hear* that call—whether or not it is obeyed—is an honor. For every step of obedience, God takes a step closer to the individual.

**Q:** Wouldn’t the thought of not departing Babylon in haste also include the idea of giving some type of explanation for leaving? Not only would this strengthen the individual, but also the explanation might help others in the congregation with a hearing ear.

**A:** That would depend upon the circumstances. Certainly the individual’s family and best friends would be informed, but the main responsibility is the individual himself, the principle being “he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.”



**Q:** Isn't "Babylon" broader than just Papacy? Wouldn't it include all systems that teach God-dishonoring doctrines?

**A:** Yes, Babylon is a system of both mother and daughters.

The Book of Revelation is all spiritual regarding Babylon, whereas the Book of Isaiah is both natural and spiritual. Isaiah had a partial application back there to the natural Jew and also has a fulfillment pertaining to our day.

**Isa. 52:13** Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Verses 13-15 are a new and separate section—a radical change. After the text said, "Depart ye, depart ye, ... touch no unclean thing," verse 13 begins with "Behold, my servant." God's "servant" is Christ, who will "deal prudently, ... be exalted and extolled, and be very high." (The Jews think they are the suffering "servant.") Proofs that the servant is Jesus will be considered with the next verse.

**Isa. 52:14** As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

"Astonied" means "astonished"; that is, the people were so awestruck that they were frozen (as stone) with amazement. The rest of verse 14 furnishes clues that an individual is referred to here, not the Jewish nation. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." This person whom God loves is an obedient servant who will one day be greatly extolled and honored. However, at the time of this vision, the servant was in his period of humiliation.

Jesus' visage (face) was "marred more than any man" at the time of his crucifixion. During his earthly ministry, multitudes followed him (for example, 5,000 men plus women and children on one occasion, and 4,000 on another occasion). The people desired his company then, but not when he was crucified. Prior to his crucifixion, it was said of Jesus that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and *in favour with God and man*" (Luke 2:52). Having no food or sleep for 36 hours; being scourged, spit upon, interrogated, buffeted, etc.; and then being nailed naked to the Cross, Jesus was a pitiful sight.

Why did Isaiah prophesy that Jesus' face would be marred beyond that of any other man and his form more than that of all the other sons of men, especially when many others suffered the death of crucifixion? (1) Because Jesus was a perfect human being in all aspects, the contrast when he hung on the Cross was more noticeable. (2) Events happened suddenly. At the height of his popularity, after the people had hailed him, "Hosanna to the highest," and were ready to crown him, he was apprehended at night in the Garden of Gethsemane while he was praying, and he was tried secretly, condemned by the priests, and taken to Pilate early in the morning to be executed. When the people saw him carrying the Cross, they asked, "How could this be?" Immediately they began to lose faith in him as the Son of God. In other words, in view of his previous profession to be *the Messiah*, the great Savior of the nation of Israel, his crucifixion, with his body twisted and hanging in such a pitiful state, seemed more dreadful than that of others who did not make such a profession. And how did the people react? They turned on him and mocked him: "If you are the Son of God, show us. Come down from the Cross." The evidence seemed to contradict Jesus' profession—until the earthquake, the tearing of the Temple veil, the raising of some sleeping saints, his resurrection, and his ascension.

Psalm 22 recorded *in advance* Jesus' thoughts while on the Cross. Verse 6 describes his thoughts

as he looked down at his body: “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” When a worm is held up, it is naked, twisted, and distorted; it has no arms or legs and no rosy cheeks. When Jesus hung on the Cross, he was completely naked, and his body was twisted out of joint (those who drove in the spikes did not exercise care and consideration for his position). He saw his bones dislocated and sticking out grotesquely. Imagine how the Son of God felt being exposed to such shame! The public could now look upon him in his nakedness, upon the one who had been perfect. He was a worm not only from the standpoint of humiliation but because he had no covering of clothing.

Psalm 22:14 reads, “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” Jesus’ heart burst, and this verse is saying that he felt the heart attack coming on. His heart was getting weak like wax. Shortly after this experience, he cried out, “It is finished!” When the centurion pierced his side with a sword, both blood and water gushed out, showing that the heart sac had ruptured.

**Isa. 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.**

The RSV reads, “So shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.”

One might ask, “Doesn’t everyone know about Jesus and about his being crucified?” But the answer is no, for hundreds of millions of people do not know either his name or about the Crucifixion. Heathen religions outnumber the Christian religion by far! Hence many will hear about Jesus for the first time in the Kingdom. Some have heard just a little about him, and others have heard more but have not thought about him. Verse 15 is saying that the people will be shocked when movies of the *actual* Crucifixion are shown in the future. Then *all will know* what Jesus endured for them and that he is the true Savior. They will be amazed to realize how much love Jesus manifested as well as how much humiliation he suffered. They will be startled to know that Jesus could have come down from the Cross but chose instead to submit to the experience out of his love for God and for the human race. The great ones of earth, those who boast in their accomplishments, are worshipped and revered in the present age, but when the people truly know about Jesus, they will say, “All glory be given to him!”

Individuals who allow others to do homage to them in the present life will be greatly shamed in the future. Blasphemy means to accept to oneself the honors, emoluments, and praise that belong to God or Jesus.

**Isa. 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?**

Generally speaking, the nation of Israel did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, the apostles asked, “Who hath believed *our* report?” Chapter 53 is primarily a picture of the last moments of Jesus’ life.

**Isa. 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.**

“He [Jesus] shall grow up before him [his Father, God] as a tender plant.” God sent Jesus into the world and superintended Jesus’ whole life, starting with the virgin birth. Jesus was begotten of the Father in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and he grew up, to all appearances, like a normal human child until he reached the stature of manhood, at which time he began to

preach.

Notice the word “we”: “when *we* shall see him,” “that *we* should desire him.” This pronoun refers to the apostles.

Verse 2 would seem to indicate that Jesus was not good-looking, that he was not unusual in appearance, but that is not what this verse is saying. Verse 2 is describing *Jesus’ crucifixion*. Previously multitudes followed him even into the desert, and just before his crucifixion, the people shouted, “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Matt. 21:9). However, *all forsook him* at the time of his crucifixion just a little while later.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus healed the blind, the lame, etc., and raised the dead. Therefore, when he rode into Jerusalem on the white ass in the tradition of a king who was about to take office and then, with authority, chased the money changers out of the Temple, the people thought that surely he was the Messiah. But just five days later, when Jesus hung on the Cross, all their hopes crumbled. It seemed *impossible* that the Son of God could be crucified—hence the people disbelieved him. The Crucifixion occurred at the Feast of Passover, a time when Jews from all over Israel and from other nations were gathered at Jerusalem.

Jesus’ humble beginning is briefly referred to: “He shall grow up ... as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.” A little plant with potential life was planted in arid soil. Although the tender plant looked green at first, its survival seemed to be doomed without water. When Jesus came at his First Advent, the angels proclaimed, “Peace on earth, good will toward men. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11,14). But where did the shepherds find the babe? He was in a lowly manger in a cave stable—hardly the place one would expect to find a King! The shepherds testified of the angels’ glorious message and proclamation about the child who would be the future Messiah, but to the people, he seemed so poor because of his earthly surroundings and humble parents. Even though he himself was unusual, his background seemed incongruous with his being Messiah.

Jesus did not act like a king; he was not proud and haughty. Both the beginning (his humble origin) and the end of his earthly life (his humiliating death on the Cross) seemed to belie his role as Messiah. In between, he spoke with authority and healed many of their afflictions, with the result that he grew in popularity. Nevertheless, his humble beginning and humiliating death seemed to negate his claims.

**Isa. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

When was Jesus “despised and rejected of men”? When was he a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”? This happened in connection with his trial and crucifixion. Before that, the common people heard him gladly, and sinners and publicans were especially attracted to him because his message offered mercy and forgiveness and an opportunity to come back into harmony with God. Incidentally, the Gospels do not particularly mention Jesus’ sorrows. And there is not one word about his height, his hair or eye color, or whether he was handsome. God purposely avoided describing Jesus because the important thing was the *message*.

“We hid as it were our faces from him.” The apostles continue to speak here. During Jesus’ earthly ministry, they followed and accompanied him, but at the time of the Crucifixion, *even the apostles* doubted for a time that Jesus truly was the Messiah. For example, the two disciples walking to Emmaus said, “We *trusted* [past tense] that it *had been* he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21).

To repeat: *Even the apostles*, Jesus’ followers—let alone the Jewish nation—hid their faces from

him as he hung naked and all out of joint and twisted (like a worm) on the Cross. “His visage was so marred more than any man” (Isa. 52:14). Psalm 22 prophesied that he would say of his twisted body, “I am a worm, and no[t] man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” Jesus was tested to the very core so that *all beings*, heavenly and earthly, will and can say, “WORTHY is the Lamb!” (Rev. 5:11,12).

In the Garden of Gethsemane, all of the disciples fled. Only two, Peter and John, followed him afar off to the high priest’s house where the false trial was held. Nevertheless, they were embarrassed and did not try to defend Jesus.

Under the circumstances and with their limited understanding, how could the apostles have esteemed Jesus as the Messiah while he hung on the Cross? Events seemed to be a mockery of his claim.

**Isa. 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

What particularly seemed to indicate that Jesus was “smitten of God”? He was crucified outside the city walls as a criminal. The Old Testament tells us that “he that is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God” (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). The Jews knew that according to the Law, anyone who died by hanging on a tree was accursed of God, and hence the apostles and the Jews thought he was being punished by God. But to die as Adam’s substitute, Jesus had to suffer Adam’s experiences. Since Adam’s sin was brought into the world through a tree, a tree was part of the offset ransom price. Also, just as Adam felt forsaken after he had sinned, so it was necessary for Jesus on the Cross to feel momentarily forsaken and separated from God.

**Isa. 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**

“With his stripes we are healed.” Jesus took the sinner’s place. He was *wounded, bruised, and chastised* for our iniquities and transgressions so that we could be healed. In the Old Testament, material fruitfulness and health were equated with obedience to God (whereas in the Gospel Age, God deals with the Christian according to spiritual faith and obedience). Jesus was beaten, scourged, spat on, buffeted, bruised, hit with a rod, mocked, etc. He knew that if he resisted and did not die, his purpose in coming here to be man’s Redeemer would fail, so he obediently submitted. But to onlookers, to the people, Jesus appeared to be a sinner receiving punishment. They thought, “He was a wonderful man who healed many people and did a lot of good. We thought he would deliver us from the Roman yoke. It is too bad that he has sinned.” Job was similarly regarded when the multiple calamities came upon him.

**Isa. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

When Jesus was apprehended and crucified, the apostles were like sheep without a shepherd. In their confusion, they returned to fishing and their previous occupations. The pronouns “we” and “our” in these verses continue to refer particularly to the apostles. The point is that Jesus’ followers, who had initially proclaimed him, later felt he had been cursed of God.

**Isa. 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.**

*At his trial*, Jesus did not open his mouth, but earlier, during his ministry, he defended himself against his accusers. His going “as a lamb to the slaughter” at his crucifixion startled the

disciples, for they were accustomed to his turning the tables on those who tried to trap him verbally. This chapter of Isaiah is primarily a picture of the last moments of Jesus' life.

At shearing time, a sheep does not need to be restrained, for it stands still and thus is easy to shear. In Old Testament times, the way of removing wool was to pluck or pull it out. Therefore, the animal suffered the indignity of rough handling by the shearers. Although the plucking did not necessarily cause the sheep to bleed, the skin became very tender. As a parallel to this type of "shearing," the mockers pulled out the hairs of Jesus' face.

**Isa. 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.**

"He was taken from prison and from judgment." The word "prison" is an incorrect translation, for Jesus was not put in prison in the normal sense of the word. He was apprehended late at night in the Garden of Gethsemane, tried before a kangaroo court, and taken to the house of Caiaphas—all before dawn. Early in the morning, and without any sleep, Jesus was taken to Pilate, subjected to various experiences, and executed on the Cross—all that same "day." The correct thought in verse 8 is that in connection with the charges laid against him, he was not given a fair trial. Proper judgment was taken away from him; he was robbed of his rights as a person to a fair trial. He was "taken from ... judgment"; that is, he was executed without a valid cause. False judgment was *intentionally* rendered.

"Who shall declare his generation?" Jesus was cut off in the prime of life at 33 1/2 years of age without a wife or children. He was without "generation," without posterity.

"He was cut off out of the land of the living." Violence is implied. In the prime of life, Jesus was *abruptly* terminated ("cut off") in a *violent* death with no posterity to perpetuate his memory.

God now commented: "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." All of the suffering was permitted to come upon Jesus because it was necessary for him to die, but because he faithfully endured all of the stripes and afflictions, eternal honors will be heaped upon him. The Apostle Paul was beaten with 39 stripes several times, he was in perils of the deep, he was persecuted, he was left for dead from a stoning, etc., but he said, "Our light affliction ... is but for a moment" when compared with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). However, being perfect, Jesus suffered more than any other man. Because we are half dead and numb in mind and body, we cannot experience the depth of mental anguish or pain that he suffered. Jesus was keenly aware of all the imperfection around him, but for everything he suffered, he will be compensated with an eternal weight of everlasting glory. He will forever be on the right hand of his Father, and no one will be able to deny his worthiness.

**Isa. 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.**

"He made his grave with the wicked" in that he was crucified with two malefactors (thieves). And "he made his grave ... with the rich" in that he was laid in the new rock-hewn family tomb of the wealthy, honorable counselor Joseph of Arimathea. Hence Jesus was given both a noble and an ignoble death. His body was laid in a rich man's sepulcher, and he died between two wicked men. Why do the Old Testament Scriptures call attention to these facts? If any Jew read the Old Testament honestly and had a seeking heart to know, he would have to admit that Jesus was the Messiah, that his life fulfilled the multitude of prophecies.

"Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." The RSV is better:

*“Although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.”*

Another point of interest is that Jesus died for *all*; he died for the rich, and he died for the poor. Jesus tasted death for *every man*, for the sinner as well as for the upright (Heb. 2:9). It is true that what a man sows, he shall reap; but no man sows sin that merits eternal torture. In other words, *all* will have an opportunity to receive everlasting life.

While publicans and sinners seemed to flock to Jesus during his ministry, he said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). He did not mean that the scribes and Pharisees were sinless, but that they were proud and did not realize their need to seek forgiveness for sin. Jesus’ making his grave with the rich is symbolic of his commiseration for rich and poor alike.

**Isa. 53:10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

**Isa. 53:11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Catholics and Protestants recognize that Isaiah 53 is speaking about Jesus, yet verse 11 says he is a “*servant*”; God calls him “*my righteous servant*.” The Apostle Paul said, “There is [but] *one God* [the Father], and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). It is completely foreign to the Bible to try to make Jesus God. If the context is honestly analyzed, Jesus is seen to be the Son of God, and not God the Son. A father is not a son and vice versa; they are two *separate* beings.

In verse 11, God is speaking about Jesus, the reasoning being as follows: “Because Jesus made his grave with the rich and the poor, because he was smitten for the transgression of my people, because he made his soul an offering for sin, my righteous servant, who died, shall justify many. The work he does in the future will prosper in my hand. I will honor and exalt him for his work.” When Jesus was raised from death after having died faithfully on the Cross, the Father exalted him to His right hand. But while on earth, Jesus said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). Church creeds say that Jesus and God are coequal in authority and person, but the Scriptures say otherwise. When Jesus prayed, he looked to the Father. He said, “Of mine own self I can do nothing, but as the Father hath taught me” (John 5:30 paraphrase).

**Comment:** “LORD” in all capital letters in the Old Testament always refers to Jehovah, to the Father.

**Isa. 53:12** Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus will “divide the spoil [treasures] with the strong [the Church].” His faithful followers will share the seat of government with him. These humble (and often uneducated) people will be kings and priests with him, and thus will hold future positions of honor, authority, and glory. The Scriptures show that God will give honor to Jesus, and Jesus will share that honor with the Church, his Bride.

**Isa. 54:1** Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

This is a difficult verse with a double application, that is, both natural and spiritual. Galatians 4:26,27 furnishes the clue to the *spiritual* application: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." Paul was talking about the Church class of the Gospel Age, and he gave different illustrations from the Old Testament that prefigure the calling of the Gentile Church. He quoted Isaiah 54:1 as a fulfillment of the mysterious "Jerusalem, which is above." Revelation 21:2 speaks about the New Jerusalem, the Holy City: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The Scriptures describe the followers of Jesus who are faithful unto death as being kings and priests in the next age. In another picture, this company of 144,000 individuals is likened to the bride of Christ; that is, collectively, they will be married to Christ, and they will reign with him as a queen in the next age.

In addition, the faithful Church class is described as "the holy city," for in the Book of Revelation, a "city" represents a religious system or government. Hence the New Jerusalem will be the holy government of the next age. In contrast, the old Jerusalem is an unholy city (that is, the Roman Catholic Church) that sits on many waters (peoples) and is married to the governments of earth. The true Church does not mix in politics but is separate and distinct, waiting for the future age. Thus there are two cities: the holy city and the unholy city. The fact that John the Revelator saw a "holy city" and a "new Jerusalem" implies the existence also of an *unholy* city and an *old* Jerusalem. Moreover, he saw the holy city "coming down from God out of heaven," which means this government of the future does not originate down here but is of God. The names of the individuals comprising the true Church are written in heaven, and not by any human being. The symbolic language of the Bible pertaining to the Church class is almost like surrealistic art, for it uses word language to speak of this called class as a city, as a bride, as a mother, and as children of the Sarah Covenant.

Another proof that a "city" in Scripture is a religious government is Hebrews 11:10, "He [Abraham] looked for a *city* which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is *God*." The faithful patriarch looked forward to the future government of Messiah.

**Q:** Is Isaiah 54:1 a good translation in the King James: "for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife"?

**A:** The children of the desolate one, the Church class, will be more. In the present age, the Church class are called as an espoused virgin unto Christ; in the next age, they will be the mother having many children. Galatians 4:22-24 reads, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar." Sarah was the wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac, the seed (or child) of promise. Hagar, the bondwoman, and Sarah, the free woman, each represent a covenant. The children of Sarah, the barren and desolate one, will not only come later than Hagar's, but they will exceed in number the children of Hagar.

"The children of the desolate [one will be more] than the children of the married wife [Hagar]." The word "married" is misleading, for it implies that Sarah was not Abraham's wife. The word in Hebrew is *baal* but in a passive sense. Instead of being "lord," it means "one lorded over," "one possessed," or "one owned." The following symbolisms apply:

Abraham = God  
Isaac = Jesus

Eliezer = Holy Spirit  
Rebekah = the Church

Sarah = Grace Covenant

Abraham (God) sent Eliezer (the Holy Spirit) to look for a bride (Rebekah) for Isaac (Jesus). Eliezer was the oldest servant of Abraham (Gen. 24:2). God is from everlasting to everlasting, and the spirit, power, or mind of God existed before Jesus was created. Rebekah was given a promise: “Be thou the mother of thousands of millions” (Gen. 24:60). In other words, she was promised that she would have billions of children.

In the next age, Jesus and his bride are also likened to Adam and Eve, being called the Second Adam and the Second Eve, respectively. In other words, the Lord *from heaven*, the *resurrected* Jesus, will be the Second Adam, and the Church *in glory* will be the Second Eve. By dying on the Cross as a substitute for Adam, Jesus purchased planet Earth. The promise was that anyone who kept the Law of Moses inviolate would have everlasting life. Therefore, Jesus, through perfect obedience unto death, attained the right to human life here on earth, but he will give these life rights over to Justice to redeem the entire human race. Hence Jesus is a life-giving spirit, a Life-giver. He is like a father, and the Church is like a mother. And in the regeneration, the world of mankind will be their children. (To *regenerate* means to give life again.)

The thought of regeneration is corroborated in Psalm 45:16, “Instead of thy fathers shall be *thy children*, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.” This text is saying that the Church will regenerate the Ancient Worthies. Those comprising the bride of Christ are the children of God. Accordingly, Psalm 45:13 likens the Church to God’s daughter: “The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.” God’s “daughter,” the Church, will marry His Son, Jesus. As a product of that marriage, further children will be brought to life—that is, the human race, of whom the Ancient Worthies will be first. Jesus and the Church together (The Christ) will bring back Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., from the tomb. Stated another way, Jesus and the Church in glory, the King and his queen, will have “children,” and the first of these children will be the “fathers” coming forth. Therefore, Psalm 45 shows that the Ancient Worthies cannot be resurrected until after the marriage takes place.

The above reasoning was presented to substantiate the thought that more will be the children of Sarah, the barren one, than the children of Hagar—even though the results have seemed to be the reverse for a long time. In the type, Hagar had Ishmael as a son, while Sarah was barren for years before Isaac was born.

Another point: The “Isaac seed” will be as “the stars of *heaven*.” Not only will the Church class be the mother of the regenerated people of earth, but they will be the mother of all future generations created on other planets. If God created the earth not in vain but to be inhabited, the same is true of other planets in other solar systems. At least some of these planets will be inhabited in the future. Psalm 147:4 tells us that God calls each of the stars by name and knows their number. Thus He named the planets and stars in advance, and our particular planet He called “earth.” Why? Because physical man was *first made here*; he is of the *earth*, *earthly*. In time, physical men will inhabit other planets, but those planets will not be called “earth.” Earth is the only place where Jesus will ever die, for what happened here is an object lesson for all future yet-unborn generations throughout the universe. When those future generations are considered in conjunction with earth’s regenerated human race, the latter is like a drop in the bucket. In fact, the promise to the Church “Be thou the mother of thousands of millions” is a very conservative statement.

Isaiah 54:1 refers to all “children” to be ultimately born anywhere in the universe. Today we are living in the very earliest *dawn of creation*. When Adam was created, the angels sang for joy, for this man was a new kind of being (Job 38:7). And Eve was the first woman, for there were no females in heaven. Subsequently, “when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them ... the sons of God [angels] saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. 6:1,2). If there were females in heaven, they certainly would have been beautiful, and angels would not have come



down here and demeaned themselves by taking on a human form in order to have a human wife. Hence the angels who disobeyed were attracted to a *new* thing: woman.

When earth is viewed from outer space with its vegetation, oceans, lakes, and atmosphere, it glows like a blue-green jewel. Earth has the most beautiful colors of all the planets because it has been made a *habitation* for man. When the angels saw man, they shouted for joy. When they saw woman, there was added joy. But they also rejoiced over the animals. Eden, the fish, the animals—everything about *physical* life on this planet was new to the angels, for they were accustomed to that which is *spiritual*.

**Comment:** In *Reprint* No. 3165 entitled “The New Life in Christ,” the Pastor suggested that there is a *spiritual* counterpart for everything we have in nature here on earth: birds, brooks, trees, mountains, etc. To the angels, the *physical* aspect was new.

**Reply:** Yes, the spiritual, ethereal counterpart is of a different substance than what we see down here. To the angels, man appeared as tiny, little physical darlings. God made the earth with His fingers. Collectively, the nations of earth are like dust on a scale; they are less than nothing in comparison (Isa. 40:15). Earth is a theater for what God intends to do in the future. Events occurring here are recorded for the benefit of future generations so that evil will not arise the second time. Never again will man fall as Adam did. Never again will Satan be permitted to interfere with the inhabitants of a planet. Never again will Jesus have to die to redeem fallen beings. Earth is the beginning of physical creation. The marriage of Jesus and his bride will take place before children are born elsewhere. The spiritual seed comes after the Hagar, or natural, seed and will be more numerous in the final analysis.

Job 38:7 does not specifically mention the creation of man. The context pertains to the creation of planet Earth, man, woman, the animals, etc.—collectively, *all* were a *new thing*. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4-7).

During the Kingdom, there will be *regeneration*, but after the Kingdom, there will be *generation*—the creation of new beings, both spiritual and physical. Thus the multiplication of the spiritual seed, the multiplication by the 144,000, will be virtually limitless.

If verse 1 is given a natural application with the barren, desolate one being natural Israel, then it can be reasoned that there was a time (approximately a 2,000-year period) when the nation was cast off from favor. Their “house” was left unto them desolate (Matt. 23:38), but they are to be reinstated. From this standpoint, natural Israel was barren, and Sarah had the husband. Verse 1 is a confused, difficult Scripture that could never have been understood clearly without the Apostle Paul’s clue in Galatians. Paul’s interpretation is miraculous, beyond human reasoning, and effort is required to understand verse 1.

**Isa. 54:2** Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

**Q:** In the clause “Enlarge the place of thy tent,” is the “tent” the earth, the temporary dwelling place for the Church in the flesh? In glory, the 144,000 will look back at their former abode.

**A:** Yes. The “tent” will be enlarged in two stages: (1) the earth and (2) the universe, the other solar systems. It is like a husband building a small house for him and his wife, but as time passes, he enlarges the house to prepare for anticipated children.

**Q:** The Scriptures say that heaven and earth cannot contain God and that He dwells above the heavens. Does this mean that He, Jesus, and the Church will have their abodes *above* all of the solar systems? If so, the “tent,” in the fullest sense, would signify *all* solar systems.

**A:** Yes, eventually. On a larger scale, God (and The Christ) have a permanent abode above earth and the heavens. Hence the entire universe and all the solar systems are also like a tent that is located *below* the dwelling place of God and The Christ.

**Isa. 54:3** For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

When Jerusalem is the capital of the world, the Law will go forth from spiritual Zion (the Church), and the word of the Lord (the pronouncement, the commandment of the Law) will go forth from Jerusalem through the Ancient Worthies, as the mouthpieces, to the world of mankind (Isa. 2:3). Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees (paraphrased), “You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom, but you yourselves will be thrust out” (Luke 13:28). People will come from all over (from the north, south, east, and west) to receive instruction from the Ancient Worthies (Matt. 8:11).

A *Reprint* article says that Isaiah 54 may also have a Jewish fulfillment in the Kingdom. Paul’s clue in Galatians proves the spiritual fulfillment is primary, but since the nation of Israel will be prominently involved with the New Covenant of the next age, the Kingdom will be Israelitish.

**Isa. 54:4** Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Verse 4 is an indication of a natural (and hence a double) fulfillment for some of these verses. Verse 1 is primarily spiritual, but there can be a natural application. Verses 2 and 3 are both spiritual and natural. Presented from a Jewish standpoint, verse 3 is saying that the Jews will see the Gentiles come to them. “Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” The spiritual Church will regenerate the fathers. The “seed,” the regenerated class, will be brought forth from the grave. Verse 4 begins a stronger natural application, but there is still a spiritual fulfillment. In other words, the spiritual application is phasing into the natural application.

“Fear not; for thou ... shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.” “Widowhood” is a reference to Israel’s leaving the Lord. At one time, Israel was married to God, but the nation forsook Him and broke the covenant. As a result, the Israelites were estranged from God for a long period of time. We are now living in a day when Providence has regathered the Jews and is preparing them for reunion with God in the Kingdom. When Kingdom blessings come in the future, Israel will be able to forget her widowhood and her being discarded.

Notice the terms “shame of thy youth” and “reproach of thy widowhood.” Christians had a shameful experience during the Inquisition period of the Dark Ages. They were regarded as outcasts, heretics, and schismatics because they did not belong to the nominal Church. They suffered “reproach” and “shame” in their *early* life, in their “youth,” that is, in the *present* life. The present life is so short compared with eternity that it is like a dream in the night; it is the Church’s “youth.” In the next life, those of the Little Flock will look back to the period of their trial, testing, and shame in the time of their “youth.”

**Isa. 54:5** For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

**Isa. 54:6** For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

**Isa. 54:7** For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

“For thy Maker is thine husband.” Natural Israel is the object of the Maker’s affection. Isaiah called God the “husband” of *natural Israel*, and there are no Scriptures in the New Testament stating that Jehovah is the husband of the Church. Instead *Jesus* is the Bridegroom (and hence the future husband) of the Church. Therefore, verses 5-7 apply only to natural Israel, and not to the Church. Another evidence, in addition to the “husband” relationship, is that although the Church class are disciplined under the ministry of evil, they were never the object of God’s wrath; nor did He ever forsake them in the sense indicated in verses 6-8 and elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah.

Jehovah’s “husband” relationship with the nation of Israel is a *collective covenant* relationship, and not an individual intimate husband-wife relationship. God is the husband of natural Israel in an accommodated, modified sense. However, in regard to a seeming conflict, the question might be asked, “Since the Church is supposed to be more important than the natural nation of Israel, how can one who is greater than Jesus be the husband of natural Israel, whereas one who is less than Jehovah is the husband of the Church?” In Isaiah 50:1, the translators were puzzled as to whether or not God was ever a husband to Israel. “Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.” Because of the confusion, some translators say God divorced the nation of Israel, and others (such as the King James Version) seem to say there was no divorce because God was never married to Israel in the first place. Other verses in the Old Testament establish the correct view. Let us consider texts in the Book of Hosea.

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD” (Hos. 2:19,20). *God* said He would, in the future, betroth Himself to the *nation of Israel*. God, not Jesus, will make the New Covenant with Israel.

“Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts” (Hos. 2:2). Now we will skip to verse 14 of the same chapter, which shows that God’s relationship to natural Israel will be changed in the future. “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her” (Hos. 2:14). This verse pertains to present-day prophecy, when God brings Israel into a wilderness condition to begin to woo her again, as in days of old, and to draw her to Himself to ultimately betroth her again. He speaks comfortably to her. Isaiah 40:2 gives the instruction “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.” And so, during the Harvest period, a message of truth has gone forth from the Scriptures that Israel’s double was fulfilled in 1878 and that a time of favor has now come upon her.

The question might then be asked: “If this is a time of favor for Israel, why have severe persecutions occurred since 1878?” These persecutions have been permitted for *disciplinary* purposes, as “hunters” and “fishers,” to bring the Jewish people back to their homeland. Ezekiel 20:34-37 shows that in the “wilderness” of their own homeland—that is, before God officially recognizes the nation of Israel as His people again—Jacob’s Trouble and a purging process will occur to bring the Holy Remnant into the proper heart condition for covenant relationship with God.

The Prophet Hosea said that God was once a husband to Israel, that a long period of time followed in which He was not a husband to her, that He will draw her back from her punished condition to the homeland (called a “wilderness” because, as a nation, they still do not know God), that He will speak comfortably to her, and that He will ultimately betroth her unto Himself again. Now notice additional Scriptures in Hosea.

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God” (Hos. 1:10).

“And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali” (Hos. 2:16). The names signify a covenant relationship. Ishi means “my husband.” In other words, in the future, Israel will call Jehovah “Ishi,” “my husband.” Earlier in Hosea, the symbolic name Lo-ammi signified “no, no more,” meaning the relationship was broken.

“Now ... she [Hosea’s wife] ... conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hos. 1:8,9). Later in the Book of Hosea, the “Lo” was dropped and “Ammi” indicated an encouraging prophecy; that is, what was previously negative would again be positive. Thus certain Old Testament Scriptures allegorically liken the nation of Israel to being Jehovah’s wife, to being betrothed to Him.

**Comment:** Jeremiah 3:14 seems to apply: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”

**Reply:** Yes, it shows the nation’s coming reinstatement to favor. The sequence is as follows: favor, divorce, period of estrangement, reconciliation, and reestablishment.

Back to Isaiah Chapter 54. If it were not for the Apostle Paul’s saying in Galatians 4:27 that Isaiah 54:1 applies to the Church, we would think the entire prophecy applied only to natural Israel. The following verses are another matter, for the true Church has never been the object of God’s wrath and will never be divorced, and the false Church is to be destroyed, not reinstated. But with natural Israel, the fulfillment fits. Natural Israel (1) was divorced and (2) will be reinstated. Only the first verse, therefore, was a puzzle, and Paul said it has a spiritual application. However, verse 1 *also has a natural application*.

Paul said that the barren, desolate one who will sing for joy is Sarah, the Grace Covenant, for the free woman will ultimately have more children than Hagar, the “married wife.” But Hagar’s relationship to her “husband” was quite different than would exist in the married state today. Even though Hagar was recognized as a wife, it was more of a concubine relationship to Abraham, as was Keturah. Even after Ishmael was born (and prior to Isaac’s birth), Abraham was still considered “childless” because the son of promise was to come through Sarah. Sarah was the one whom Abraham especially loved. The Apostle Paul said that the two women were allegories, representing two covenants. Hagar, the bondswoman, and her child, Ishmael, and his seed represent natural Israel. Sarah, through whom Isaac, the child of promise, was born, pictures a spiritual covenant. After Sarah’s death, Abraham married Keturah. Abraham’s three “wives” represent three covenants.

The number of male children born to Abraham through these three women is as follows: Sarah had one male child, Hagar had one male child, and Keturah had six male children. The three covenants represented are as follows: Sarah pictures the Grace Covenant, Hagar pictures the Old Law Covenant, and Keturah pictures the New Law Covenant.

The *New Covenant* will be made with Israel, the *same nation* that received the *Old Law Covenant*. Notice that Keturah (the New Law Covenant) had more children than either Sarah or Hagar, for she represents natural Israel in the *renewed* relationship. From one standpoint, natural Israel will have more children than even the Sarah class. Remember, verse 1 has a double application. Sarah, the one who was barren for a long time, will ultimately have more children than Hagar, the one with a husband. In the great future, in the ages to come, the seed of the spiritual class will far outnumber the natural seed. In the present age, the spiritual class has always been a minority. In fact, those who have followed God *in any age*, past or present, have always been a minority. But in the future, those who follow God will be the majority. Hosea 1:10 prophesies that Israel, the natural seed, will become as the sand of the sea in the Kingdom. To come in under the New Covenant, the Gentiles will have to become Israelitish proselytes. Therefore, from the natural standpoint of the *Millennial Age*, the natural seed will outnumber the spiritual class, for the natural seed will embrace the world of mankind. But beyond the Millennium, into the ages of ages, the reverse will be true—The Christ will create life on other planets that will far outnumber the natural seed. Having life within themselves, The Christ, the spiritual seed class, will be able to create other beings on other planets in the distant future.

Both Hagar and Keturah picture natural Israel, Hagar being Israel under the Old Law Covenant and Keturah under the New Law Covenant. The “wife” relationship of Hagar and Keturah to Abraham was not the same as Sarah’s, for Sarah was the special, tender love of Abraham.

The husband relationship of Jesus and the bride in the New Testament is not merely a collective relationship, for Jesus will love *each individual member* of the 144,000 in a special way. In contrast, the relationship of God as a husband to natural Israel is in the *collective* sense only. God’s marriage and remarriage to Israel are collective and not special or individual. God dealt with Israel as a collective whole. True, Jesus will marry the Church as a collective body or unified whole, but he will also know every individual in a specialized sense, for he will give each one a private, personal name unknown to others, and each of the 144,000 will have access to him. The Old Testament marriage relationship of God to Israel is modified and qualified, whereas Jesus’ relationship to his Church will be close, intimate, and personal.

God identified Himself as the husband of natural Israel because of a *covenant* relationship. Jesus’ relationship to the Church is not just a covenant relationship but a personal relationship as well. Otherwise, it would mean that the Church had a relationship inferior to Israel’s. Of those who keep his commandments, Jesus said, “The Father loves you, and I love you.” “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21). On the one hand, God’s marriage to Israel is a *temporary* relationship intended to give comfort. On the other hand, Jesus’ marriage to the Church is an *eternal* relationship.

All of the obedient will ultimately be sons of God, but there are levels and *degrees* of affection and intimacy. Certainly the Father has more love for those in the Little Flock than He does for the world of mankind. The “jewel” class have a superior relationship because they are rarer and more beautiful and have been crystallized in righteousness.

From another perspective, not only do the Arabs outnumber the Jews, but from a spiritualized religious standpoint, adherents of the Muslim religion outnumber those of the Christian religion. And nominal Christians far outnumber true Christians. But in the long-term picture, the Sarah Covenant spiritual seed will be far more productive and fruitful than the natural—even though, at present, the reverse seems to be true.

The Ancient Worthies will receive a spiritual resurrection at the end of the Kingdom. However, they will never attain to the degree of honor held by the Little Flock. Since the Scriptures tell us that the Ancient Worthies will receive a “better resurrection” (Heb. 11:16,35), they would have to receive a heavenly reward ultimately. Otherwise, since the Ancient Worthies will come out of the tomb as perfect human beings, what about the obedient of the world of mankind who will walk up the highway of holiness? Will they not also attain to perfection on the human plane? At the end of the Millennium, the Ancient Worthies and the world of mankind will be on the same level. Where would the “better resurrection” be *unless the Ancient Worthies receive a spiritual reward*? Abraham looked for a *heavenly* country and/or city, not an earthly one.

**Isa. 54:8** In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

**Comment:** What an interesting contrast! The almost 2,000 years of God’s “wrath” on Israel seem like a *long* time to us, but it is “*little*” compared with Jehovah’s “*everlasting*” kindness and mercy.

**Reply:** That is true, and that is how the Apostle Paul viewed matters. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). In other words, our afflictions are temporary and light, whereas the glory is eternal and a weight beyond all comparison.

**Isa. 54:9** For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

Another interesting verse! God used the sign of the covenant with Noah that He will never again destroy all flesh with a flood to show that after Jacob’s Trouble, He will never again be wroth with Israel.

**Isa. 54:10** For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

Verse 10 is similar to verse 9. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee.” This is a Hebrew expression much like the way God uses the sun and the moon in Scripture as symbols of His faithfulness and constancy. In other words, even if the mountains and the hills were to pass away, God’s affection and covenant of peace would not depart. Deeper thoughts about the mountains and the hills being removed can perhaps be considered on another occasion.

**Isa. 54:11** O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

Verse 11 starts a new thought. It is similar to verse 1 of this chapter in that it starts with a spiritual application and then glides into a natural application. The spiritual application is the emphasis on jewels and a ministry of evil. Of course a ministry of evil has also been preparing natural Israel for their stewardship in the Kingdom as ministers of righteousness. They will be representatives of Jehovah in a general sense with the Ancient Worthies as their spokesmen and head.

**Q:** How will natural Israel and the Church be comforted?

**A:** Natural Israel will be comforted when the Kingdom is inaugurated and the Jews are

reinstated. In regard to the Church class, Isaiah Chapter 53 spoke about Jesus as the “arm of the LORD” (53:1). As a sin offering, he was buffeted, spat upon, and maltreated, but he will ultimately see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied (53:11). In other words, in the long-range viewpoint, the sufferings he endured during his earthly ministry will be viewed as light afflictions. Because of his sensitivity and perfection, he suffered agonies beyond what any other person has ever gone through, but when he sees the Kingdom results and outcome, he will know that all of his experiences were well worth enduring. Jesus submitted to the Crucifixion and related experiences, accepting by faith that God’s way was best: “He ... prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). However, in the Kingdom, he will see his past experiences not from the standpoint of faith but from the standpoint of having the divine nature and being satisfied. Verse 11 is leading into similar thoughts in regard to the Church. Isaiah 53 showed Jesus. Now Isaiah 54 and 55 will bring in the experiences of the Church (as well as natural Israel).

Down through history, God has been developing two classes: natural and spiritual Israel. Natural Israel was schooled through the prophets and the Ancient Worthies under the Old Law Covenant. When the New Covenant is made and the Ancient Worthies are seen as Kingdom representatives, the people of Israel will view the past experiences of the Ancient Worthies in a completely different light. The Ancient Worthies died in hope and in faith, whereas natural Israel, generally speaking, died in perplexity, disobedience, and discouragement. Nevertheless, when God deals with the people in the future, their hearts will melt at His kindness and mercy.

Natural Israel was in Diaspora for much of the 2,000 years that the Church class was being developed. During that time, God was honoring the spiritual class, whereas prior to Jesus’ earthly ministry, God honored the nation of Israel in a very special sense. However, even in the Diaspora, natural Israel’s experiences were a schooling and will ultimately be seen to be a blessing. Both natural Israel and the consecrated of the Gospel Age have been tossed to and fro in various Gentile nations.

The spiritual versus the natural emphasis in Isaiah Chapter 54 is as follows. Verse 1 is primarily spiritual. Verses 2-10 are primarily natural with some spiritual undertones. Verses 11-17 are primarily spiritual with natural undertones.

**Isa. 54:12** And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

The spiritual emphasis of verses 11 and 12 is an allusion to the New Jerusalem with its pearl gates and jewel foundations (Rev. 21:10-21).

**Q:** Please elaborate on the use of the particular jewels in verses 11 and 12.

**A:** An elaboration will have to await further understanding. The jewels show that the class to be comforted will be specially, prominently, and distinctively honored. The sapphire foundation reminds us of Exodus 24:10, where Moses and some of the elders of Israel saw a likeness of God on a sapphire throne. “And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his [its] clearness.” Under God’s feet were paved blocks of sapphire. How could the foundation of His throne be both “sapphire” and “as ... the body of heaven in its clearness”? Both are blue, the blue of the heavens picturing faithfulness. Thus the fact that God will lay the foundations of the Church with sapphires (“I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires”) signifies an *everlasting, permanent* condition.

“I will make thy windows of agates.” The agate is a variegated stone with strata or bands of different colors. “Windows of agates” seem to indicate that the Church class, from the

standpoint of their high, prominent position, will be able to look down on the various planes of being under them: cherubim, seraphim, angels, Great Company, mankind.

Guardian angels have access to God; they can go and see Him, whereas the other angels cannot. Jesus said, “In heaven their [guardian] angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10). Thus the guardian angel assigned to each of the consecrated is specially honored with a particular right to go into God’s presence at any time without violating protocol.

“Carbuncle” means “stone of fire” in Latin. Before Satan sinned, when he was Lucifer, he went up and down among the coals, or “stones of fire,” as he wished. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezek. 28:14). The scope of his operation was that of an archangel, which means he was above angels. He and the Logos were the two sons of the morning, meaning that the earliest created beings in God’s universe were (1) the Logos and (2) Lucifer a short time later (Isa. 14:12). As an archangel, Lucifer could do great things, and his garments glittered with stones. He was handsome, brilliant, and intellectual. In fact, Lucifer means “light,” that is, luminous; he was a glorious being second only to the Logos under the Father. His walking “up and down among the stones of fire” meant that he could go to any plane of being he so desired.

“I will make ... thy gates of carbuncles.” Gates picture accessibility, for they are the means of access to a house, fortress, city, etc. Carbuncle gates signify that those of the divine nature will have access to everything below them.

“And all thy borders [are] of pleasant stones.” Decorative jewels of many pleasing varieties will enhance or beautify the Little Flock from the standpoint of their future honor and glory.

**Isa. 54:13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.**

All of the Church’s children will be taught of God—if *they so desire*. This is also true of the consecrated of the Gospel Age. God promises to instruct and help those who make a covenant of consecration, but the problem is whether or not they *recognize and heed* the instruction. In other words, God guarantees He will take a personal interest in all who come into His family to help them make their calling and election sure. But the individual *must look* for that instruction.

When we pray for something, we should look for the answer, but we often forget and then are surprised when the answer does come. The instruction is to both *watch* and *pray*.

**Isa. 54:14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.**

Verse 14 starts to glide into an application for natural Israel, although the primary emphasis is still the spiritual application. In the natural picture, verse 14 shows that the Holy Remnant will be a prepared nucleus for the start of the Kingdom. Israel will be threatened with annihilation in Jacob’s Trouble, but when the Kingdom is established, such fear, terror, and oppression will “not come near thee.” Real security is pictured here. Of course as regards the Church class, they cannot be harmed as new creatures if their hearts are loyal to the Lord. Beyond the veil, there shall be no oppression, fear, or terror.

**Isa. 54:15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.**



In the spiritual application, the civil and ecclesiastical powers will unite to suppress the truth and the feet members, but the consecrated are not to fear their fear and join their confederacy, which will curtail liberties in an effort to hold back the threatening anarchy. At this time, the Church will be severely tried. As for the natural application, in Jacob's Trouble, the confederate host styled "Gog" will invade Israel. Neither gathering is approved by the Lord.

**Isa. 54:16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.**

The "smith" is Satan. Just as the blacksmith heats a horseshoe until it is almost white hot, removes it from the fire, hammers and hammers and hammers it into shape, dips it in water, and nails it to the horse's hoof with long nails, so the Church needs corresponding hot, cold, and hammering experiences. God has overruled that Satan is His minister in connection with the ministry of evil. Of course Satan tries to destroy God's work and purpose, but with all of his persecutions and hammerings to denigrate God and His children, he is actually serving to develop the Church and perfect them for their future positions. The ministry of evil perfects the Church. As with Job, God allows testings of the consecrated, even to the core, but within predetermined parameters.

When God created Lucifer, he was perfect until the day iniquity was found in him (Ezek. 28:15). At the time of the Garden of Eden incident, Lucifer fell from his perfection. Since then, God has used Satan as His hangman to unwittingly accomplish His purpose, and down through the centuries, Satan has tried God's people of both spiritual and natural Israel. Not only has natural Israel been disciplined by the Diaspora, but at the end of the age, Jacob's Trouble will provide a further purging.

God "created [permitted] the smith [Satan]." In His providence, God is so capable that He can do certain things without infringing upon the moral liberty of the individual(s) involved. In other words, God will set the stage without interfering with either human or angelic free moral agency, for He knows in advance how people will react. An example is the Pharaoh of the Exodus, whom God raised up to glorify His name. Verse 16 is saying that Satan would be used as a tool of God. Because God knows how Satan will react under certain conditions, that which He desires to get rid of will be taken care of by this agency. ("I have created the waster to destroy.") Hence Satan's extremes will ultimately result in good by developing the Church and natural Israel.

What bearing does verse 16 have on the topic of the chapter? In the natural application, only a Holy Remnant will survive Jacob's Trouble; the majority will be eliminated. The Haman picture illustrates the principle. Haman not only built a gallows to destroy Mordecai and his family but also made preparations to have the people rise up and slay every Jew in the empire on a given day. However, Haman's plan backfired when the king saw through the plot, and Haman himself was hanged on the very gallows he had built for Mordecai. Instead of the Jews being surprised and annihilated, they were prepared and waiting so that the people intent on killing them went right into their own deathtrap. And that is what will happen with Gog and Magog. When Gog goes down to destroy Israel and take a spoil of land and goods, the intent will boomerang, and the host of Gog will eventually be defeated. In reality, Satan will be used to destroy his own forces. What at first seems to be damaging will be overruled for good.

Now, regarding the Church, the New Creation, how does verse 16 apply? The ministry of evil perfects the Church. The Christian fights "not [merely] against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). All down the age, Satan and the fallen angels have been the enemies of both the Church and the Great Company, being especially involved in the trial of the flesh. In the trial with his eyesight, the Apostle Paul said Satan was like a thorn that

buffeted him, but the trial worked for Paul's good. He was so brilliant that without that thorn in his flesh, he might have become heady and proud. Therefore, what appeared to be a hindrance worked out for good in the long run.

If we consider verse 16 to have a dispensational fulfillment for the Church, the setting would be the end of the age. Just before Gethsemane when Jesus knew he had to die, he said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). The power of Satan was supreme at the time of the Crucifixion—it was Satan's hour. And so, at the end of the age, the Destroyer will cause the death of the feet members. During the hour of power, the night wherein no man can work, the Church, the feet members, will be put to death (John 9:4).

At the end of the age, Satan will be very active in a special way against the Lord's people. He will work "all power and signs and lying wonders" and "all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:9,10). God will allow a certain lie to become a delusion, and Satan is particularly identified with that lie. Satan will exert GREAT ENERGY in connection with the delusion.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13,14). The fallen angels will actively stir up the confederacy of the beast, dragon, and false prophet. The "unclean spirits" that come out of their mouths will be doctrines of devils, of which Satan is the prince, or chief.

The Second Psalm indicates that the feet members will have experiences similar to those of the Master at the end of his earthly course. Genesis 3:15 reads, "I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel [the feet members]." Satan is energetically preparing the furnace, digging the pit, building the gallows, etc., to destroy the Church, but God promises that the feet members will not be harmed as new creatures.

The Book of Isaiah has been difficult to understand. On the one hand, Christians tend to give the spiritual application only. On the other hand, Jews read the Old Testament and give it only the natural interpretation. Much of Isaiah is both spiritual and natural.

**Isa. 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.**

Verses 16 and 17 tell about the experience of the Church on this side of the veil, whereas earlier verse 14 talked about the Church on the other side of the veil, free from trouble and with permanent, everlasting security. Verses 16 and 17 indicate that a hard experience is coming, but it will not harm the feet members as new creatures.

"This is the heritage of the *servants* of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." The "servants" can be considered as the feet members (the Church), the Ancient Worthies, or the Holy Remnant; no weapon formed against them will prosper. At that time, the Holy Remnant will realize they have been providentially and miraculously spared. Having previously prayed, mourned like doves for the Lord, and gone into the clefts of the rock, they will be a contrite, spared class. The Holy Remnant will be handpicked in advance, for God foreknows how they will react.

**Isa. 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.**

The picture changes now to a Kingdom setting. An invitation is issued: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Notice that *all people* are invited to drink. The food and drink will not cost anything, yet the people will have to “buy.” In what sense will they “buy” without money? Salvation is not automatic. The people will have to bow the knee and confess that Jesus is Lord—and *obey* the rod-of-iron rule.

What is the distinction between “milk” and “wine”? “Milk” is doctrine for babes, whereas “wine” is doctrine for the mature. Moreover, “wine” is *joyous* doctrine, the *joys* of the truth, as opposed to mere “water.” The first miracle Jesus performed at his First Advent was to change six vessels of water into six vessels of wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). The first work of Jesus at his Second Advent was to change the truth into the joyous Harvest message in six *Volumes*. The joyous, coherent plan of God was seen to manifest His wisdom, power, love, and justice.

**Q:** How did Mary know Jesus could change the water into wine?

**A:** She did not know, but she realized he could handle the situation. Jesus was now 30 years of age, and since Joseph had evidently died, Jesus had taken over the carpentry trade and was supporting his mother. She knew he had superior wisdom—like Solomon—to deal with any contingency that might arise. It is interesting that the changing of water into wine at Cana took place on the “third day,” which pictures the Millennial Age, and Jesus returned at the beginning of the “third day,” that is, 1874.

**Q:** Why did Jesus say to Mary, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4)?

**A:** Jesus’ real miracles were to be performed later—in his own time and way. In this sense, his hour had “not yet come.” His rebuff to Mary was uttered to counteract the later worship of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Church. In that church system, Mary is placed ahead of Jesus, for communicants pray to her to get the Son to do something.

Jesus sets the pace and the deeds, not his mother or anyone else. In this sense, his saying, “Mine hour is not yet come,” is similar to his words, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17). Many in life do a lot of suggesting as to what other people should do. Suggestions can be in order, but this is something we should be very careful about doing.

In the final analysis, Jesus did obey Mary. In thinking over her request, he probably realized the miracle would not be a violation. He was just exercising a proper *natural reserve and caution*. He was watching for God’s providences.

“Without money and without price.” Is there a difference between the two? The “price” for following Jesus in this age is consecration unto sacrifice and *death*, whereas consecration in the Kingdom will be unto *life*. The people will have to humble their pride and their will, and to acquiesce, but they will not have to count the cost (Luke 14:28). However, while the stones will all be removed, the “little season” at the end of the Millennium will be a severe test (Rev. 20:3). Satan will tempt the world of mankind with an intensity similar to that coming shortly on the Church. During the Millennium, many will, at least at first, obey out of prudence so that they receive health, happiness, etc., but only those who *fully* love God will pass the test. All who enter the Little Season will have perfect minds and bodies and thus will be capable of perfect obedience. But only if their hearts are right will they pass the severe test. In fact, the holy angels, the Ancient Worthies, and the Church are all subjected to severe testing. In any age, the final test is very crucial and severe. Of course the Church has more of a continual testing, but the rewards are “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

**Isa. 55:2** Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

In verses 1 and 2, Isaiah was telling the people, “Listen carefully. Eat that which is good. Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Get strong. Drink milk, and with more maturity, enjoy the wine.” In other words, “Enjoy the truth and build yourselves up during the Kingdom. Get strengthened for the severe test at the end of the Millennial Age.” The “wine” being mentioned before the “milk” in verse 1 shows that Isaiah was addressing a mixed class, with some being very young in understanding and others being more mature.

**Q:** Will there be much emphasis during the Kingdom on the severe test at the end of the Millennium? Of course the people will not know the character of the test, but will they know a test is coming?

**A:** Yes, they will know a test is to occur, but they will not know exactly when. One reason is that in the Kingdom, there will be no calendar or clock as we have it. Time will be reckoned on a daily basis with just the days of the week: Sunday through Saturday. The people might have to work only two days a week (instead of five), and the work will be done at a different pace and under different conditions, perhaps being adjusted to a person’s capability and preference. Even today the majority of the people around the world do not use the same calendar that we have in the United States.

The point is that with a universal clock in the Kingdom and a way to reckon time without using years, the world will know a test is to occur in the Little Season, but they will not know just when the Little Season or the test is to begin. Of course *God will know* the time, but not the world.

And there is another point. When something is a long way off—say, a couple of hundred years away—the thoughts of the people are on more immediate things. Satan will be loosed *toward the close, or toward the completion*, of the Millennium, but when is that? The Bible is purposely vague, and because of the nature of the test, it will come as a surprise. The disobedient will go up to the “camp of the saints” and make a request that manifests their wrong heart condition (Rev. 20:3,7-9). They will want the Kingdom to end so that they can revert to their former wrong, evil practices. Amos 8:4-6 describes this attitude: “When will the new moon [the New Covenant] be gone ... and the sabbath [the Millennium], [so] that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? [So] that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?” This Second Death class will obey during the Kingdom Age but only out of prudence, knowing that if they disobey, they will be punished. They will be biding their time, waiting for the reign to end, so that they can once again take advantage of their intellectual and shrewd business talents. All whose hearts and wills are not fully in harmony with the Lord will be destroyed. The Lord will require perfect obedience at that time.

Although we cannot obey perfectly in the Gospel Age, our hearts and our wills must be right; we must desire to serve the Lord *fully*. At present, we have imperfect minds, imperfect instruction, physical weaknesses, etc., but in the next age, as the people grow and are perfected, as they get clearer and clearer minds and better health, they will be more responsible and hence will be judged according to their works. If we were judged on that basis now, we would all be failures. In the present age, God judges the intention of our *hearts*. Not even our minds are judged, for the mind is like a muscle of the body, and just as we can have a weak muscle, which is a physical ailment, so we can have all kinds of thoughts we do not desire. However, the *heart* condition—and the will, which is even deeper than the heart—pertains to the depth of

our love for God and our desire to serve Him. If we get too liberal in dealing with the flesh and our weaknesses, our reins (our wills) will become contaminated and eventually, if unchecked, result in incorrigibility. Although the mind should be distinguished from the motive or the will, it is part of the body, and it affects the will. Thus if we feed on or harbor thoughts for any length of time that are not conducive to righteousness, the heart will be adversely affected. The longer we are in a room with smoke, the more the smoke permeates our clothing.

**Isa. 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.**

“Incline your ear, ... hear, and your soul shall live.” This instruction and promise pertain to the Kingdom, the time when the truth will be offered to all without money and without price, the New Covenant being applicable (Isa. 55:1). God “will make an everlasting covenant [the New Covenant] with you [Israel], even the sure mercies of David.”

**Isa. 55:4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.**

God has given Jesus to be a “witness to the people,” a “leader,” and a “commander.” In what sense? Why was “witness” mentioned first? Jesus became the “faithful and true *witness*” after his crucifixion, when he had fulfilled his earthly ministry and been faithful unto death (Rev. 3:14). The term also refers to his former life and ministry. The next two attributes (“leader” and “commander”) are sequential. Since Jesus was a faithful and true witness, God will make him a leader and a commander in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 55:5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.**

The RSV reads, “Behold, you [Israel] shall call nations [plural] that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall *run* to you.” The Gentiles will be anxious to come in under the New Covenant with Israel to get the blessings (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 8:23).

Note: The word “nation” or “nations,” which can be either singular or plural here in verse 5, can also be translated “people,” referring to the Gentiles. The term “a people” can be thought of as those living in a nation or having a racial quality or something that distinguishes them, and the term is plural in itself. In addition, “people” can be thought of as various individuals of different backgrounds and nationalities or nations.

“For he [God] hath glorified thee [Israel].” God will glorify Israel in connection with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant in Jacob’s Trouble, the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies, and so forth.

The beginning of the verse refers to the Church: “Behold, thou [natural Israel] shalt call a nation [the Church] that thou knowest not.” The Apostle Peter called the Church “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an *holy nation*” (1 Pet. 2:9). In other words, natural Israel will recognize the Church; Israel will call a “nation” they were not aware of. At present, they do not realize there is to be a higher nation composed of many peoples—a “holy nation,” the Church. And “nations [the Gentiles] that knew not thee [natural Israel] shall *run unto thee* because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee [Israel].” When God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentiles will realize that God is with the nation of Israel. Thus two pictures are here: (1) Israel will recognize the Church as superior, and (2) the Gentile nations will recognize that Israel is superior to them. This same theme of Kingdom joys and the pleasures of restored Israel will be repeated and repeated from now on

in the Book of Isaiah, just as Jacob's Trouble was a major theme earlier in the book.

**Isa. 55:6** Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Verses 1- 4 and part of verse 5 apply to the Kingdom. Verses 6 and 7 are a new thought, a parenthetical insert, referring to the Church. In the present age, those with a hearing ear are *invited* to seek the Lord; in the next age, it will be *mandatory* to seek and obey Him. The rest of the chapter refers to the world and to Israel.

**Isa. 55:7** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

God "will have mercy upon him [the wicked]; ... for he [God] will abundantly pardon."

**Q:** Is there a distinction between the words "pardon" and "forgive"? Why does verse 7 say "abundantly pardon" when certain acts require retribution?

**A:** In the Gospel Age, when a person repents and consecrates, recognizing Jesus as his Savior, some sins against light are beyond redemption. In other words, restitution cannot be made because of the very nature of the previous sin, and therefore, a measure of retribution is needed somewhere along the line in our experiences in the present life. But where a sin is attributable to Adamic weakness, the Lord abundantly forgives; that is, He wipes the slate clean. Acts 3:19-21 prophetically mentions that our sins will be blotted out at the time of restitution. (It is one thing to have our sins covered and another to have them blotted out.) The entire blotting out of our sin will take place at our change to the new nature. However, in the present life, we must make amends for what we can. In the Kingdom, when the world of mankind comes forth from the tomb and is on trial for life, some sins committed in the present life will receive retribution.

This is a big subject—sin, retribution, forgiveness, repentance, etc.—but generally speaking, God forgets those things in our past which it is impossible for us to redeem or restore. He realizes our heart condition and deals with us accordingly, and He would not have called us and let us know the message of truth if we could not fulfill our consecration vow *if rightly exercised*. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father ... draw him" (John 6:44). When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). In other words, "You could not have said that, Peter, if the Father had not revealed it to you." Whether we appreciate the fact or not, it is a miracle for us to know the truth. And just the fact we hear the truth means that God is drawing us and giving us the opportunity of the calling of this age. Consequently, we see that verses 6 and 7 can apply to us in connection with submitting ourselves to the Lord. He will have mercy on us and abundantly pardon us.

Jesus said that some of our sins are due to our own faults. It is one thing to suffer for our own faults and shortcomings, and it is another thing to suffer for righteousness' sake through no fault of our own. Of the two types of suffering for the Christian, suffering for righteousness' sake is the higher level. "Blessed [happy] are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10). The Father disciplines us as a child (1) for wrongdoing and (2) for right doing. Sins of a willful or partially willful nature must receive some kind of retribution ("stripes"), whereas sins due to heredity and Adamic weakness can be freely forgiven (Luke 12:47,48).

**Isa. 55:8** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

**Isa. 55:9** For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Isa. 55:10** For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

**Isa. 55:11** So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

This chapter of Isaiah emphasizes mercy. Verses 8-13 apply to the world of mankind in the Kingdom, and particularly to the nation of Israel, who will be greatly refreshed. Verse 10 is saying that as rain and snow descend, or fall, and do not return thither but permeate and seep into the ground and bring forth verdure, growth, and eventually food for man and beast to partake of, so God's Word is the same. Why was this subject introduced here? God said in verse 9, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my thoughts are higher than man's thoughts." Then He connected this thought with His Word.

**Comment:** God makes a lot of promises and statements, many of which we cannot understand. As time goes by and we learn more about His character, we should, hopefully, have a deeper appreciation.

**Reply:** Even with general and current truth and prophecy, the Lord's thoughts are higher than ours. And dispensationally speaking, God's thoughts embrace large periods of time. Since we live in a short span of time, we observe Him in our own little time slot. Thus we cannot appreciate His stately stepplings down through the corridor of the ages. We do not see His large majestic steps down through history accomplishing His purpose except as we develop in the understanding of His Word. In order to understand a little, we must be taught of Him from His Word and have His mind.

**Comment:** According to a *Reprint* article, verses 8-11 were included because verses 1-5 are too wonderful for the majority of the world to believe, yet because God's ways are so much higher than man's, these promises should be believed. It is as if God were saying, "Believe in my benevolence. These things *will come to pass*."

**Reply:** Yes, verses 1-5 are restitution promises. People think of God's mercy only in terms of the present period, but there are different ages and dispensations. People do not appreciate God's stately stepplings down through the ages and the long span of time. The world's call of opportunity will occur in the next age. The call to be of the Bride of Christ in the present age is an invitation, in which a person voluntarily gives his heart to the Lord. In the Kingdom, consecration will be mandatory. Generally speaking, Christians have failed to see the opportunity of salvation for the world of mankind in the next age. They quote the text "Now is the day of salvation," but they do not realize that now is the day of the GREAT salvation of the HIGH CALLING (2 Cor. 6:2). The implication of those Christians is that if one does not obey now, in the present age, all is lost. But God has other purposes with regard to mankind in the future—benevolent purposes with a day of opportunity for all. Whatever God has promised *will happen*, no matter how long the fulfillment takes. The same is true of a planted seed. After the planting comes a long period of waiting before the first indication of potential fruit bearing.

God's ways being higher than man's ways are probably what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). Verses 30-32 are

also pertinent: “For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [the Jews’] unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. [And then Paul added:] O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Thus there is an emphasis on mercy in both Romans 11 and Isaiah 55. Romans 11:29 reads, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”; that is, God has said the time would come when He would again have mercy on Israel. In Romans 11:27, Paul was talking about natural Israel: “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Paul was saying that although natural Israel was once broken off because, through their unbelief as a nation, they did not accept the Messiah and the Gentiles came into the Abrahamic tree of promise, He has purposed that, at a future date, He will forgive Israel and reinstate the nation. At that time, both classes (Jews and Gentiles) will have been previously humbled as well as exalted. This dual experience will give them a greater appreciation of God’s love and mercy. Similarly, a sick person who has been restored to health has more appreciation for that health than the person who has never been sick.

**Isa. 55:12** For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

**Isa. 55:13** Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Verses 12 and 13 apply to the world in the Kingdom, and especially to restored, forgiven Israel. During the Gospel Age, Gentiles have accepted Christ in much greater numbers than Jews. In the next dispensation, however, the ratio will be reversed. The New Covenant will be made with the house of Israel, so Gentiles will have to become proselytes to the Jewish faith with Jesus as the Lawgiver. Consequently, Paul was astounded at how God will deal with both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 11:33). There is a period of exaltation of the Jews and a period of humbling. The same is true in regard to Gentiles. Thus each should realize the need for forgiveness. In the next age, then, when under the New Covenant the Jews are again in the ascendancy, they will be more merciful in their attitude toward the Gentiles. God’s wisdom is shown in permitting the humbling and the humiliation experiences to come on both Jews and Gentiles. If those who are exalted were previously humbled, they are more apt to be better agents of the Kingdom.

Verse 12 mentions symbolic “mountains,” “hills,” and “trees of the field.” “Mountains” are the larger and greater Gentile kingdoms of the present age. “Hills” are the smaller Gentile kingdoms of the present age. “Trees of the field” picture prominent individuals and leaders. In other words, when the New Covenant is in operation, all Gentile nations, both great and small, will rejoice in the forthcoming blessings. In their great happiness and celebration, the Gentile nations and their leaders will hail and honor Israel. Figuratively, the Gentiles will be in the front of the procession, singing and clapping their hands in joy as they introduce that which is behind: Israel. As a contingent, the symbolic mountains, hills, and trees will go out ahead of Israel in peace and joy, clapping their hands and cheering for that nation.

From an opposite standpoint, during the Civil War, there was a period of sorrow when Lincoln’s body was transported back to Illinois by train. People lined up along the tracks to mourn him and to express their sorrow and tears. Imagine, instead, a victory parade. At the approach of the party, the mountains, hills, and trees would exult with joy. And so, when the Gentiles see the blessings of the Kingdom on Israel a little while after Jacob’s Trouble, they will joyously acclaim that nation. Anti-Semitism will cease.



“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” Isaiah was saying that there will be a *complete change* in the *hearts* of society. Pines and evergreens refresh and purify the air. People who have a thornlike or brierlike disposition are usually faultfinders and hypercritical, with nothing constructive to offer. Grace, love, and comfort are lacking. But in the Kingdom, when the hearts of the people are converted, the briars and the thorns will become constructive in their influence and have a purifying effect in their rigidity. The destructive effect of the thorns and briars will cease, and fir (everlasting life) and myrtle trees will flourish. This change in men’s hearts will be reflected beautifully in the Third Temple, for myrtle and cedar trees will be there.

Isaiah was gradually introducing a generalized picture of the Gentile nations in the Kingdom. Then he would concentrate on natural Israel.

The thorn and brier analogy can be stated another way. All mankind are fallen. Those who become Christians must still fight hereditary and environmental weaknesses and problems of the past, but with the instruction of God’s Word, their lives are changed considerably. The point is that when the “briars” and “thorns” of mankind are changed in the Kingdom, these tendencies will be redirected along constructive lines.

There is a relationship between the thorn and the fir tree, and between the brier and the myrtle tree. The rigidity of the thorn will change for good. However, to not be able to recognize evil is just as bad as being a destructive thorn without mercy or consideration for others. The one who is all soft is too forgiving, too merciful, and has no qualifications for repentance. One might as well be a Universal Salvationist and say that all will be saved, including Satan. The desirable and true perspective is in between the two extremes: having a combination or blending of sternness and love. In fact, that was Paul’s reasoning or philosophy in Romans 11:22. “Behold therefore the *goodness and severity* of God.” Both qualities are needed: goodness (mercy) and severity.

On the one hand, some individuals are more merciful than God, but to be more forgiving and more loving than God is a *false concept* of love. On the other hand, some are too severe; they are lacking in mercy and forgiveness. God has the perfect blend of both qualifications: the hardness of the diamond and the softness and compassion of the sard stone. “And he [God] that sat [on the throne] was to look upon like a jasper [diamond] and a sardine stone” (Rev. 4:3). The diamond shows God’s severity, glory, and brilliance of office. (“No man hath seen God at any time” because no one can look upon Him and live—John 1:18.) The sard, the stone for engraving, shows His compassion. (“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, ... I dwell in the high and holy place, [and] with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones”—Isa. 57:15.) The blending of these qualities is shown in the aspect of the “thorn” becoming a “fir tree” and the brier becoming a myrtle tree. A fir tree is not soft (it has rigidity), but neither does it have the degree of hardness of a thorn. One can walk through fir or myrtle trees, brushing against them, without getting injured. That is not true of thorn and brier bushes. Thus the ideal is the *balanced* condition of severity and goodness, of justice and love. Because we are all warped in one direction or the other, the Holy Spirit is required to try to rectify this weakness in our characters and balance us with love and justice.

Paul was impressed with the perfect combination of these two qualities in God’s character. Thus he marveled at the depth of God’s wisdom—it is beyond comprehension! Isaiah 55 is likewise talking about the goodness and the severity of God, whose ways are higher than ours. Ultimately, when the fruitage of His plan is accomplished, there will be great rejoicing.

Q: Is verse 13 literal as well as figurative?

**A:** It will be literal in regard to the Third Temple, but it is also figurative along with verse 12 about the mountains and the hills singing and the trees clapping their hands.

“It shall be to the LORD for a name [memorial—RSV], for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” The fulfillment of this part of verse 13 will be at the *end* of the Kingdom. While initially the nations will be made to know that Israel has been delivered and there is a change of government, it will take time for the full blessing and fruitage of that age to be realized. *After* the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, when they were on the *far* side, they sang the hallelujah chorus. Accordingly, those who attain unto the age *beyond* the Millennium will look back and rejoice in God’s plan and realize His wisdom, justice, love, and power. At that time, His attributes will be fully manifested to society as a whole.

**Isa. 56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.**

**Isa. 56:2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.**

This advice would be proper in any age. The Lord is near to one who opens his heart to spiritual things. Blessed is the man who acts upon God’s will.

“Blessed is the man ... that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.” This message had a partial fulfillment in Isaiah’s day. God was pleased with and blessed any Jew who tried to obey His Law and keep the sabbath holy. These two verses should really be part of the previous chapter, as the context is the same. Therefore, the tense should be future, and the primary fulfillment is during the Kingdom Age. The mention of the sabbath proves that it will be observed under the New Covenant in the next age.

God’s face and character are hidden in His Word. Of course many people who superficially read the Bible completely misunderstand His character. They falsely conclude that God is very cruel, wrathful, and angry and that Jesus is very kind.

**Isa. 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.**

Some definitions are needed. The “son of the stranger” (“foreigner” in the RSV) would be a Gentile proselyte. Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith in the Jewish Age got the blessings and natural promises then due to natural Israel. A “eunuch” (used in the favorable sense here) is a Christian, one who is in a covenant, or personal, relationship with Jesus during the Gospel Age.

Why would the Gentile proselyte (“son of the stranger”) say, “The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people”? Why would the Christian (“eunuch”) say, “Behold, I am a dry tree”? Whether in the Jewish Age or in the Gospel Age, both of these categories are criticized by the nominal mass, be it natural or spiritual Israel. These right-hearted ones realize they are missing out on blessings of fellowship. (This same lesson is taught in Song of Solomon 1:6, “My mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards.”) The faithful minority element are not accepted by the nominal mass.

There are several other kinds of “eunuch.” A literal eunuch is surgically deprived of the ability to have children. In olden days, prized male slaves were sometimes castrated to prevent any physical or sexual desire in their close contact with the household. Another kind of “eunuch” is one who takes a vow never to marry in order to serve the Lord wholly and completely.

As used here, the term “eunuch” refers to the true Christian, who does not seem to get a compensatory blessing in the present life. In other words, while Christians do get blessings in the present life in connection with consecration, the greatest blessings, the real reward, will occur in the next life. Present blessings are only a foretaste of blessings to come. The way is narrow at present, yet it is interspersed with some sweet experiences.

“Eunuchs” in the false Church are those who have taken vows not to marry and then devoted their lives to the nominal system. Priests or nuns who subsequently see the hypocrisy of the system or who regret their vows are in a dilemma. In regard to their vows, they ask, “What have I done?” However, Martin Luther and others realized that they could leave the institution and still serve the Lord. Down through the Gospel Age, when the wheat and the tares were growing together, the Lord did not particularly call Christians to take a stand and come out of the nominal system. But now we are in the Harvest, and it is time to come out of Babylon.

**Isa. 56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;**

**Isa. 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.**

God was saying to the “eunuch” class, to true Christians, that He knows about them and that they will be better to Him than sons and daughters and that He will give them an “everlasting name.” When a person dies childless, his lineage and name cease, and he is quickly forgotten. But if faithful, those who are eunuchs for the Lord’s sake will have a perpetual name and a relationship closer to Him than that of sons and daughters. The Scriptures elsewhere show that those of the Little Flock will be fruitful in the next age.

Cornelius was the first Gentile convert to the Jewish faith at the change of dispensations from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. Prior to the Lord’s recognition of him, his prayers ascended up as a memorial (Acts 10:1-4). During those 3 1/2 years, Cornelius may have sensed that his prayers were being stored up rather than being specially answered. Some Christians have testified that after having a very close relationship with the Lord for a number of years, they experienced a period when they felt their prayers were not being answered. It seemed as if their prayers were bouncing off the wall and not being heard. Those rightly exercised were driven to try to serve the Lord better and better, and as a result, the close relationship was restored. Cornelius may have experienced a similar feeling but not because of wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the period of waiting was a great test of his faith. And so the “son of the stranger” should not say, “The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people.” Neither should the “eunuch” say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” Both should exercise faith and persist in seeking the blessing. They should not be dismayed or discouraged if the nominal mass shuns them, for they *will be rewarded*.

**Isa. 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;**

Back to verses 1 and 2. These verses can have a past and a present application and are designed to be instructional, but they definitely have a *future* application as well. The setting of this prophecy pertains to those who join themselves to the Lord in the Kingdom Age in a special sense.

In verses 3-7, there are *two* classes of “sons of the stranger,” or “foreigners” (RSV). One is the *particular* calling of the *present* age; the other is the *general* calling of the *next* age. Notice the

word “also” at the beginning of verse 6.

In regard to the high calling of the Gospel Age, true spiritual “eunuchs” are those who obey by separating themselves unto the Lord in a personal relationship with Him. But there are even two kinds of true Christian “eunuchs”; all must consecrate, but some go further and refrain from marriage for the Kingdom of heaven’s sake, as did the Apostle Paul (Matt. 19:12).

**Isa. 56:7** Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

In the Kingdom Age, “sons of the stranger,” Gentiles, will consecrate. Notice what verses 6 and 7 say about them in regard to the Third Temple. God says (RSV), “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, every one who keeps the sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my *house of prayer*; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a *house of prayer for all peoples*.” God’s “house of prayer” is the Third Temple, which will be built in Jerusalem.

Isaiah was speaking of the Kingdom Age and the honor that will come back to Israel when the people are reconciled to God at that time. But inserted in this prophecy, which pertains to the Millennial Age and shows the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, is a message pertaining to the Church. Now the context reverts back to the Kingdom Age and to those God will bring to His “holy mountain” in Jerusalem. He will make them joyful in His “house of prayer,” the Third Temple.

When Jesus cast out the money changers from Herod’s Temple, he said, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13). Although Isaiah 56:7 is a prophecy of the Third Temple in the next age, Jesus quoted this prophecy to give a lesson of holiness to those living at the First Advent. In other words, lessons about the Third Temple can pertain to us now, in the present life. Jesus was saying that in harmony with the prophecy of the future, the Temple, which was built as a sanctuary to honor the Lord, should not have been made into a den of thieves. (The first temple was Solomon’s. The second temple, Zerubbabel’s, was enlarged by Herod and thus is called Herod’s Temple. The Third Temple is Ezekiel’s.)

In the last chapter, Isaiah generalized about mountains and hills (verse 12), but now he was getting more specific with details. The worldwide condition will have a particular, specialized application to Jerusalem. There, at that focal point, will be the example for all peoples to follow; from there will go forth instruction and guidance.

Verse 7 is definitely future; there is no past application. Notice, a *literal* “house,” or temple, will be built in Jerusalem with *literal* sacrifices. In other words, the New Law Covenant will be very similar to the Old Law Covenant with a temple, sabbaths, a law, etc. At no time in the past was a temple in Israel a “house of prayer for *all* people”; this is a Kingdom setting.

**Isa. 56:8** The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

In the future after Jacob’s Trouble, God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The *two* regatherings in our day are clearly referred to here. “Yet will I gather others to him [*after* Jacob’s Trouble], beside those that are gathered unto him [*before* Jacob’s Trouble].” The Revised Standard Version reads, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ... I will gather *yet others* to him [Israel] *besides those*

*already gathered.*” After Jacob’s Trouble, all surviving Jews in other parts of the world will be brought back to Israel by the “sons of the stranger” (the Gentiles).

**Isa. 56:9** All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

**Isa. 56:10** His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

God’s blind “watchmen” are His professed spiritual watchmen, the watchmen over nominal spiritual Israel. “Dumb dogs” are the DD’s—the Doctors of Divinity, those who “doctor” divinity and are not true teachers. The Lord used sarcasm here. Ostensibly, they are the teachers and the watchmen, but in reality, they are the opposite.

Why was verse 10 preceded with, “All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest”? “Beasts” of the field and forest will come in and devour because the watchmen are blind and do not properly “bark” (warn the flock) in regard to prophetic truths. The watchmen are not alert; they are not acquainted with God’s (*prophetic*) Word. Just as the purpose of a dog’s bark is to warn, so these professed teachers have a responsibility to warn the flock. They have no interest in doing so, however. Instead they are “sleeping, lying down, [and] loving to slumber [prophetically].” They preach smooth, easy, soft things with an emphasis on love, and they neglect admonitions. The King James margin says they are “dreaming” or “talking in their sleep.” In other words, they are like bags of wind; their talk, which lacks coherent instructional value, has no real substance. Notice that verse 10 says, “They cannot bark.” Why? Because they do not have prophetic understanding.

**Isa. 56:11** Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

The watchmen are not only blind and dumb, but they are greedy (“strong of appetite” in the King James margin).

**Isa. 56:12** Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

The key phrase in revealing what is wanting in these watchmen is their attitude that “tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” They think that everything is rosy and beautiful and that conditions will continue on with tomorrow being even better than today. With such an attitude, they see no reason to warn. However, it is not that they cannot understand but that they are not interested in understanding; hence they incur responsibility. The watchmen of Christendom do not see the dangers of tomorrow, the dangers of the beasts of the field coming into the flock to devour. But the Scriptures say that “perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1). As in Noah’s day, conditions will get increasingly worse. The Book of Jude warns that at the very end of the age, the true Church itself will be infiltrated (Jude 4). Another way of saying the same thing is that all will be deceived except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). Tomorrow will not be like today but will be quite different.

**Q:** Don’t the “beasts” apply to the nominal Church?

**A:** The “beasts” will first enter the nominal system, but the spirit of nominalism is always a danger to the true Church. Subsequently the beasts will infiltrate the true Church but in a somewhat softer guise that is not as recognizable. The Book of Jude emphasizes what happens in the true Church, but first, it occurs in the nominal system. And what is happening in nominalism today? Standards are dropping. Women and homosexuals are being ordained as

ministers. The consecrated must beware.

**Q:** And what are these “beasts” in the field?

**A:** A worldly, unconverted element. First, they will commingle with the nominally converted. Later they will mix in with the truly converted.

**Comment:** As an example of how conditions are getting worse, there is a *Reprint* article not written by Pastor Russell on 2 Timothy 3:1-5 with the list of adjectives describing the perilous times: “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” The author of the article felt that the rendering was much too strong; hence he gave alternate English words to soften the translation. His point was that people with these characteristics would not be considered godly by any. But we observe these very changes in the nominal system.

**Comment:** Many in the Bible Student movement are too liberal.

**Reply:** The function of a shepherd is not merely to provide food and water but to protect, warn, and admonish as well. It is along this line that shepherds today are particularly negligent. And why? Because as soon as a shepherd takes a different view, he encounters opposition, estrangement, loss of friends, and perhaps loss of eldership. Any elders who pursue the popular, easy course and are nice and social will continue to be elected, generally speaking, because they do nothing to offend. But neither do such shepherds do anything that is especially commendable.

**Comment:** Some elders warn severely, but their warnings are improper and are not justified. This shows the responsibility of the teacher.

**Reply:** Yes, it can work both ways, and the elder who warns suffers either way, that is, whether the warnings are correct or whether they are unjustified. Those in the Truth movement who warn and admonish are less popular, for such action costs them votes. On the other hand, elders who do not speak out risk nothing and, consequently, do not suffer. Instead of following the instruction of God’s Word, they follow the “wise” middle policy of the natural man, proceeding according to the pulse of those with whom they associate, being neither too serious nor too light.

**Comment:** Along the lines of improper warnings, we expect that the ministers of the nominal system will strongly warn against “sects” who do not believe in the Trinity, so they will speak out later but on the wrong issue.

**Reply:** When the ministers have access to the media and the cooperation of the government, they will be following the popular side of the issue. Therefore, when they bark under that circumstance, it will be because they have the backing of the people. At that time, many who have reservations will acquiesce to unjust measures restricting freedom, reasoning that such curtailment of liberty is the lesser of two evils. The lesson to us is that when the trouble increases, we must not assent to things we do not heartily approve of. This discussion is applicable to the next chapter of Isaiah as well.

The ministers say, “Come ..., I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink.” “Wine” and “strong drink” are false doctrine, not only the “wine of fornication” but the “wine” of pleasant and smooth things. Wine that is first light and occasional can become addictive. One

who habitually drinks wine tends to want more and more and stronger and stronger wine. In regard to eldership, the Bible says that an elder should not be “given to wine” (1 Tim. 3:3). That does not mean he cannot take a drink under any circumstance, but he must not be “given” to it. The requirement is not quite as restrictive with a deacon. A deacon should not be given to “much wine”; he should be watchful but can be more social (1 Tim. 3:8). That which is legitimate and proper under certain circumstances can, through frequent use, lead to abuse.

True “wine” would be the pleasing doctrines of Scripture. In other words, “wine” is not necessarily inherently wrong, but “strong drink” is. As was demonstrated at the marriage at Cana, the practice was to serve the good wine first, for the taste buds were more sensitive in the beginning. When the wine supply was exhausted and Jesus changed the six pots of water into wine, the host was asked why the better wine was being served last. The point is that as multiple drinks are served, the quality of the wine being offered deteriorates and gets stronger. Incidentally, if all drinking of wine were wrong, our Lord would not have converted the water into wine. Wine is not being advocated, but for a marriage or another such occasion of joy, wine in moderation is permissible. Each individual is then responsible for controlling himself.

**Q:** Then would wine be considered “strong drink” if it is abused?

**A:** Yes, the danger is that it loosens the tongue and inebriates. In the case of ministers, their senses become numbed by their false doctrine so that they cannot bark.

**Isa. 57:1** **The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.**

“The righteous perisheth.” The Church (that is, the feet members) will die at the end of the age. Verses 1 and 2 belong to the context of the previous chapter about the professed spiritual watchmen having a good time, drinking strong drink, being blind, and failing to bark. The faithful class who do warn will perish. “And no man layeth it to heart.” The world will not be cognizant of what is happening.

Isaiah 56:9 through 57:2 reminds us of Belshazzar’s feast, a type of the coming church-state hour of power in the midst of peril. Even while Babylon was being besieged, the leaders were confident in their false sense of security. Moreover, King Belshazzar and his lords used the gold and silver vessels of the Temple to drink wine and praise their false gods. The leaders of nominal spiritual Israel are intoxicated with false doctrine. Especially at the end of the age, they will misuse divine truths (the gold and silver Temple vessels). Daniel (the feet members) was clothed with new garments (the divine nature) and elevated in office (glorified). In other words, “the righteous,” who are said to perish in Isaiah 57:1, are pictured by Daniel in the type of Belshazzar’s feast. The class who interpret the handwriting on the wall will suffer and die. Their flesh will be destroyed, but they will receive a change of nature and be glorified with Christ. In the Gideon picture, the vessels (the flesh) were destroyed.

In another picture, when the three Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were thrown into the fiery furnace, the cords that bound them were burned, but their garments were not even singed. This incident illustrates that the feet members will die according to the flesh but be delivered as new creatures.

In the type of Belshazzar’s feast, Daniel was clothed *before* the city of Babylon fell (Dan. 5:29-31). The king was slain that very night, but Daniel was elevated *before* the king’s death. During Babylon’s hour of power, the righteous will die—the feet members will finish their course *before* the Time of Trouble begins. They will be “taken away from the evil to come.”

Depending on the Old Testament picture, the king of Babylon represents either Papacy or the

anarchistic, radical element. Therefore, in pictures where Babylon destroys Israel, Babylon represents the anarchistic enemy who will destroy nominal spiritual Israel, the clerical element. However, in settings where Babylon alone is pictured, it almost always represents Papacy.

To emphasize the point again: Isaiah 57:1 is a very strong verse to show that the feet members will go off the earthly scene *before the Time of Trouble*. They will be found “worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

**Isa. 57:2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.**

This verse is very interesting. Based on verse 1, the “beds” have to be *beyond the veil*. And that is also true of Psalm 149:5, “Let the saints be joyful *in glory*: let them sing aloud upon their beds.” “The righteous” will be “taken away from the evil to come” and “enter into peace” beyond the veil, into the permanent “rest” referred to by the Apostle Paul. “There remaineth therefore a rest [in heaven] to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). The words of a hymn are, “Here o’er the earth as a stranger I roam, Here is no rest, here is no rest; ... Soon shall the faithful forever be blest, There, there is rest, there is rest.”

The future rest is not a rest of slumber but a rest from trouble, sickness, imperfection, and sin, for the righteous will be “walking in uprightness [*actual righteousness and perfection*].” In the present life, we try to please the Lord as best we can, but weaknesses of the flesh in our fallen humanity keep us from perfection in thought, word, and deed. The victorious Church beyond the veil with their actual white robes of righteousness are described as the “called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

The Pastor explained that Psalm 149 applies to the present life because of the sword in the saints’ hands, but our Lord *in glory* is pictured with a sword in his hand and in his mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:16; 19:15,21). “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, ... To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints” (Psa. 149:6,7,9). Therefore, having a sword in the hand is not a proof that the time setting is in the present life. This “judgment” honor, which all the saints will have, pertains to Babylon’s destruction yet future after the true Church is complete.

There are two kinds of rest and two kinds of bed. There is a rest on this side of the veil and a rest on the other side. The credal bed is on this side of the veil, and Solomon’s bed is beyond the veil (Song 3:7).

Revelation 19:14 will take place beyond the veil when the Church is complete: “And the armies which were *in heaven* followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” The plural word “armies” means troops in heaven, not two different armies (not an army down here and an army above). Also, the context of Revelation 19:14 is *after* the destruction of Babylon because Jesus’ vesture is dipped in blood. Jesus is *returning* from having trodden the winepress. The “fine linen, white and clean” robes are the actual robes of righteousness, not the imputed robes of the present life.

**Q:** Why do the pronouns change in verse 2? “*He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds.*”

**A:** The “righteous” feet members will be so few in number that each will feel like the only one. The perspective is that each of the feet members will be on his own at that time; each one will act *individually*, with one here and one there comprising the class. The completed company, the entire Church, will “rest in their beds” beyond the veil. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their



works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). They will rest from their labors, but their works will follow with them; that is, they will remain active. The rest beyond the veil is one of heart. Being free from trials and imperfections, they will continue to work and be active but *without fatigue*.

The sleeping saints were raised from death in 1878. However, they are not doing Harvest work, for the Lord has been attending to the development of Christians all down the age and does not need their assistance. They are active being educated in “school rooms,” as it were, as to what their activities, duties, and responsibilities will be when the Kingdom is established and the general resurrection takes place. Therefore, only the 300 or so feet members of the 144,000 will require an accelerated education when they get beyond the veil.

**Comment:** The saints who have already been raised must be thrilled, for they are almost a completed company. As another saint dies and is raised instantly, there would be great rejoicing.

**Reply:** Yes, they will all go in to the wedding together, so they are waiting for the last few members. In the meantime, they are being instructed by Jesus and the already raised saints.

**Comment:** The saints who die during the Harvest period will not need as much education in some respects because they have more knowledge of history, technology, etc.

**Reply:** Yes, and that is true of the unconsecrated as well. Regarding the world’s coming forth from the tomb, the dead will be raised in reverse order, Adam being the last and those who have lived in the present century being the first. The generation that lives through the Time of Trouble will be judged first, then the generation who just died, then the next generation going backwards in time, etc.

“They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.” The phrasing indicates that the feet members will enter into peace and rest (death) and yet *immediately* walk (alive) in their uprightness. They will be changed instantly, in a moment, and not lie in the tomb asleep and oblivious, as have others down through the age.

Psalm 105:17-19 reads, “He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.” The feet members of the Joseph class will be imprisoned, and the Word of the Lord will try them until the time of their faithfulness *unto death*. There are other pictures of imprisonment and subsequent deliverance as new creatures: Daniel was shut up in the lions’ den, John the Baptist was put in prison, and the three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace.

Psalm 105 continues in verses 20 and 21, “The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance.” Just as Pharaoh freed Joseph from prison, so the feet members will be freed by their change to glory beyond the veil. And after freeing Joseph, Pharaoh elevated him to the throne of Egypt. Pharaoh made Joseph the “lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance.” Jesus and the Church (The Christ) are to be made rulers “to bind his princes at his pleasure; and [to] teach his senators wisdom” (Psa. 105:22). Psalm 149:6-9 speaks about this same binding and instructing work. With two-edged swords in their hands, The Christ will bind kings with chains and nobles with fetters of iron, executing vengeance and judgment upon the heathen.

**Isa. 57:3** But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

**Isa. 57:4** Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and

**draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,**

Notice the term “*sons* [plural] of the sorceress,” and consider the last part of the verse, “the seed of the adulterer and the whore.” The “adulterer” is masculine; the “whore” is feminine. In the Book of Revelation, the “kings of the earth” (the powers that be, the “fathers,” as it were) commit fornication with the “mother of harlots,” the “whore,” the Roman Catholic Church (Rev. 17:1-5). The children born of this relationship are the members of the false Church. “Sons” result from this union between the adulterer and the whore.

Notice that *sorcery* is involved: “sons of the *sorceress*.” As time goes on, divinations and enchantments will be introduced into the nominal Church as signs. Even now to a certain extent, some religious groups are being deceived by signs. *Glossalalia* is one example; in addition, healings, visions, sounds, music, and/or noises are being sought more and more. Not only in the Pentecostal churches but in the more conservative denominations as well, the charismatic mode of thinking is gaining popularity. This type of thinking will become more and more prevalent as the end of the age approaches. Isaiah 19:3 tells that increasingly the religious element will seek for enchantments and be guided by them. “They shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.” What will happen? The children of this sorcery—namely, those who are the product of the male adulterer and the female adulteress classes—will be deceived by these signs and wonders and utter very bold pronouncements and boastful claims accordingly.

There is a saying: “Seeing is believing.” To those not informed and forewarned by Scripture, the miraculous nature of these occult signs and wonders will be proof of their veracity. These “children of transgression” will make “a wide mouth” and “draw out the tongue” against the feet members, against “the righteous [class who] perisheth” (verse 1). Isaiah was not saying that the righteous class would simply die of natural causes, such as a heart attack, but that they would die *violently* by the product of this false teaching. Out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet will go forth froglike spirits, doctrines of demons, “spirits of devils” (of whom Satan is the chief), to gather together the people to Armageddon and cause the death of the feet members. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:13,14).

“Against whom do ye sport yourselves?” The “sons of the sorceress” will “sport” themselves against the feet members. Prior to and during the Crucifixion, the people mocked Jesus, and that will be the experience of the feet members too. For example, a blindfold was put over his eyes, and he was told to “prophesy” as to who smote him. This was a mockery of the many prophecies he had uttered during his public ministry. On the Cross, he was taunted, “You can heal others, but you cannot even heal yourself.” “If you are truly the Son of God, why don’t you come down from that Cross?” At the end of the age, those who have the courage to stand up will be tested to the utmost.

**Isa. 57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks?**

The “sons of the sorceress” enflame themselves “with idols under every green tree, slaying the children [true Christians] in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks.” Particularly as regards the end of the age, the sons of the sorceress will slay the “righteous,” the feet members (verse 1).

In olden times, the people murdered infants and young, innocent children and even ate them. It was real cannibalism. Although infants are sinners in the sense that all are born and shapen in

iniquity (Psalm 51:5), they are not accountable for sin on a personalized basis. The feet members are called “children” because from the public standpoint, the true Church class are naive, childish, foolish, and immature in worldly wisdom and in their thinking and philosophy. Notice that the “seed [children or product] of the adulteress and the whore” sacrifice true Christian “children” to their “idols,” that is, in the name of Christianity.

The “valley” is sometimes likened to the *lowland* condition of the present life. In contrast, we aspire to the “*highland*,” to a loftier condition beyond the veil. The Church is spoken of as growing in Sharon, the plain, the lowland: “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” (Song 2:1). The feet members are the “children in the valleys,” a very humble class—hence “nobodies” in the eyes of the world.

**Isa. 57:6 Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?**

The blood of the innocent, the righteous, will be poured out as a “drink offering.” The wicked will sacrifice the “children” (feet members) to their idols in the name of Christianity—that is, according to *their* concept of Christianity. But the situation will be reversed, as indicated by the clause “Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion.” The persecutors will have to drink the cup themselves. Like pebbles in the brook that have been worn down and made smooth by the rushing water, so when the next age comes, they will be humbled and put in a lowly condition. In fact, the more active a person is in causing the persecution, the more mortified and ashamed he will be in the Kingdom. With abasement and shame being directly proportional to the injustices that are practiced, the instigators of persecution against the feet members will suffer a great deal in the next age.

“Even to them [the feet members] hast thou [the wicked, the persecutors] poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering.” The feet members will be presented as a meal offering, a sacrifice, unto the false idols (gods) according to a false concept of Christianity. In other words, the persecution will be done in the name of the Lord, to His praise and honor. Daniel’s enemies caused a religious edict to be enacted that would trap him; it stipulated that for one month, anyone who prayed to any other god than the god of the realm was to be cast into the lions’ den. Daniel habitually prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem, and he continued to do so (Dan. 6:4-7). His disregard of the decree was reported to the king, who recognized the duplicity against Daniel. However, he could not rescind the decree because of the law of the Medes and the Persians. As a result, Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den. The connection with the lesson here in Isaiah 57 is that the religious decree against Daniel was ostensibly to honor the god of the realm, and King Darius was considered the representative, or son, of that god, that is, a god in the flesh. Not only Darius but also most of the ancient kings regarded themselves as being of the seed of divinity. Each Pharaoh of Egypt felt he was a child of Ra (a son of this god).

**Isa. 57:7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.**

This “bed” is in the present life. The nominal Church takes *future* promises and looks for their fulfillment in the *present* life. Papacy believes that its period of earthly domination from 799 to 1799 was the 1,000-year reign of Christ. The period from 1799 to the near future Papacy considers to be the Little Season of Satan’s rule through Protestantism. Papacy further believes that the Protestants’ coming back into the papal fold will mark the return of the Kingdom of Christ. Thus Papacy is looking for its concept of the “lofty and high mountain” (the ideal situation from the perspective of Roman Catholicism) to occur down here on earth. Papacy wants peace on this side of the veil and in advance of the proper fulfillment.

“Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.” This portion of verse 7 is a further confirmation of the premise that the persecutors will think they are honoring and pleasing God when they put the feet members to death. And that was Papacy’s attitude in the Dark Ages too. John 16:2 reads, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” There will be a revival of the same type of persecution and thinking during the coming hour of power.

Papacy will make a wide mouth and stick out the tongue, that is, ridicule, the righteous class (verse 4). As these days draw nearer and nearer, all the bad traits of the human nature will come to the fore more and more, and God’s people will have to become more and more docile in the way that Jesus “opened not his mouth ... [but was] as a sheep before her shearers is dumb” (Isa. 53:7). The Church class will have to submit fully to such indignities. The bold public witness will precede imprisonment. Similarly Jesus chased out the money changers and preached boldly until he was apprehended. Once he was seized, he submitted, knowing the time for his crucifixion had come. He did not want to postpone drinking the Lord’s cup. As with Jesus, so with the feet members—the popular season will immediately precede the unpopular experience.

The Catholic Church does not expect a physical or personal return of Christ. Rather, they interpret the return from a pragmatic standpoint, feeling that when the whole world becomes Christianized under one Church (the Roman Catholic Church), that will be the Kingdom.

**Q:** But wouldn’t Catholics be deceived if Satan materialized to appear like Jesus?

**A:** A clarification is needed. If Satan appears as a supernatural being, he will not especially look like Jesus because he does not want to honor the Son. But just as he has been very successful in making himself an angel of light, so he will come in the guise of a wise counselor of superior intelligence from outer space. If some people assume he is the returned Jesus, Satan will allow the liberty of such thinking for a while. Many (both the religious and the nonreligious) will be deceived by the appearance of a supernatural being with supernatural power and wisdom to help mankind out of their dilemma.

**Q:** Will the feet members still be here when Satan materializes?

**A:** Yes, but they will be gone when the fallen angels come in like a flood, inundating the earth as in Noah’s day. When the Flood started, Noah and his family were already in the Ark. A handful of celestial beings is one thing, but the whole realm of unrepentant angels cascading down is another.

**Isa. 57:8** Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.

Generally speaking, Chapter 57 is addressed to the religious systems (mystic Babylon) based on what natural Israel did, for natural Israel was also nominally in covenant relationship with God and is a type of the nominal Church.

**Isa. 57:9** And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

The RSV reads, “You journeyed to Molech with oil and multiplied your perfumes; you sent your envoys far off, and sent down even to Sheol.” “Molech” means “king.”

“And thou wentest to the king ... and didst send thy messengers far off.” The nominal religious element courted the favor of the civil element (governments). While in covenant relationship with God, natural Israel courted favor with Egypt, Babylon, and Syria and in connection with that relationship incorporated some of the religious practices of these other nations. In other words, contrary to God’s will, Israel tried to emulate her neighbors in various ways. For instance, when King Ahaz saw a beautiful altar in Damascus to a heathen god, he admired its workmanship to such an extent that he had Urijah the priest make a copy for use in the Temple court (2 Kings 16:10-16). In addition, Ahaz moved the brazen altar, the true altar, to a secondary position and put the unauthorized altar in the primary position.

The Lord’s architecture is not ornate like pagan architecture. Its simplicity, sound construction, and graceful design are conducive to wholesome lessons. In contrast, the sculpture and the artwork of heathen religions are so ornate that they distract and focus attention on the craftsmanship and elaborate ceremonies.

Verses 8 and 9 are referring to figurative harlotry in the type (the mixing of heathen religions with the true) and spiritual harlotry in the antitype (the mixing of the civil and religious elements). Israel is likened to a woman who plays the harlot. Not satisfied at home, she went to far-off nations where she was attracted to the heathen religions. “Perfumes” and “ointment” indicate that Israel tried to make herself more appealing by giving offerings and valuables to “the king.”

“Thou ... didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.” Hell (*sheol*) is the *hidden* state. When potatoes were “helled” (1611 English), they were covered, or buried, in a mound of earth. When a roof was covered, or thatched, with straw, that was “helling” a house. The text here is referring to religious practices of other nations that were adopted by the Israelites. In Egypt, the Satanic worship of Osiris involved occult mysteries and communication with fallen spirits. It was a secret, debased form of worship associated with the underworld, bloodletting, immorality, and the sacrifice of humans. In Phoenicia and Canaan, human sacrifice was practiced with Molech worship. Both thoughts are brought in here: the worship of Osiris, the god of the underworld, and the worship of Molech, which included child sacrifice.

When God instituted animal sacrifices, the animal was slain kosher style and hence died a painless death. If all the meat we eat were obtained kosher style, the animals would not suffer any pain. When the jugular vein was cut, the resulting rapid loss of blood weakened the animal and killed it in a few seconds. The animals that died as sacrifices under the Jewish religion were pictures of the need for Messiah, a perfect man, having to die in the future to cancel sin. However, Satan twisted the animal sacrifices to mean *child* sacrifices. In some instances, the king even set the example for the nation by offering his own son. Whereas *dead* animals were put on the altar under the Law, *live* children were sacrificed in the heathen religions. The image, or statue, of the Molech fire god had a hollow interior that served as a furnace. Molech had its hands out to receive a live child. Then the arms pulled the child to its breast and the furnace. Meanwhile, a band played to drown out the sound of the child’s screams. The child was roasted and then eaten in a barbaric-like communion.

Another example of Satan’s perverse twisting of the truth is the drinking of blood. When Jesus instituted the Memorial, he served bread and wine to represent his body and blood, respectively. He meant that he was going to die shortly in Adam’s stead and that his death would secure for the world of mankind the hope of life in the future. There was nothing barbaric about these symbols. Jesus was simply saying, “By partaking of the bread, you are appropriating to yourself my merit, and you are also participating in the privileges of the Memorial. By partaking of the wine, which represents my blood and death, you are signifying your willingness to participate in my death.” And what did Satan do? By copying the animal sacrifices and anticipating the institution of the Memorial, he incorporated into heathen

religions the drinking of *actual* blood and the eating of *actual* human flesh. Satan always tries to outdo God, and the more sensational way of Satan is more appealing to debased and depraved humanity. Fallen humanity is more attracted by Satan's methods than by God's methods because to follow God and Jesus, one must go against the stream.

Israel succumbed to these heathen practices. "Cannibalism" comes from "Canaan" worship, the worship of a fire god and eating human flesh. Cannibalism originated with the ancient religion of the Canaanites, who were Molech worshippers. Molech was a Canaanite-Phoenician cultist religion.

Molech worship was sadistic (sadism is getting joy out of the suffering of another individual). Similarly today, many criminals show no remorse for their violent crimes. In fact, rapists and murderers find delight in the victim's struggle to get away; they derive satisfaction from overpowering the individual.

Many of the old-time translators knew about the cannibalism in the Old Testament, but they felt it was so shocking that they covered over, or camouflaged, this sin with nice words. It would have been better to render an accurate translation to show that Israel's punishments were justified and that they as a people need forgiveness.

**Isa. 57:10** Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

At first, the Israelites were captivated by the new and different heathen religious practices, but in the final analysis, there was no real hope based on sound logic (no expiation of sin or hope of a true resurrection). Yet the Israelites were reluctant to admit as a people that they had erred and strayed from the right path.

Followers of the heathen religions worshipped gruesome, wrathful, fearsome gods who needed to be appeased and bribed with sacrifices—Satan's methods. These religions brought no hope, mercy, or truth, and those who practiced them were brought low in character, both mentally and morally.

**Isa. 57:11** And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

Israel was not afraid of God because they failed to understand His principles and methods in holding His peace and not interfering with the evil. The same condition prevailed prior to the Flood when Satan sinned and some of the angels materialized and took human women as wives. Each day for 120 years, the evil and violence increased, but God did not interfere. However, He was talking to Noah and, through Noah's preaching of righteousness, to those who had an ear to hear. Only Noah's family (eight people) resisted the evil. The permission of evil has been a test down through the ages to see who loves God. When Moses went up into Mount Sinai to commune with God, the Israelites were tested. They thought Moses would return shortly, but one day after another passed for a period of 40 days and 40 nights. Even though God had just done some mighty acts on their behalf, the Israelites did not have a sufficiency of faith and trust. They should have reasoned that God had some purpose in delaying Moses' return. Instead they concluded Moses was dead and they built the golden calf.

**Q:** Why did Aaron agree to the building of the calf?

**A:** It was a stalling tactic on his part to ask all the women to donate their gold jewelry. Later Aaron was reprimanded, for what he did was wrong, but he was not severely punished

because he thought the delaying technique was the right thing to do. Moreover, he did not think the women would freely give up their jewelry. Perhaps this all began to take place after about 30 days of the 40 had expired, for it took time to melt the jewelry, make a mold for the calf, etc. Meanwhile, Aaron hoped Moses would return. When he did come down from the mount, the people were in the height of their festivity.

Saul was similarly tested with a waiting period, but he failed that test and disobeyed when he took the initiative and did the sacrificing. The point is that *time* has been a test in both Old and New Testament times.

**Comment:** The Church of the third and fourth centuries also failed the test of waiting. Instead of waiting for Jesus' return, they tried to set up the Kingdom on earth prematurely under Papacy.

**Reply:** Yes, and Papacy's exaltation to power is the antitype for the golden calf incident. As time went on, professing Christians lost faith in a Second Advent and the personal return of Christ, so they instituted the Roman Catholic religion. Knowledge and patience are strong tests. Without the knowledge of God's principles and methods, it is harder to wait.

God asked, "Have not I held my peace even of old, and thou [Israel] fearest me not?" By disobedience in not waiting, Israel manifested their lack of reverential fear of God. When retribution is swift and sudden, people pay attention and are fearful. Delayed justice is another matter. Hardened criminals may get away with their evil acts in the present life, but God is taking note of all their violent crimes. In the Kingdom, they will receive retribution, and they will have to retrace every willfully wrong step in order to get life. One who builds an evil character now will have more trouble in the Kingdom. The principle applies to all people: what (character) a man sows, he will reap. A person who willfully associates with evil now is less likely to appreciate the opportunity for reform in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 57:12** I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

This sarcasm indicates that the great majority of people take the wrong path. Because so few truly endeavor to please the Lord, the whole nominal mass are sarcastically being told that their professions of righteousness will not profit them.

**Isa. 57:13** When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

When the nominal mass cry, they will not be heard or delivered. When the Little Flock is complete, the Lord's message to even the Great Company will be, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye *workers of iniquity* [lawlessness]" (Luke 13:27). The Great Company are still virgins but foolish ones, who allowed their flesh to overcome them so that they did not properly obey the Lord (Matt. 25:1-13). Hence it will be necessary for them to go into the Time of Trouble, sharing their portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 8:12; 24:51). If their repentance is sincere and they wash their robes white "in the blood of the Lamb," they will at least receive eternal life as a rescued class (Rev. 7:14). Thus three classes are being discussed in these New Testament Scriptures: (1) wise virgins, (2) foolish virgins, and (3) hypocrites. Special attention is focused on the first two classes at the end of the age because they have covenanted to do the Lord's will.

"The wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them." In other words, the Time of Trouble will destroy all of "thy companies," all of the false idols, religious practices, and earthly organizations. Some people are actually consecrated to a society, denomination, or movement; they think that doing the good works of that organization is a form of protection to them,

whereas it is actually an idol that comes between them and the Lord. Because their faith is resting not in the Lord but on an improper basis—be it an individual or an organization—they will be proportionately disappointed in the Time of Trouble. Jesus likened this type of faith to building a house on sand instead of on rock (Matt. 7:26).

On the other hand, those who put their trust in God will possess “the land,” that is, the Kingdom. “He that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.” Of the 12 spies, only Joshua and Caleb brought back a favorable report, and of the original adult Israelites who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan. The great majority (approximately 2 million) perished during the 40 years in the Sinai wilderness. Similarly, only a small percentage of nominal believers will actually enter and possess the spiritual Kingdom. In other words, the account of Joshua and Caleb is a picture of how few of the “high calling” class will become part of the 144,000.

The picture of the Israelites’ entering Canaan can be considered from two different time periods: (1) faithful Christians in the Gospel Age obtaining their inheritance in the spiritual or heavenly Canaan, and (2) the obedient of mankind in the age beyond the Millennium getting eternal life in the earthly Canaan. Of the latter class, who will enter the ages of ages, Jesus said, “They ... neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35,36). Such will enter the eighth Creative Day.

Chapter 57 of Isaiah is written in such nebulous, diffused language that the meaning is hard to pinpoint mathematically in this type of study because it is based on previous knowledge of earlier chapters of Isaiah, the writings of other prophets, and history as recorded in Kings and Chronicles. A wealth of information is being hinted at in these few short verses.

Only those who trust the Lord will enter the Promised Land and inherit His “holy mountain” (heaven for the Little Flock of the Gospel Age and earth for the obedient of mankind in the Kingdom Age). In the final analysis, the same principles of obedience apply to all who get life in both ages. The difference is that in this present age of faith and quietness, one must read about God in Scripture to know about Him, whereas in Old Testament times, there were visible demonstrations and audible messages, and God will deal similarly in the next age.

**Isa. 57:14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.**

Verse 14, which is a reference to the Kingdom, reminds us of (1) the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age (Isa. 35:8,9) and (2) John the Baptist’s ministry announcing the coming of Messiah at the beginning of the Gospel Age. As we continue on in Isaiah, this double picture will become a more generalized picture of just the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

**Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

Verse 15 tells what God’s real interest is: “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Just as many frequently quote John 3:16 in the New Testament about God’s love (“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”), so many quote this verse in the Old Testament about the GREAT, HIGH, and LOFTY ONE, whose name is HOLY, dwelling with and helping the humble and contrite little ones. Yet the world is so dull of understanding that they curse God and use His name in vain. If they knew about the great God and the office He occupies, terror would strike their hearts, but He is quiet and hides Himself in this age because to manifest His indignation with such people (as He did in Old



Testament times) would destroy the age of faith. During the Gospel Age, He is looking for those who believe through the Word of truth.

There is a saying, “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” Foolish humans do things the reverent, obedient holy angels would NEVER think of doing. In fact, it is horrifying for them to see the brazenness of man when God’s name and actions and office are so HOLY. The holy angels fully appreciate God’s character, but it is not perceived down here by mankind in general. The Lord is interested in the lowly, humble, contrite class who put their faith and trust in Him. He is looking for the mourners in Zion—for those who mourn because of their own imperfect state and the imperfect state that surrounds them and who yearn for a changed climate and condition where they can serve God in peace. But Christians need trials and struggles during the present age in order to develop a Christlike character.

How does God inhabit eternity? He is immortal; He will never die.

**Isa. 57:16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.**

Why will God “not contend for ever”? If God judged mankind based on their actual deeds, *no one* would get life, for there is “none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). Hence in this age, He makes allowances and judges His children according to their efforts and the desires of their hearts to know and do His will. By the deeds of the Law, none can be justified. The same principle applies to the Kingdom Age. Jesus, the Mediator, will instruct the people, furnish wholesome counsel, and give them a period of time to correct their ways. In both ages, God’s purpose is to reach the class who realize they are sinners, for these are the contrite ones. All have erred, but not all are contrite.

Prior to the Flood, God indicated He would not be quiet forever. “And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man ... yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3). In verse 16, God was saying, “Neither will I be always wroth.” He does not always manifest that wrath, but He takes cognizance of what is happening.

**Isa. 57:17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.**

**Isa. 57:18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.**

**Isa. 57:19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.**

**Isa. 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.**

“For the iniquity of his [natural Israel’s] covetousness was I wroth.” The nation of Israel is being collectively addressed as an individual. God is giving this “man” an opportunity to confess, repent, and be forgiven for having rejected His Son, for example. Notice, however, that despite this opportunity, a class remains wicked in both the present age and the next age: “the [incorrigibly] wicked are like the troubled sea, ... whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

The Lord, the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, says in one breath, “I dwell with the lowly and contrite of heart; I observe their ways and see that they have gone astray, but I will cure and heal such.” Then, right away, He adds, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea.” In other words, whether this collective “man” is regarded as the

Jewish nation (composed of many people) or as nominal spiritual Israel (also composed of many individuals)—and even though God gives this nominal whole an opportunity of reform—there is an incorrigibly wicked element that will not get everlasting life.

When God says, “I ... will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners,” the “mourners” are those who fight against sin and evil in their own bodies in both ages. Realizing they are not happy with their sinful circumstance, the Lord will be merciful to such. Those with this mournful frame of mind, be it now or in the Kingdom, will be healed, comforted, and restored. But the wicked are another matter; they prefer the evil and do not struggle against it.

**Comment:** The wording in verse 20 about the wicked being like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, sounds like Jude 13, which describes a Second Death class in the true Church as “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.”

**Reply:** Chapter 57 treats principles of the divine character and God’s method of dealing with His people in the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial ages.

Verses 18 and 19 read as follows in the RSV: “I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and requite him with comfort, creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the LORD; and I will heal him.” At the time of Jesus’ birth, the angelic host announced, “Peace on earth, good will toward men ... for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (paraphrase of Luke 2:11,14). The angels’ message, called the gospel of glad tidings, is the opportunity of life for all mankind—the high calling of the present age for the Christian and everlasting life in the Kingdom for Israel and the world. The receiving of eternal life on any plane will be “peace.”

The gospel went “near” (first to Israel in the beginning of the Gospel Age) and “far” (subsequently to Gentiles throughout the world). In the Kingdom, it will go first to Israel, to the natural Jew, and then to all mankind. This chapter is a *double* message for the Church and the world. If God judged strictly, no one would get life, but His intent is to save, reclaim, and restore the lowly and contrite of heart, the “poor in spirit.”

**Isa. 57:21** There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

It is not God’s intent to save the incorrigible, but He will save those who struggle against sin.

**Isa. 58:1** Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Why did God tell Isaiah to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet”? He wanted Isaiah to unashamedly proclaim a loud public message. In many of the Hebrew singsong chants, the cantor uses a different intonation in his voice to indicate the significance of the message. A “voice like a trumpet” would be a sound from the throat, signifying a solemn public message. Isaiah was to cry aloud to the nation of Israel in regard to their sins.

**Isa. 58:2** Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

**Isa. 58:3** Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

What was Israel's sin? They were *ceremonially* obedient to God, going regularly to the Temple according to the Law, but they were insincere. They even feigned interest by asking about the ordinances of the Law, but they were not in the right heart attitude to receive instruction. Moreover, the people took "delight in approaching God"; that is, they delighted in being seen in their ostensible obedience.

The fast in verse 3 would be the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:29,31 reads, "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: ... It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever." The affliction of souls was peculiar to the Day of Atonement. Many higher critics accredit the latter half of Isaiah to having been written after the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were in Babylonian exile—a much later date. But this verse is proof to the contrary, for Isaiah was castigating the people in regard to a *present* condition. Their sins and their insincerity the rest of the year nullified their going into the Temple on the Day of Atonement and afflicting their souls and fasting in a very solemn manner. The remainder of the year, as verses 1 and 2 show, they went in and out of the Temple but perfunctorily and ritualistically. Hence God could not accept their praise, worship, and fasting on that one solemn day of the year, the Day of Atonement. God was saying through the prophet, "I cannot accept this one day of fasting, for it is not representative of your attitude throughout the year."

**Q:** Is "afflicting the soul" another definition of fasting?

**A:** Yes, and it also means contrition of heart and a mental review of the past. No work was to be done on the solemn Day of Atonement, and most people did not eat once they left home and began to walk to the Temple services and for the rest of the day. The solemnity and lack of food and work, as well as the walk, gave the people more opportunity to examine themselves. When Israel went through this ritual, they wondered why God did not answer their prayers and why they did not get material blessings.

**Q:** Is there a parallel to the present day in Israel? Many Jews, especially from this country, who have moved to Israel are experiencing a harder life over there. Wouldn't they wonder why, if God is supposed to be blessing them, the material increase is so slow in coming? Living there requires certain sacrifices, and that is why some whose hearts are not really in Israel have moved back to this country.

**A:** To a certain extent, there is a parallel to our day regarding Israel. However, this condition has existed all down the age with both Jew and Gentile.

**Isa. 58:4** Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

"Ye fast for strife and debate." The people fasted, but they ended up with strife and debate. Some even smote with the fist of lawlessness. In other words, the contrition, fasting, and confession were superficial. Immediately after fasting for forgiveness, they returned to strife, debate, mischief, etc. They used the Temple as an excuse for forgiveness, whereas actually they were planning what mischief they would do next.

They prayed loudly, thinking their prayers would be heard in heaven. But for all they thought they had done, they did not receive a compensatory reward. These verses describe well the attitude of both natural and nominal spiritual Israel all down the age.

**Comment:** During the World Wars, both sides prayed for victory. Would that be a parallel to verse 4, "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate."

**Reply:** The principle is the same with that inconsistency. How could God answer the prayers of both sides? And certainly there were righteous individuals on both sides and unrighteous ones.

**Isa. 58:5** Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

The Lord was asking, “Have I appointed just one day for fasting out of the entire year?” Fasting was supposed to be a *condition of heart, a habit of thoughts and deeds throughout the year*, not just one act of penance.

**Isa. 58:6** Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

**Isa. 58:7** Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Verses 6 and 7 explain what kind of “fast” the Lord desired of natural Israel. The nation was expected to do natural things to get natural rewards. Obedience brought material prosperity, and disobedience brought loss and suffering. The bands were to be loosed, the heavy burdens lifted, the yoke broken, etc., along natural lines for those who were trying to get out of their sorrowful state.

For spiritual Israel, the Lord expects comfort, fellowship, and help to be given to those who are poor in spirit and depressed. “The hungry” are to be fed with the bread of truth (1 Cor. 5:8). “The naked” are to be clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees for weighing the tithe and the cumin, for exacting burdens of the people, for emphasizing just the negative, and for having no message of forgiveness, restitution, and hope of recovery for those who felt oppressed and hungered for truth and righteousness (Matt. 23:23). In the spiritual sense, those who are burdened and sorrowful are the ones whose consciences are grieved and tenderized, whereas people who take pleasure in sin do not feel heavily burdened. When one drifts downstream with the current, the way is easy and pleasurable. But to go up the river against the current takes effort and struggle. And so it is with the taskmaster of sin. The farther one goes downstream, the more retracing will have to be done. The steps of recovery become proportionately more difficult. Help will be needed.

**Comment:** The “fast” that the Lord appreciates is the giving of oneself to help others.

**Reply:** Yes, an eye and an ear should remain open to see where help can be rendered to others.

**Isa. 58:8** Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.

**Isa. 58:9** Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

**Isa. 58:10** And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

**Isa. 58:11** And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

**Isa. 58:12** And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

At the end of the age, Israel will come to this heart condition through providences. God will thoroughly purge the nation in Jacob's Trouble and wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion (Isa. 4:2-4). The spirit of burning will be in Jerusalem.

"Take away from the midst of thee ... the putting forth of the finger" (verse 9). The RSV reads, "If you take away from the midst of you ... the pointing of the finger, ... then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noon day." "Pointing the finger" would be accusing others and judging them in an unjust sense.

"The glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward" (verse 8). This is a reference to the cloud at the time of the Exodus. Just as the cloud moved behind the Israelites to protect them from the pursuing Egyptians and there was a mighty deliverance of the Israelites in the days of Moses, so God will work a mighty deliverance in the future for that same nation and people. One difference is that when these providences occur in the future, the Lord will select for rescue those Jews who are in the proper heart attitude. At the time of the Exodus, the cloud reflected light forward for the Israelites and darkness backward upon the Egyptians. In the future, the light will rise out of obscurity on the *handpicked* Holy Remnant.

Verse 12, referring to the establishment of the Kingdom, is a reminder of Acts 15:16, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." These conditions will be brought about as a result of the Lord's chastising the Jews in Jacob's Trouble and bringing those who are willing to the right heart condition. The Holy Remnant will get the blessing of building "the old waste places," raising up "the foundations of many generations," and being called, "The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

In earlier verses, the daily sacrifices and especially the Day of Atonement were emphasized, followed in succeeding verses by a moral lesson. Beginning with verse 13, the series will start over with the emphasis this time on the daily sabbath. The chapter divisions are arbitrary, and from Chapter 58 on, allusions will be made to the sabbath day, the sabbath year, the Jubilee, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Of all the holy days in the past, the Feast of Tabernacles will be the most prominent for the world in the next age. Under the Law, the males were required to go to the Temple in Jerusalem for Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, but only the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory in the Kingdom.

Originally, all male Jews had to go to Jerusalem for the three feasts, but as time went on, the Temple was destroyed, captivity occurred, etc. When, therefore, Jews could not return to Jerusalem for various reasons, they were to observe the feasts in local synagogues with special services of commemoration—and thus transcend the distance to Jerusalem in spirit. Any true Jew did the best he could under given circumstances.

**Isa. 58:13** If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

**Isa. 58:14** Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon

**the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

The moral lesson in verses 13 and 14 ties in with the questions raised by the house of Jacob back in verse 3: “Wherefore have we fasted ... and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?” In other words, “We have fasted and humbled ourselves. Why doesn’t God hear our prayer?” God was saying that He would have fulfilled His promise, but they went back on their word.

The sabbath was a wonderful arrangement. If, as required, all work had ceased, the sabbath would have been like a vacation day of rest and meditation each week. Instead of reasoning that observing the sabbath interfered with earning money, they should have reasoned, “If all of us observe the sabbath, we can joyfully relax, worship the Lord, and have our minds on higher spiritual matters.” Back there people worked long days, from sunup to sundown. Consequently, the opportunity to visit neighbors and fellowship should have been appreciated as a joyous occasion—partly social but in an atmosphere conducive to worship and meditation.

**Q:** Wouldn’t “fasting” for the new creature be primarily the daily laying down of our lives?

**A:** Yes, if the Atonement Day is considered to be the whole Gospel Age. The Day of Atonement can be viewed as the day itself (picturing the Gospel Age) or as the work of atonement that follows (in the Kingdom). Since each of us lives for only a portion of the antitypical Day of Atonement, the significance would be that our entire life from the time of consecration until death is a time of soberly and earnestly trying to fulfill the will of the Lord. Under the Law, the Jews did this in pantomime for just one day each year as a picture. Similarly the 24-hour sabbath day is a picture of a “day” of a thousand years.

The entire walk of a consecrated person is a solemn “fast.” Although the Christian deprives himself of certain pleasures and opportunities in the present life in order to be separate from the world and to do God’s will, yet that antitypical “fast” day should be one of pleasure on a higher plane. It should be a delight to do the Lord’s will. In fact, in whatever age, one’s pleasure should be in the Lord and “not [in] doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” The thought of social fellowship is included.

**Isa. 59:1 Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:**

A person with a short hand has limited power, but God’s hand, or power, is not limited. He can do what He wants—He can save!

**Isa. 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.**

Imagine the Prophet Isaiah calling out to the people and enunciating these words! “Your iniquities have separated you from God. He does not hear you and He has hidden His face from you because of your sins.”

**Isa. 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.**

What is the distinction between the hands being defiled with blood and the fingers with iniquity? Obviously, “hands” and “fingers” are used in the unfavorable sense here. The “hand” is a symbol of power, hence an *open* act of violence or wrong. “Fingers” are a more limited application of power in the doing of evil, hence a more nefarious or *subtle* way of conniving

and finagling.

If in the favorable sense, Jesus said that his miracles at the First Advent were done with the finger of God (Luke 11:20), imagine what he will do with his hand and arm in the Kingdom! He will exercise much stronger power.

**Isa. 59:4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.**

“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth.” The criticism was in wanting to win regardless of, or in violation of, justice. It would be like hiring a lawyer to win at the expense of someone else or to escape what is justly owed to another. Justice is so perverted today that many feel it is impossible to obtain.

“They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” Mischief begins in the mind and results in iniquity. A major violation, such as the robbery of a neighbor, should be reported to the authorities, and we should be a witness for the neighbor in such a case, even if we are threatened by the perpetrator.

Much compromising occurs in business. For example, for the self-employed, there are subtle ways of trying to get out of paying taxes. Sometimes payoffs are required in order to obtain a certain kind of license. Such problems face a Christian who has his own business. The mind is apt to rationalize with the excuse that “everyone else does it.”

Under the Law, a Jew was obligated to report a crime or injustice lest he incur the same penalty as the one committing the wrong. The parallel for the consecrated would be the duty to call attention to certain faults among the brotherhood. Christians are not obligated to be the policemen of the world, but they are obligated to follow the same spirit with spiritual Israel as the natural Jew had to do with his own people. Thus there is more responsibility among the consecrated than among the world.

**Isa. 59:5 They hatch cockatrice’ eggs, and weave the spider’s web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.**

In former days without refrigeration, fertilized eggs could contain a foul dead chick embryo. Therefore, eggs were “candled” to make sure they were unfertilized. But with the great volume of eggs to be monitored, fertilized eggs sometimes entered the market and the buyer had to carefully check each egg before using it. Verse 5 is talking about eggs that should be a good food. Here, however, the person was deceived into eating an egg which looked all right but was, in fact, a viper’s egg that contained a viper. As a result, when the egg was eaten, the person died. In other words, the deadly poisonous egg was intentionally misrepresented as being good to eat. This verse is talking about those who intentionally practice *deception* to harm their fellow man with the motive of getting more money for themselves.

Dishonest people also “weave the spider’s web,” meaning they sell inferior garments that are likened to a spider’s web. For example, inferior cloth, or material, may be misrepresented as 100 percent virgin wool. The “web” looks beautiful, but being ethereal, it rents easily. Sooner or later all will be accountable for their deceptive practices, for scheming to make a profit at the expense of others.

Under the Law Covenant, sacrifices had to be offered for sins of *ignorance*. All of the cataloged sins in the Book of Leviticus are sins against knowledge. The lesson is that a person is responsible for what he does. A fully willful sin got many stripes or death depending on the nature of the infraction. Only sins of ignorance were forgiven—but even then, *only after the*

proper steps of forgiveness were taken. The point is that all are guilty before God according to the flesh except for those who have come into Christ, who knows the heart condition and the responsibilities of the consecrated.

We should ask forgiveness for specific sins we are aware of and then a general forgiveness for what we do ignorantly and are unaware of. Our faith is in the Lord to determine the degree of responsibility. He knows how to measure, for as the Scriptures say, “He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psa. 103:14). Restitution should be made to the extent that is possible, but of course some things cannot be restored because of the nature of the misdeed. As a general rule, private sins require private repentance, and public sins require public repentance and retraction.

**Isa. 59:6** Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

**Isa. 59:7** Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

**Isa. 59:8** The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

Verses 6-8 refer to those who *habitually practice evil and deceit* and are unconcerned. They work *iniquity*, not with one act but with a *series* of evil actions. “The act of violence is in their hands” in the sense that, if deemed advisable in their eyes, they will go to even more extremes. The class described here delight in evil; it is their way of life.

The Law should have been a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ because not only did the Law make them aware of the subtleties of sin, but it provided no mercy. The Law constantly pointed out sins and shortcomings, so the conscientious person would have been looking for a way out. Righteousness through faith would be the only hope because by the deeds of the Law, no man is justified (Rom. 3:20).

**Isa. 59:9** Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

**Isa. 59:10** We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

**Isa. 59:11** We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

Referring to the nation of Israel as a *whole*, verses 4-8 use the pronouns “they” and “them” and emphasize that *none* call for justice. Verses 9-11 use the pronouns “we” and “us” and emphasize that a *righteous element* within the nation of Israel desire justice, even though they are not receiving it; that is, these verses express the experience of the Holy Remnant during Jacob’s Trouble—their words, thoughts, and heart attitude. (Compare verses 4 and 11.) They will be perplexed and confused as they face another “holocaust” from the invading Gog host.

The Holy Remnant will “mourn sore like doves” and “roar ... like bears.” In other words, in the hard experience of Jacob’s Trouble, the individuals comprising the Holy Remnant class will respond or react differently to the anguish *according to temperament*.

Coming chapters of Isaiah will show other aspects of the Holy Remnant. Initially, they are like zombies in shock. Here salvation is far from them. They are looking for judgment; they are



groping for some escape, but there is none. But as time goes on, they will begin to realize Divine Providence is favoring them.

**Isa. 59:12** For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

**Isa. 59:13** In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

**Isa. 59:14** And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

In Jacob's Trouble, when the Holy Remnant are looking for an escape, a way of hope, but do not discern any and are in a sorrowful condition, a beneficial change will come over them. This "righteous" class will recognize that the experience, the trouble, has come upon them because of their transgressions and iniquities; that is, they will be *repentant* and realize that they have done wrong. They will be further depressed, however, in that although they recognize their sins, they will think it is too late. While they will say, "We have departed away from our God," they will feel there is no hope of recovery because *Gog is being victorious*. All around them, the Holy Remnant will see violations of justice and the overwhelming authority of those who are attacking them ("judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter"). The enemy will make great gains at first, and another element will also be overwhelming them at this time, as we will find out later.

**Isa. 59:15** Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

**Isa. 59:16** And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Verse 16 says that God "*wondered* that there was no intercessor." The word "wondered" might seem strange, but there is an explanation, as follows. God knows all things before they happen, and of course Jesus knows what events will occur in Jacob's Trouble. In regard to us, we have faith in God's prophecies and *know* they will be fulfilled, yet we marvel at certain ones, and Jesus marveled during his earthly ministry (Matt. 8:10; Mark 6:6). Certain happenings are astounding. For instance, suppose someone is being brutally murdered in a public place and the 40 or 50 people watching do not interfere because of fear of losing their own lives. Even though we know this is the general attitude of the public, we would marvel that not one person had the courage to stop the brutality or that at least two did not think to act together. And so the Lord Himself marvels at times, even though He knows the situation.

Verse 15 indicates that those who try to do good will be evilly treated: "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." The standard is so low that the person who stands up for right will become a target, or a "prey." In the company of evil, in group association with evil (such as in a street gang), the difficulty of standing up for what is right becomes very apparent.

Of course the context here in Isaiah is Jacob's Trouble and the heart attitude and state of confusion of the Holy Remnant at that time. Zechariah 14:2 states that Jerusalem will be captured, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Will anyone try to save the screaming victims in that experience in Jerusalem? No! None will help. The other Jews will try to hide or run away to save their own skins. When the enemy is numerous, no one will stand up. Even the Holy Remnant will be like zombies, like "dead men," confused and groping like the blind (verse 10). Conditions will appear bleak and hopeless.

**Q:** Is verse 15 saying that those who try to do right will be scorned by the unrighteous majority all around them?

**A:** The right-hearted Jews will observe that “truth is fallen in the street” (verse 14). They will mourn like doves and be appalled as they see the persecution and evil taking place, but after a while, they will realize that they themselves are being spared, that they are marked for deliverance. Verse 15 is describing conditions before that realization takes place.

**Q:** Doesn't the commandment say that we should lay down our lives for our brethren?

**A:** Yes, but in the right way. For instance, there are certain circumstances, such as when a person is doing wrong, where love dies on behalf of that party. When Jesus died for the world of mankind, he also died for the Church, for the hope of the Kingdom, etc. In marriage, a man is to regard his wife as his own flesh. He should be willing to die for his wife, but he should also consider self. We are to love others as we love self, *not more than self*. For example, we must work out our own salvation. In doing that, we try to help others, but we would not sacrifice our own salvation, normally speaking. A little discrimination must be used lest we forfeit the high calling under a misguided effort of trying to help others. In other words, we should not sacrifice ourselves as new creatures in the interest of others to the neglect of our own salvation. And certainly we should not allow ourselves to go into Second Death in an effort to “love” and help others improperly.

In the context here in verses 15 and 16a about the Holy Remnant and Jacob's Trouble, the Lord has not yet intervened, manifesting His interest in saving them. The enemy is unchecked, and violence is everywhere. Then the last half of verse 16 reads, “His arm brought salvation unto him.” As God's “arm,” Jesus will be the instrument of salvation. Although the Church will also be identified with this mission, the preeminence is given to Jesus, as seen in verse 17.

**Q:** “It displeased him that there was no judgment.” Does verse 15 indicate that God will be displeased when the Holy Remnant is scorned and despised?

**A:** Yes. Shock and momentary paralysis will be the initial reaction of the Holy Remnant when they see atrocities being committed, but it would be abnormal not to react eventually. Consequently, they will next yearn for deliverance, but there is no one to help (no human help), for no one will stand forth as a leader and intercede. Hence God will use His “arm” Jesus (and the Church). The Church will intercede and stop the trouble by pouring upon the enemy great cataclysms and phenomena of nature.

After the trouble, destruction, evil, and chaos are stopped, the next step will be *reconstruction* through the resurrected Ancient Worthies. (They will be raised at the peak of Jacob's Trouble.) The Ancient Worthies will receive instruction—perhaps they will hear a voice in the inner ear as they did in Old Testament times.

**Q:** Will the Ancient Worthies be raised with perfect characters?

**A:** They will be perfect physically and mentally, and they will have perfect characters from the standpoint of moral fiber but not from the standpoint of maturity of understanding. When raised, they will have faithful characters but not be fully enlightened as to their office or duties. Even Jesus, as the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). In the present life, the Church receives a schooling for their future office, but the Ancient Worthies were not so instructed.

**Isa. 59:17** For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a

**cloak.**

Jesus will gird himself *as a warrior* (not a priest) to go forth and fight for Israel. He will put on a breastplate of righteousness, a helmet of salvation, garments of vengeance, and a cloak of zeal. Verse 17 is another way of saying that Jesus will establish the Kingdom *with power and authority* during Jacob's Trouble. In the Gospel Age, God has been relatively quiet because to manifest Himself too clearly to the world would defeat the call of faith. He has purposely refrained from rewarding the good and destroying the evil. But when the present age is finished and God has accomplished His purpose, Jesus will change his role from that of Aaron to that of Melchisedec.

In the days of the Romans when a serious conflict was imminent, the generals confidently and courageously put on a cloak of authority over their other garments to signify they were ready for battle. Their zeal transferred to the soldiers under their command. And so Jesus' cloak of zeal signifies his determination to deliver the Holy Remnant.

**Isa. 59:18** According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

According to their deeds, God will punish the enemies of Israel (Gog), for in reality, they are *His* adversaries. "To the islands he will repay recompence." God will recompense the republics of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish (Ezek. 38:13). Basically speaking, the interest of the United States in Israel is a self-interest, not a real love for the Jew. The United States wants to keep Israel strong because of the nation's strategic location and the oil in the Middle East.

Sheba (the United States), Dedan (France), and Tarshish (England) will have forces on the scene in Israel as observers, or onlookers. In effect then, all nations from both East and West will be represented in one capacity or another in the drama in Israel at the end of the age. Of course the Western nations will not be aggressive participants in the warfare against Israel like the forces of Gog. Western observers will already be in Israel before anarchy breaks out worldwide, and they will remain there during Jacob's Trouble.

**Q:** Since the prophecies indicate oil will be found in Asher, will the desire for oil be one of the motivations for Gog's going down into Israel to take a spoil?

**A:** There is no Scripture to indicate oil will be found before the Kingdom is established. The two prophecies about oil being found in Asher are Genesis 49:20, "Asher ... shall yield royal dainties," and Deuteronomy 33:24, "Let him [Asher] dip his foot in oil." Gog will pillage Israel for a "great spoil" of food, cattle, and goods and for the strategic location but not for oil (Ezek. 38:11-13).

**Q:** Won't all nations be gathered against Israel at the time of Gog and Magog?

**A:** No, Gog and its confederate armies will be gathered *against* Israel, but not the representative forces of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish.

**Q:** Then how does the Revelation 16:14,16 picture apply about all nations being gathered to Armageddon?

**A:** Armageddon is a condition, not a place. As used prophetically, the Valley of Jehoshaphat is also a condition (Joel 3:2,12).

**Q:** How is Armageddon related to Jacob's Trouble?

**A:** They are different pictures. Armageddon of Revelation 16 is a spiritual picture, the emphasis

being on a *worldwide* condition. Armageddon will start first, and Jacob's Trouble will occur in Israel at the end, or climax, of Armageddon.

Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish will not be in Israel for the purpose of destroying and taking a spoil. In fact, initially they would like to preserve Israel, but when the Western world, the home governments they represent, collapses in anarchy, their thoughts will be on self-preservation. In other words, when Jacob's Trouble occurs and the other nations are in anarchy, then every man will be for himself. At that time, some of the individuals comprising Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish will pillage Israel just like Gog and Magog. Those individuals will be held accountable. Hence God will recompense not only Israel's adversaries and enemies (Gog, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah) but also those of the "isles" who then try to spoil Israel.

**Isa. 59:19** So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

Verse 19 identifies the context of Isaiah 59 as Jacob's Trouble. It is the time when "the enemy shall come in like a flood."

"From the west, and ... from the rising of the sun" is another way of saying "from west to east," that is, the entire Western and Eastern world. In other words, there will be a *worldwide* recognition of God.

**Q:** Is "the enemy [that] shall come in like a flood" a reference to Gog?

**A:** The enemy will be Gog plus materialized fallen angels, as can be proven by New Testament Scriptures.

In Jacob's Trouble, "the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him [the enemy]." In battles of old, a "standard," a pole with an emblem, was used to signify or identify the forces. The standard marked the emperor's forces, for example, the best fighters of the opposing forces. Accordingly, when the enemy comes in like a flood and dominates the situation, all of a sudden, the standard of Jehovah will be raised up. At that point, the tide of the battle will radically change in the Lord's favor. Daniel 12:1 refers to the same time and setting: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel]."

How will the "spirit of the LORD" lift up the standard? God will speak with authority: "The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). When the enemy comes against Israel, God's *fury* will come up in His face, meaning His anger will no longer be contained. Although, generally speaking, God has purposely hidden Himself down through the ages, He has been cognizant of the injustices and wrongs. But during the Gog invasion of Israel, He will intervene and say, "ENOUGH!" The forces of Gog will then *know He is mad* (Ezek. 38:18). *His fury, His judgments, will be seen!*

After Gog has been doing mischief and violence to Israel for a while, God will *suddenly* lift up a standard and manifest His anger by going forth to fight for His people as in the days of old. The "spirit" (POWER) of God will lift up a standard—similar to the way He parted the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus with "the blast" of his nostrils (Exod. 15:8). In other words, the blast, or *revelment*, of His power and authority opened the Red Sea. And the revelation of God's power in the future will be SUDDEN. The Kingdom will not quietly phase in—it will be established with *great power and great glory* (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26).

**Isa. 59:20** And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression

**in Jacob, saith the LORD.**

A little while after the Church is complete, “the Redeemer [The Christ] shall come to Zion [natural Israel] ... [to rescue] them [the Holy Remnant] that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” Verse 20 is a powerful proof text to show that the Holy Remnant will be a repentant, contrite class. Over and over again the Book of Isaiah shows that the nation of Israel will be purged so that only the “*holy*” Jew will be delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble.

**Isa. 59:21** As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

“This is my [new] covenant with them, saith the LORD.” God will establish His New Covenant with the righteous element in Israel. “*My spirit that is upon thee [the righteous element], and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart ... saith the LORD.*” This sounds like Zechariah 12:10, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit of grace and of supplications*: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and ... mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.”

“My spirit ... shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed ... from henceforth and for ever,” saith the Lord God. Joel 2:28,29 is a similar prophecy: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your [Israel’s] sons and your [Israel’s] daughters shall prophesy, your [Israel’s] old men shall dream dreams, your [Israel’s] young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” God will put His spirit primarily in the mouth of the Ancient Worthies. The words of authority and instruction will be given predominantly through the Ancient Worthies. Men will again “dream dreams,” as did Joseph and Daniel in the Old Testament. And just as God communicated through the Logos, Gabriel, and other angels, so a lot of communication and decision making in the Kingdom will be done in a miraculous fashion, but this time through the glorified Church. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3). In other words, it will be commonly recognized that communication with God is coming through Jerusalem and Israel and that the New Covenant has been made with that nation.

**Isa. 60:1** Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

**Isa. 60:2** For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

“The glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” The glory of God will rise upon the Holy Remnant of Israel at the end of Jacob’s Trouble. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come.” When the light comes on Israel, the earth will still be in darkness and the people in gross darkness. The directive “arise, shine” shows that a *definite or fixed time* is coming in God’s plan when He will establish His Kingdom in power and great glory.

In the past, the glory cloud of the Lord over the Tabernacle in the wilderness was an evidence of God’s presence on behalf of the nation of Israel. As surrounding nations confronted Israel, they noted the distinctiveness of this cloud, which led and sheltered the nation from excessive heat, sandstorms, and cloudbursts—as if the God of nature were protecting Israel in the desert. Therefore, this future arising and shining on Israel suggests that a time will come at the end of the Gospel Age when God will *visibly manifest* His favor to deliver the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble (Ezekiel 38 and 39). The interesting point is that when God intervenes to rescue and deliver Israel, the other nations will all be in anarchy. “Darkness shall cover the earth, and

gross darkness the people.”

**Isa. 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.**

Christians have applied the language in verse 3 to the Church and its leadership role in the next age, but this verse should not be considered alone, for it is part of a continuous context about God’s redemption of Jacob and the introduction, or establishment, of the Kingdom.

“Kings [shall come] to the brightness of thy rising.” When the Kingdom is inaugurated, the “*brightness*” of Israel’s rising will be *rapidly apparent*. The establishment of the Kingdom will not be a gradual process requiring 30 or 40 years but will happen speedily and with *great power and glory*.

**Q:** Is the clause “the Gentiles shall come to thy light” another way of saying, “And many people shall ... say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3)?

**A:** Yes, and another parallel Scripture is Zechariah 8:23, “Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” There are many other such Scriptures, including some still coming in Isaiah.

**Isa. 60:4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.**

Natural Israel is told to “lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all ... thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” This text is describing Israel’s sons and daughters who will go back to Israel *after* Jacob’s Trouble. In other words, there are to be two regatherings of Jews to Israel: (1) The first regathering has been taking place since 1878. This mixed group of Jews, who have been returning to Israel for various motives, will go under the rod and be purged in Jacob’s Trouble (Ezek. 20:37). (2) After the Kingdom is established, all surviving Jews elsewhere in the world will be shipped back to Israel. Verse 4 is describing this second regathering. When the Gentiles realize that the God of Israel, the true God, has distinctly manifested His recognition of the Jews as His people and that the word of the Lord is to go forth from Jerusalem, they will make sure that every Jew gets back to his homeland.

Only by selective divine intervention will any Jew survive not only Jacob’s Trouble in Israel but also the great Time of Trouble in Gentile lands. Individual Jews will be handpicked for miraculous survival, whereas with the world of mankind, generally speaking, the promise is simply to “seek righteousness, seek meekness: it *may be* ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3).

Notice the particular wording in verse 4: “thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” The RSV is better for the last part of this verse: “your daughters shall be carried in the arms.” The thought is not that the sons will be coming from far away and the daughters are already resident in Israel but that all Jews, male and female, who survive the trouble will be sent back to Israel in the second regathering.

**Isa. 60:5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.**

The Revised Standard Version reads, “Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill

and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you." The "abundance of the sea," the anarchistic masses, who are the Gentiles in this setting, will be "turned," or "converted," to Israel. In the Time of Trouble, God's light will arise on Israel *first*, that is, *before* it arises on the rest of the earth. It will be like a spotlight in a theater shining out of darkness on a particular actor on the stage. The world's attention will thus be focused on the drama occurring in Israel at the time of Jacob's Trouble and God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant. It will be seen that God is establishing His Kingdom in Israel.

Darkness (anarchy) will be covering the whole earth and thick darkness the people at the time when the light, the glory of Jehovah, arises on Israel (verse 1). Like the wild, choppy, unstable sea, the world will be troubled and wild in anarchy when God brings a calm to Israel. Soon the stabilizing influence of peace will spread to the other nations and becalm them, but the calm will *first* occur in Israel. At that time, the Lord will say, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa. 46:10).

**Isa. 60:6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD.**

"The multitude of camels shall cover thee [natural Israel], the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come." Camels and dromedaries were the mode of travel in Isaiah's day—the ships of the desert, as it were. Hence the prophet used these animals prophetically to symbolize the future means of conveyance that would exist in our day.

Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, and Nebaioth (verse 7) are all related to Ishmael. (This is not the Sheba in Ethiopia.) Nebaioth was Ishmael's first son; Kedar was the second son. Nebaioth, Kedar, and Sheba were from the East, beyond Edom. About the fourth century BC, the Nabateans settled in Petra.

Sheba's bringing "gold and incense" is a reminder of the First Advent when the three wise men brought gifts. Traveling on camels from afar, from a country and people not indigenous to Israel, they paid homage to and recognized that Messiah had been born in Israel. A parallel will exist in the beginning of the Kingdom. When the light of God's favor arises on Israel, there will be a Gentile response. People will come from afar to Israel, to the place whence the word of the Lord will emanate, to pay homage and respect to earth's King.

**Isa. 60:7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.**

When the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth are gathered together, they will minister unto Israel as sacrifices for God's "altar." Even today when bedouin and their sheiks travel by camel, very often their goats and sheep accompany them. And in antitype, they will come with goods to give homage to the Kingdom and its new rulership.

"I [God] will glorify the house of my glory [the literal Third Temple described by the Prophet Ezekiel]." "Sheba ... shall bring gold and incense ... [to] show forth the praises of the LORD [in this future Temple]." Instead of gold and incense, those of Kedar and Nebaioth will bring animals to offer on God's altar in the Third Temple. In other words, the people and nations in the Kingdom will show deference to Israel according to ability. The nations will give of their products, and each person will have to show obeisance according to individual capability. The sacrifices set forth in the early chapters of Leviticus picture that less will be expected from those who first come forth from the tomb than later on when they have had time for development. At first, just a handful of flour, which contains no blood, or a dove will be acceptable. When

fully developed, the people will be expected to offer symbolic bullocks (Psa. 51:19).

**Q:** Why will literal animal sacrifices be needed in the Kingdom?

**A:** Why is the Memorial observed now? This service is a *remembrance that hearkens back to Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary*, to what he did for us in the past. Of the future temple, Ezekiel 43:18 reads, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon." Earlier verses give cubit dimensions for the lowest and middle settles. With such measurements, the Third Temple is just as literal as Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness.

With our more luxurious standard of living here in America, we do not realize that for thousands of years people lived the same primitive way without modern technology and methods—and still do in Third World countries today. In Old Testament times, the people of Israel offered sacrifices to God, but they did not realize that the shedding of blood in those animal sacrifices pictured the necessity for a coming Redeemer to die on behalf of their sin. As centuries rolled by, the sacrifices became distorted, and new types of services were invented. Animal sacrifices are advocated by certain heathen religions in other nations, but these lack meaning and are also distortions. In the Kingdom, there will be a *true* literal picture as well as its symbolic counterpart. The Old Testament sacrifices showed forth the *coming* Messiah; the Kingdom sacrifices will *point back* to Messiah. The sacrifices described in the latter chapters of the Book of Ezekiel have not been performed up to the present time, for they belong to the New Covenant of the future and would contradict the Mosaic Law still in effect for the Jew.

Notice again the wording here in Isaiah: "they shall come up with acceptance on mine *altar*, and I will glorify the *house* of my glory." These words are part of sacred Scripture. In the study of the Tabernacle, the more accurately one understands the literal structure with measurements, furniture, curtains, priestly garments, etc., the more detail one sees in the antitype. Put succinctly, we must understand the *literal type* in order to understand the *symbolic antitype*, and that should be our motive for studying the type: to better understand the antitype. The principle is the same for studying the future Temple of Ezekiel. The more we understand about what the *literal* structure will look like, the better we will understand the symbolic lessons. The motive is not to worship the stones and the beauty of the structure itself, but to realize what they represent and to memorialize what has happened in the past. The temporary Tabernacle class will become a permanent Temple class, a spiritual house of glory. The literal Third Temple pictures not only Jesus but also the work of the Church in glory.

Many people think that what is natural is not spiritual, but anything that enlightens us in God's Word is spiritual. A question was asked of the Pastor, "With the *Sixth Volume* being so beautiful and so spiritual, why was the first chapter devoted to *physical* creation?" The Pastor's reply was that Chapter 1 is the most spiritual chapter in the entire book. Not only is God's Word truth, but "man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (John 17:17; Matt. 4:4). The chapters on Ezekiel's Temple are part of God's Word. Hence there is value in studying the pictures that are recorded in the Bible, including animal sacrifices. Many who are repulsed by the thought of literal animal sacrifices think nothing of having chicken or steak for dinner. People tend to follow their emotions, and thus they improperly judge certain matters without realizing they are casting a reflection on Almighty God. Remember, it is *God*, not the devil, who instituted the animal sacrifices for lessons and pictures.

**Isa. 60:8** Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

The context for this question is significant. Doves and pigeons are birds with a *homing* instinct. Those in the Kingdom who have a dovelike instinct and sympathy and a desire to obey will be attracted like a magnet to Jerusalem for instruction. Then who or what "are these that fly as a



cloud” and as birds? The reference is to airplanes. Just as a “camel” (or dromedary) is an automobile or a ship, so a “bird” is an airplane. Hence *all modes* of transportation will be used. Any nation refusing to go representatively to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles will receive no rain (Zech. 14:16,17). In some manner, *all nations* will have to pay homage representatively to the King of kings. The tiny, insignificant nation of Israel—just a speck on the world map—will be the focal point of the Kingdom, God’s headquarters, with traffic from all nations going there for instruction.

**Comment:** The last verse of this chapter verifies that thought: “A *little* one shall become a *thousand*, and a *small* one a *strong* nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.”

**Reply:** Yes, that is the spirit or theme of the chapter. Verse 22 also shows that at the due time, the Kingdom will come FAST. God “will *hasten* it in *his* time.” Christians have been waiting for centuries for that Kingdom, but when the last events begin to coalesce, the prophecies will be fulfilled very rapidly. When the stage is set for the final drama and series of events, then that which seems slow in coming will *burst* upon the earth.

In the Kingdom, people with the right heart desire will want to make pilgrimages to Israel. Even now those who go there from a Biblical standpoint are not just curiosity seekers. In this day of faith and limited understanding, many have saved and sacrificed just to see the Holy Land. Imagine the desire in the Kingdom when the people will understand with clarity! They will make the trip with great thankfulness and appreciation. Over the years, Catholics have gone to Rome, Muslims to Mecca, the ancients to Mount Ararat, others to Mount Sinai, etc. Pilgrimages are natural impulses and the zeal is good, for even when it is misdirected, the potential is important. In the Kingdom, the right-hearted will *greatly* desire to go to Jerusalem.

**Isa. 60:9** Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

The “isles,” representing republics, are identified with the far-away “ships of Tarshish,” that is, England and the Western world. How do the “isles” wait for God? They wait in the sense that the whole creation groans, unknowingly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19,22). England and the Western world wait ignorantly for God, for His Kingdom. When the Kingdom is established, the people from these nations will desire to pay homage to Israel and its God. They will send back to Israel with gifts of silver and gold the “sons” of Israel, the surviving Jews, within their borders.

The word “first” is significant. Not only will the Gentiles be converted unto Israel and give Israel wealth (verse 5), but from afar, they will send Israel’s sons and daughters back to the homeland (verse 4). Now verse 9 adds the detail that England and the Western world will be *first* to ship back surviving Jews when they see that God “hath glorified thee [Israel].” These verses are describing the second regathering.

**Isa. 60:10** And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

The “sons of strangers” will build up Israel’s walls, and their kings will minister unto Israel. Gentiles will cooperate and help as they can. Why will there be “walls” in the Kingdom? What will be the situation? Jerusalem will be reduced to a “heap” in Jacob’s Trouble; it will be leveled “as a plain” by the earthquake and lifted up (Jer. 30:18; Zech. 14:10). The rubble will have to be cleared away so that God’s buildings can be constructed. The Book of Ezekiel furnishes the exact dimensions of the city as it will be rebuilt and even names the gates. In addition, the Third Temple will be built according to specific measurements with the appointment of overseers

such as Bezaleel and Aholiab. In fact, the measurements of the Temple are so specific that probably only Jews will work on this structure. Gentiles will voluntarily help in other areas of reconstruction.

Proof that this verse refers to natural Israel and not to the Church is the statement “in my wrath I [God] smote thee [Israel].” Not because of what the nation is today but “for the *fathers’* sakes,” God will pour grace and truth on Israel (Rom. 11:28), and the Gentiles will be happy with the Kingdom arrangement when it comes.

**Isa. 60:11** Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

Figuratively the “gates [of Jerusalem] shall be open continually” in the sense that enthusiastic worship and the desire to do obeisance will not be stifled. God especially appreciates the spontaneity of reverence or a gift to Him. Hence He will encourage freewill offerings and a desire for cleansing day and night.

“Thy gates shall be open continually; ... that men may bring unto thee [Israel] the forces [wealth] of the Gentiles, and that their kings [leaders] may be brought.” During the Kingdom, both the common people and those who have special abilities and natural prowess in fields such as music and art will be desirous of serving God and attaining salvation.

The “gates” in Revelation 21:12,13 are spiritual. There the “gate angels” are the Ancient Worthies, who will teach and instruct the world of mankind under the tutelage of The Christ in glory.

**Isa. 60:12** For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The nation and kingdom that will not serve Israel will “perish” and “be utterly wasted” in the sense of being brought down to the dust, that is, being *humbled*. All nations will have to serve God from the least to the greatest, from the most remote to the nearest (Jer. 31:34). They will be brought down to their knees by judgments if necessary, by the iron rod of Christ’s rule (Rev. 2:27).

**Isa. 60:13** The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

The “glory of Lebanon”—the fir, pine, and box tree—will be used to “beautify the place of my [God’s] sanctuary,” that is, the Third Temple. Isaiah was saying that these trees will be selected for building the Third Temple. Similarly Hiram of Tyre supplied building materials for Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 5:1-10).

“The place of my [God’s] feet,” the Temple, will be made “glorious.” It will be God’s residence in a particular sense. In the Tabernacle arrangement, a cloud covered the entire nation of Israel, but a foot, or column, descended from the mother cloud and rested on the Tabernacle to signify God’s presence with the nation. The Shekinah light, which was inside that pillar cloud, could be seen only in the Most Holy.

**Isa. 60:14** The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Verses 1-13, previously considered, apply to natural Israel in the beginning of the Kingdom. Only the first three verses could be considered to have a spiritual application, but even then, the primary application is natural. Verse 14 through the end of the chapter also applies to natural Israel. Verse 16 contains a clue for interpretation: “the mighty One of *Jacob* [natural Israel].” Earlier verse 10 also contained a clue: “in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.” In His wrath, God has smitten and will smite natural, or fleshly, Israel. God chastens and disciplines His spiritual sons of the Gospel Age, but we would not say He smites them in wrath.

“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee.” In the Kingdom, the Gentiles, who previously afflicted Israel, will go to Jerusalem, to “The city of the LORD,” to pay homage. The nation that refuses to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles will receive no rain (Zech. 14:16,17). Recognition must be shown that Jerusalem is the capital of the world, that the seat of Messiah’s government emanates from that city. The Law will go forth from spiritual Zion, but the declaration of that Law will be uttered from Jerusalem, primarily through the Ancient Worthies, the earthly mouthpieces.

“They that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.” In the Kingdom, Israel’s former enemies will have to recognize the wrongs they committed against the Jews and to acknowledge that the nation is now the Israel of God. To “bow themselves down at the soles” of Israel’s feet signifies *extreme homage*.

At the introduction, or inauguration, of the Kingdom, when Gog and Magog come down to wipe out Israel and God fights for Israel as He did in ancient times, magnifying His glory by His deliverance of the Holy Remnant in the sight of all nations, the Gentiles will see that the Holy One of *Israel* is indeed the true God. The glory of the manifestation of God’s deliverance of Israel will be so great that it will have a corresponding favorable reaction on the Gentiles who are alive at that time, causing them to reverence the natural Jew. Zechariah 12:8 shows there will be a distinction between the Ancient Worthies and the Holy Remnant. “In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem [the Holy Remnant]; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David [the Ancient Worthies] shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.” The “inhabitants of Jerusalem,” the common people, the Holy Remnant, will be individually strengthened as David was to fight Goliath. The “house of David,” the ruling element, the Ancient Worthies, who will come forth from the tomb at “midnight” (Psa. 119:62), are to be “as [almost like] God” because of their stature. In other words, they will be very highly appreciated as the earthly representatives of God. And the Holy Remnant, the ordinary surviving Jews, will be esteemed and honored as if each were David. The principle is stated in verse 22 in regard to the tiny nation of Israel, which shall become a great nation: “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.”

The same principle also applies to the Church. During the Gospel Age, God has been calling a very insignificant people, the poor of this world, not many wise, rich, or noble. The *Little Flock*, with her Head, will govern the world in the Kingdom. Spiritually speaking, therefore, out of a little one, God will make a great royal nation or priesthood.

**Isa. 60:15** Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

**Isa. 60:16** Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

The Holy Remnant will be the recipients of “milk” (nutriments and nourishment) from other nations; that is, they will get support from the Gentiles. Following a purging with tremendous

miraculous experiences, the Jews who survive the trouble will be a meek and contrite class.

As Jews are resurrected, they will come forth in the country of their previous residence. Since in many cases, this location will be a nation other than Israel, the Gentiles in that nation will ship those Jews back to Israel with gifts. Therefore, the Gentiles will ship back to Israel all Jews who are living in alien lands—not only the surviving remnant but also Jews raised from the grave. With money, gifts, goods, and transportation being furnished by the Gentiles, the return of the Jews to their homeland is a reminder of the Exodus when the Egyptians gave gifts and hastened the departure of the Israelites.

The time setting for these Jews to return to Israel with gifts and wealth would have to be the *second* regathering because most Jews now returning are taking their *own* capital, and support has come from *Zionist* organizations, not Gentile nations.

**Isa. 60:17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.**

The following minerals will be upgraded. Brass becomes gold, iron becomes silver, wood becomes brass, and stones become iron. This is a picture of the Gentiles helping to build up Israel by giving *abundantly*—by giving *over and above* what would be just and reasonable. Instead of giving exactly what is needed (for example, brass), the Gentiles will give more and on a higher scale (gold). In other words, wanting to cooperate speedily with the Kingdom, the Gentiles will give Israel *generous, voluntary, freewill, luxurious* gifts. This hearty response on the part of the Gentiles shows the **POWER** with which the Kingdom will be established. It will be a real eye-opener. All of the living will **KNOW!**

In the Kingdom, Israel will have “officers [of] peace” and “exactors [of] righteousness.” What is the difference between these two categories? In Israel’s future position of influence and power, why will there be peace officers and exactors of righteousness? How will they function? In the resurrection, all people (Jews and Gentiles) will come forth from the grave with the same characters they had in the present life, the principle being, “As a tree falleth, so shall it lie” (Eccl. 11:3). All kinds of characters will come forth: hardened criminals, the meek, the proud, etc. The meek and humble class and/or the poor and hungry will need to be lifted up. To such, who are the majority of mankind, the Kingdom will be very refreshing. On the other hand, thieves, crooks, murderers, and the proud will need to receive many stripes. Because they will resist the Kingdom arrangement at first, they will have to be punished and penalized under the rod-of-iron rule. Their characters will have to be corrected, molded, and changed. However, any stripes will be administered along the lines of *true justice*, and not out of vengeance or spite. While the line and the plummet will be used in judging in that day (Isa. 28:17), one class will need correction more than the other. The point is that the *same Ancient Worthies* will be viewed differently by each class. The meek class will regard them as “officers [or ambassadors of] peace.” To the dishonest and proud class, these same rulers will appear to be “exactors [of] righteousness.” Thus when the Kingdom is established and the same rules, regulations, and standards apply to everyone, the meek will welcome that standard, but those who are hardened in wrongdoing will find it onerous.

Just as the trees (resources) of Lebanon will be used to beautify the Lord’s literal sanctuary (verse 13), so the minerals of verse 17 will be used to help Israel reconstruct the cities (especially Jerusalem) and the Temple.

**Isa. 60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.**

There will be no more violence or destruction in Israel in the Kingdom. Moreover, “thou shalt

call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise”; that is, the *Jews themselves* will call their walls “Salvation” and their gates “Praise.” With hearts overflowing in full appreciation for the goodness of the Lord, they will be a truly transformed, changed people.

What is the difference between the walls and the gates? Why should the walls be called “Salvation” and the gates “Praise”? A wall is a barrier of protection that keeps out the enemy, but it is also a barrier of security, comfort, and protection to the inhabitant within. The Jews will call the walls “Salvation” because of the realization that God is protecting and helping them and because of His promise to never again let them be uprooted and plucked out of their land.

A gate is the means of access, or entry. Only those who are in the proper heart attitude will be able to enter the gate, the Kingdom arrangement. Many Psalms speak of gates and express this principle of a right heart condition being necessary for entry into security. Isaiah 35:9 states this same principle regarding God’s custodial care and authority in the Kingdom: “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.”

**Isa. 60:19** The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Verse 19 is one picture of the sun and moon, and verse 20 is a second picture. The two pictures seem to be in opposition to one another, for in the first picture, the sun and moon do not shine, and in the second one, they shine all the time. However, both verses contain the thought that God will be Israel’s everlasting light.

“The sun shall be no more Israel’s light by day; nor the moon by night, because God will be their everlasting light” (paraphrase). Verse 19 is figurative language, for it does not mean there will be no literal sunlight or moonlight in the Kingdom. The point is that in the Kingdom and beyond, into the ages of ages, the true source of light will be the Father Himself. The “Father of lights” will be Israel’s light and glory both day and night (James 1:17). In other words, the figurative light of the Father will so greatly exceed and overflow the literal light of the sun and moon in both importance and brightness that it is the Father’s light that will be looked to and sought. While we appreciate the beauties of nature (mountains, lakes, sunsets, etc.), the *Author* of that beauty, the *Author* of creation, far outshines what He has created.

Today some people of principle with a reverential attitude have nature as their God. These are usually noble-minded people who think about the beauties of nature, but their perception and appreciation are at a much lower level than in the Kingdom when God is recognized as the true light. This lower thinking will then pale into relative insignificance. Instead of worshipping the things created, the objects of His work, they will worship the Creator Himself.

And God will be an everlasting light to Israel in the Kingdom in another sense. Even though Jesus will be the Father’s representative, the full credit goes to God, for it is *His* plan, *His* purpose. Jesus will be God’s minister to make sure the work is properly done.

**Isa. 60:20** Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

“Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself.” Here the “sun” is a symbol of healing, favor, blessing, and the fullness of God’s countenance. “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with *healing* in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall” (Mal. 4:2). “The LORD make his *face* shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up [the light of] his *countenance* upon thee, and give

thee peace” (Num. 6:25,26). Therefore, the sun not going down and the moon continuing its light mean that when fully effective, the light of God’s favor will last throughout eternity.

With the “moon” being a symbol of the Law Covenant, the moon in this context is the New (Law) Covenant. Verse 20 indicates that once the New Covenant goes into operation, it will never cease. The entire Kingdom will be needed for the Mediator, The Christ, to bring together God and man, the two alienated parties, but once they are in covenant relationship (or at-onement) with each other following the test at the end of the Millennial Age, that relationship will exist forever, and the people will never die anymore. It will be a perpetual covenant of natural everlasting life.

The “sunlight” will increase throughout the Kingdom, gradually getting brighter and brighter. In the beginning of the Kingdom, there will be a certain degree of light, but at the end of that day, the light will be sevenfold, that is, very brilliant (Isa. 30:26). For those who live through and beyond the Millennial Age, the sun and moon will never set, figuratively speaking. However, although the sun will never set, some could, as individuals, slide out of the way and go into Second Death, thus not being able to appreciate the light on into perpetuity.

**Comment:** It is interesting that the beginning of this very chapter speaks about darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the people during the period of anarchy. The chapter then leads us up to this beautiful picture of resplendent light at the end of the Kingdom.

**Isa. 60:21** Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Although this statement would be true of all who pass the test during the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3,7-9), the time setting and application are much earlier. “Thy [Israel’s] people [that is, the *purged Holy Remnant*] shall be all righteous [at the *inauguration* of the Kingdom].” The New Covenant will be made with Israel (“to the Jew first” is the principle), but the Gentiles will be blessed under that covenant by becoming identified with Israel (Rom. 1:16). In other words, what happens first to Israel will eventually happen to mankind. The Jews will be particularly honored at the inauguration of the Kingdom.

“They shall [be] ... the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.” Natural Israel will be the “branch” of God’s planting and the “work” of His hands at that time, just as the Church in glory is God’s workmanship of the present age (Eph. 2:10). Israel’s being called “the branch of my planting” should not surprise us, for elsewhere in the Scriptures, Israel is likened to a vine, a vineyard, a fig tree, and a stick.

**Isa. 60:22** A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

Not merely will that which is little become great, but God *will hasten the coming of the Kingdom* in its due time. For years, many of the Lord’s people have longed for the establishment of the Kingdom and have died without seeing the fruition of their hopes, but as we approach the very end of the age, the unfolding of events will become increasingly rapid. It is like water going down a drain. When the water is almost gone, it *rushes* into the drain. Accordingly, as we come to the focal point or terminal end of the age, events will *rapidly accelerate*.

“In his time” is rendered better in the Revised Standard Version as “in its time.” “I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.” When the due time for the Kingdom comes, God will make a *short work* of the events to take place. The long time in coming is contrasted with the arrival of the event. “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and *hasteth greatly*, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly” (Zeph. 1:14). “Howl ye; for the

day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty” (Isa. 13:6).

**Isa. 61:1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

**Isa. 61:2** To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

**Isa. 61:3** To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Jesus quoted part of this prophecy while in a synagogue in Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). Notwithstanding these nice, gracious words, some of the Jews were ready to murder Jesus, thinking he was being too presumptuous.

At the First Advent, Jesus omitted the last half of verse 2 about the day of God’s vengeance. He was directing his comments and comforting message at that time, and ever since, to his followers, to the Church. But this prophecy will continue, for it also extends to the world of mankind in the future as they come out of the prison house of death.

Jehovah anointed Jesus to utter these words at the First Advent, and they were directed to those who realized they needed a physician. Nothing in this prophecy indicates it is for the proud, the noble, or the rich. The message pertains to those who are of a poor and contrite spirit—regardless of their goods or earthly connections. Various descriptions are used for those in the right heart condition: “meek,” “brokenhearted,” “captives,” “them that are bound,” “all that mourn.” Jesus’ message was an uplifting, exhilarating prophecy for those who recognized they were being oppressed with sin and sickness (physically, mentally, and morally) and who were looking for rescue. To this right-hearted class, Jesus’ words were the balm of Gilead.

Starting with Macedonia, the gospel message of truth went westward during the present age, and as it spread, it especially blessed the meek and humble class. Thus it is a blessing just to live in a country where the gospel is promulgated.

“The acceptable year of the LORD” is the Gospel Age, and those who are faithful will become “oaks of righteousness” (RSV). Later this message will extend to the world. Those who hear at that time and are faithful will be blessed but on a lower plane than the Church, that is, on the plane of human restitution. In other words, it is an “acceptable year of the LORD” to those who have a hearing ear now, but those who do not hear in the present age are guaranteed to hear in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 61:4** And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

**Isa. 61:5** And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Verses 1-3 apply primarily to the Church, and secondarily to natural Israel and the world. Verses 4-9 apply to natural Israel.

The “waste cities” are located in Israel. Several clues indicate that the time setting of these verses is the Kingdom. For one thing, the ruins of ancient Biblical cities will be rebuilt. While spoken of as “cities” in the Bible, these numerous little hamlets and villages were actually clusters or clans of large families within the tribal divisions. The fact that these small villages will be reinhabited means that instead of large concentrations of people in cities as we know them today, the Kingdom will be a more rural arrangement with flocks of sheep and goats and with plowmen and vinedressers. The economy will be basically agricultural. In other words, during the Kingdom, man will have to provide his own food. Not until after the Kingdom will man again be allowed to eat of the trees of Eden, the *grove of life*, and thus have sustained everlasting life. In the everlasting ages beyond Jesus’ reign and the Millennium, the world will return to a Garden of Eden condition with its fruitage.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve ate primarily of the fruit of trees, and not especially of the ground, even though in an earlier Creative Day, God created the seed to bear its kind. God told Adam, “If you eat of the variety of fruit in this garden, you will be sustained to live forever.” Following their disobedience, Adam and Eve were barred from Eden, for if they could eat of those trees they would live forever *in spite of their sin*. The implication is that with access to those trees, they would not need to grow crops in the ground such as potatoes, carrots, etc.

“Strangers shall ... feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and ... vinedressers.” The thought is that “strangers” and “sons of the alien”—that is, *Gentiles*—will render *voluntary service*, and not that they will be delegated to a servile role. They *will want* to feed Israel’s flocks, plow the land, and dress the vines.

**Isa. 61:6** But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

“Ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD.” Who are these Israelite priests? The Book of Ezekiel gives the dimensions of a literal Third Temple and also tells about the future Zadok priesthood, who will officiate in that Temple. In Israel’s past, a priest had to be a son of Aaron, but in order to be a priest in the Third Temple, one will have to be a son of Zadok as well. Stated another way, the future priests will have to be of the Zadok lineage, or branch, of the Aaronic priesthood (Ezek. 44:15; 48:11). Zadok was a priest in David’s day at the time when Nathan was a prophet (1 Kings 1:32). Of the two contemporary high priests, Zadok is the one who remained faithful to David and to the Lord, while Abiathar went over to Adonijah’s side.

While the Zadok line will perform the priestly services in the future Temple, the Ancient Worthies will serve in a civil capacity. One at a time, they will sit in the gate in the office of “prince” (Ezek. 44:3). In other words, the “prince” is an office like the presidency, and the Ancient Worthies will take turns during the Kingdom Age being the representative prince in the Third Temple. Psalm 45:16 describes the Kingdom role of the Ancient Worthies as “princes [plural] in all the earth” in that they will be distributed throughout the earth with regional jurisdictions, while one “prince” at a time presides in Jerusalem. Both the office of prince and the various regional or geographic jurisdictions will be rotational, so that the Ancient Worthies will have the privilege of returning to their own homeland as well as serving in various countries.

**Comment:** Such a rotational arrangement will be a great blessing for the people throughout the world in that over the years, they will have close contact with many Ancient Worthies.

**Reply:** Yes, and the Ancient Worthies will benefit too from the rotation.

The indication seems to be that David will be the first prince in the Kingdom. One reason for



this conclusion is that Zadok lived in David's day. Of course Zadok himself will be the first "high priest."

Zadok means "priest," and it is interesting that the title Melchizedek (also spelled Melchisedec) means "prince" or "king" (*melek*) and "priest" (*zedek*). (See Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 5:6.) The Book of Ezekiel provides for both a priesthood and a prince in connection with the Third Temple, and the Temple itself pictures the order of the Melchizedek priesthood (instead of the old Aaronic or Levitical priesthood).

The emphasis on "ye" and "you" in verse 6 ("ye shall be named," "men shall call you," "ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles") shows that in addition to the Jewish priesthood of the Kingdom, most of the Ancient Worthies will be Israelites. In the 1,656 years prior to the Flood, which is more than one fourth of the history of the human race up to the present day, there are only four Ancient Worthies we can be sure of: Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Shem. On the other hand, the Jewish Age produced the major and minor prophets, Jacob, Joseph, the judges, etc. Although not all of the names of the Ancient Worthies are known to us by any means, this listing gives some idea of the proportion of individuals who made the grade prior to and during the Jewish Age. The fallen angels are one factor that adversely influenced the number of Ancient Worthies being developed in the years before the Flood. Not only did the fallen angels materialize, but their activities resulted in a mixture of human and angelic seed and a prevalence of violence and lust in the earth, so that conditions did not favor the development of a righteous class.

**Comment:** Since the fallen angels were most disobedient during the 120 years just prior to the Flood, that leaves about 1,500 years for development. With mankind being in a more perfect condition during that time (that is, not as fallen), it is surprising there were not more Ancient Worthies, although of course earth's population was much smaller.

**Reply:** There may have been other Ancient Worthies prior to the Flood, but we can name only four with certainty. It is likely, however, that the majority of those mentioned in the fifth chapter of Genesis were faithful. Methuselah, who lived 969 years, died of natural causes the very year (or even the very day) the Flood came (Gen. 5:27). Hence he could have been an Ancient Worthy.

In summary, perhaps 90 to 95 percent of the 144,000 Ancient Worthies will be Jews. From Jacob onward, all were Jewish up to John the Baptist. Even adding Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, the number of non-Israelite Ancient Worthies is small. Rahab and Ruth are proselyte exceptions.

While the clause "ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD" refers to the Zadok priesthood, the following clause, "men shall call you the Ministers of our God," is speaking about the Ancient Worthies. (The word "Ministers" means "servants.") The role of the priests will be more ceremonial. Zadok and his sons will be in the Temple performing the religious services that are specified in the latter chapters of Ezekiel, whereas the ministers (servants), the Ancient Worthies, will do the governing work throughout the earth. In other words, down here on earth in the Kingdom, civil and religious offices will be kept separate. It is The Christ in the heavenly realm who will coordinate the activities of religion and government. Even in Old Testament times, kings and priests were separate individuals in almost all cases. For example, the Levites had no inheritance in the land.

Similarly, the Christian tries to stay out of politics, for Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). That does not mean we could not vote if legislation were passed to make voting mandatory. In such a case, we would be merely obeying the law of the land. The exception will be the end of the age, for then conscience would be involved. At that time when meetings are forbidden, the government would be tampering with the vitals of Christian life.

**Isa. 61:7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.**

“For your shame ye shall have double.” For their past shame, Israel will have an overflowing of blessing in the Kingdom. “Double” means that Israel had their cup of sorrow, anguish, punishment, trial, and persecution in the past, and now, in the Kingdom, their cup will be filled with blessing, joy, and exuberance. “They shall rejoice in their portion” when they are so honored in the future. “In their land they shall possess the double: [and] everlasting joy.”

Israel’s period of shame lasted for 1,845 years. If the double were an exact mathematical correspondency here, the period of honor and blessing would have to extend into the ages beyond the Kingdom because less than a thousand years remain of the Millennium. Therefore, according to the context of verse 7, the word “double” (Hebrew *mishneh*) is not a chronological double but is used as a similar portion in a generalized sense.

**Isa. 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.**

“For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering.” In the Kingdom, the practices of the present and past ages will not be tolerated. Judgment will be fair, and there will be no more blemished offerings. Malachi 1:8 tells that in the past, the Israelites brought sick and lame animals for the tithe or for offerings to the Lord and retained the healthy animals for themselves. In noting this practice, God said that it was like offering dead dogs to Him (Isa. 66:3). God will have patience with the Adamic weaknesses of mankind in the Kingdom, but where there is responsibility, He will reward obedience and punish disobedience.

“I will make an everlasting covenant with them.” God will make the New Covenant with the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31).

**Isa. 61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.**

In what sense will Israel’s “seed ... be known among the Gentiles”? The Ancient Worthies will be known and distributed throughout the earth as ambassadors. Of course the office of prince, the headquarters of the Ancient Worthies, will remain in Jerusalem, for the word of the Lord will go forth from there (Isa. 2:3), but the representation of that government will be through the dispersed Ancient Worthies.

In the heavenly phase or executive branch of the Kingdom, the commandment of the Law will go forth from Zion, the Church in glory, who will be *both kings and priests* (in contrast to the *separate* functions down here of the prince and the Zadok priesthood). The Law will go down to Jerusalem, to the earthly phase of the Kingdom, to the prince, the nominal head, the mouthpiece of the Church. The Church will communicate their wishes and instructions to the prince, who will, in turn, properly discharge the message to those down here on earth who can do the work.

“Their offspring ... [shall be known] among the people.” There are two ways of viewing the word “offspring.” A later chapter of Isaiah will furnish more information on this subject, and at that time, a fuller explanation will be given. For now, the following will suffice. Consider Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as grandfather, father, and son, respectively. Isaac and Jacob are the offspring of the seed of Abraham. When the three come forth from the tomb, the people will see not only the patriarch Abraham but also his descendants. This verse is one clue, therefore,

that the Ancient Worthies will *rotate* geographic assignments. One reason for the rotation is to prevent the prince from being honored too preeminently over the other Ancient Worthies. For example, if David were the prince for the duration of the Kingdom, the people would think about him more than about Jesus. Thus the highest focal point and honor will go to Jesus. He is *the Head* of the Kingdom, and although all will look up to The Christ, Jesus will be singularly at the top of the Pyramid. The office of prince is merely a means by which the invisible Christ will exercise his authority and influence on the earth.

**Isa. 61:10** I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

Notice the change in pronouns to “I,” “my,” and “me” in this verse. These pronouns tie in with verses 1-3, the reference being to Jesus first and then to The Christ. Jesus read part of verses 1-3 in the Nazareth synagogue, ending with “This day is this scripture [*beginning to be*] fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). Thus the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-3 started at that time.

By Jesus’ quoting verses 1-3, we know that preaching the “good tidings unto the meek,” binding “up the brokenhearted,” proclaiming “the acceptable year,” etc., are his privilege. But verse 10 now adds an important detail, which *proves* that verses 1-3 apply to the Bride as well as to the Bridegroom. “He [Jehovah] hath covered me with the [actual] robe of righteousness.”

We can think of The Christ as an individual, as a man. Paul wrote, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac [an individual] was, are the children [plural] of promise” (Gal. 4:28). Paul was saying that Isaac pictures The Christ, Head and body. The next question is, How does a person wear a robe? It covers his shoulders, *not the head*, and continues on down over his body. Jesus did not need to be clothed with righteousness because he was already righteous, but the Church, being children of Adam and hence sinners according to birth, need and receive at consecration an imputed robe of righteousness from Jesus. From this standpoint, The Christ can be said to be clothed with the robe of righteousness, and the pronouns “I,” “my,” and “me” in verse 10 refer to The Christ. “He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a *bridegroom* decketh himself with ornaments, and as a *bride* adorneth herself with her jewels.”

God “hath clothed me with the garments [plural] of salvation.” One garment of salvation, the *imputed* robe of Christ’s righteousness, is given in the present life. This loaned robe is a foretaste of the joy to come to those who are faithful. A second garment of salvation, the *actual* robe will be given at the marriage to the more-than-overcomers.

These verses are basically a picture of the future, but the garments have a start in the *present* life. From the finished standpoint, when the Little Flock are beyond the veil, they will each have actual white robes and crowns and be bedecked with jewels. All who make this grade will have displayed an exceptional degree of dedication and enthusiasm in the *present* life. And they will have esteemed the privilege of being with Jesus so highly that they are faithful unto death. They will all have the attitude “this one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13).

**Isa. 61:11** For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Why is this last verse included? To show that just as surely as a person puts seed in the ground and in time a plant springs up, or comes forth, according to the laws of nature, “so GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.” God planted seed thoughts, or prophecies, in the Old Testament. He sowed light for the righteous (Psa. 97:1). Now, way

down here at the end of the age, we can see that seed starting to come forth. God expects results, and so can we. The principle is stated in Isaiah 9:7, “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” In other words, certain events were prophesied, and Jehovah *guarantees* the results, the fulfillment. The Lord of hosts has put His stamp of approval on these events, and they *will be performed*. Isaiah 55:10,11 uses the same type of logic: “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it *shall accomplish* that which I please, and it *shall prosper* in the thing whereto I sent it.” As the rain causes the earth to bud, so shall God’s Word accomplish His purpose and bear fruitage; it shall not return unto Him void. God used easy-to-understand language by coming down to the level of the ordinary Jew who was given to agriculture.

**Isa. 62:1 For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.**

The caption for this chapter in some Bibles is “God’s Promises of Salvation for Zion.” In this context, “Zion” is the Church, and “Jerusalem” is natural Israel. The terms are used together, and the definitions are the same in Isaiah 2:3, “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (Sometimes when two names are used together in Scripture, one following the other in the same verse, the usage is for the purpose of repetition, and the meaning is the same—but not here.)

God will not hold His peace or rest until the righteousness of Zion (the Church) goes forth as brightness and the salvation of Jerusalem (natural Israel) as a burning lamp, or torch. With natural Israel, this statement is particularly true as regards the Holy Remnant, of which the remaining chapters of Isaiah will provide still more information.

A modern-day illustration of a torch is the one on the Statue of Liberty. While the torch does not literally burn, it burns symbolically. The French people gave the Statue of Liberty to the United States to show their appreciation for the American Revolution and the uprising of the people against the tyranny of England and for breaking the yoke of Colonialism. With the Declaration of Independence being signed in 1776, the French Revolution followed the American Revolution, and it covered the ten years from 1789 to 1799. The *Second Volume* explains that the American Revolution triggered the French Revolution, although the latter was the breaking of tyranny on a larger scale. The domination of the nobility and the clergy was overthrown in France, which was the stronghold of conservatism in Europe.

Just as the torch on the Statue of Liberty is a beacon of liberty, enlightenment, and leadership, so God will lift up a similar ensign in Israel for all nations to behold when He miraculously delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. The victory will herald the new age. (We are already in that age in a *chronological* sense, but when the Kingdom is established, the world will know in a *practical* sense that the new age has come.)

**Isa. 62:2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.**

Verse 2 is saying that both the Church and natural Israel will be called by a “new name.” Then verse 4 gives Israel’s new name as “Hephzibah” and the name of the land as “Beulah.” The group name for the Church will be “Jehovah-*tsidkenu*,” i.e., “The LORD our righteousness[es]” (Jer. 33:16). Elsewhere Jesus is given the title “The righteousness of Jehovah.” The name for the Church is in the feminine; that for Jesus is in the masculine. God will not rest until the “righteousness” of The Christ goes forth (verse 1). The Christ, the great Deliverer in glory,

shall come forth and deliver natural Israel.

**Isa. 62:3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.**

The Church will be “a crown of glory” and “a royal diadem” in God’s hand. In a secondary sense, after the Ancient Worthies are raised, the Kingdom is in operation, Jerusalem is rebuilt, the Third Temple is complete, and benefits are made manifest to the people (such as coming forth from the tomb, healings, peace, and joy), the world will look to Jerusalem as the center of blessing. Israel and Jerusalem will be emblematic of the Kingdom. Ezekiel Chapter 48 describes how the new *earthly* Jerusalem, the future capital of the world, will be built. With the headquarters for the Ancient Worthies being the Third Temple in Jerusalem, the eyes of the world will be focused on that land and city. In harmony with the wonderful message to go forth from Jerusalem, God will overrule so that beautiful architecture adorns the city. Israel will flourish and blossom like a rose.

**Isa. 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.**

The “Forsaken” and “Desolate” one is *natural* Israel. While the Church, *spiritual* Israel, are forsaken too in a sense, especially during the Dark Ages, most of their trials are permitted as part of the ministry of evil that develops them, and some trials are for wrongdoing. The reverse is true of natural Israel, for most of their suffering experiences were punishments for sinning against their covenant with God, and some experiences were educational in nature. Of the Church, the Apostle Peter said, “If ye suffer for *righteousness*’ sake, happy are ye” (1 Pet. 3:4).

Verse 4 refers primarily to natural Israel. “Hephzibah,” the future name for the people, means “My delight is in her.” “Beulah,” the future name for the land, means “married”; in other words, “thy land shall be married.”

**Isa. 62:5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**

Notice the figurative language in verse 5. “As a *young* man [one who is more enthusiastic, exuberant, enamored, etc.] marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee.” This thought harmonizes with verse 1, where God said, “For Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until their salvation goes forth as a lamp.” It is as if God is impatient for this day to come. He will wait for the set date and time according to His plan, but He longs for and looks forward to the time when His own name will be vindicated, let alone the names of Jesus, the Church, and natural Israel. This is comparable to a man who sets a date for his marriage and waits and waits on pins and needles for the event, anticipating it with joy, knowing it will bring a period of *rest and peace*. God used a human illustration to show that He has emotion.

“As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” The Holy Spirit guided the wording here to apply to both the Church and natural Israel. As a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so (1) *Jesus* will rejoice over the Church and (2) *God* will rejoice over natural Israel. Jesus can be considered as the God of the Church in the sense that David said in Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” In other words, David recognized Jesus as his Lord, and the Church recognizes him as her Lord. Jesus will marry the Church, and both will reverence the Heavenly Father, their “LORD.”

With natural Israel, the illustration is different. The marriage of the New Covenant will be between God and the nation of Israel. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” (Jer. 31:31). As discussed in an earlier lesson, all things being equal, the marriage between God and Israel would be higher than the marriage between Jesus and the Church. But other details in Scripture clarify the marriages. In regard to the marriage of Jesus and the Church, God planned that Jesus would have not only a *collective* Bride with a *collective* name but also a *personal and distinctly separate* relationship with each member of the Bride class and a *personal* name known only to that individual and Jesus (compare Rev. 3:12 and 2:17). On the one hand, it is the *personal, individual relationship* between Jesus and each of the 144,000 saints that makes this the higher marriage. And of course those comprising The Christ will have the divine nature. On the other hand, the marriage between God and the nation of Israel will be a more limited contract. Not only will it be a contract of human restitution, but it will be a *collective* marriage only—and thus a lower relationship than that between Jesus and the Bride.

Some translators try to evade the thought of God marrying Israel because they think of the nation as being permanently cast off and rejected. Henceforth when the Bible speaks about Israel, these translators apply the term to the Church; that is, they look at the prophecies from the spiritual standpoint only. However, the Harvest message has shown from Romans 11 that after the Church is complete, all Israel will be saved and restored to the relationship lost during the Diaspora.

**Q:** How will the relationship between God and natural Israel be manifested?

**A:** The relationship will be manifested by the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble, by Jerusalem being the capital of the world, by the Third Temple being built there, by the majority of Ancient Worthies being Jews, by the headquarters and the judgment work of the Ancient Worthies being in Israel, and by temporal rewards and prosperity.

**Q:** In the beginning of verse 5, who is referred to by the pronoun “thee”? “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry *thee*.” As the Jews come forth from the grave, will they marry their own land?

**A:** Under the Old Law Covenant, the Israelites knew they were pleasing God by their temporal blessings. Thus *earthly* rewards showed their obedience. When the Holy Remnant are rescued at the end of the age, they will be the nucleus of the Kingdom with the Ancient Worthies as the princes. Thus both the nation and the Ancient Worthies will be honored. The Holy Remnant will be seen as a remarkably changed people. The prosperity along natural lines, the attendant blessings, will be an evidence of God’s pleasure. Just as under the Old Law Covenant, God said, “If you do so-and-so, I will do such and such,” so it will be under the New Covenant. In other words, earthly rewards will show God’s favor to Israel, the Ancient Worthies, and the Holy Remnant.

The way verse 5 is worded, it could be interpreted as Israel’s sons marrying the land as well as God marrying the sons in a collective sense. “As a young man marrieth a virgin [singular], so shall thy sons [plural] marry thee [the land].” As God collectively marries the nation of Israel, so shall Israel’s sons marry the land. Thus two pictures are coordinated here, one following right after the other. (1) God marries the nation of Israel. (2) The Jews marry the land of Israel.

The Old Law Covenant was like a marriage contract. There were stipulations and laws under the covenant, to which the nation said, “I do,” agreeing to “cherish, honor, and obey,” as it were. In a marriage, however, the rules are unwritten. The bottom line of the contract is signed with a verbal “I do,” and lo and behold, as the years pass, problems arise. Only in certain unbearable circumstances would there be a legitimate Scriptural reason for ending a marriage.

The standard marriage vow is a simple contract. For Christians to embellish their marriage vows with extra clauses and conditions, as is often done today, more condemnation is heaped on the husband and wife if the conditions are broken. It is better to keep the vows simple.

**Isa. 62:6** I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,

Verse 6 is a break in thought. As with some Bibles and translations, a paragraph break is inserted to indicate that a new thought starts here.

**Comment:** There seems to be a connection between the “watchmen” here and those in the Song of Solomon (5:7). After the Church is beyond the veil, the Great Company will give a persistent message to Israel that will be rejected initially.

**Reply:** The “watchmen” in Israel will not be receptive at first. Having missed out on the marriage, the Great Company will appreciate—but too late—what they have lost. In their appreciation, they will go about the city telling of their beloved friend, the wonderful Bridegroom, as they try to reestablish the relationship. When the watchmen ask whom they are looking for, the Great Company class will respond by describing the Master in such glowing terms that after a while, the watchmen will begin to get interested.

Once again there is a double application. There are “watchmen” in the Church, and there are “watchmen” in natural Israel. The seven messengers are watchmen to the Church in a special sense. God raised up these individuals with a charge concerning the Church.

**Q:** Wouldn't all of the consecrated be considered “watchmen” and the elders particularly?

**A:** The principle is the same with the term “shepherd.” The Great Shepherd is Jehovah. Next in line is Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Then come bishops (elders) as undershepherds. At the lowest level, each Christian is a watchman in the sense of being a steward.

**Q:** What is the time setting for verse 6? Is this a future picture?

**A:** We will go into that aspect now. The thoughts presented thus far were just introductory to show that there are different types of “watchmen.” The fulfillment of verse 6 is between now and the establishment of the Kingdom. The watchmen will not “hold their peace day nor night”—they will not be silent—until the Kingdom is established (see verse 7).

**Comment:** Verse 1 informs us that God is not holding His peace. Then verse 6 gives an extra admonition to the watchmen to keep crying out the message “Thy Kingdom come.”

**Reply:** That is right, for why cry out for peace when the Kingdom is here? God will not hold His peace until the Kingdom is established, and neither should we.

**Comment:** Verse 7 says that the watchmen are not to hold their peace until God makes Jerusalem “a praise in the earth,” which would be the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Notice that the watchmen feel the urgency of the message. (The watchmen theme occurs several times in Isaiah, although not always with the word “watchmen.”) The Pastor could have been a millionaire through the chain store concept, but he sacrificed this talent and prospect for the sake of the truth message. Throughout his lifetime, he felt the responsibility of being a steward and declaring the Second Presence and other Harvest doctrines. The previous six messengers likewise felt the responsibility and urgency of their stewardships: Paul, John,

Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, and Luther. Consider the many trials, hardships, and persecutions Paul endured because he felt the urgency of preaching the gospel. None of the seven messengers could rest day or night.

There are also “watchmen” in natural Israel. Leaders of the Zionist movement, such as Theodor Herzl, have felt this urgency. Based on the Hebrew Scriptures and their love for God, Herzl and others dedicated their lives to aiding Israel. Though God turned His back on the natural Jew for a long time during the Diaspora, He nevertheless kept alive the flickering flame of hope in their darkest hour.

Chapter 62 is beautiful with the dual relationship of the Church and natural Israel. In the future, it will be put to music along with Chapter 61. Although the natural class existed first, the two classes have been contemporaneous down through the Gospel Age, but now we are coming to the end of the age, which is the focal point of Isaiah in his ending chapters.

**Isa. 62:7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.**

The watchmen hold not their peace day or night (verse 6). In other words, they are persistent. They give God no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

**Isa. 62:8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:**

Jehovah has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength that natural Israel’s grain will no more be taken by enemies when the Kingdom is established. While previously there was a dual natural and spiritual application in this chapter, the picture is now changing more and more to just the natural application.

In the past, Israel was invaded and plundered, and their land was appropriated by conquering enemies. Their food, their daily bread, was taken, and they had to fight for survival. However, when the Kingdom is set up, Israel will be at rest. The people will grow grain and plant vineyards, and they will eat the fruit and drink the wine that is produced by their own labor.

God’s “right hand” and “arm of his strength” are Jesus. God “hath sworn” by taking an oath that His covenant will be fulfilled, and He will accomplish this through Jesus. Not only Jesus’ coming at the First Advent and his dying as a sacrifice for sin for the Church and the world but also his resurrection are a confirmation that God’s plan *will be fulfilled*. It is as if God is raising His right hand and swearing an oath. Paul said (paraphrase), “Now that Jesus has humbled himself by dying on the Cross, God will not stop His plan” (Phil. 2:8-11). If God has gone so far as to let His own Son die, we can be sure the entire plan and His Word will be fulfilled. The death of Jesus on the Cross is the most powerful affirmation of God’s intention. In this sense, God has sworn by His “right hand,” that is, by Jesus. In other words, this is a figurative illustration of how God swore, or confirmed His oath—not merely with His *written* Word but also with the *living* Word (the Logos). What a *powerful* illustration! Both are the Word of God, and God has sworn through both. To repeat: the Bible is the *written Word of God*, and Jesus is the *living Word of God*. There could not be a more powerful confirmation of God’s intention. (Incidentally, Jesus did not forfeit his title “The Word.” He is still the Logos, the mouthpiece of God, but he is also the mighty glorified Christ as well.)

**Isa. 62:9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.**



“They that have gathered it shall eat it.” This prophecy is a reminder of the promise that every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and eat the fruit that he produces. “They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it” (Mic. 4:4). Israel’s labor shall benefit *her*. These are earthly promises.

“They that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.” For “holiness,” the Revised Standard Version has “sanctuary,” that is, the Third Temple. Once we are alerted to see them, there are many, many Scriptural references to the literal Temple of the future. The fruits of Israel’s labor shall be drunk “in the [outer and inner] courts of my [God’s] sanctuary.”

**Isa. 62:10** **Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.**

This verse pertains to the introduction of the Kingdom. But what “gates”? City gates? Temple gates? And what “highway”? First, a little history must be considered.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah” (Psa. 24:7-10). Groups of singers (called courses) were appointed for service at different times of the year in the Temple. This Psalm is intended for a choral group in the future. Some of the singers will ask a question, and other singers will give a response, another question follows, then a response, etc.

In Psalm 24, the statement is made, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” Then the question is asked, “Who is this King of glory?” The response is, “The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.” The question is repeated, “Who is this King of glory?” The response is, “The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

What is the significance of the “head” of the gates? How could it be lifted up? In ancient times, the cities were well fortified, and at night, the gate to the wall was closed so that no enemies could enter and capture the city by surprise. There was only a small entrance on the side to allow individuals to enter one at a time. In some parts of the world, additional security was provided by constructing moats in front of the gates and drawbridges, which were pulled up at night. During the day when the gate was open and the drawbridge was down, watchmen were stationed on the wall. Other gates were pulled up cantilever fashion like a sliding door.

In Psalm 24, the command is given, “Lift up the gates; let the King of glory in.” The people ask, “Who is this famous King? Why should we let him in?” The response is that the King of glory is *Jehovah*. Of course this is hypothetical, for nothing could deter God. The Psalm was written this way to show enthusiasm. When the people hear about God’s Kingdom and what it will mean for the human race as the “desire of all nations,” they will want Jehovah to “enter” and take control. They will desire His presence and favor. The setting of this Psalm is the hypothetical city of Jerusalem, and it is time for God to establish His Kingdom in that location.

**Q:** What is the “head” of the gate?

**A:** It is the contraption that lifts up the gate.

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

figurative highway will be for the Holy Remnant to return to Israel from “Assyria” (now Syria and Iraq). The Jewish people in these lands today are like prisoners in that they cannot leave to return to Israel. But when the Kingdom is established, the surviving Jews in Syria, Iraq, and other lands will be released to return to the homeland.

**Q:** Why won't these countries allow the Jews to go back to Israel?

**A:** There are several reasons. For one thing, many of the technicians and intelligentsia are Jews, and if these people leave, who will replace them? Another reason is that the Muslims and/or Arabs equate giving permission to encouraging the Jewish faith, which they do not recognize. But when the time comes, not only will the surviving Jews be permitted to leave, but they will be expedited back on a “highway”; that is, the Lord will figuratively clear the way for passage. There will be no bureaucratic red tape, such as visas, to delay their return.

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land” (Isa. 19:23,24). Egypt and Assyria are traditional long-time enemies of Israel. In the Kingdom, there will be communication (“a highway”) between Egypt and Assyria, but in between them is Israel. This verse is saying that en route to each other's country, the Egyptians and the Assyrians will stop to worship the Lord in Jerusalem (“Israel [shall] be the third with Egypt and with Assyria”). While this is a figurative highway in the sense that there will be communication, it is also a *literal* highway.

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8). Again this is a Kingdom setting, and again the highway is figurative. It is the time when great healing will take place: the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will walk, and the dumb will sing and speak. This “highway” is for the “unclean,” but the unclean cannot take their filthy habits with them. The highway is designed for their blessing and improvement.

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40:3). To prepare the hearts of the Jews to receive Messiah, John the Baptist preached righteousness and repentance from sin. Those Jews who repented and felt their need for reform were in the proper heart condition to be blessed when Jesus appeared. Hence many of John's disciples forsook him and went over to Jesus. In humility, John encouraged this transfer of allegiance, for he said he was not even worthy to untie the shoelace of Messiah.

Back to verse 10. The setting for this dramatic figurative language is the beginning of the Kingdom. “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.” The way is being prepared for the people who are going to Jerusalem, for the word of the Lord shall go forth from there (Isa. 2:3). All nations will be required to send a representative delegation to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles to show their obeisance and fealty to the Lord of hosts in connection with His Kingdom. The penalty for disobedience will be the withholding of rain (Zech. 14:16-19).

“Cast up, cast up the highway.” Who will do this? The people will go through the gates, but the building of the highway is another matter. Roads in ancient times were made with stones. For example, when the Romans besieged Masada, they used stones in a deep valley to make a road that led up to the top of Masada. They heaped up those stones to make a roadbed on which they drew a siege tower on a sled with men armed with bows and arrows behind it. On that hard rock bed, they slid their fortress to the top of Masada, and from the tower on that sled,

they looked down on the defenders inside Masada and eventually captured it. The Jews inside committed suicide rather than be captured by the Romans. The point is that a road was made from the field stones that lay about in the countryside. Whenever a highway, an important road, was made in ancient times that was needed for year-round use for military or other purposes, the base was constructed of stones, for a dirt road would have turned to mud during rainy seasons and become impassable.

**Comment:** The Hebrew word for “cast up” is *salal*, which means “to heap up.”

**Reply:** Yes, the thought is to cast up *heavy* stones one on top of another, to heave them up to build a stone roadbed.

The purpose of constructing this “highway” is to have a year-round road as an easy means of communication between the other nations and Israel. Now we get the picture. When the Kingdom is established, a foreman or traffic cop will yell, “Lift up the gates! Lift up the gates! Go through! Hurry through the gates!” He will want the congestion cleared so that the people can get into Jerusalem to receive blessings. His yelling to others to “gather out the stones” means that improvements and repairs will be made to the highway as needed. And who is this collective managerial one issuing the instructions? The Ancient Worthies. In Revelation 21:12, the Ancient Worthies are called the “angels” at the gates. They will direct traffic, as it were, giving instructions for the people to go through the gates and enter Jerusalem. Now we can see that there will be a “highway” to Assyria and to Egypt.

**Q:** What about the instruction to “gather out the stones”? Isn’t that a separate work?

**A:** Yes, the clause “cast up the highway” means to build the highway, to construct and repair it, so that traffic will move smoothly. The command to “gather out the stones” means to remove any impediments. Thus verse 10 is giving *enthusiastic* instructions for directing the people through the gates.

“I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted” (Isa. 49:11). With Jerusalem being the future capital of the world, a *worldwide* network of communications will be needed with Jerusalem as the hub. Directional signals and signs will point to Jerusalem, as it were. For instance, in this country, our destination might be New York City. On a highway, long in advance of that destination, we see signs such as “New York City, 239 miles” as an assurance that we are headed in the right direction. In the Kingdom, the entire system of society will be oriented toward Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be the broadcast, or *communication, center of the world*—the television center, the radio center, etc.—for the word of the Lord will go forth from *Jerusalem*.

The thought is not that society will be “modernized” like today because much that we have at present is superficial and not really beautiful or practical. With mankind living more quietly and knowing they can live forever, they will think and act differently and lead a more natural or rural life with every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree (Mic. 4:4).

Verse 10 is telling enthusiastically that the people will be assisted into the Kingdom, but something will be needed in addition to the assistance: *obedience*. Isaiah 26:2 expresses the thought: “Open ye the gates, that the *righteous* nation which *keepeth* the truth may enter in.” And Isaiah 35:8 says, “And an highway shall be there ... called The way of *holiness*; the unclean shall not pass over it; but [yet, nevertheless] it shall be for those [for the unclean].” The purpose of Messiah’s Kingdom is to cure all mankind of their mental, moral, and physical diseases, but in order to be cured, they must *respond, cooperate, and obey*. Unto Jesus, every knee must bow and tongue confess that he is Lord (Phil. 2:10,11). He will rule with an iron rod (Rev. 2:27). Those who refuse to listen to the voice of that prophet will be cut off (Acts 3:23). All people will

have the *opportunity* for everlasting life, but they will have to obey wholeheartedly in order to actually attain that life and happiness. The condition for entering the gates is that *inwardly* the people will have to be prepared to accept and *obey* Jesus.

That is what John the Baptist did at the First Advent. He was trying to prepare not so much the road itself but the hearts of the people to accept Messiah. Thus two works will be going on simultaneously. God takes care of the *outward* preparation—Jesus' death on behalf of mankind, the establishment of the Kingdom with the Ancient Worthies, a worldwide communications network, and every assistance—but the people will have to repent; that is, each individual must do an *inward* work.

“Lift up a standard for the people.” A high standard of holiness will be required in the Kingdom. “Thine ears shall hear a word *behind* thee, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it*” (Isa. 30:21).

There is a distinction between the followers of Jesus in the Gospel Age and the people in the Kingdom Age. In this age, the Lord goes *in front of* his people like a shepherd before his sheep. He said, “My sheep hear my voice, ... and they *follow me*” (John 10:27). In this age, we are *invited*, not commanded, to follow Jesus. We are told to sit down and count the cost, and to be a faithful follower of Jesus, we must love him *more than self* or any family member (Luke 14:28; Matt. 10:37). In the Kingdom, however, consecration will be *mandatory*, not voluntary, and the people will hear Jesus' voice *behind* them. The New (Law) Covenant will be the standard with the same principles of love for God and neighbor as under the (Old) Law Covenant (Jer. 31:31).

**Isa. 62:11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.**

The “daughter of Zion” in this verse is natural Israel. When the Kingdom is established in Israel, God will proclaim throughout the earth, “Behold, [natural] Israel's salvation cometh; behold, my reward is with me, and my work is before me” (paraphrase). In the Kingdom, the Ancient Worthies will receive their reward from God. In Luke 13:28, Jesus said to some in his day, “You will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom. The people will go to them for instruction and not to the scribes and Pharisees, not to the clergy.” The Ancient Worthies will be raised perfect to be the mouthpieces on the human plane to give instruction to the world of mankind, so they will be rewarded in the sense of having an office. God's work will be before Him from the standpoint that it will be accomplished through Jesus in the Kingdom.

**Isa. 62:12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.**

The nations will call the Holy Remnant “The holy people, The redeemed [rescued] of the LORD.” It is true that all mankind are to be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but the redemption of verse 12 refers to the rescue of the Holy Remnant from Jacob's Trouble. The Jewish people have been forsaken and persecuted in the past, but when the Kingdom is established, they will be called “Sought out, A city not forsaken.” The nations will seek out the Jew; they will “take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Following Jacob's Trouble, the Gentiles will appreciate and want to associate with those Jews who are left as a remnant.

**Isa. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.**

In vision, the Prophet Isaiah saw a traveler approaching. As recorded by Isaiah, this scene will be dramatized in the Kingdom so that mankind can look back and see what has happened. Jesus is the glorious personage “travelling in the greatness of his strength.” He is the “I” who speaks “in righteousness, mighty to save.” The time setting is the end of the age, shortly before the establishment of the Kingdom.

The glorious personage is seen coming from Bozrah, the capital of Edom in Isaiah’s day. (Edom is literally southeast of the Dead Sea.) Isaiah used terminology familiar to people in his day. Some Bible scholars think Petra (Sela) is the site of ancient Bozrah. To repeat, the glorious personage is seen coming back from Bozrah, the most noted city of Edom.

Why is Jesus described as being “glorious in his apparel”? The purpose is to show his return as a *victorious general bedecked in honor, power, and authority*. Similarly, when Roman generals returned to Rome after many years, it was often an occasion for a great celebration to honor or elevate them.

Presumably, based on other pictures, Jesus is riding on a horse. The question is raised, “Who is this [hero] that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?” There is *excitement* in this picture. Jesus *himself* answers, “It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save” (RSV).

**Isa. 63:2** Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

**Isa. 63:3** I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

The tense is better for verse 3 in the RSV: “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.”

Now we are getting a closer inspection, and there is a question, a puzzlement, an incongruity. While Jesus is bedecked in *glorious* apparel, he is besmirched with *blood*. The next logical question is, Why are his garments stained with blood? The answer: because Jesus was in the *winepress*.

In a winepress, the grapes are placed in a large vat. People then get into the vat to trample and crush the grapes with their bare feet. Of course the juice splatters before it drains off. Because of the heat of the day and to allow freedom of movement, the people wear minimal clothing (only a loincloth for the men) while crushing the grapes in the wine vat. They work for hours, getting more and more covered with the red juice.

In this vision, just as a man treading a literal winepress gets the “blood” of the grapes on him, so the apparel of Jesus was stained with blood. But what part of his garments was stained? Just the lower extremity. The upper portion of his garments remained clean and glorious. Thus the apparel was both soiled and glorious. Jesus’ garments got stained at the winepress in Bozrah, and now he was returning *gloriously and victoriously* in greatness of strength. He was *coming back* from having already trodden the winepress.

Edom was the large plot of land given to Esau by the Lord as a reward and a perpetual inheritance. Esau, Jacob’s brother, sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage, that is, for that which was temporal. Thus Jacob got the double portion of the firstborn (the spiritual blessing) that had originally been given to Abraham. In other words, the promise of being the blesser passed from Abraham to Isaac, and it would have gone to Esau if he had not sold it to

Jacob. However, although Esau forfeited his spiritual birthright, he got material gain; he became rich in natural things. This history in the Book of Genesis is a necessary background for understanding the antitype.

In connection with the Abrahamic promise, the chief portion was being the *blessor*. The lower portion was being the *blessed*, the *recipient* of material things. To have the privilege of dispensing blessings and happiness to others was the higher blessing, the implication being not only that the *blessor* is in a superior position but also that he would receive “material” blessings as well. The degree of loyalty to God, His truth, and righteousness will determine who makes the Little Flock.

What Esau forfeited has a counterpart in history. Other names for Edom are Idumea and Dumah. Edom means “red”—and so does the word “Adam.” In fact, Edom can also be translated Adam. (“DM” is the name and it means red; the vowels can vary.) And who was Adam? As the first man, he was in a position of honor. He was made lord of the earth and given dominion over the cattle, fish, birds, etc., but what happened to him? Through disobedience, he forfeited his lordship, his glorious position, just as Esau did—and for a mess of pottage, as it were, for eating forbidden fruit. (Evidently, Adam thought he could not bear to live without his helpmate Eve.)

There is another type with regard to Edom, in addition to the one with Adam. Edom pictures the nominal Church. Originally, the nominal Church was a golden cup in the hand of the Lord; it was pure, as symbolized by a “white horse” (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 6:1,2). But the color changed to red when tares came in after the apostles fell asleep (Rev. 6:3,4). While seeds of error could be seen in the early Church, the apostles identified hypocritical individuals who were responsible and did not allow their error to spread. Therefore, although the mystery of iniquity was already in the early Christian Church, it was latent and did not affect the doctrine (2 Thess. 2:7).

The early Church had the promises of reigning over the earth and of being kings and priests, but what happened? Instead of waiting, some tried to claim or obtain Kingdom honors ahead of God’s due time. In trying to grasp these honors, they mixed into politics and earthly rulership. But not until the true Church is *complete and in heaven* will the true reign of Christ begin. At that time, God will reveal the names of those who comprise the Little Flock. Thus the Church, which started out pure, became contaminated and adulterated both in doctrine and with the world. The “redness” of sin is identified with Adam, Esau, and the nominal Church; that is, all three started out pure but did not remain that way. Ruddy, hairy Esau (or Edom) pictures the nominal Church, which sold its birthright and tried to establish Christ’s Kingdom prematurely in his absence and prior to his return at the Second Advent.

In summary, the garments of this personage who comes back from Edom are blood-stained as a result of treading the winepress. Some additional pictures will now be considered.

“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs” (see Rev. 14:18-20). The 1,600 furlongs are symbolic to represent the measure of blood guilt. Notice, also, the mention of a winepress, into which grapes are cast and trodden. The RSV correctly translates “a horse’s [*singular*] bridle.” The King James should have “bridle” (*singular*).

Notice that the vat in Revelation 14:19 is called the “*great winepress of the wrath of God.*” With the winepress symbolizing trouble, the “*great winepress*” would be the great Time of

(*international*) Trouble. When the grapes of the vine of the earth are trodden, the juice will come out so profusely that the level will rise higher and higher. Imagine treading the grapes on a horse in this scene! As the level of the liquid kept rising, it covered the stirrups first and then the saddle, so that the horse was wading in blood, as it were. But the juice, or blood, continued to rise even further—up to the horse’s bridle. Bridles are used to control direction and to stop or restrain a horse.

In Scripture, both good things and bad things pile up or accumulate. An example of good accumulation is the prayers of the saints; these prayers rise on incense into the presence of God, who answers them in His own way (Rev. 8:3). Another example is Cornelius, whose prayers were stockpiled until AD 36, when it was time for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. Meanwhile, he was already consecrated to God and his prayers kept accumulating—until they could be answered.

An example of bad accumulation is the restraining of wrath until finally the anger explodes. In trying to explain the wrath, the person may then say, “I have had it up to here,” and point to his or her chin. Another example is the iniquity of the Amorites, which was not punished until it had accumulated up to a certain point. At the end of the age with Gog and Magog, the Lord God will say, “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, ... that my fury shall come up in my face” (Ezek. 38:18). The implication is that prior to this necessary wrath, God has been suppressing it. For a long time, God has held His peace, but the time will come when the restraint is loosed. The “great winepress of the *wrath* of God” ties in with Jesus’ treading of the winepress in *anger* in Isaiah 63:3.

With the winepress of Revelation 14:18-20, so much blood accumulated that when it was let loose, it rose up to the horse’s bridle—and this occurred in 1914. (The 1,600 furlongs indicate a 1,600-year time period from 314 to 1914.) At that time, Babylon’s judgment became set and irrevocable. What has happened beyond that time is just superfluity, for the full guilt was reached in 1914, when the lease of the Gentiles expired.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.... And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11,13-16). This text has several things in common with previously quoted Scriptures: a white horse, the treading of the winepress, blood on the garments, wrath, and Jesus as the rider. The apparel is glorious and honorable, as shown by the name on the vesture: “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” The name of the rider of the horse is “The Word of God,” that is, the Logos, Jesus.

As revealed by the context, another factor common to Isaiah 63 and Revelation 14 and 19 is that Jesus does the treading *alone*. Although complete, the Church does not help Jesus in this work. However, the Church will share in the destruction of Satan at the end of the Millennium. “And the God of peace shall bruise [destroy] Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). But in regard to mystic Babylon, the false systems that claim to represent Christ, it is only Jesus, the Lamb of Revelation 17:14, who will cause their downfall and destruction. In Revelation 19:14, those of the Church, or Little Flock, are described as an army who follow him, but they do not participate. Their robes are “white and clean,” not spattered with blood. They will have the honor of being nearby but not of doing the work with him. Revelation 18:20 proves that the Church will be looking on, or witnessing, the destruction, while God accomplishes the work through Jesus on their behalf: “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and

prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”

**Q:** Doesn't the Church participate with Jesus in smiting the image and in dashing the nations together as a potter's vessel (Rev. 2:26,27; Dan. 2:34,35)?

**A:** The Church will be associated with Jesus in connection with the Time of Trouble in the sense that they will share in dashing the nations to pieces and in delivering Israel out of Jacob's Trouble, but Jesus alone will personally bind Satan and destroy Satan's *spiritual*-control house in earth's atmosphere.

And what about the spiritual institutions down here, the beast and the false prophet? The false Church is called the “mother of harlots” (Rev. 17:5), whereas the true Church is a virgin and will not be a “mother” until her marriage to Christ. The false Church believes that the wedding has already taken place and that it is the mother of daughters. Papacy not only boasts of being the mother Church and calls the Protestant systems *fratelli separati*, her separated brethren, but believes all will unite with her in “the one Church of God.” The point is that there are two aspects of Satan's control: the spiritual aspect above and the earthly aspect down here. Satan is in the institution of Papacy in the sense that he controls it from the spiritual aspect.

Jesus will bind Satan and then destroy his house (Rev. 20:2; Matt. 12:29). Of this future work, Isaiah said prophetically of Jesus, “I have trodden the winepress *alone*.” We sing a hymn with the similar words “He trod the winepress alone,” but that hymn pertains to Jesus' ministry, which ended in blood at Calvary. It is true of that time that none of the people were with him. Jesus' Calvary experience is related to the end-of-the-age picture in the following sense.

Satan, the prince of the power of the air, was the mastermind. His hour of power came when Jesus allowed himself to be taken in the Garden of Gethsemane and then crucified on Calvary (Eph. 2:2). Jesus said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30).

The next level below Satan was the scribes and Pharisees, who were in the professed “church” of Jesus' day. As they were plotting to put Jesus to death, Judas entered the scene—a happening that was no doubt considered providential by the clergy. The people were swayed by the leadership. Of the clergy, the “*chief* priests” were mostly to blame, for some of the lesser priests believed in Jesus but kept quiet because of fear. Their silence allowed Jesus to be crucified.

The Church will share in the destruction of the nations but not in the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. The false religious systems will be dealt with first. They will be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). The dragon will be dealt with later.

When the image is smitten (the clay, iron, brass, gold, and silver), the organizational structure will be destroyed (Dan. 2:34,35). People will be involved in this destruction until the fourth world empire, or beast, is slain. When that beast dies, the inference is that the previous three beasts will die too. Although Babylon was destroyed as a universal empire, it lived on as a people or nation (Dan. 7:12). Media-Persia succeeded Babylon as an empire, and Greece was the third world empire. Although destroyed as an empire, Greece exists as a nation today, and Rome still exists. Today we are in the “toes” of the Roman Empire period. Soon it will be replaced by the stone of Messiah, the fifth world empire, Christ's Kingdom. We know that many people will die at that time because whenever one world empire succeeded another, there was bloodshed. The institutions will be destroyed but not all of the people. The nations of earth will become the Kingdom of Messiah. For quite a while, until certain changes occur such as one language being spoken throughout the earth, the people will maintain their identity from the standpoint of residence and national characteristics.



The responsibility of who will die in the trouble rests with Jesus. While the Lord is not dealing with the world of mankind on an individual basis in this age, their names have been recorded. When they walk up the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age, they will have to make amends for certain acts not repented of in the present life. Some rectification of past injustices will be required, but mercy will be extended in that each individual will have the opportunity to make good, and everlasting life will be the reward for those whose heart condition is right.

However, the determination of death in the coming Time of Trouble is another matter. The advice is to “seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3). Certain individuals will be “marked” for death at that time, although others will die as well. Messiah will determine the screening process.

In summary, the Church, reigning with Christ, will participate in breaking, or smashing, the civil and religious institutions down here and the deliverance of natural Israel, the Holy Remnant. But Jesus alone will personally bind the Adversary. Satan’s associates in the spiritual realm, the other fallen angels, are another picture.

**Q:** When verse 3 says, “of the people there was none with me,” does that mean the people not with Jesus will be those here on the earth?

**A:** First, consider conditions during Jesus’ earthly ministry. In the Garden of Gethsemane and at the time of the Crucifixion, he trod the winepress alone. All of his disciples forsook him and fled when he was apprehended. Although Peter and John were more courageous and followed at a distance, Peter denied the Master three times. In this experience, Satan manipulated Jesus’ death through the clerical element. Pilate (representing the civil element) wanted to release Jesus, but when the clergy threatened to inform the emperor that an insurrection had occurred, Pilate got frightened, washed his hands, and allowed Jesus to be crucified. The point is that although the institutions down here condemned Jesus, it was the Adversary who was particularly involved. Therefore, in the coming trouble, it is *Satan’s* house, or institution, that is to be particularly destroyed by Jesus. The part we see is Papacy. We see the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, but we do not see Satan, who is behind Papacy, the civil element, and federated Protestantism. Out of the mouth of these three will come the doctrine of *demons* (Rev. 16:13,14). The same message, the same unclean froglike spirits, will be uttered by all three. Satan is the prince of the demons in the higher spiritual house. Invisible to us, he is the one motivating the earthly institutions and goading them to action. In other words, Satan is behind the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, who will all speak doctrines of *demons*, and the demons are part of Satan’s house, which Jesus will handle *personally*. The picture is very complex. When history is seen in retrospect, the clarity of the details, which are difficult to apprehend at present, will be shocking.

To understand the issue of life and death in the next age, we should consider that under the Levitical arrangement, any matter that was too difficult for the priests to handle was taken to Moses. Only as a secondary lesson did the people go to the priests in connection with ceremonial cleansing. When it comes to the issue of life itself in the Kingdom, Isaiah tells us that Jesus (not the Church) will do the judging, although he may use representatives to judge the simpler matters. And Jesus will judge not according to the sight of his eyes or the hearing of his ears. The Little Flock will be instructed how to judge and will be given certain rules and regulations within which they can operate, but the determination of life itself, which is very precious, versus Second Death, which is scary, will have to be screened by Jesus, and he will act not according to his own will but according to the *Father’s* will on these matters. It is the Lamb’s book of life, not the Church’s.

**Q:** Did the first “winepress” experience happen at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion?

**A:** That was his own winepress experience. As the Head, he was injured, and now he wants to take the chief responsibility with regard to the destruction of the systems in the great Time of Trouble.

**Comment:** Then the picture is twofold.

**Reply:** Yes. When great injustices have been committed, one who is in a leadership role (that is, Jesus) would like the satisfaction of personally taking care of the more horrendous aspects of the injustices. The mopping-up detail is another matter, a relatively secondary matter.

**Q:** Will the institutions be destroyed in the Time of Trouble, and then individuals will be dealt with in the Kingdom?

**A:** Some individuals will be dealt with even during the trouble and the destruction of the institutions. For instance, consider a person who is elected to serve as pope. He sits in an office that purports to be the vicar, or substitute, for Christ, but Jesus said, "There is only one Master. I am your Master, and all of you are brethren." These words were spoken to the apostles, and the pope is not even an apostle. Jesus was saying, "All you apostles are brethren, and I am the head of the Church." The title "pope" is *papa* in Latin, meaning "father of fathers," and the pope claims to reign in Christ's stead. How presumptuous! At his coronation, the pope sits on a throne and allows the cardinals to kiss his toe. In the meantime, the Scripture is read, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 2:12). The point is this: the system being destroyed is one thing, but the degree of responsibility that attaches to the individuals in leadership positions in the false systems is another matter. For example, at the top is the pope, and under him are the cardinals.

**Comment:** Isaiah 63:3 says that Jesus will tread the winepress alone, but under his direction is the Lord's great army (Joel 2:11).

**Reply:** There are other pictures, such as Jezebel. When Jehu called to the eunuchs, they threw Jezebel out the window, and the dogs ate her. This picture shows that the downfall of Papacy will occur partly from *within* its own ranks and partly from *without*. The "dogs" represent a radical, ungodly element outside of the system.

**Q:** Are they all part of the Lord's great army?

**A:** Yes, the Lord's great army includes all of these elements that contribute to the downfall of Papacy.

**Q:** What about Revelation 2:26, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"?

**A:** That text refers to the smiting of the image, the destruction of the arrangement down here. The glorified Church will superintend. The destruction of the Vatican (its records, statuary, etc.) is one subject, but the *personal guilt of individuals in the system*, the blood aspect, is a separate subject that will be handled by Messiah.

**Comment:** Psalm 149 harmonizes with Revelation 2:26. "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa. 149:7-9). Punishments will be executed upon individuals, and "kings" will be bound; that is, individuals within the systems.

**Reply:** It is like the puppeteer with his puppets. The puppet operator up above (Satan) motivates the puppets below (the systems). The destruction of the puppets is one thing, but dealing with the manipulator of the strings is another matter. Certain beings *in the heavens* motivate and manipulate the puppets down here, and in addition, certain personalities *down here* manipulate others down here. However, the institution is one thing, and the blood guilt of the individuals is another. For example, when Jesus was crucified, the people said, “Let his blood be upon us and upon our children.” In other words, they accepted the responsibility. With regard to the world of mankind, 1 Timothy 5:24 tells that some men’s sins go beforehand to judgment and some men’s sins follow after. The thought is that even though God is not dealing with the world of mankind now, certain individuals or leaders are particularly culpable, and some are dealt with in the present age. That responsibility is Jesus’, as shown by the blood on his garments. It is he (and not the Church) who will take care of *personalized* judgment, whereas the institutions are another matter. Some in heaven and some down here in leadership roles merit judgment, although basically Satan and the demon powers are obsessing the minds and thoughts of mankind along various lines.

The winepress feature is the Time of Trouble, in which the grapes of wrath (that have been stored) will eventually be pressed. “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God” (Rev. 14:18,19). A singular horse will do the treading of the grapes (Rev. 14:20). The juice of the grapes, which stains Jesus’ garments in the picture, is likened to blood. Jesus will tread the winepress alone; he will make the decisions. As he is the Head of the body now, so he will be the Head of the body then. The Church will be given positions of glory and power, but their role will be somewhat limited, for the decisions they make will be on a lower level. They will be on the level of a mother nursing a child or like the priest who estimated the value and cost of righting a wrong. But the “blood,” the very issues of life, is more precious and more important. Jesus will deal with the individuals whose sins particularly need retribution, and the Church will deal with institutions and governments. The Church will be the “mother,” but God will be the Life-giver and the Life-taker-away. In the final analysis, He will make the decisions regarding Second Death. However, Jesus has so much the mind of God that he will know the Father’s decisions.

Satan has a large degree of responsibility because he is the archenemy of God. He is the most influential one. However, the fallen angels under Satan also bear responsibility, and on down the line, each one of us has a responsibility. We are judged a lot on how we think, deal, and act toward other people and on the degree to which we influence them. Our thoughts, words, and deeds should be according to God’s Word and will. We are held accountable. Hence James 3:1 says, “My brethren, be not many masters [teachers—RSV], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” To exercise an influence on the minds of other people (that is, to teach them) and to influence decision making incur responsibility. In other words, the degree of responsibility for sin is according to enlightenment and the spirit of discernment. Also, one is proportionately responsible according to the degree of willful ignorance.

Before proceeding to verse 4, we will briefly review two pertinent pictures:

1. Revelation 14:18-20 describes the treading of the winepress. The vine of the earth is sickled and cast into the winepress.
2. Revelation 19:11-13 shows Jesus riding a white horse and returning from the battle as a conqueror with blood-stained clothing—just as in Isaiah 63:3, the blood is only on Jesus’ garments. In contradistinction, the Church follow him on white horses and are wearing

unblemished, gleaming white robes (Rev. 19:14). In other words, Jesus is accepting the responsibility for the work that has just been accomplished in regard to blood.

**Isa. 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.**

We will now consider Isaiah 34:6-8 from the standpoint of differences and similarities with Isaiah 63:1-4. “The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. 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. For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.”

Isaiah 63 tells that Jesus treads the winepress alone. Although the contents of the winepress are not specially discussed, grapes would be involved because of the word “wine.” In Revelation 14, the “vine of the earth” again implies grapes in a vineyard. Grapes of wrath are thrown into the wine vat for retribution. The implication is that down through the pages of history, God has been taking note of some who have unjustly opposed His cause.

Isaiah 34 does not mention a winepress at all and talks about the sword of Jehovah, whereas Isaiah 63 describes Jesus as the one coming from Bozrah. However, in regard to the sword of Isaiah 34, we know that Jesus will be God’s representative in the Day of Vengeance.

Notice the similar language or key expressions of Isaiah 34 and Isaiah 63, which are figurative pictures. The drama and atmosphere of both scenes portray God’s indignation and indicate a time period (“the *year* of recompences for the controversy of Zion” versus “the *year* of my redeemed is come”). Both scenes are somehow related to retribution, recompenses, and the Day of God’s Vengeance.

What is the “controversy of Zion”? Saints who were persecuted and killed unjustly all down the age (and especially during the Inquisition) appeared to be forgotten. Nobody seemed to answer their prayers. Revelation 6:9-11 shows them figuratively crying out, “How long, O Lord, ... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?” But they were told to wait until the end of the age. “It was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Romans 12:19 reads, “Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Many Christians unjustly experience slander, misrepresentation, persecutions, and deaths that are offensive in God’s sight. To all outward appearances, they are defeated, but God is saying, “I am taking note of what is happening. If you are faithful unto death, I will give you the crown of life. Remember, I will repay; vengeance is *mine*.” Thus we must *wait* for God’s vengeance.

**Q:** How will the Lord settle the account with deceased individuals?

**A:** The sleeping saints were resurrected at the end of the age in 1878. Prior to that, all down the age, they slept in the grave and the Lord kept noting the injustices committed against them. During the Dark Ages, poor hapless victims remained faithful while persecutors tortured them in an effort to make them recant and denounce their faith. In dark dungeons, many died horrific deaths unnoticed by the public. But while the blood guilt accumulated, Jesus carefully noted the perpetrators and persecutors who were particularly responsible, as opposed to those who may have acted in ignorance and blind faith, thinking that verily they were doing God a service (John 16:2). In other words, some were willfully guilty, and others were sincerely misinformed. In due time, Jesus will personally repay according to the degree of personal guilt of each persecutor.

Isaiah 34:6 says that the sword of Jehovah will be filled with (that is, be responsible for) the blood of lambs and goats and the fat of rams' kidneys. Instead of just saying the blood of grapes and the winepress, this picture breaks down into classes those who will be involved.

**Comment:** With regard to *individual* vengeance, all the blood from righteous Abel unto Zacharias was required of the generation living at the time of the First Advent (Matt. 23:35). The parallel picture is that all the righteous blood shed from Zacharias unto the end of the age will be required of the generation living at the end of the age.

**Reply:** There is retributory justice. Suppose someone committed an atrocious act in the Jewish Age. While the sins were carried out on the progeny because of the disobedience of the parent, yet in the final analysis, the individual (the parent) who actually committed the sin will be held responsible in the Kingdom. That one will not escape retribution because of the fact that his children suffered. Although a certain degree of responsibility attaches to associates and progeny, the individual himself (for example, Nero) is culpable.

**Q:** But how does such an example from the past fit into this context of the one coming from Bozrah with dyed garments? This specific time period is still future but prior to the Kingdom. The time setting is not when the resurrection takes place with individuals on the scene who were guilty of gross sins in the past.

**A:** As Jesus developed and perfected the Church down through the age without the other saints helping, so he will finish the Church at the end of the age. Not only is he the Beginner and Finisher of the Church in a generalized way, but he has been trimming the candlesticks in a *personalized* way all along. Regardless of the agencies Jesus uses, he is involved in the particular judgment regarding what is to be done and how it will be accomplished. Generally speaking, a lieutenant who knows what his superior officer's directives are will carry them out except when he sees that they involve a degree of responsibility. Then he may be fearful to make the decision. While this has been true of God's people down through history, the same type of judgment is taking place with regard to those who have persecuted God's people. The responsibility that is being noted is particularly in Jesus' hand. It is the principle of "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." Some of those responsible for the death of many true Christians lived a relatively happy life and died in luxury and honor. But their sins have been stored up, and they will receive stripes in the Kingdom for the responsibility they incurred in sinning against light. But that is only part of the picture.

Now comes the end of the age, and a *current* generation is to be dealt with. Many evil decisions are being made behind closed doors not only in government but also in religious circles and secretly by individuals and groups. The Bible tells us that conditions will get worse and worse, so that at the end of the age, there will be little or no justice. God knows all the details behind the scenes, while at most, we get just little inklings. When it comes to judgment on the current generation at the end of the age, the Lord knows where the responsibility lies. Even though we are alive at this time, we do not know the various degrees of responsibility. Much of our information comes from television, and that reporting can be very biased. Sometimes information that is withheld would have presented matters in an entirely different light if it had been revealed. The point is that the Bozrah picture, with Jesus treading the winepress alone, pertains only to *individual* responsibility.

Jesus knows the degree of punishment of all people down through history. Some men's sins go beforehand to judgment and some follow after. With the sins that come beforehand, Jesus has been responsible in many cases. For instance, suppose that in the present age, a person viciously kills someone and then cuts the body into pieces. Would the Lord just forgive the killer in the Kingdom and say he was deranged? No. However, suppose someone comes around and cuts the killer's body in pieces in the present age. Retribution in that respect might

be entirely satisfied before the Kingdom is established. But when retribution does not occur in the present age, as is usually the case, the person's sins are noted by the Lord and stored up for the Kingdom so that the nature of the punishment and the degree of responsibility, whether past or present, will be requited. The prevailing thought—and an erroneous one—is that in the resurrection, all will be forgiven *carte blanche*.

Now let us suppose that an institution viewed more favorably were to collapse. Individuals who devoted money, time, and service to that organization would be affected for a while by its demise and experience sorrow, but in time, they would find interest elsewhere. Thus the collapse of an institution would not be real punishment for those affected. The same is true regarding a close relative who dies. We can be very grief-stricken, but a few years later we recover and adapt to our condition. Therefore, the fall of an institution does not really affect the individual very much. The collapse of Papacy would affect those in the Vatican, but most Catholics are in parishes throughout the world. In proportion as one were in a lower echelon, he would be less affected. All would mourn over having to adjust to new circumstances, but in varying degrees. What individuals do *personally* while in such an arrangement may be very favorable or very unfavorable. The *personalized* aspect is the distinction. The collapse of the system and its leaders is one thing, and the individuals are another matter.

Now another point. When various ones come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom, they are going to be judged, and the Lord knows the *degree* of responsibility; that is, he knows to what extent past sins were Adamic, willful, or a mixture of the two, and he will render judgment accordingly. But from that point on, the Church will deal with that individual—not according to what happened in the present age but from the resurrection on. In that sense, the Church will be the “mother” of the Kingdom. The Church's role will be like helping a released prisoner to rebuild his life.

Thus there is a distinction in the judgment of sin based on when it occurred. Normally we just generalize about everyone receiving forgiveness in the Kingdom, but such generalizations can incur the indignation of Christians in the nominal system—and to a certain extent they are justified. Ezekiel tells us that the prophet who speaks in the Lord's name has to be careful that he does not just preach smooth things. Why? Because such preaching favors and hardens the sinner in his sin and he is not awakened to the realization of his guilt. The sinner tends to rationalize, “I will do what I want now and wait until the Kingdom comes to change my ways.” But the Apostle Paul preached the whole counsel or gospel of God. When he spoke of judgment and the Kingdom, people feared, and it was not that he preached hellfire. Rather, from Paul's powerful logic and by the extension of his reasoning, they realized they would have to answer for their sins if he was right.

**Q:** Please tie in these comments with the context of Jesus' coming back from Bozrah. Is the retributive aspect also involved, such as the sins that are put on the scapegoat?

**A:** First, we will consider the winepress picture, which is an important feature of the great Time of Trouble. The winepress is a constriction of providence with the result that judgment comes to pass. And even now we begin to see the stage being set, for people are waking up to some extent. In this constricting period, there is to be the collapse of the nominal system, which has been falsely representing Christ's cause down through history. The vine of the earth being cast into the winepress and the systems falling are one thing, but the degree of responsibility of the people within the systems is a separate matter. Both thoughts are involved.

Isaiah 34:6 mentions lambs and goats. In the scapegoat picture of the end of the age, which will take place after the Church is complete beyond the veil, the Great Company (represented by the scapegoat) will be led by the hand of a fit man (the Adversary) out into the wilderness for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (Lev.

16:21; 1 Cor. 5:5). The blood from the slaughter of the lambs in Isaiah 34:6 and the scapegoat's being sent out into the wilderness in Leviticus 16:21 indicate that the Great Company will die through hard experiences in the Time of Trouble as "tribulation" saints. Although they lose the crown, the chief prize, God will save them in His mercy, but first, they must finish their course here on earth.

**Q:** Because Jesus is seen coming from Edom in Isaiah 63:1 and because the goats and the lambs are slaughtered in Isaiah 34:6, could we say that these are pictures of *Christendom's* collapse?

**A:** Yes, that is correct. Isaiah 63, the Bozrah picture, refers to the collapse of the religious systems and their organizational aspect. This text does not refer to the smiting of the image, which will incorporate other features. The image will be smitten by the stone (by The Christ, Head and body). The smiting of the nations will be quite different from dealing with individuals, which will come later.

The *Fourth Volume* states that the goats represent tares, but based on other Scriptures, the goats may be more comprehensive than just tares. In the Tabernacle illustration, there are two goats, the live goat (Little Flock) and the scapegoat (Great Company). Both classes are pictured by a goat, not because they are in disfavor with God but because when they were called to follow Christ, they had a goatlike disposition to overcome. In life, as they learn the Lord's will, they have to constantly change their thinking and mode of life, and their joys and pleasures are translated into different avenues. According to the flesh, they could not get life, but God notes their faith, works, obedience, etc., and rewards them not because of the perfection of their deeds but because of their heart condition and the robe of Christ's righteousness.

In the illustration of Isaiah 34:6, the lambs represent undeveloped, immature Christians, that is, the Great Company. When the door is shut, they will be outside weeping, and they will suffer their portion with the hypocrites. The point is that *many* categories of people will suffer in the Time of Trouble, but there are simplified pictures such as wheat and tares, Lord's goat and scapegoat, and lambs and goats. A tare is one thing, but the "goats" of Isaiah 34:6 could include those who have a goatlike disposition, and the *degree* of the goatlike disposition is what affects one's destiny. Some Christians oppose certain thoughts, not because they have so much knowledge but because they are listening to their own will and reasoning and not the Lord's. Proportionate responsibility will be incurred.

The principle is the same with the scribes and Pharisees. Of those involved in putting Jesus to death, the chief priests who paid Roman soldiers a large sum of money to say that his body had been stolen by his disciples are in a *dangerous* position, for they *sinned willfully against light* (Matt. 28:11-15). They knew an earthquake had occurred on the morning of the resurrection and rolled the stone away, they knew the guards had seen an angel, and they knew the soldiers were eyewitnesses. These chief priests incurred much more responsibility and guilt than other members of the Sanhedrin who were not in the inner circle. Others who participated in crying, "Crucify him!" are also guilty but to a lesser degree than those who paid the hush money. Scribes and Pharisees who believed remained quiet initially because of fear of their fellow Jews. An example is Joseph of Arimathea. Earlier he was silent, but when Jesus was crucified, when the chips were down, he boldly requested Jesus' body from Pilate. Some people are weak and cowardly by nature, but God's influence can change those who are like wax into steel *if their heart condition is right*.

All down the line with the human race, there are various degrees of responsibility. Jesus has been keeping records of needed punishment and retribution and upon which individuals. He will deal with the upper echelons of responsibility, and the Church will deal with the lower echelons. And for that matter, the Lord's Great Army will be involved in the lowest level.

Today many do not think of the Lord as ever being angry. We are living in a day when ancient history is neglected, hidden, and whitewashed. Fifty years ago firsthand accounts and testimonies could be obtained in libraries of those who were persecuted for their religious convictions. Now the emphasis is on current history, from the First World War through today. In the schools, ancient history is passé, and medieval history is used only in a general sense as an index finger to show that the same symptoms exist at present. Instead of going back to the original disease, the source, the people want to study current symptoms. Thus schools pervert history, and the people want to forget the past and deal with the here-and-now.

We are living in a time when prisoners are coddled and often given better treatment and attention than the victims. Justice is turned upside down. The abolition of the death penalty is contrary to God's Word. The villain is given the hero's role. People are regarded as heroes simply because of physical prowess, mental capability, etc., and not for their characters. And children are brought up with too much mercy, the rod being spared.

The Church in glory will be involved in the fall of institutions. They will be identified with the stone smiting the image on its clay and iron feet. The Isaiah 34:6 picture shows more detail: lambs, goats, and kidneys of rams. "Goats" are more inclusive than just tares in the nominal system, for the term includes some who will prove to be incorrigible in the next age. Although the incorrigible are the exception rather than the general rule, they should be mentioned.

The same is true of public discourses on love. It is said that the Scriptures tell us to have brotherly love and to be united, but the exceptions are rarely mentioned. In fact, when the exceptions are mentioned, the speaker is often criticized. However, the Bible gives exceptions, and the true or whole gospel includes the exceptions as well as the general rule. Otherwise, a slanted gospel is being presented. "Love" is followed even by the world, but that love is not God's love based on obedience to His commandments. In order to know both God's *love* and His *indignation*, we must know His *Word*. Love is the doing of God's will, not our own will. We are to obey God's Word and not follow cliché utterances and sweep things under the rug.

**Q:** Would we say, then, that the tares represent all in the nominal systems who are not spirit-begotten?

**A:** What is the "nominal system"? The nominal system professes to be identified with God's Kingdom. The Great Company class also profess to be representatives of God. As "virgins," they are on a higher level than the tares, but because they are *foolish* virgins, they will have to suffer a portion of judgment with the hypocrites. However, distinctions should be made between the Great Company and the hypocrites. Each class will be dealt with *according to responsibility*. The tribulation will bring the Great Company to their senses and help them wash their robes through a recognition of their wrongs so that they can be saved, or rescued. As for the tares, or hypocrites, the tribulation may or may not bring them to their senses.

**Q:** We like to make a distinction between the nominal Church and brethren associated with present truth, but didn't the Pastor say that, given enough time, the spirit of nominalism would enter our very midst?

**A:** Yes, especially as we get closer and closer to the very end of the age. The Scriptures say not only that all will be deceived except the Very Elect but that the antitypical John class will decrease this side of the veil and the body of Christ, the Little Flock, will increase beyond the veil. Therefore, any problems in the Church down through history will be compounded at the end of the age with fewer and fewer of the Very Elect remaining in the flesh. Stated another way, if the foolish virgin class becomes a greater and greater majority among the consecrated as we get to the end of the age, we should be more and more *careful* lest wrong *majority* thinking, explanations, and decisions influence us. God's Word must be the standard.



The Apostle Peter said, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?*” (2 Pet. 3:11,12). It is not that we are or can be perfect, but we can try to be. We must make a *serious, sincere effort* to please the Lord to the extent of our capability.

“For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” The nominal Church orchestrated religious persecutions many, many years ago. Today people reason, “How can you be angry about something that happened so long ago?” But Isaiah 63:4 shows that responsibility for the religious persecutions against God and His true people is not forgotten with the passage of time. God holds these persecutions in store in the cumulative sense. Because we realize that we ourselves are sinners, we want to think of past history from the merciful standpoint only.

The Lord’s Prayer says, “Forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass against us]” (Matt. 6:12). In this very prayer, we are asking God for His forgiveness, but we cannot forgive those who trespass against *others*, only those who trespass against *us*. This principle of forgiveness applies to us, but not if it violates the laws God laid down for us. For instance, the following words are attributed to Jesus on the Cross, but they are not in Scripture: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This spurious verse sounds very nice, but such an utterance would not harmonize with Jesus’ own teaching. And what was that teaching? “If your brother trespasses against you, *rebuke him*; and if he repents and asks your forgiveness, then you are to forgive him” (Luke 17:3 paraphrase). To grant blanket forgiveness to those who manipulated Jesus’ crucifixion is not the true picture; it may sound good, but it contradicts principle.

Consider the incident of the harlot of whom Jesus supposedly said, “Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone” (John 8:7 paraphrase). That incident in John 7:53–8:11, which is not in the earliest manuscripts, teaches a wrong principle, for the woman was actually caught in the act of adultery; it was not circumstantial evidence. Other Scriptures, such as the account in Numbers 25, counteract this wrong principle. For example, consider the Midianite woman and Zimri, the Israelite man, who sinned in the sight of all Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. Because of their fornication, Phinehas was commended for killing them both with a javelin or spear. In fact, his act stayed the plague and stopped the Lord’s anger.

To take the statement of John 8:7 as a principle (“Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone”) would end all arguments, for everyone is a sinner. Accordingly, not one of us could ever “cast a stone” at any time, but the Scriptures show there are cases where we have a responsibility to “cast a stone.” To the extent that these cases are ignored, we are not being faithful to God’s Word.

**Comment:** If the statement “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” were authentic, then the Heavenly Father acted contrary to Jesus’ prayer request when He brought retribution on Israel in the trouble of AD 69-70.

**Reply:** The people said, “[Let] his blood be on us and on our children” (Matt. 27:25).

**Comment:** A person who *knowingly* does wrong will be beaten with many stripes, whereas a person who *unknowingly* does wrong will be beaten with few stripes. The *degree of responsibility* is the determining factor in the number of stripes received.

**Reply:** Revelation 18:20 says, “Rejoice over her ... ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” The saints are to *rejoice* over the fall of mystic Babylon, over their own

vindication, and over the satisfaction for wrong that was done.

**Q:** How do we harmonize Stephen's statement "Lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60)?

**A:** First, Stephen was not an apostle. The text simply records his attitude at that time. It would be a different matter if God, Jesus, or an apostle (especially after Pentecost) had made the statement. For others, we must analyze the statement, the speaker, the occasion, and the context and then use judgment because the Bible has recorded some statements that contradict principle. For instance, on one occasion when Jesus spoke of the persecution that awaited him, Peter rebuked him, and the Master said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark 8:33). But this incident occurred before Peter was anointed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

**Comment:** To counteract Stephen's words, we can point to the Apostle Paul, who suffered for his past acts of persecution against Christians. He received retribution.

**Reply:** Along another line, when Thomas said, "My Lord and my God," that, too, was prior to Pentecost, so his statement cannot be given apostolic sanction (John 20:28). At that time, the apostles were not fully instructed in the ways of the new dispensation.

In summary, the glorified Church is or is not involved in the coming judgment depending on which picture or circumstance is being discussed. With the binding of Satan, for example, the Church will not be involved. Jesus will bind Satan personally, but the Church will be instrumental with his destruction at the end of the Millennium. They will share in "bruising" him (Rom. 16:20).

**Comment:** Only the hard-to-decide cases were taken to Moses.

**Reply:** Yes, "lieutenants" can carry out decrees within the limitations of their orders. When the degree of responsibility approaches a determination of Second Death, only the highest level makes such a decision, but others share in being agents with lower levels of responsibility and judgment.

**Comment:** When Miriam was struck with leprosy as a punishment, Moses besought the Lord on her behalf (Num. 12:1-15), but God replied, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again." Miriam had to remain outside the camp for seven days as a punishment, and that was the Heavenly Father's decision.

**Reply:** Yes, God used the illustration that if a man spits in another person's face, something should be done. Since Miriam spit in God's face and Moses' face, as it were, she had to suffer some embarrassment and punishment.

**Comment:** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and found the Israelites sinning with the golden calf, God was going to destroy the people, but Moses intervened on their behalf (Exodus 32). It would appear that God changed His mind, for He did not destroy the people. Nevertheless, they were punished.

**Reply:** For one thing, Moses was a picture of Christ, and he came down here to die for mankind. The purpose of his dying was to grant an opportunity of salvation to every person who has ever lived. Included in the "second" opportunity that the world will have in the Kingdom will be the *knowledge* of Jesus, his sacrifice, and the way of salvation. In the present age, the spirit-begotten can incur the penalty of Second Death because they have been fully enlightened to know that Jesus is the Savior. And this is the very truth that is guaranteed to all

in due time: to know that Jesus is the true Savior (1 Tim. 2:3,4). One who acts upon that knowledge has had the opportunity for life. Consider Judas, who died before Pentecost. He had enough knowledge of Jesus—his miracles and teachings—to incur the penalty of Second Death. It is the knowledge of Jesus that brings responsibility. Therefore, those who are related to truth in the present age, those who *truly know about Jesus and believe, even though they may not be spirit-begotten*, can go into Second Death if they grievously sin against this knowledge.

**Comment:** In the incident of the golden calf, Moses said in Exodus 32:26,27, “Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, ... companion, and ... neighbour.”

**Reply:** Yes, because of the great sin and disobedience, the Israelites were told by God, through Moses, to kill at random brother, companion, and neighbor. (If we had been Israelites at that time, would we have obeyed?) Those who showed their loyalty to God by obeying were overwhelmingly Levites, and their obedience meant that they killed some members of their own families and tribe. Probably, in addition, a much smaller percentage of Israelites from other tribes obeyed the command and thus passed the test. However, the Levites responded to such a degree and at such great cost to themselves that they were commended as a tribe and the Lord chose them to replace the firstborn.

This incident reveals the Lord’s principles, and God is a God of *love*. All will get the opportunity for life sooner or later, but His principles must be understood and obeyed. Those who would be of the Little Flock must prove so loyal to God now, in the present life, that if the Church in glory during the Kingdom were so instructed, they would put to death even members of their own family—son, daughter, mother, etc. The Little Flock will feel that God’s judgment and love are so far superior to their own that they will respond with unquestioning obedience. They will comply simply because God so commanded. Consider Abraham’s willingness to offer up Isaac.

Normally when we first consecrate, we do not see the degree of obedience that is required for membership in the Little Flock. But as we meditate on God’s Word and try to obey Him, we grow and get stronger. With the requirements so high, it is no wonder that 2,000 years have been required to find the 144,000. Since all die anyway, the time factor is immaterial from the standpoint of justice whether a person dies one day or 50 years earlier. Furthermore, we know, generally speaking, that God will raise all from death and give them an opportunity for life.

**Comment:** We did not cover the “fat of the kidneys of rams” in Isaiah 34:6.

**Reply:** Just as with the true sacrifices of the Tabernacle arrangement, the inner parts of the animals represented the inner desirable affections, motivations, and directions of the will, so there is an unacceptable sacrifice of zeal for evil. In the proper sense, Jesus said, “The zeal of thine house has consumed me,” and he overthrew the tables of the money changers (John 2:17 paraphrase). He was put to death because of his zeal. As a sin offering, Jesus was very pleasing to God and his sacrifice cost a lot. To manifest such zeal in God’s professed house took great courage, for Jesus knew his actions would be regarded as sacrilegious.

Misdirected zeal, purpose, intent, and motivation for doing evil in the Time of Trouble will receive judgment. This type of zeal is more serious, for it pertains to evil motivations and the intent of the *heart* rather than just to the outward exterior.

**Q:** Is the thought that those who are not properly motivated will be part of the slaughter?

**A:** Yes, and notice that the slaughter is identified with the “fat of the kidneys of rams,” not of

lambs, for these individuals are matured and *hardened in sin*. The lambs of Isaiah 34:6 represent the Great Company as an undeveloped class.

**Q:** Are the lambs connected with the scapegoat picture?

**A:** Isaiah 34:6 presents the Great Company from a different standpoint—they will share the portion of the hypocrites but *without being hypocrites*. Other individuals will not only share the portion of the hypocrites but be even more responsible and guilty than the hypocrites. However, the Great Company are not hypocrites; they are *true virgins* but unwise ones.

**Q:** Is the explanation like the priest in the type who laid the sins of the people upon the head of the scapegoat?

**A:** Yes, to the extent that the Great Company will have a share in the expiation. Some erroneously think that the Great Company will cover all such sins, that is, that the Church dies for Adamic sin and the Great Company dies for all other sins. However, the Scriptures indicate otherwise—the Great Company dies for only *part* of the sins of the people. In addition, the Great Company will experience retribution for some of their own sins.

**Isa. 63:5** **And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.**

Jehovah is responsible for committing anyone to Second Death. However, Jesus, as the highest one under Him and the one most educated in the ways of the Father, is trusted with judgment. John 5:22 tells us that all judgment has been given to the Son. In this chapter, Isaiah 63, the one seen coming from Bozrah with dyed garments is Jesus, who says, “It is I who speak in righteousness.” In verse 2, the question is asked, “Why is your apparel red?” The answer is given in verse 3, “Because I have trodden the winepress. When I trampled the people in my anger, their blood stained my garments.” Verse 4 indicates that the time period when this action is to occur is “the day of vengeance,” “the year of my redeemed.” The principle is the same as saying, “The iniquity of the Amorites has come to the full” (Gen. 15:16). Now in verse 5, Jesus says, “I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore *mine own arm* brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.” JESUS’ POWER, his “OWN arm,” will bring salvation. Jesus, not the Church, will tread the people in his anger. However, when the picture is extended on into the Kingdom, we know from other Scriptures that Jesus will gently treat those who are sheeplike and laden with young lambs, but he will use an iron rod on those who have ramlike dispositions and are recalcitrant.

The destruction of Sodom is a good illustration. Out of the thousands in that city, only three individuals were saved: Lot and his two daughters. Yet because Lot was not aggressive for righteousness like Abraham, because he was not of the same caliber or strength of character as Abraham, who was the friend of God, he had to be rescued. God judges an individual not by results but by his character, for how many converts did Noah make? Only seven. Imagine a man of Noah’s stature and character preaching righteousness for 120 years and converting only his own small immediate family! Thus faithfulness is not measured by results. Numbers do not mean that much.

Verse 5 is saying that when Jesus looks down from heaven and sees the hopeless conditions on earth, he knows that only divine intervention can help the human race out of the quagmire of sin, injustice, and distress. Conditions are beyond human repair and need superhuman help. Verse 5 is not saying that no one sorrows over the conditions, for many good people mourn the evil, but what can they do? Not much. As Jesus views conditions, he is getting stirred up, and he will ACT when the due time comes. He will straighten out matters with his own strength.

Incidentally, the “arm” of Isaiah 53:1 is a different context: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” In that setting, *Jehovah’s* “arm” would be Jesus.

**Comment:** Verse 2 is interesting because it emphasizes *Jesus’* anger. So often God is pictured as the God of vengeance, and Jesus is portrayed as gentle and loving.

**Reply:** Yes, Jesus will *tread the people in his anger* and *trample them in his fury*. As a rule, we are more sympathetic to those who are dying from hunger or a natural calamity because we see people in their need and are emotional in judgment, but injustices that are practiced are even worse. Only as we grow in the understanding of God’s Word does His thinking become more our thinking. Injustices stir up divine anger more than just poverty.

When Jesus was apprehended at night in the Garden of Gethsemane, all of his disciples momentarily forsook him and fled, but out of the Twelve, Peter and John followed him afar off. Even though they did not intervene, they manifested courage under a circumstance that surprised them. Although earlier they professed a belief that Jesus was the Messiah, their lack of understanding as to the reason for his death caused them to doubt and to consider him just a prophet until his resurrection (Luke 24:21). Nevertheless, from the standpoint of righteous indignation, some risked their lives. The women followed and tried to offer comfort (Luke 23:28). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus boldly begged for Jesus’ body, risking expulsion from the Sanhedrin. Courage was born out of danger. A lesson for us is that we should raise our standard of reasoning and judgment to the highest possible level. The higher the level, the greater will be our chances of not wavering and lowering the standard.

**Isa. 63:6** And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

The Revised Standard Version correctly uses past tense for the setting of this picture: “I *trod down* the peoples in my anger, I *made them drunk* in my wrath, and I *poured out* their lifeblood on the earth.” Jesus is *returning* from the winepress, *having already trodden* it (verse 3).

**Isa. 63:7** I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Verse 7 through the end of the chapter pertains mostly to the nation of Israel, either directly or indirectly, although verse 7 will require further discussion when we get to verses 15 and 16. Verses 7-9 emphasize God’s loving-kindness, mercy, and pity in contrast to verses 1-6, which portray a scene of wrath.

Who is speaking? Who is the “I”? In verses 1 and 3-6, Jesus is speaking. He says, “I have trodden the winepress alone.” If there were no paragraph break or break in thought with verse 7, Jesus would presumably still be the speaker, or the speaker could be the Prophet Isaiah. However, the break in thought seems to indicate that the Great Company is speaking. This premise will be substantiated when verses 15 and 16 are discussed.

**Isa. 63:8** For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

God, who “was their [Israel’s] Saviour,” said, “Surely they are my people, children that will not lie [will not deal falsely—RSV].” God led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, across the Red Sea, and through the Wilderness of Sinai for 40 years; hence He was “their Saviour.”

The name Jacob means “supplanter” because when the twins were born, Jacob prophetically reached out and grabbed the heel of Esau, who preceded him. And that is what happened. Eventually Esau sold his spiritual birthright for a meal. In time, Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, which means “prince of God” or “prince with God.” Of course Jacob was an individual, so originally “Israel” referred to a person, but later the name came to represent his offspring, or seed, hence the nation of people. Usually in Scripture, “Israel” refers to the nation.

Is it true that the Israelites did not “lie”? Following the Exodus, they rebelled and forsook God a number of times, one of the first being the making of the golden calf. Therefore, this statement about not lying must be considered from a *prophetic* standpoint, as illustrated in the incident with Balaam, for the Lord found no fault with the Israelites, even though they forsook Him (Num. 22–24). Three times King Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel, but God overruled the situation so that the prophet went into a trance and ended up blessing Israel.

The way to harmonize Israel’s disobedience with the statement in verse 8 that there was no perverseness in the nation is to say that God was viewing things from a *future prophetic* standpoint. Balaam quoted the Genesis 49:9,10 prophecy that out of the tribe of Judah would come the Messiah: “Judah is a lion’s whelp: ... The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” One day Jesus would be not merely the slain Lamb but also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In other words, since potentially the great heir would arise out of Israel, it would be inappropriate to put a blanket curse on that nation. Until Messiah came, Israel had favor, even though there were punishments. A curse could not be put on Israel while they were still under the 70 weeks of favor (“the sceptre shall not depart from Judah”).

**Isa. 63:9** In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

The phrase “the angel of his presence,” which refers to the cloud that covered the Tabernacle for 40 years, is a clue that connects these verses with natural Israel. Starting with verse 8, much of this chapter is reminiscing about how God delivered the nation in the past. The purpose of this review is to point out a lesson; namely, what God did back there is a picture of a much greater deliverance on a much higher plane yet to be fulfilled. Throughout Scripture, the term “Israel” has a variety of meanings (nominal Church, true Church, the literal nation, etc.), but ultimately, at the end of the Kingdom, “Israel” will represent all who have cooperated and obtained salvation, hence the *fully saved*, the *fully redeemed*, on both the earthly and the spiritual plane. During the Kingdom, the whole world of mankind will come forth from the grave and be given an opportunity for everlasting life, but not all will get life in the final analysis.

The Passover is referred to in this chapter, but there were two “passovers” of Israel from Egypt: (1) initially the firstborn and (2) subsequently the rest of the nation in the Red Sea. Thus the Passover picture, when seen in its fullness, includes more than just the night when blood was put on the door and the lamb was eaten. The deliverance of the nation in the Red Sea was also a passing over, and at that time, the pursuing Egyptians died. The delivered Israelites on the far side of the Red Sea, whom Moses led in a victory song, represent those of the world of mankind who will get life at the end of the Kingdom. The victory song back there is a type of the grand hallelujah chorus at the end of the Millennial Age, when *all who are saved* will rejoice. When death is ultimately swallowed up in victory, there will be a great celebration both in heaven and on earth (1 Cor. 15:54).

The pursuing Egyptians who lost their lives in the Red Sea represent those of the world of mankind in the Kingdom who will not get life, those who will go into Second Death. And the

firstborn Egyptians who died earlier during the Passover night at the hands of the destroying angel represent those of the consecrated of the Gospel Age who do not obey God and thus go into Second Death. So again, when God says of Israel in verse 8, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie," He is speaking of the ultimately redeemed nation. As "their Saviour," God does not purpose to save every individual but only those who prove loyal to Him at heart whether in this age or the next.

When God's plan for earth is complete, it will be a victory. Notice that in each of the first six Creative Days, God accomplished His purpose (Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25). But we are living in the last or Seventh Creative Day, a period of 7,000 years. When that day and God's purpose for it are accomplished, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

Now we will consider verses 8 and 9 in the original picture. For instance, in the golden calf experience, the especially disobedient died, but the nation continued on. There were other occasions of disobedience and murmuring, and what happened? More died, yet the nation lived on, manifesting God's *patience* as He continued to deal with them. In the Kingdom, God will manifest that same patience with the world of mankind when He grants everyone a fair trial and an opportunity for life.

Of course, except for Joshua and Caleb, the entire generation that was of a certain age died in the wilderness because of disobedience, but how long did that take? *Forty years*. Even though the whole nation perished and only their children entered the Promised Land, God dealt with the disobedient for a long time. Thus God is merciful and patient, as reflected in verse 7: "I will mention the *lovingkindnesses* [plural] of the LORD ... and the *great goodness* toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his *mercies*, and according to the *multitude of his lovingkindnesses*." Israel sinned many times in the wilderness, including on ten notable occasions, but He gave them ample opportunity before they died.

**Isa. 63:10** But they rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

This verse shows that eventually the generation of Israelites in the wilderness had to die except for Joshua and Caleb. Many people consider the God of the Old Testament to be a God of anger because not only do they fail to realize that His wrath was justified but also they fail to see the mercy aspect.

**Isa. 63:11** Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy spirit within him?

**Isa. 63:12** That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

**Isa. 63:13** That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

Verses 11-13 also refer to the Exodus, but from a slightly different standpoint than verses 8-10. When the Jewish people observe the Passover today, they correctly look back at what Moses did as a historical event of the past, but that was *only the beginning*. As great as that miracle was, it is only a small dramatization of a *much greater deliverance* to take place in the near future. The question is asked, "Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock?" The shepherd of the Exodus was Moses, but the Shepherd of the future will be Jesus. The former was a deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt; the future will be a deliverance throughout the Kingdom of the world of mankind from bondage to sin

and death. Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10).

Why are these questions asked about God, about the One who performed such a mighty miracle for the Israelites in the past through Moses, His instrument or representative? When will these questions be raised, and by whom? When Christendom fails, these questions will go through the minds of the Holy Remnant. They will wonder, “Where is Jehovah?” At present, Israel is putting its trust in the United States, the United Nations, and to a lesser extent England and France, but in the trouble of Armageddon, when the Western governments fail, they will inquire, “Where is our God, who did such wondrous miracles in the past?” They will begin to truly look to God when their very survival is at stake.

The Holy Remnant will ask, “Where is the God who led us through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, so that we did not stumble?” In rocky terrain like Sinai, a horse can travel uphill much easier than it can go downhill. The horse is not adapted like the goat for that type of terrain, and the slippage is greater going downhill. Out of deference to his horse, a rider will often dismount and lead the horse down, giving the animal more liberty of movement and less weight to carry. Incidentally, in severe and dangerous mountain climbing, people often lose their lives on the way down.

In other words, the questions being asked in verses 11-13 refer back to when God led the Israelites through the treacherous desert terrain of Sinai, called the “howling wilderness” (Deut. 32:10), and miraculously fed and clothed all 2 million of them. At that time, they were unified and well organized like *one* animal, like a horse, under God’s instruction and guidance through Moses. The nation will again be guided and led in the future, and during the time setting of this verse, the Holy Remnant will be asking these questions. During Jacob’s Trouble, they will look back on the great event of the Exodus and hope—almost against hope—that there might be a reoccurrence of God’s great deliverance.

**Isa. 63:14** As a beast goeth down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

Not only does a horse need to be led through treacherous terrain down into a valley, but when it arrives, it needs liberty, pasturage, and rest. After troubled waters, as it were, comes peaceful pasturage. We are reminded of Psalms 23 and 46.

**Isa. 63:15** Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

**Isa. 63:16** Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

The translators properly indicated a break in thought with verse 15. At first, verse 16 might seem to cause a problem, for how could the verse reflect the thoughts of the Holy Remnant when Israel does not know them: “Israel acknowledge[s] us not.” Verses 15 and 16 harmonize with the time setting when they are seen to be *prophetic thoughts of the Great Company*.

We will compare verses 15 and 16 with the picture in Song 5:2-9 of the “sister” who is too comfortable in bed to get up and answer the door when the Master knocks. Being a little piqued at the intrusion on her rest, she remains in bed, being indifferent and making various excuses until it is too late. When she finally arises, the Master is gone, but she can smell his fragrance on the handles of the door lock. Then she starts to search for him and asks, “Have you seen my Beloved? Where has he gone?” When the watchmen of the city find her, they first



beat and wound her and take away her veil, but subsequently they become interested and ask, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women ... that thou dost so charge us?” Sometimes when people smite another and inflict injustices, they finally come to their senses and realize they were opposing the wrong person. And that is the case in Song 5. First, the watchmen abuse the Great Company, but then they get interested in her “Beloved.” The Great Company respond with a glowing description of Jesus.

Song 5 is the text the Pastor had in mind when he thought the Great Company class would have a message for the Holy Remnant after the Church is complete beyond the veil and after mystic Babylon has fallen. The message will be directed to the whole nation of Israel, but only the Holy Remnant will respond favorably.

Jesus said to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father” (Matt. 3:9). In other words, “Just because you are naturalized Jews of the seed of Abraham does not mean you will inherit the promises to the Jew *carte blanche*. In addition, you need to have the faith of Abraham.” The Great Company are a class who not only are not children of Abraham according to the flesh but who, as Christians, are not recognized by the nation of Israel. Therefore, at first, the watchmen of Israel will rebuff and smite the Great Company, the class who are looking for their Master, but then the Holy Remnant will have a change of heart and become interested. A rapport will develop between the spiritual Great Company class and a remnant of natural Israel. In this experience, the Great Company will be looking for their own imminent deliverance, and the Holy Remnant will take up the refrain. That refrain is enunciated in verses 17-19.

Back to verse 7, where the Great Company are speaking. They will recount the loving-kindnesses of Jehovah and then give a message to Israel. When the Great Company realize the Church is complete beyond the veil and they remain down here, they will be greatly disappointed and weep and gnash their teeth. In time, however, they will be rightly exercised and rejoice that they still have an opportunity to go to the marriage supper. In their zeal, they will praise God and give a message to Israel (that is, the Elisha class will give their smiting message). This picture is related to the picture of Habakkuk 3:17,18. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*”

**Isa. 63:17** O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

**Isa. 63:18** The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

**Isa. 63:19** We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

Verses 17-19 are separate but related to verses 15 and 16. As the Holy Remnant begin to get interested and to respond to the Great Company message, their thoughts are prophetically given in verses 17-19.

“They were not called by thy name.” This clause in verse 19 proves that verses 17-19 pertain to natural Israel—and specifically to the Holy Remnant. God said to Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). They were God’s chosen people, a chosen nation. No other one nation has ever been adopted by God. The exception would be the royal nation of the consecrated, which is *international* in scope; it is a people *out of all nations* and not just one race of people or one nation. The Church of God is composed of Italians, Americans, Germans, etc., who have a *common faith*. Therefore, verse 19 is saying that of all the nations of

earth, only one was ever adopted by God, namely, Israel.

“The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” The Holy Remnant speaks in verse 18: “We had that blessing for only a short time, and then we were put out for a long Diaspora of almost 2,000 years.” Their initial attitude is given in verse 17: “O LORD, *why have you made us err from your ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?*” But they will overcome this attitude; they will gradually soften and improve.

To a large extent, we are a product of our birth, environment, and teaching. To understand God’s ways and methods, we must unlearn a lot of things. We begin as babes in Christ, but just like a natural parent with his child, God knows we will respond, develop, and grow. A natural parent can see obedience in a child up to the level of development, but the parent knows the child is immature and has much to learn. The principle is the same with the Holy Remnant. As time goes on, they will become more and more acquainted with what God expects of them, and they will be very much like Daniel, who acknowledged in his prayer the error of the nation. Eventually the Holy Remnant will see that as a nation, Israel did err. The next chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 64, will be their petition; that is, the Holy Remnant will petition God for deliverance from Jacob’s Trouble. They will beseech Him to come down and deliver them from the national extremity that is threatening to utterly exterminate them as a people.

**Isa. 64:1** Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

Verse 1 starts with “Oh”—“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens.” The mood or setting of this expression is one of anticipation or longing for the coming of the Lord in a dramatic fashion. At first, it might seem strange for anyone to want such calamities to occur, so in order for us to appreciate this verse, we will consider a little historical background.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever....

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes,

“And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai....

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

“And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” (Exod. 19:9-11,16-18)

“Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.

“And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

“And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.” (Deut. 4:10-12)

“The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

“(I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;).” (Deut. 5:4,5)

“And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

“Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.” (Deut. 33:2,3)

These citations pertain to Israel’s presence at Mount Sinai about two months after they had left Egypt. God disclosed to Moses His intent to make a public announcement to the nation three days later, and He informed Moses what the people should do to prepare. On the third day, when the people were gathered on the plain before the mount and God appeared to them, “mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke,” and “the whole mount quaked greatly.” Flames and fire accompanied the earthquake, as well as lightning and thunder. The resultant ash from the earthquake created a thick cloud that caused great darkness. Mount Sinai was belching out flames and fire way up high into “the midst of heaven.” In addition to the rumbling of the shaking earth and the loud thunder, there was the sound of a trumpet, which began like a ram’s horn, a shofar, and then got steadily louder and louder and louder until the people, trembling, could not stand the sound any longer and begged Moses to intercede for them. Fearing they would all perish, they wanted God to speak with Moses and then have Moses relay the message to them.

One reason God gave this demonstration of awesome power in connection with the inauguration of the Law Covenant was so that the Israelites would “hear my words” and “learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth.” The following additional citations furnish other reasons.

“God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise....

“The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.” (Hab. 3:3,10)

“And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.

“For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?” (Mic. 1:4,5)

“The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

“Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?

his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.” (Nah. 1:5,6)

Psalm 114 is a flashback to dramatic events in Israel’s history, as follows:

“When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

“Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

“The [Red] sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back [when the Israelites entered the Promised Land under Joshua].

“The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs [the earthquake at Mount Sinai was so great when the Law Covenant was given that it could be visibly seen].

“[Then David repeated a description of the events.] What ailed thee, O thou [Red] sea, that thou fleddest? [that is, what troubled you, O Red Sea, that caused you to flee?] thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

“Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?

“Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

“Which turned the rock into a standing water [pool—NIV], the flint into a fountain of waters.” (Psalm 114)

Why did God want Israel to witness such dramatic demonstrations? The Lord spoke from heaven in a “voice” of such powerful dimensions because He wanted to show that the very elements of the world are at His beck and call. Without actually seeing His similitude or face, the Israelites saw the majestic appearance of God, as it were, by hearing only His voice.

**Q:** Because of the Israelites’ transgressions, did God also want them to be aware of His glory, majesty, presence, and *fury*?

**A:** Yes, another reason for the dramatic demonstrations was to make the Jews aware of their own unfit condition—to make them realize their iniquities and sins and their need for God and His forgiveness and grace. Still another reason for the drama was to apprise the nation that Moses was God’s mouthpiece and to impress that fact on their memories forever.

A paraphrase of Isaiah 64:1 follows: “Oh that you would come down from heaven as you did in the past!” In spirit, Isaiah was looking for God’s intervention in earth’s affairs to establish His Kingdom. Moreover, Isaiah was saying he desired to see God’s name and character vindicated. For thousands of years, God’s name has been maligned and misrepresented, so His people should desire not only that His love be manifested but especially that His holy name be vindicated.

What a God of all patience! He has been quiet and hiding Himself and only dealing with humble, little people who study His Word. It is a wonder that He did not explode and just wipe out the entire planet because of transgressions and rebellion. The first needed lesson will be the manifestation of His POWER and MAJESTY. Then, subsequently, when He speaks in a quiet voice through Jesus, the people will be in a better heart condition to realize their own undone condition and to listen to Him. They will marvel that the great Almighty God, whose power and majesty they had just witnessed, is now speaking kindly to the world and dealing with them in a merciful manner.

**Isa. 64:2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!**

God will manifest His great power and authority in Israel during Jacob's Trouble to defeat overwhelmingly the forces of Gog. At that time, the world's attention will be focused on the Middle East. Even though there will be signs and wonders all over the world, they will particularly occur, and on a *much grander scale*, in Israel. Jerusalem, the capital of that tiny nation, will be the pulpit of God's authority. From there, He will speak.

What does the term "as when the melting fire burneth" signify? The heat will be so intense that the rocks will become molten. Even today there is evidence that this happened during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. An earthquake caused the normal relatively horizontal strata of the rocks to ripple and rupture into almost vertical strata. The intense heat of the earthquake broke the crust of the earth, and as the lava flowed out, it scorched the rocks on the surface. God will cause such phenomena to occur in the deliverance of the Holy Remnant so that the nations will "tremble" at His presence. The Kingdom will not glide in peacefully but will be inaugurated in Israel with force and drama.

**Isa. 64:3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.**

For the following reasons, God did "terrible [awesome] things" at Mount Sinai when the Law, the Ten Commandments, were given:

1. To manifest His majesty.
2. To have the people realize their sinful condition.
3. To demonstrate that Moses was the mediator between God and man in the Wilderness of Sinai.
4. To show that the true God is a living and invisible God, as opposed to the visible graven images of Egypt. The God of Israel is too awesome to be seen face to face. He is a "consuming fire"; heaven and earth cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27; Heb. 12:29).

The Israelites were thus reassured and sustained. They had left Egypt for a desert wilderness where they would serve Jehovah, the ever-living God, and He presented Himself to them in this manner. Those who were properly exercised carried this memory of God's visitation in their hearts for the rest of their lives. Those with the wrong heart condition did not retain the memory. Despite such mighty demonstrations of power, the nation as a whole did not receive the experience "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4:2).

**Isa. 64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.**

The Apostle Paul quoted this text in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of [the natural] man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:10 adds, "But God hath revealed them unto us [in a fragmentary fashion in advance of the world] by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." God has in reservation a wonderful plan for the Kingdom Age, in which all mankind will have the opportunity for salvation. Until that time, the world at large is completely in the dark.

As Paul often did, he quoted an Old Testament Scripture out of context in the New Testament. The real fulfillment of Isaiah 64:4 is *future*, but he gave this verse a partial *current* fulfillment during the Gospel Age by applying it to the Christian in principle. The Holy Spirit does enlighten us and tell us about some of God's purposes in the future.

We should put ourselves in the setting of Isaiah 64:1-4. The first three verses are the sentiments of a prayer of the Holy Remnant for a very dramatic representation of God coming down and making His presence known to the people here on earth. Then comes verse 4, saying that men have not heard or seen what God has prepared for those who wait for Him. Back in Moses' day with the demonstrations at Mount Sinai, several things occurred: God spoke to the nation of Israel, as it were; Moses received instructions for the Tabernacle; and the Law Covenant was given, backed up by many ordinances, ceremonies, and sacrifices on various aspects of life. All of a sudden, these *tremendous happenings and revelations* occurred at Sinai, only tiny samples of which had been done previously. Moreover, within a year, Israel had a glorious Tabernacle. The series of events was like a person being taken from the jungle and brought into a very advanced civilization that is hard to comprehend. In summary, the introduction at Mount Sinai was a shock. And that is what the Holy Remnant is prophetically praying for here: "Oh that you would come down as you did at Mount Sinai!" God's coming down resulted in a *great blessing* to Israel, and it will again in the future when He delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. Stated in a little different way, the Holy Remnant is reviewing past examples of the character and capabilities of God and saying, "Oh that you would do the same thing again and that we would get the desired blessing, as promised in your Word!"

The whole world is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting (ignorantly) for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19). The human race is searching for happiness, joy, health, and peace, but what they really want—and do not know it—is God's Kingdom. The Prophet Haggai (2:7) said, "The desire of all nations shall come," yet the people do not know specifically what that desire is because they are not looking for the Lord. At present, this desire could be described as a subconscious yearning, and when that desire (or Kingdom) comes, the world will be greatly and pleasantly surprised.

**Q:** At Mount Sinai, God manifested His presence, and the Law and plans for the Tabernacle were given. Since we know there will be a parallel at the end of the age, could we say that in addition to the manifestation of His glory and the New (Law) Covenant, there will be a *literal* Third Temple?

**A:** Yes, God had a literal Tabernacle in the past, and there will be a literal Temple in the future. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple have a deep spiritual significance, and the literal structures add to this understanding. Past and future parallels are as follows:

At Mount Sinai

God's presence and majesty  
Old Law Covenant  
Tabernacle

At Mount of Olives in Jerusalem

God's presence and majesty  
New Law Covenant  
Ezekiel's Temple

**Isa. 64:5** **Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.**

We should keep in mind that Chapter 64, which is not to be spiritualized, expresses the thoughts of the Holy Remnant at the time of Jacob's Trouble. In this future setting, the Holy Remnant will beseech God to deliver them out of Jacob's Trouble through a reenactment of miraculous demonstrations of the past. The pronouns "we," "us," and "our" all refer to the

Holy Remnant. In answer to their prayers, God will deal with His people as He did in days of old, and He will manifest Himself as *Israel's* God.

Isaiah was saying that all have sinned. The Jews who are spared as part of the Holy Remnant in Jacob's Trouble will realize they are survivors because of God's favor toward them as *individuals* while He was manifesting His great power against the forces of evil. They will be aware of the history of their people and know that God is being merciful to them now, in this current experience, because of their repentant, contrite heart attitude. At the same time, they will be sympathetic toward those Jews who die in Jacob's Trouble and hope for their recovery out of death and a future opportunity.

The Holy Remnant will realize that God favors those who obey Him. In the past, God said through Moses, "If you do such and such, I will do so-and-so." When the nation tried to obey God, they received visual and material benefits; for example, they were victorious in battle, they had many children, and the land was fruitful. With the eye of faith, Christians patiently look for the same types of benefits to be reserved for them in *heaven*. With natural Israel, temporal benefits were more or less immediate; with spiritual Israel, the heavenly benefits are future.

The Holy Remnant will realize that the reason Israel had so many problems down through history is their own fault and that if, as a nation, they had prayed, fasted, and obeyed, then many of their troubles would have been eliminated. They will know that God loves those who serve Him, and their desire for themselves and for others will be to serve Him from that day forward into the illimitable future, to continue on as God's people with His blessing.

**Isa. 64:6** But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The Holy Remnant continue to speak here. Other Scriptures, such as Isaiah 4:2-4, show that at this time, they will be a purged, purified, repentant, chastened people. They will see him "whom they have pierced" and mourn for him as one mourns for the loss of an only son (Zech. 12:10-14). Many Scriptures indicate the changed condition of these Jews when they realize Jesus truly is the prophesied Messiah. They will be heart-stricken much like Joseph's brothers. The brothers maligned and mistreated Joseph, but when he became prime minister and revealed his identity, they were very fearful at first.

**Isa. 64:7** And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Verse 7 is saying the Holy Remnant will be such a *small* portion of the people that it will be as if the whole nation is unrepentant and does not recognize God or call on His name.

**Comment:** The Holy Remnant will have the same attitude that Daniel had when he apologized for the sins of the people and personally felt the burden of their iniquities.

**Reply:** Yes, in his prayer, Daniel took their guilt upon himself, yet he was one of the most outstanding Old Testament examples of obedience.

The effect of the manifestations of God's great power in Jacob's Trouble will be very wholesome on the Holy Remnant when they realize they were personally selected to survive the severe judgment. The world will see these survivors as a changed people.

**Isa. 64:8** But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

The Holy Remnant continue to speak here. The world of mankind will take up this refrain a little later, for God appears first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. As Christians, we, too, try to be submissive in God's hands so that He can mold us like a potter. Depending on how we react to and obey His providences, we will, hopefully, become vessels of glory and beauty in the future. In summary, throughout eternity, all who get life on any plane in any age must have a heart attitude of consecration and submission to the Lord to do and obey His will. The hard stone of the heart will be turned to soft clay in responsiveness and submission to the Lord, yet be firm for Him in other matters. Stated another way, those who get life will be hard like a diamond in obedience to God and soft like clay in submission to His will. Thus there is to be a mixture of hardness and softness. This mixture is illustrated in Revelation 4:2,3 in regard to the One (God) who sat on the throne. In His character, the sard stone of love and compassion is blended perfectly with the diamond (called the "jasper") of justice and purity.

**Q:** Would the Jews back in Isaiah's day have understood and benefited from these prophetic end-of-the-age messages to any extent?

**A:** They caught the drift of better days to come, but they did not fully understand. They realized a coming Messiah was promised and a time of future blessing, but they did not comprehend the call of the Church, even though certain verses hinted of such. For example, Jude 14 mentions that Enoch prophesied of the Lord's coming "with ten thousands of his saints." And Daniel 7:18,22 prophesied about judgment being given to the saints of the most High and their taking and possessing the Kingdom forever and ever. Therefore, in Old Testament times, the people were given little glimpses of blessings to come that they could long for without having much understanding.

**Isa. 64:9** Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

Even though Joseph showed kindness to his brothers on several occasions, when they realized that he was the prime minister of Egypt—the brother they had put into the pit and sold into slavery—they were fearful at first, but he pacified them by saying, "It was God's will that I have this experience. You may have meant it for evil, but God overruled it for good so that I would be made prime minister of Egypt." Similarly, the Holy Remnant will realize that the nation crucified Jesus, one of their own brethren. Thus, even though the Holy Remnant will see God's kindness in delivering them, they will be in awe and experience some trepidation initially. They will entreat Him, "Do not be angry with us too long for our iniquity in crucifying your Son."

**Isa. 64:10** Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

**Isa. 64:11** Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

**Isa. 64:12** Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

Jerusalem today is not the city it once was. The Old City is occupied by Arab merchants and Gentile organizations and churches. In the Temple area, the Dome of the Rock sits on the site where the Third Temple will be built. When the Kingdom is established, not only will the "holy cities" of Israel (Jerusalem, the cities of refuge, etc.) and the Temple of the past be rebuilt, but their judges (the type of government) will be restored as at the first. To the Jew who longs now for holy conditions in Israel and the proper observance of feast days, present conditions are a frustration and a "wilderness." Moreover, many areas of Israel still need development and



could be considered a “desolation.” Therefore, from the standpoint of the Holy Remnant’s expectation for Israel based on Bible prophecies and their disappointment with current conditions, they could view the nation as a desolation and a wilderness.

**Q:** Does verse 10 express the feelings of the Holy Remnant when they see Jerusalem reduced to rubble on its heaps in Jacob’s Trouble (Psa. 79:1)? Their feelings of longing will be intensified when they see their capital, *Jerusalem*, their most holy city, devastated.

**A:** Yes. We were taking the viewpoint of Isaiah 4:2-4, for many Jews do not believe their own Hebrew Scriptures are the infallible Word of God but view them in a purely scholastic sense. For those who have a lot of faith, vision, and trust in the Lord, it is helpful to mathematically analyze certain topics such as chronology, but the Bible must be approached from the standpoint of its being the infallible Word of God in order to get the proper blessing.

**Q:** If verses 10 and 11 refer to Jacob’s Trouble, how will the clause “Our holy and our beautiful house ... is burned up with fire” be fulfilled at that time?

**A:** Consider the viewpoint of a sincere, thinking 90-year-old Jew who is about to die, and all around is trouble, especially economic and political. When he contrasts the current trouble with his Jewish heritage under the Law, the prophets, and God’s blessings, he is very concerned that God is not fighting for His people as in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3), that there is no leader like Moses, and that there is no Temple because of the Dome of the Rock. Then comes Jacob’s Trouble, which increases the trouble. The Holy Remnant will realize that Jacob’s Trouble is a visitation of judgment from God because they have sinned. Even in times of great catastrophe, the Arabs say, “Allah did it. Allah be praised!” Therefore, when the Dome of the Rock is destroyed by an earthquake, a natural disaster, the Arabs will accept what the great God Allah has permitted. With the Jews and the Arabs both being Semitic and hence kinsmen, this philosophy pervades underneath.

Remember how Chapter 64 started. Prophetically, the Holy Remnant will long for God to manifest His presence as in the past: “Oh that thou wouldest....” The entire chapter gives the thoughts of a Jew here at the end of the age reviewing the history of Israel, God’s people, from the past up to the present. In the meantime, the Jewish people departed from God and seemed to lose His favor, and now the Holy Remnant are wondering what is happening. The penitent Holy Remnant will be brought safely through Jacob’s Trouble. Thus the perspective is not that the Temple is being burned at that time. Rather, the Holy Remnant will be thinking of past calamities. When Jerusalem is destroyed in Jacob’s Trouble, houses are rifled, women are ravished, and others are penned up in the Old City to seemingly be dealt with next, certain things will happen. In other words, the setting of this chapter and the sentiments expressed will occur after Jerusalem is taken but before God comes down and rends the heavens (verse 1) to deliver the Holy Remnant. This chapter describes their in-between experience of yearning for deliverance.

**Isa. 65:1** I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

The RSV is better: “I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, ‘Here am I, here am I,’ to a nation that did not call on my name.” God was speaking to natural Israel, to a nation that did NOT call on His name when He figuratively kept calling to them and was ready to assist them: “Behold me.” “Here am I.”

**Isa. 65:2** I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

All day long God spread out both of His hands to rebellious Israel. As they willfully and noisily walked in their own way, He was trying to hush them, as it were, and attract—even *demand*—their attention, but the people ignored Him.

**Isa. 65:3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;**

Israel provoked God by sacrificing in gardens; that is, they not only worshipped heathen gods but usually did so in a conspicuous or prominent place such as high on a mountain. Israel also provoked God by burning incense on brick altars. Very often the incense and cakes were offered to Ashtoreth, the “queen of heaven.” This ancient mother god corresponds with Isis of Egypt and Mary of the Catholic religion. In fact, many lands have a version of a mother god. The Israelites baked cakes to her as a meal offering.

The “gardens” were actually groves. In Isaiah’s day, individuals or families made a grove, or garden, on their property for statuary, or images, to serve as their own little “church” for worshipping heathen gods. Wealthier people built altars or images in groves in high places (on mountains). Examples of a comparable custom today would be to place a statue in a garden or on the front lawn or to pray before a crucifix in a bedroom.

Not only is incense not used much in this country, but the pungent odor is often repugnant to people today. However, incense is still used in the Middle East and Asia. Burning incense and having a place for prayer are not wrong in and of themselves, but to use these to worship one other than God is wrong. Under the Tabernacle arrangement, incense was burned in the Holy. The criticism here is against a *manufactured* type of worship—against *man-made* gardens and bricks. The Israelites were utilizing man-made gimmicks, whereas the Old Testament said to use *natural* field stones. Under the Law, the Israelites were prohibited from using tools on the stones comprising an altar. Bricks were forbidden because they came from man-made molds.

**Isa. 65:4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;**

Why did the Israelites sit in tombs and among graves and lodge in monuments? They wanted to communicate with the dead, and they thought that being in close proximity would facilitate the communication. They used occult methods (necromancy, spiritism, etc.) to communicate with the spirit world instead of asking God what *His* will was. This is another example of *human* inventiveness and manufacture, which in antitype would be man’s attempt to justify himself.

The Israelites ate “swine’s flesh” (pork) contrary to their Law. Actually pork is one of the most nutritious meats, and Christians can eat pork because they are not under the Law Covenant. For the Jew, however, pork is ceremonially unclean. Incidentally, heathen religions often considered the pig, especially the suckling pig, to be a sacred animal and offered it for sacrifice.

“Broth of abominable things is in their vessels.” In Egypt, Indonesia, and elsewhere is the whirling dervish religion. At the height of the whirling dervish dances, some are enabled by occult power to eat live scorpions; this act supposedly demonstrates their holiness. Insects are frequently eaten in the Middle East, and they are highly nutritious. Under the Law, many kinds of insects could be eaten, and others were considered ceremonially unclean. John the Baptist ate locusts, a form of grasshopper that is quite nutritious. Here in verse 4, God was criticizing the Israelites for eating a broth, soup, or stew that contained ceremonially unclean things. No doubt they added these items to increase the nutrition of the soup, but they were disobeying God’s Law. The point is that the Israelites did what they wanted regardless of God’s instruction. Whatever they liked, they ate. When God stretched out His hands to reason with them, they

ignored Him and His Law.

**Isa. 65:5** Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Especially the religious element, the scribes and the Pharisees, had the attitude of being “holier than thou.” This element took an opposite view from the common people, the publicans and the sinners, who were careless and ignored God’s instruction, eating what they pleased. Instead the scribes and Pharisees bent over backwards to obey outwardly and added burdens (traditions) to the Law. For instance, they taught that certain rituals or ceremonies had to be followed before eating. Jesus criticized their attitude, saying, “For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things.... Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.... Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition” (Mark 7:8,9,13). On another occasion, the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus, “Why do you eat with sinners?” They ate only with their own kind at a separate table, considering themselves to be too holy to eat with ordinary people. They had an inordinate view of this subject.

To illustrate, consider Ezekiel 44:19, “And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.” When the priests go from the Inner Court of the future Third Temple to the Outer Court, they are to change their clothing because the Lord does not want them to sanctify the people. However, the religious element exaggerated such instructions to mean they should *never* fraternize or communicate with the common people. What the instruction actually means is that *in matters of religious worship*, the priests were to be separate, but in public, in the world, they could mix. This principle is also true for the Christian. The Church is in the world, but the world should not be in the Church. The Apostle Paul said, “I wrote unto you ... not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5:9,10). In other words, if this principle is carried too far, if the Christian tries to avoid *all* fornication, refusing to sit at a table or work with unconsecrated fornicators, drunkards, etc., he will have to leave the world, but if anyone who is called a brother practices such sin, he should not be fraternized with.

Instead of getting the proper lesson, the scribes and Pharisees thought they were a separate and sanctimonious class. Jesus called them hypocrites and blind guides who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel (Matt. 23:23,24). They were very particular about certain matters (they measured out the tithes and the cumin), but on other matters of the Law (judgment, mercy, and faith), they were way off-base. The problem was that they were not properly instructed by the Word of the Lord. They obeyed the traditions of men (the Talmud, etc.) more than the instructions of God.

“These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.” The smell of smoke is acrid and unpleasant, and if thick, the smoke adversely affects breathing. In fact, in many fires, it is the smoke that kills people, the lack of oxygen, rather than the fire itself. Verse 5 is saying that Israel’s wrong practices, their iniquities, were a continual smoke in Jehovah’s nostrils. Their burning incense to false gods highly displeased God continually. It is true that none of us are righteous, for we are all born in sin and “shapen in iniquity,” and no one can stand before God in his own righteousness (Rom. 3:10; Psa. 51:5). However, if we try to obey God, it will be infrequent that we displease Him. To be “a fire that burneth all the day” means that the Israelites continually displeased God; they did not try to obey but constantly practiced sin.

**Isa. 65:6** Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even

**recompense into their bosom,**

The statement “Behold, it is written before me” can be understood from two standpoints. While “it is written” in the sense that God said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay,” it is also written in the sense that He does not lightly consider such infractions by His professed people, even though the infractions are seemingly done with impunity (Rom. 12:19). God takes note of their deeds—deeds of kindness and justice as well as deeds of cruelty and injustice. A record is being kept, and all are accountable for their deeds according to their degree of understanding. Accordingly, all will be rewarded or punished *in due time*. See the following Scriptures: Psa. 10:14; 56:8; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Eccl. 12:14; 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 34:21,22; Jer. 32:19; Zech. 4:10; Rom. 2:5,6; 1 Tim. 5:24,25; Heb. 4:13.

**Isa. 65:7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.**

Notice how the iniquities of their “fathers” were brought into this context. Isaiah was saying to the people of his day, “You, as well as your fathers, are guilty of these iniquities.” In other words, the sins had been accumulating throughout the generations—their sins and the sins of their fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, etc. Individually, all are accountable. Although it may appear that God is indifferent to sin, He does not wink the eye in the final analysis. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). However, in His mercy He has provided for all to have an opportunity in the Kingdom to mend their ways.

“Therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.” Like verse 6, this verse indicates that a personal record is being kept of everyone’s deeds, individual by individual and generation by generation.

Incense being burned “upon the mountains” refers to the larger gardens, the more public shrines, as opposed to the smaller individual or family gardens and groves down in the valleys.

**Isa. 65:8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.**

Why did God say, “Destroy not the cluster because of the new wine in it”? God could have permanently cast off the entire nation of Israel (the “cluster”), but because of the relatively few outstanding Jews (the Holy Remnant), He will save the nation. It is like seeing a vine that does not bring forth the abundance of fruit desired, but because of a few choice grapes here and there for new wine, the entire vine is not destroyed. And so in the near future, God will rescue Israel because of the Holy Remnant that is in it.

**Isa. 65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.**

In this context, God’s “elect” would be natural Israel, the Holy Remnant. Eventually the seed will include all who come in under the New Covenant.

**Comment:** Romans 11:28 uses the word “election” in referring to natural Israel: “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the *election*, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”

**Reply:** Yes, the Romans text shows there is justification for applying “elect” to natural Israel

here in Isaiah.

“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains.” Jacob refers to the ten-tribe kingdom and Judah to the two-tribe kingdom. In other words, the future blessing and promise will come to the *entire* nation of Israel. While the ten-tribe kingdom deflected first, was cast off earlier, and had more obnoxious kings than the two-tribe kingdom, the Anglo-Israelites believe that only the ten tribes will be restored to favor. In fact, however, the Bible shows not only that God will restore favor to the two tribes as well as the ten tribes, but also that He will “save the tents of Judah first.” “The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah” (Zech. 12:7). The word “seed,” as used in this context, will be discussed under Isaiah 65:23.

**Isa. 65:10** And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

The land of Israel is divided topographically with Sharon being the plain portion, the lower, flat, broad expanse. The plain of Sharon will become “a fold of flocks.” This natural, or pastoral, picture shows that in the Kingdom, Israel will be a place of herds and flocks. Today in Israel, the Arabs and the bedouins have flocks and herds but not the Jews. Life will be more natural and pastoral in the Kingdom than it is today.

**Q:** “Sharon” is a general term referring to a topographical division of Israel, but is the “valley of Achor” a more specific name?

**A:** Yes, the Valley of Achor is the area of Achor (Acre today).

**Q:** Why will so many animals be needed in the Kingdom?

**A:** Meat will be eaten in the Kingdom until the human race reaches perfection at the end of the Millennium. Animals will also be needed for milk and cheese.

**Comment:** In addition, animals will be used as sacrifices in the Third Temple services. When people come representatively from other nations to the Temple, they will not be able to bring animals with them.

**Reply:** Yes, Ezekiel Chapters 40–47 tell about the building of the Temple and the reinstatement of animal sacrifices on a limited scale.

**Isa. 65:11** But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

**Isa. 65:12** Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

What is the thought behind “troop” and “number”? The Revised Standard reads, “But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword ... because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in.” Two Syrian gods were called Fortune and Destiny. In mythology, obeisance was given to a particular god or gods (Fortune and Destiny in this case) according to the blessing desired. With the Hebrew word *gad* literally meaning “troop,” God was using sarcasm in a play on words with the names of the two Syrian gods.

**Isa. 65:13** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

**Isa. 65:14** Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

**Isa. 65:15** And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

Verses 13-15 refer to the Diaspora. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus illustrates a reversal of circumstances: Israel (the rich man) lost the blessing, abundance, and favor, and the Gentiles (the beggar, or Lazarus) gained the blessing. The parable prophetically shows the wide gulf that would exist between the two down through the Dark Ages and the persecuting, purgatorial experiences the Jews would have at the hands of Gentiles in Europe. Strangely enough, in the very nations where the Jews were persecuted and made the scapegoat, the “servants” rejoiced and sang “for joy of heart.” These “servants” were God’s people, Christians, but there are two kinds of Christians: the true and the merely nominal. True Christians had true joy and holiness and did not participate in the persecution, whereas nominal Christians, anti-Semitic in attitude, did the persecuting.

What an odd turn of events! Jesus was a Jew, and God’s name had been on Israel—but now came this strange reversal. Those who previously had God’s favor and wonderful opportunities lost them and experienced nothing but frustration and agony, whereas the former outcasts got the joy of the gospel. (Of course false Christians, who regarded the Jews as Christ killers, got a false joy. They took the stigma of the actual individuals involved in the Crucifixion and applied it indiscriminately to all Jews.) In summary, verses 13-15 contrast the sad experiences of the cast-off Jews experiencing Diaspora in the so-called Christian lands and the happy experiences of Christians.

**Isa. 65:16** That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

While the Jews received persecution down through the Gospel Age, that is not to be their eternal destiny. A change of thought begins here, and it is definitely stated in verse 17.

“That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth.” Why is the phrase “God of truth” mentioned twice? Many people in parts of the world other than “Christian” lands associate the wrong deeds of natural Israel and Christendom with the God of Israel, and thus condemn both. For example, at the 1846 Evangelical Alliance, representatives of countries like China and Japan pointed out that the gospel message is beautiful but that those who espouse Jesus’ teachings do not live and act accordingly. Muslim leaders have also scorned Christianity and its history, and Khomeini in particular singled out the pope for denunciation. Thus many of these other nations have cursed not only the so-called Christian nations but also Israel and Israel’s religion, Judaism. But verse 16 indicates a change taking place where one day the world will see that the God of Israel is indeed the *true* God, the God of truth. A better day is coming when the wrongs of the past will be rectified.

**Isa. 65:17** For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

The “*new heavens*” and “*new earth*” refer to the coming Kingdom, which is the time of Jesus’ reign, the resurrection of the dead, etc. Specifically, the “*new heavens*” represent the new powers of control, both civil and spiritual. The “*new earth*” would be those under the new rulership, those being governed underneath the new control of Messiah’s Kingdom.

**Comment:** The last part of this verse is interesting. “The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” From the standpoint of the troubles mankind has experienced—troubles that have been overwhelming at times—the whole 6,000 years of the history of the human race are really but a tiny dot on the stream of time.

**Reply:** Yes, as the world looks back, its past history will seem like a nightmare, but even that nightmare will be forgotten.

**Isa. 65:18** But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

“Jerusalem” can refer to the New Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the invisible power of The Christ, who will reign over the earth. It can also refer to literal Jerusalem, from which the “word of the Lord” will go forth to other nations (Rev. 21:2; Isa. 2:3).

**Isa. 65:19** And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

The primary emphasis of verse 19 is down here in the Kingdom. As the New Jerusalem comes down and establishes control, it will correspond with the earthly Jerusalem. This verse reminds us of some of the promises to the obedient inhabitants of the earth in the Kingdom and beyond, into the ages of ages: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa. 30:5).

**Isa. 65:20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

In the Kingdom, in the “*new heavens*” and “*new earth*” era, there will “be no more thence an infant of days.” An “*infant of days*” is an infant who lives only a few days and then dies. In ancient times, the infant mortality rate was much higher than today. While the longevity rate of today, the average length of life, is considered to be so high, one factor is that the infant mortality rate is lower—that is, *more* people live longer today—but centenarians have existed all down through history, not just in our day. Therefore, in the Kingdom, infants and babies will not die but will continue to live until they meet up with the responsibilities of that time.

Neither will there be in the Kingdom “an old man that hath not filled his days.” Older people often say, “If only I could live my life over again,” meaning that in their senior years, their sense of values and their perspective have radically changed from those of their youth and even middle-age years. When they are old and ready for the grave, they are aware of many missed opportunities earlier in life. Some express regret that they did not respond more promptly to the Lord’s leadings and to the instruction in His Word. Hence millions of people who live to an old age still have not “filled” their days. In other words, they died dissatisfied because they felt their life was more or less a failure.

The autumn of the year with bright, colorful leaves is usually the best time of the year, yet a sadness is attached to it, because it presages winter. The autumnal years of life are much the

same. There is a tinge of sorrow and yet beauty. And so the Bible refers to the “hoary head” as being a person of wisdom because, generally speaking, even if one did not respond properly to all of life’s experiences, he knows more than youth. “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 16:31).

In the Kingdom, in the time of the new heavens and the new earth, “there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days.” What is the slant of this thinking? It is true that there will be a radical change from present conditions, but what is meant by the expression “the child shall die an hundred years old”? This verse is not talking about the many billions in the Kingdom who will get everlasting life but about those who do *not* make the grade, about the *failures*. The point is that those who are failures in the next age will have *no excuse*. Now infants can die a few days old never having done either good or evil and never having received the knowledge that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. But in the next age, that child will come forth from the grave and be given a full opportunity to make good and get life. In fact, that child will live to be a hundred years of age, and then, if disobedient after such a long period of time, that individual will be cut off in permanent or Second Death. On the other hand, the old man who sowed his oats and did not obey God but wishes at the end of his life that he had lived differently will get a fresh opportunity when he is awakened out of death in the Kingdom. Then if, after a hundred years under that circumstance, a person still does not properly exercise himself, he will be cut off. In other words, *no one*, young or old, will have an excuse for not making good in the Kingdom. There will be neither an infant of days nor an older person who has not had a full, fair opportunity to get life.

Verse 20 is saying that the child, the “infant of days” who died shortly after birth, will live to be a hundred years old. The person who lived to old age in the present life will also be given a hundred years of opportunity in the Kingdom. Hopefully, the great bulk of mankind will inherit everlasting life, but many will prove to be incorrigible and not make the grade because they actually prefer the evil.

To repeat: verse 20 is written from the perspective of those who *fail to get life in the Kingdom*. The child, or “infant of days,” who does not make the grade will die at age 100, being “accursed,” as it were. And the old man, or “sinner,” who fills out his days in the Kingdom but does not make the grade will also die as the “accursed.” In other words, there will be no excuse in the Kingdom, for all will know the Lord, from the least of the people unto the greatest of them (Jer. 31:34). There will be no need to tell one another, for the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the seabed (Isa. 11:9).

Normally, verse 20 is said to mean that when a person is 100 years old, he will be like a child with the healthy flesh of youth. Although the Book of Job teaches this thought in regard to the Kingdom, verse 20 does not. “His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth” (Job 33:25). The people of that day will have the complexion of a child: fair-skinned, delicate, and pure. They will eventually be the very essence of health as they prosper under the righteous government of the Kingdom. But verse 20 is discussing the *period of opportunity*.

Moreover, verse 20 is speaking only in *general* terms, for it does not mean that everyone has to get a full 100 years in order to merit Second Death. Generally speaking, everyone will be afforded this opportunity to make progress, but other Scriptures indicate that three types of sinners will be resuscitated in the Kingdom and then go into Second Death, as follows:

1. The totally incorrigible and stubborn who refuse to obey Christ will be cut off shortly after coming out of the grave. They will refuse to hear the voice of “that prophet” or to make any progress (Acts 3:23). First, however, they will at least hear and have the opportunity of salvation, for all must come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).



2. Those who do listen but who make little progress in their 100 years of opportunity will be cut off at that point. Their lack of progress and growth will be the evidence that they are not worthy of continued life.
3. Those who obey only out of prudence will be cut off at the end of the Millennium when the Little Season reveals their wrong heart condition. Although they obey outwardly, they will, in their hearts, want to return to former crooked ways and take advantage of others. "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (Amos 8:4-6). In the present age, this type of person is shrewd and gets money through malpractices. When the Kingdom is inaugurated and Christ is reigning and enforcing the iron-rod rule, this class will comply because it is prudent to do so, but they will long to return to their former way of life.

People today who charge exorbitant fees (doctors, lawyers, etc.) are really refined, educated robbers, even though they smile outwardly and appear to be nice. They live a life of pleasure, comfort, and ease and are highly respected, but in the Kingdom, they will have to tow the line. Many such individuals will want the New Covenant (the "new moon") and Christ's reign to end and God to give over the earth to mankind as He formerly did to Adam. They will know that Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that when he has accomplished this, he will turn the Kingdom over to the Father so that "God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). They will know that the Kingdom is a time for the rehabilitation, development, and testing of the human race and that ultimately the strict supervision will be removed and mankind will live forever. However, they will want the New Covenant to expire, the Mediator to withdraw, the Millennium and the Seventh Creative Day to end, and the ages of ages to begin so that they can sell "the needy for a pair of shoes." Having little or no regard for people and looking upon them as mere commodities, this class will want to be kings like Adam and continue to prey on their fellow human beings. They will make the shekel (the price) great but the ephah (the quantity or measurement) small. They will want everlasting life so that they can again work their shrewdness and make excessive profits. It will be difficult for this class to reform their ways and to actually get everlasting life. Although those of this class who do not reform will be deceived in the final searching test of the Little Season and go into Second Death, they will live more than the hundred years.

**Isa. 65:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.**

Life in the Kingdom will be more rural. The people will build their own houses and plant their own vineyards. In other words, they will have to work for their temporal needs, but life will be radically different from today in that what each person can grow from the earth will be his to keep. Oppressive taxation will be a thing of the past. Today we live an artificial type of life. Instead of walking, we ride; skyscrapers block the sun; etc. Relatively few observe nature.

**Isa. 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**

In the present age, one builds and another often inhabits. Reasons why people lose their homes include poverty, foreclosure, fire, war, sickness, and death. In the Kingdom, people will be able to retain what they create and do. Whatever efforts are put forth to satisfy temporal needs will

endure. When a person is not capable of a particular task, others will be happy to help. Happiness, ease, and comfort will abound.

“For as the days of a tree are the days of my people.” What is the analogy here? Some trees, such as the redwoods of California, live for thousands of years without decaying. The cedars of Lebanon were comparable to the redwoods. Imagine counting the annual rings on such trees and actually being able to point to a ring that grew during the time of Nero or other notable events of history! The analogy is that just as these trees theoretically live forever, so will the obedient world of mankind in the Kingdom and beyond. Olive trees are another example. If not damaged by fire or some other force, they can easily live for more than a thousand years.

**Q:** Would the root system of a tree be part of the analogy? The longer a tree lives, the deeper the roots grow and the more water and sustenance they take in. The bigger and taller the tree, the more beautiful it is and the more shade it provides. Moreover, a tree is self-sufficient.

**A:** Yes, the text would support those thoughts. For instance, trees are intentionally planted to draw water. The thicker the vegetation, the more abundant the rainfall. It would seem that more trees would drink up more water, but in fact, it is the opposite, for trees attract rain and water. Trees that are in a proper locale tend to be self-sufficient.

“Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Trees are associated with everlasting life. The days of a tree are like the days of God’s “elect,” who will ultimately make good and live forever here on the earth. The saved world of mankind will be the “Israel of God” in the fullest sense of the word. Kingdom blessings will start with natural Israel under the New Covenant, but as the Gentiles subsequently come in under that covenant, they will receive the same benefits and rewards.

**Isa. 65:23** They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

“They are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their *offspring* with them.” Contrary to what many believe, this verse proves there will be marriage and some child-bearing in the Kingdom. The age *beyond the Millennium* is when these activities will cease.

The people (and their children, their “offspring”) who get life in the Kingdom will be “the [earthly] seed [of Abraham] of the blessed of the LORD [Jehovah].” Their number will be as the “sand of the sea[shore]” (Gen. 22:17; 32:12). Becoming part of the earthly seed of the blessed of God will follow the principle “to the Jew first,” then to the Gentile.

**Q:** Would Jehovah’s “blessed” be The Christ? Jesus, the second Adam, will be the age-lasting Father and the Church, the second Eve, will be the mother of all who come forth from the grave, as well as of new children born during the Kingdom.

**A:** Yes, as “the blessed” of God, it will be Jesus and the Church who will regenerate the human race. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus spoke of the “regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, [and the Church] ... also.” The Christ will be both father and mother to the world of mankind. Even the Ancient Worthies will be considered children of the *blessing* seed.

The promise to Abraham teaches restitution, and it is usually quoted from that standpoint (Gen. 12:2,3; 18:8; 22:15-18). However, the Apostle Paul applies the promise differently to show there is a higher blessing than receiving. The higher blessing is to be the *blessing*. Paul’s use of the term “children of promise [and faith]” in Galatians 4:28 shows that the blessed of the Abrahamic promise are the channel through which the blessings will go to others. In the highest sense of the word, Jesus and the Church will be that channel of blessing to others.

Stated another way, the blesser (those dispensing the blessings, the channel of blessing—the Church) will be more honored than the blessed (those receiving the blessings—the world).

From a natural standpoint, the progeny of Abraham will be blessed. Take Adam for an illustration. The entire human race comes from Adam. We might think the Abrahamic promise means that not only will Adam be blessed but all of his seed. But the trouble is that the seed will come forth *before* Adam does. Most of the early Church were Jews. At Pentecost alone, 8,000 Jews became Christians. Those Jews who made their calling and election sure will be the progenitors in the Kingdom. Hence the blessers will precede the blessed. The order is reversed.

This chapter of Isaiah has a natural setting primarily and a spiritual application secondarily. The “seed” of verse 23 and God’s “elect” of verse 22 are the same; they will be the children of The Christ. When the earthly application is considered, the “blessed” are the natural seed of Israel and those of the world of mankind who come underneath the New Covenant—and their progeny, if any. When the spiritual application is considered, the Church will be the blesser, and the seed would be those who are blessed of the blesser.

“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal. 3:8,9). As stated previously, Paul’s reasoning is quite different from the normal explanation. Notice that God justifies the heathen *through faith*, but when—in this age or the next age? The Gospel Age, the present age, is the age of *faith*. In the Kingdom, the world of mankind will be justified by *works* (Rev. 20:12). Therefore, Paul applied this Scripture about Abraham to the present age. When the promise is read, “In thee shall all nations be blessed,” we generally think of how the world of mankind will benefit, and although that lesson is part of the Genesis text, Paul’s reasoning was otherwise. He emphasized that the gospel preached to Abraham will be accomplished “in *thee*,” that is, in the blesser, in the channel, in the *Church*. The promise to Abraham was not only that the nations would be blessed but that there would be a *channel* of blessing, which is the higher blessing.

The same word translated “blessed” is used variously in Scripture; sometimes it means “channel” and sometimes “recipient.” The context determines the meaning. The Apostle Paul reasoned that the “*thee*” of the phrase “in *thee*” refers to the channel. The promise was made to Abraham that “in *thee* [in the channel, in the Church] shall all nations be blessed.” The *real good news* is to be *with Christ*, to attain the spiritual hope of the high calling, for restitution does not even begin to compare with the spiritual hope. The “kingdom” means the Little Flock, the royal nation of kings and priests, not restitution. Restitution is part of the good news, but it is not the primary emphasis. Stated another way, the “gospel” is not restitution.

We should not feed on earthly restitution. Our desire should be to see *Jesus*, and not our father, mother, brother, etc. We should be living and dying for *him*. Hence it is essential for our hopes to be trained on the spiritual aspect, and we need to have clarity of purpose and vision in that regard. In 1 Corinthians 9:24, Paul admonished us to *run* so that we might obtain the prize. Hope for the high calling and love for God and Jesus have to be cultivated through the Word, for they are foreign to our nature. We are more responsive to other sensations. We are told that “every man that hath *this hope* in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). In the New Testament, those Scriptures that pertain to the high calling of the Church *far outnumber* Scriptures about restitution. The New Testament is mostly instruction for the Church, not for the world.

**Isa. 65:24** And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Christians often quote this verse in connection with prayer life: “Before they call, I [God] will

answer; and while they are yet speaking, I [God] will hear.” Sometimes the answer to prayer comes not only the very next day but while we are still on our knees. And there are times when the answer is delayed, as with the importunate widow (Luke 18:2-5). In fact, the answer can be delayed for weeks, even years. Sometimes the answer is no. The principle underlying the answer to prayer is that God knows best how and when to respond.

Although these are valuable lessons for the Christian, when verse 24 is considered in context, it shows that there will be prayer in the Kingdom Age. Jesus said, “It is written, My house *shall be called* the house of prayer” (Matt. 21:13). Truly the Third Temple will be a “house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7). While the Kingdom will be an age of sight and works, as opposed to the age of faith now, prayer will always be in order.

John 4:19-24 about the woman of Samaria also refers to prayer in the Kingdom. She said to Jesus, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” In the Old Testament, Jews were supposed to pray in the direction of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. While the Temple was still standing, Jews who wanted to make a special petition to the Lord went to Jerusalem, offered a sacrifice, and prayed in the Temple. This method is what God instructed the Jew to follow, but now, in the present age, Christians do not have to obey the outward form of praying toward Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. The important requirement is to worship God in spirit and in truth. But what was Jesus telling the woman about the Kingdom?

**Comment:** The Samaritans felt that a certain mountain should be the center of their worship, but Jesus was saying that the time would come when neither the city of Jerusalem nor the mountain would be essential to prayer. He said, “The hour *cometh*, and *now is*,” meaning in the future, in the Kingdom Age, and also now, during the Gospel Age.

**Reply:** As Christians in the Gospel Age, we see that God wants us to worship Him with the *right heart condition*. We should want to know and please *Him*. In the Kingdom and especially beyond in the ages of ages, the Temple in Jerusalem will retain its symbolic value, but in prayer, no particular direction will predominate. Prayer will be important in the Kingdom.

**Q:** Will there also be testimony meetings in the Kingdom? They would be very helpful in the towns and hamlets.

**A:** Yes, in the style of a town meeting. There will also be films that replay history as it actually occurred.

**Isa. 65:25** **The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.**

Notice the relationship of the paired animals. Although the wolf and the lamb are enemies currently, and so are the lion and the bullock, that will not be true in the future. In the Kingdom, these traditional enemies will be compatible and “feed together.” In other words, there will be peace among the animals as well as among humans.

“Dust shall be the serpent’s meat.” This portion of verse 25 tells us that there will be snakes in the Kingdom. One reason is that they will be a constant symbolic reminder of lessons learned about Satan. In fact, all of the animals and insects have an educational value. At present, many snakes eat rodents and live prey, but in the Kingdom, they will be so adapted as to obtain their

nutrition from the earth itself, from dust and dirt, like the earthworm.

Verse 25 is informing us that a radical change will take place. Not only will the animals live together peaceably, but their diet will change to vegetarian. This verse, plus Isaiah 11:8, indicates that snakes and vipers will lose their venom. “The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den.”

Verse 25 also shows there will be an animal kingdom throughout eternity for man’s pleasure. The animals will not receive a resurrection, but whether or not they will live indefinitely beyond the Kingdom we do not know.

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.” Since there will be death during the Kingdom, how do we harmonize this statement? What this means is that the animals will not hurt or destroy in the Kingdom, but God will have the prerogative of putting incorrigible individuals to death; i.e., they will go into a permanent sleep called Second Death.

Originally, when Adam called the animals to him in the Garden of Eden and named them, there was peace between all of the animals and man. But following Adam’s sin and his expulsion from the garden, the animals became fearful and distrustful of mankind except for the domesticated ones.

**Isa. 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?**

Usually just the first half of this verse is quoted, but we should understand the statement in harmony with the context. Here the earth is called God’s “footstool.” (In some contexts, Jerusalem or the Temple is said to be the place of Jehovah’s feet, His footstool.) But why was this subject introduced? Who was being addressed? We know God was speaking to natural Israel because of the reference to “the house,” that is, Solomon’s Temple. This structure was built according to God’s instructions, yet He asked here, “Where is the house that ye build unto me?” In this context, where God is speaking in a somewhat sarcastic vein to the Jew concerning the house that was constructed to *Him* according to *His* instructions, why did He allude to the heaven and the earth?

**Q:** Was God trying to counteract boastfulness? He did not want the Israelites to think too highly of themselves but wanted them to realize He was superior in every sense.

**A:** That is part of the answer. While elsewhere in the Old Testament, God may have identified the Temple as His footstool, house, or sanctuary—the place of His residence—it was only a tiny picture of something much larger, and the problem was that the Israelites were idolizing the picture. God wanted them to draw a higher analogy and liken the heaven as His house and the earth as His footstool. The highest concept to which their natural human minds could rise was heaven, but actually even the heaven is not big enough and high enough, for the heavens *cannot contain God* (1 Kings 8:27). Therefore, the Lord was not finding fault with the Temple and Jerusalem but with the Israelites’ narrow perspective of viewing them.

**Isa. 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.**

“For all those things hath mine hand made [the heavens and the earth], ... saith the LORD.” God spanned the heavens and meted them out with His own *hand*. “Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, ... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my *hands*, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isa. 45:11,12). “Mine *hand* also

hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right *hand* hath spanned the heavens” (Isa. 48:13). God originally created the heavens with His fingers, as it were, but as great as the result seems to tiny man, it is only a small demonstration of His greatness. Even though the heavens are so great that man cannot grasp their vastness and the power that made them, man can go higher than the heavens with the aid of God’s Spirit.

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.” This GREAT ONE, the One who made the heavens and the earth, condescends to look upon those who are humble and of a poor and contrite heart. How does this thought fit into the picture of the Temple, heaven, a throne, a footstool, etc.? God is particularly interested in the individual who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and such individuals were sincere worshippers in the Temple arrangement.

“But to this man will I look, even to him that ... trembleth at my word.” God is a God of love, yet He deals with those who tremble at His Word. In what sense should the Israelites (and we) “tremble” at Holy Writ? They should have such *respect* for God’s Word, let alone for God Himself, that they would fear to disobey the Word. Those who properly “fear” would be very careful not to distort, misinterpret, erroneously teach, add to, or take away from that Word. Indeed teachers have a special responsibility.

**Isa. 66:3** He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

At first glance, verse 3 seems to oppose the practice of animal sacrifices, but in the context are animals never ordained to be offered. Moreover, there are a lot of italic (supplied) words. If the italic words are removed, the verse would read, “He that killeth an ox, he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.” God instituted the offering of oxen (or steers) and lambs but not of dogs and swine. What is the allusion here? What did Israel do? The nation actually sacrificed some of these unauthorized offerings. For instance, Solomon’s heathen wives brought their religions to Israel and had shrines and altars erected in the Jerusalem environs to honor their false gods. As the centuries passed, the people tried to follow the Lord’s instructions of offering lambs and steers, but at the same time, they practiced heathen rites, some of which were the gory Canaanite ritual of drinking swine’s blood, the sacrifice of dogs to idols, the burning of children alive to honor the god Molech and then eating them (cannibalism), and the offering of incense and baked cakes to Ashtoreth, a female goddess, the queen of heaven. In other words, as a result of intermarriage with heathen women, the Israelites mixed false religious practices with the true religion of Jehovah. The mixture displeased the Lord and constituted disobedience. Isaiah described this disobedience by saying, “Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.” Because of the heathen practices, even the lambs that were offered in the Temple *according to God’s instructions* were unacceptable to Him.

**Isa. 66:4** I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

When God called, “none did answer”; when He spoke, “they did not hear.” Isaiah was saying to the Israelites, “When God sent prophets, you ignored them because you did not tremble at His Word.” Stated another way, they did not obey and worship God in spirit and in truth.

“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psa. 40:6-8). Since many statements in God’s Word seem to indicate that He was displeased with offerings and many other statements show the opposite—that He was pleased—this subject must be viewed from the proper perspective. The context here in Psalm 40 prophetically records Jesus’ prayer at the time of his baptism in Jordan, but we must give further consideration to earlier phrases: “I waited patiently for the LORD” (verse 1); “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay” (verse 2); “He hath put a new song in my mouth” (verse 3); and “Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust” (verse 4). Then comes verse 6: “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.” There are several lessons, as follows.

The Law was the means to an end, but it was not the end in itself, for *Christ* is the end of the Law to him who believes. The Law was a schoolmaster pointing forward to Christ. Jews living in Old Testament times and performing offerings and rituals might have questioned why certain animals had to be offered, but some points should have been obvious. For instance, not all of the animal being offered was necessarily put on the altar. Sometimes a portion went on the altar for the Lord, a portion was given to the priest who made the offering, a portion was given to the priesthood, and a portion was returned to the offerer. In other words, the offering was distributed so that many received blessings. Also, before being offered, the animals were first slain kosher-style (painlessly), and the blood had to be drained. Two strict prohibitions were that neither the blood of the animal nor the excess fat (such as the caul above the liver) could be consumed by the offerer. The fat and certain organs were burned on the altar. As the fat simmered and vaporized, it was considered an offering to God—God’s food, as it were.

A valuable lesson was taught by the fact that animals could not be offered unless they were slain and the blood was treated in a special way. What was that lesson? It was that *without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission or cancellation of sin*. The frequent application of blood to the horns of the altar taught that the efficacy of that altar as being a satisfaction for sin lay in the *blood* of the animal. Stated another way, the life is in the blood. Blood in the veins is life, but blood outside the veins pictures death, an expended life.

In viewing these sacrifices, the Jews should have thought or realized, “The fact God is pleased with these sacrifices means there is more to them than the superficial level we comprehend.” They should have realized that the heathen sacrifices and practices were not equivalent to those instituted by God. Moreover, they should have realized that it was proper for the priesthood, who served God in a special way and had no inheritance in the land, to get a tithe. And there is still another point. The Jews should have drawn a lesson from Abraham’s willingness to offer Isaac and the last-minute providential substitution of a ram caught in the thicket. With this incident being a prominent part of Israel’s history, the thoughtful person would have said, “These animals somehow represent that an individual, a Redeemer, has to be slain.”

When Jesus said in Psalm 40:6, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire,” he was saying in effect, “I am the *real offering*. I am the one to be sacrificed for the propitiation of sin.” He was not belittling the sacrifices but was saying that they were only a picture, a means to an end, and that he himself was the offering pointed to in the Law. Unfortunately, many Christians and nominal believers think that the ordinances of the Old Testament were bloody and barbaric, which is not the case at all.

**Isa. 66:5** Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Verse 5 is a break in thought. The primary connotation of this sudden intrusion by the Holy

Spirit into the main body of the text is along natural lines. God is pleased with the minority of Jews who tremble at His Word (verse 2) and thus suffer the hatred and temporary end-time abuse of their fellow Jews.

But the natural connotation does not mitigate against or by any means rule out a secondary continued application along spiritual lines. Compare the following two Scriptures: “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2). “He [Jesus] shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thess. 1:10).

**Isa. 66:6** A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

It would seem that this verse is intended to be understood not in either a figurative or a symbolic fashion but, rather, in a literal sense, for its meaning is suited to be grasped by the natural man—both Jew and Gentile. The background of verse 6 is described in greater detail in verses 15-18, and the climactic fulfillment is reached in verse 19. In other words, verse 19 refers to a *particular sign* God has set or determined in order to clearly and unequivocally convince all individuals on hand at the scene of action in the environs of “the city” of Jerusalem of the meaning and purpose of the representative gathering of all nations to that locale. What is that purpose? They are to witness (1) the defeat and destruction of the host of Gog and (2) the purging of natural Israel, leaving behind a Holy Remnant (Isa. 4:2-4).

Although three voices are noted in verse 6, all of the voices are, in reality, somewhat synonymous in occurrence, and all share a common causal factor. The “voice of noise from the city” refers to the tumult and outcries appertaining to Jacob’s Trouble, which will be centered in Jerusalem, and particularly to the various climactic judgments to be inflicted upon the host of Gog, as well as the purging of Israel itself by the Lord (Isa. 4:4). The “voice from the temple” and the “voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies” should probably be considered in a literal sense to mean that God’s voice will thunder a rebuke from heaven above the Temple Mount. Accompanied by a large visual manifestation of Christ’s crucifixion suffering on Golgotha Hill in AD 33, God’s voice will perhaps say, “This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him” (Zech. 12:10).

**Isa. 66:7** Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

**Isa. 66:8** Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

**Isa. 66:9** Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

Verses 7-9 are better rendered in the Revised Standard Version, as follows:

“Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son [Hebrew *zakar*, a male].

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land [Israel] be born in one day? Shall a nation [also Israel] be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her [other] sons.



“Shall I bring to the birth [the Head] and not cause to bring forth [later the body]? says the Lord; shall I, who cause to bring forth [the Head and the body], shut the womb? says your God.”

The son, or male child, refers to The Christ (Head and body members). The last members of the male-child class will be delivered before Zion’s labor, that is, before Jacob’s Trouble yet future. Other Scriptures show that this salvation will occur not only prior to Israel’s final holocaust (and subsequent rebirth to everlasting peace) but also prior to Babylon’s (nominal spiritual Israel’s) fall.

Zion, the *nation of Israel*, is the woman to whom the promises, both natural and spiritual, were originally made. Christ was a Jew, and so were the apostles and a majority of the fellowship prior to AD 69. Gentiles became joint-heirs of the spiritual promise because there were not enough Israelites with the faith of Abraham to fill up the predetermined 144,000 membership in the body of Christ.

That Zion can, and often does, refer to *spiritual* Israel is not called into question. But numerous other Scriptures use the term “Zion” to designate *natural* Israel, such as Psalm 78:68; Isaiah 4:3,4; 64:10; Jeremiah 26:18; and Zechariah 1:17. That is also the case here in Isaiah 66. Verse 10 of this same chapter tells that after Israel’s future miraculous deliverance, all nations will be enjoined to “rejoice ... with Jerusalem, and be glad with *her* [not only with Jerusalem but also with the woman, Israel], all ye that love *her*.” Verse 12 adds, “I will extend peace to *her* like a river.” Finally, verse 20 reads, “And they [the Gentiles] shall bring all *your brethren* for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations ... to ... *Jerusalem*.”

Isaiah 66 furnishes an order of events: (1) The male child (the Head, and then later the body members) is born. (2) The woman travails and other children are born, the birth sequence being (a) the Great Company, (b) the Ancient Worthies, and (c) regenerated Israel itself (the Holy Remnant) (Jer. 30:6b; Ezek. 37:9-14; Isa. 48:17,20).

The woman of Isaiah 66:7,8 cannot be nominal spiritual Zion, that is, Christendom, for several reasons: (1) The woman does not die in childbirth. In fact, she not only survives but is seen in succeeding verses to be honored and glorified. (2) The woman is on the scene *before* the birth of the male child. Neither the true Church nor the false Church (spiritual Zion) could have conceived the Savior, for he preceded the Church and is the forerunner and Head of the body members (Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 1:22; 4:15). (3) It is difficult to see how Jesus (the Head of the male-child class) could have proceeded forth from the nominal gospel Church or that he was the product of the Jewish rabbinical school of Sadducees or Pharisees, to which he in no sense belonged (Matt. 9:16,17; John 1:11) and from which he kept himself separate and distinct. However, the promises to the nation of Israel were another matter.

**Isa. 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:**

Verses 10-24 apply to natural Israel. Verse 10 is saying that those of mankind who love Jerusalem will rejoice and be glad with her. Although the consecrated, those who are looking forward to the fulfillment of prophecy, can rejoice now in an anticipatory sense, knowing that the time of blessing is near at hand, verse 10 applies to the Kingdom. Not only will the Gentiles love Jerusalem, but they will mourn for her when they truly recognize the role of Jesus, *a Jew!* In other words, just as the Holy Remnant will have a national heartfelt mourning when they are shocked into the realization that Jesus, a Jew, has been their true Messiah for 2,000 years, yet the nation obstinately rejected and crucified him, so the Gentiles will mourn when they learn that God’s favor is with Israel. Just as the Jews rejected Christ, so many Gentile nations rejected and violently persecuted the Jew. It will be a very humbling experience for the Gentiles

to realize that the Kingdom blessings will come through Israel.

The point to emphasize is that *all people* will be humbled. In their grief, humiliation, and shame, both Jews and Gentiles will have a new perspective in their dealings with each other. Later they will rejoice to see God's mercy in retrieving both into His love and favor.

**Isa. 66:11** That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

“That ye [Gentiles] may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her [Israel's] consolations.” Israel will supply “milk,” nourishment, for the Gentiles as a mother does for her child. Thus, in order for the Gentile nations to get blessings in the Kingdom under the New Covenant, they will have to recognize and identify themselves with Israel. Israel will dandle, or bounce, the Gentiles on her knees like an infant, as it were, and comfort them (verse 13).

**Isa. 66:12** For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

**Isa. 66:13** As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

**Isa. 66:14** And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

When Israel sees the Gentiles coming to her and receiving blessings, she will rejoice. Israel will rejoice to be a channel of blessing. She will rejoice as a mother to see her children prosper.

“Your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.” The “heart,” the seat of affection and emotions, is contrasted with the “bones,” the skeletal framework, that is, Israel's *organizational* structure. When the repentant Holy Remnant see their forgiveness and realize how greatly the Lord has blessed them, their hearts will rejoice both individually and nationally. The vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37) shows Israel coming back to life (1) figuratively from the Diaspora in their national resurrection and (2) literally from the dead in the general resurrection.

To “flourish like an herb” means that just as grass consists of little individual stems and seeds itself and spreads out, so the blessings to Israel will be both collective and individual. Not only will the blessings extend to the Holy Remnant, who survive Jacob's Trouble and are alive, but when the Jews are brought forth from the tomb after the Kingdom is in operation, that tiny nation will multiply and spread and flourish.

There is a contrast here. At the same time that Jehovah manifests favor toward Israel, He will have “indignation toward his [Israel's] enemies.” “The LORD shall be [made] known [in a favorable sense] toward his servants, and [He will manifest] his indignation toward his enemies.” When the brothers who had maltreated Joseph realized that he was the prime minister of Egypt, they feared for their lives. Similarly, when the Holy Remnant first recognize that Jesus is the true Messiah, they will tremble. This reaction will induce a *thorough* reformation and be a good groundwork for both Jew and Gentile. Following the fear that Joseph's brothers experienced, he told them not to be afraid and blessed them, for God had meant the experience for good. God providentially overruled Joseph's being cast in the pit and sold to the Midianites so that he would ultimately be the prime minister of Egypt. And despite the Crucifixion, which was a cruel and excruciating death, Jesus will forgive, for he realizes his experience schooled

and disciplined him for the office of Messiah. He became a more sympathetic High Priest.

**Isa. 66:15** For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

**Isa. 66:16** For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

The expressions “For, behold” and “For by” indicate that verses 15 and 16 are an explanation of verse 14, telling how God will manifest His wrath against Israel’s enemies. “The LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” After Gog defeats Israel and all seems lost, God will defend and fight for Israel as in times of old.

“By fire and ... sword will the LORD plead with all flesh [with all who gather against Israel at the time of Jacob’s Trouble but primarily on the powers that come from the north].” What is the distinction between “fire” and “sword”? Two types of destruction normally occur in warfare: (1) human lives are lost through the use of armaments and munitions, that is, by the “sword”; and (2) property and goods are destroyed by “fire.” It is one thing for fatalities to occur when a bomb is dropped, but the destruction of property through fire, defoliation, salting of fields, etc., is another matter.

God will fight with great powers, dramatic displays, and visible manifestations of nature: disease, plague, hail, overflowing rain, earthquake, etc. His “chariots [will be] like a whirlwind.” So great will the depth of the invasion be that the enemy will seem to approach and then cover the land like an ominous storm cloud. “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Ezek. 38:9). The terminology of likening God’s chariots to a whirlwind shows the fear and consternation that will be instilled in the enemy host when God begins to manifest His judgments. Jehovah will come with fire and whirlwind chariots, He will render anger with fury, and He will rebuke with flames of fire.

“The slain of the LORD shall be *many*.” If seven months will be required to bury the dead and seven years to melt down the armaments, we get some idea of the extensiveness and intensity of the trouble in Israel (Ezek. 39:9,12).

**Isa. 66:17** They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

Those who “sanctify themselves” are Jews who will be on the scene in Jacob’s Trouble but who will not be part of the Holy Remnant. When certain events transpire and they realize at the last minute that God is going to help Israel, they will try to change their allegiance and become religious, but the Lord will not be fooled. Many Scriptures in the Old Testament show that at the end of the age, God will weed out from among the Israelites those who are not in the proper heart condition to be of the nucleus of His Kingdom. For them to try to change sides and feign allegiance at the very last minute when the visible signs of His power are being made manifest will not work.

This element, who try to sanctify and purify themselves behind a tree in the midst of gardens, is an allusion to when Adam and Eve hid behind a tree in the Garden of Eden after committing sin. They heard the voice of the Logos crying out, “Adam! Adam!” When Adam responded, “Here am I,” the voice asked, “What are you doing over there behind the tree?” Adam replied, “I heard your voice, and I was afraid. We are naked.” The comparison here is to the class of

unfaithful Jews who have figuratively eaten “swine’s flesh [forbidden pork], and the abomination, and the mouse” and have felt superior and justified in their disobedience. Many Jews in Israel today are atheists.

**Q:** Why is the “mouse” mentioned?

**A:** The thought is presented from God’s standpoint. To unfaithful Jews, pork is delicious, and they eat pork just like the Gentiles. From God’s standpoint, however, eating pork is like eating rodents. (Verse 3 of this very chapter expresses the same principle in mentioning a dog: “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck.”) The mouse is contrasted with pork. Pork is a very nutritious meat if properly raised and cooked, but for typical reasons, it was forbidden under the Law. In prohibiting the eating of pork, the Lord emphasized the habits and characteristics of swine. He did not want the Israelites to be identified and associated with that type of disposition in their spiritual partaking. In eating pork, this unfaithful class of Jews depart from the mode of worship that God instituted for them. Their disobedience is regarded as if they were eating a mouse.

Isaiah 65:2-5 expresses the same principle:

“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

“A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

“Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

“Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.”

Those of this class feel thoroughly justified in what they are doing, and they consider themselves superior in their worship. They do not realize that while God identified Himself with Israel in the prior age (Amos 3:2), that was a past historical association and their habits today are not endorsed. God will save the nation of Israel for the *fathers’* sakes (Rom. 11:28). When He reestablishes favor to Israel at the end of this age, it will be to a Holy Remnant, not to the nation at large. As with the Gentiles, the brunt of the coming trouble will fall particularly on the heads of the rich, the oppressors, and the wicked. Although they will have an opportunity to get life in the resurrection, all of these—Jew and Gentile—will be consumed when God delivers the handpicked Holy Remnant. The Jews should not depart from the Law Covenant unless they accept Christ.

**Isa. 66:18** For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

God knows the works and thoughts of the unfaithful Jews. He will gather all nations to Israel at the end of the age. They will come, and they will see His *glory* when He delivers the Holy Remnant. Ezekiel 38:23 reads, “Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.” Then shall they all know that *God is God!*

**Isa. 66:19** And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

God will set a “sign” among the Gentile nations on the scene in Israel and send the survivors back to their homelands to give eyewitness accounts and to declare His glory. These nations—Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, and Javan—sound like some of the nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38. God’s determination to gather all nations to Jerusalem to battle will redound to His praise, honor, and glory (Zech. 14:2; Zeph. 3:8,9). Thus will His name be vindicated and His people, Israel, identified. The explanation of verse 6 in this chapter gives a suggestion as to what God’s “sign” among the nations might be.

Tarshish, Javan, and Tubal were sons of Japheth, and Lud was a son of Shem (Gen. 10:2,4,22). Pul is not mentioned in Genesis 10, and no sons of Ham are mentioned in Isaiah 66. Europe, Russia, Turkey, and all of the Gentile nations, generally speaking, are represented by these names, but predominantly Europe (the sons of Japheth). Gentile observers of God’s miraculous deliverance of Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble will go back to their homelands with eyewitness accounts.

Tubal is identified with Russia. Tarshish is used in prophecy for various locations in Rome, England, Spain, Greece, and portions of the Far East (hence Tarshish is a symbol of scattered, far-off peoples). On the subject of the Lord’s Great Army and events at the end of the age, the *Fourth Volume* mentions the faint possibility of Javan’s representing China. The question is whether the far-off isles not hearing of God’s fame or seeing His glory refers to just His deliverance of the Holy Remnant at the end of the age or whether, generally speaking, it refers to both the end of the age and God’s dealing with the Jew down through history. If this text refers to the whole history of Israel, then Javan may apply to the Eastern Hemisphere and not the Western.

The purpose of God’s gathering all nations to Jerusalem to battle is to show them His glory, to vindicate His name, and to manifest Israel as the nation through which He will deal and send blessings.

**Isa. 66:20** And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

After God delivers Israel out of Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentiles will send all surviving Jews back to their homeland with gifts and goods. This reaction will be similar to what the Egyptians did following the tenth plague when they sent the Israelites out of Egypt in haste (and with gifts). The people remonstrated with the still hard-hearted Pharaoh, telling him to act prudently lest all of the Egyptians die, not just the firstborn. In the future, the Jews will be sent back on “horses” (in individual vehicles), “in litters” (even if they are sick or elderly), and upon “swift beasts” (airplanes?). In other words, whatever means of travel a nation has at that time will be used to return the Jews to Israel.

“As the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.” The Gentiles will return the Jews voluntarily, as a freewill offering, because they will want to—and not perfunctorily, not because they are compelled to or simply because they are afraid. The Gentiles will want to cooperate.

**Isa. 66:21** And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

Of the Holy Remnant and the Jewish race—of the surviving Jews already in Israel as well as of those who are shipped back—God will select priests and Levites to serve in His Temple. The Book of Ezekiel tells that the priests who serve in the Third Temple will be of the Zadok line of

the Levites.

**Isa. 66:22** For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

As the new spiritual and social order of the Kingdom shall remain, so will Israel always be the capital of the world (although the emphasis may be different after the Millennium). In other words, the necessity for going up to Jerusalem each year will probably diminish, for as Jesus said, the time will come when it will no longer be necessary to pray either on Jacob's mountain or in Jerusalem (John 4:20-24). The saved world of mankind will worship God in spirit and in truth wherever they are.

**Isa. 66:23** And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

From new moon to new moon (from month to month), and from sabbath to sabbath, *all* shall worship God. This verse sounds somewhat like Zechariah 14:16-19, which says that upon those nations who do not representatively go up to Jerusalem annually to worship God in the Third Temple on the Feast of Tabernacles, there will be no rain. During the Kingdom, the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory.

**Isa. 66:24** And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

What will visitors to Jerusalem in the Kingdom see after attending the Third Temple services? They will exit the Temple and see a *huge cemetery* that extends for miles and contains the "carcasses of the men that ... transgressed" against God as part of the Gog invasion of the Holy Land. Of those who die at the time God delivers the Holy Remnant, the account says, "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." The thought is that this cemetery, or graveyard of the future, will be a *perpetual memorial* of what God did to deliver the Jews out of Jacob's Trouble and to destroy Israel's enemies. Documentary films of the actual occurrence will perpetuate certain memorable historical events such as this one, the Crucifixion, and Jesus' resurrection.

The bones of the Gog force will be taken to this cemetery site and buried. The valley in which this cemetery will be located is to be called the Valley of Hamon-gog. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place ... of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: ... and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamon-gog" (Ezek. 39:11). The earthquake that lifts up Mount Zion for the Temple site will also create this valley for a "city of the dead." The name of that cemetery, or city, will be Hamonah (Ezek. 39:16). The names Hamon-gog and Hamonah are related to Haman, the inveterate enemy of the Jew in the Book of Esther. Like Auschwitz today, this cemetery of the future will keep alive, or memorialize throughout eternity, the drama of Jacob's Trouble and God's *mighty miracles*—both the defeat of the multitude of Israel's enemies and the deliverance of His people. Praise be to the great God of Israel!

**Isaiah 52:7  
December 2005 Addendum**

Isaiah 52:7 reads, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" This text, which is very familiar to Bible Students, is incorrectly used to say that the reign of Christ has already begun and that from 1878 on, the

beautiful message of salvation has been associated with the ministry of the Pastor.

The first point to notice is that during his ministry, the Apostle Paul quoted this verse in Isaiah. “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:15). But what was Paul’s purpose in quoting Isaiah 52:7 in his Epistle to the Romans? He was using the *principles of happiness* that we have because of seeing beyond what is presently taking place in the world. Through the Bible, we see the wonderful hope of the Kingdom. That joy is instilled in our hearts—the joy of knowing that there is a God and that He has a plan with a glorious outcome in the Kingdom Age now so near at hand. However, that joy is *not* the fulfillment of Isaiah 52:7 per se, as can be proven. Yes, we have the *spirit* of that prophecy, for we are to live as if we were already in that day. We should walk accordingly and try to be circumspect with our character, words, and conduct.

God is speaking in the previous verse: “Therefore my people [Israel] shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I” (Isa. 52:6). Thus when the very next verse says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace,” the “feet” are *Jehovah’s* feet, not the feet members of Christ. Verse 7 will be fulfilled *after* the Kingdom has been established. The good news of the Kingdom will then go forth. The bringing of “good tidings” is the future making known *to the world* that the Kingdom *has been inaugurated*.

The Book of Nahum verifies the same thought more tersely. “Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off” (Nahum 1:15). The setting of this pronouncement is when the wicked have been cut off, and this will take place at the actual inauguration of the Kingdom. The prophets Isaiah and Nahum were tied together in their ministries, for Nahum was quoting Isaiah.

A clue in the book shows that Nahum wrote during the Assyrian Empire, which was quite a while before Babylon became the head of gold. In fact, a number of prophecies in the Old Testament pertain to Assyria or the Assyrian, and the term often has a double application. One application is to literal Assyria in the past with the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib. Since the capital of Assyria was Nineveh, the mention of that city tells us about the Assyrian Empire before Babylon came on the scene as we know it through the Scriptures. When the Minor Prophets speak of a future event pertaining to Jacob’s Trouble at the very end of the age, they use “Assyria” instead of “Babylon.” In fact, because Babylon was not yet in the picture at the time Isaiah wrote, he used the term “Assyrian” in prophesying of the end-time prominent leading power whose forces will come down to destroy Jerusalem.

### **“Behold” in Isaiah 40:9,10 October 1997 Addendum**

Isaiah 40:9,10 reads as follows:

“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”

When a question was recently asked about the meaning of the word “behold,” the citation could not be found in Young’s *Analytical Concordance*. However, interlinear Bibles were helpful in tracking down the Hebrew root word *hagah*. It is interesting that *hagah* is used only four

times in Scripture in its simple form: once in verse 9, twice in verse 10, and one time in Job 37:2. Normally, the thought of the expression “Behold your God!” would be either (1) a statement such as “Pay attention to God in this matter!” or (2) a statement accompanied by something visual. In other words, sight is implied in conjunction with the statement “Behold!” The person being addressed is to behold something. However, the meaning of “Behold your God!” in Isaiah 40:9 is neither of these two thoughts.

*Hagah* can be considered as either a verb or a noun. Root verb meanings are along the lines of “to murmur,” “to moan,” “to grumble,” “to growl.” Of course with many words, the root meaning is quite different from the finished word as used in context. Root noun meanings are similar: “murmuring,” “moaning,” “grumbling,” and “growling.” The Job account brings in the meaning best because sometimes it takes five English words to describe what is implied in one Hebrew word. Three so-called comforters commiserated with Job when God allowed Satan to test him to the uttermost except that the Adversary could not take Job’s life. After seven days of silence, the three comforters began to interrogate Job in a very negative fashion, one after the other, each taking two turns. Job replied to the comments of the comforters. Finally, all four gave up—Job and the three who were questioning why he was having these experiences. The result was a stalemate. A young man, Elihu, had been listening, and now he began to speak, feeling more confident that he could penetrate and get to the heart of the matter with Job. Elihu felt that the other three did not frame their questions quite the way they should have and that they were critical and were downgrading Job, whereas he was going to try to commiserate with Job. However, we find that after reasoning with Job for six long chapters, Elihu ended up criticizing him just like the other three. Eventually God interrupted Elihu’s conversation with Job.

Some think Elihu represents the Logos, and others think he pictures an angel with superior wisdom, but the contents of his remarks belie that situation completely, for Elihu was very demeaning to Job. God understood what Job’s problem was. Job did not know why he was permitted to suffer in so many ways. The lineage of Elihu is even given, showing he was a mortal human being.

Near the end of Elihu’s comments, as he was conversing, he suddenly beheld a storm brewing in the distance and said, “Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?” (Job 36:22). Elihu continued to speak: “Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out” (Job 36:26). Then he commented about the rain as he kept watching the storm cloud way in the distance. “For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle? Behold, he spreadeth his light [lightning] upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea. For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance. With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt. [There was a condition of mixed darkness and light.] The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour” (Job 36:27-33). Elihu knew that the storm cloud meant rain and that this was how God waters the earth in a majestic fashion—with strong power and yet gently, distilling the water. Even the cattle seemed to sense what the storm portended.

Elihu continued to comment in Chapter 37, speaking about the sound and power of the thunder as the storm was approaching closer. “At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the *sound* that goeth out of his mouth” (Job 37:1,2). The word translated “sound” is the Hebrew *hagah*. Of the different scholars who tried to describe this word, Gesenius did the best job. The basic meaning of *hagah* is similar to the *growl* (not the roar) of a lion, which is very deep and resonant, like a muttering but of a powerful preacher. It is not the roar or the clap of the thunder that is being described but the *rumbling*. In fact, Green’s Interlinear uses that exact word: *rumbling*. We will quote Job



37:2 from Green's: "Listen carefully to the noise of his voice [the thunder], and the sound [alternate translation: 'rumbling'] from his mouth." Some concordances have "low thunder," meaning a subdued thunder—that is, "mutter," "grumble," "muse or meditate aloud."

Next we will consider Isaiah 40:9,10, which we repeat: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." To simply substitute the word "rumbling" for the word "behold" would be a problem, for that English word is not euphemistic; it is not a smooth enough interpretation. The closest English translation we can get for "behold" is "*hearken*," not meaning just "pay attention" but meaning "*hearken to a sound*," for in his prophecy, Isaiah was calling attention to a sound. Notice that the prophecy of Isaiah Chapter 40 is detached from Chapter 39. Chapter 40 begins, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem" (Isa. 40:1,2). In the Hebrew for Isaiah 40:9, the thought is like cupping a hand behind the ear and saying, "*Behold, hearken!*" and then *pointing* to the source of the sound. A logical question is, What is the point of this reasoning?

"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand" (Isa. 40:10). Because of, or based on, the majestic, deep-throated rumbling sound of the thunder in the distance, Isaiah prophesied that God would come with a *strong hand*. Elihu had also noted the power of the thunder, speaking of the power of God's voice. Isaiah 40:10 continues, "Behold, his [God's] reward is with him," that is, the reward to punish the evildoer and the reward to justify, redeem, and rescue the Holy Remnant of Israel. In other words, it is a twofold reward, for the word "reward" can be used to mean both the punishment for iniquity and the honor for righteousness.

When we consider the context, the thought in verse 10 somewhat changes or clarifies the meaning of verse 9. At one time, we were not sure which of the two renderings for verse 9 was correct. The King James Version says, "*O Zion, that bringest good tidings*," indicating that Zion is the *source or bringer* of the good tidings. Likewise, Jerusalem is shown as the *source*: "*O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings*." The same thought is repeated, being the second part of a couplet, a technique that is used frequently in the Psalms. However, both the King James and the Revised Standard Version give an alternate or marginal translation that reverses the action:

King James

"O thou that tellest good tidings *to Zion*."  
"O thou that tellest good tidings *to Jerusalem*."

Revised Standard

"O herald of good tidings *to Zion*."  
"O herald of good tidings *to Jerusalem*."

In other words, some mysterious figure or class will herald good news to natural Zion, to natural Jerusalem. There will be an announcer of good tidings to Israel. Only two classes are in a position to give a proper comforting message to Israel (specifically to the Holy Remnant) at the end of the age. These two classes, who would have to be enlightened by present (Harvest) truth, are the Little Flock and the Great Company.

With the explanation of the word "behold," the picture now becomes a little more dramatic in that *sound* is attached to the prophecy, and attention is called to that sound, which can be explained still further. The prophecy brings us down immediate to Jacob's Trouble. In fact, it is so close to the end of the age that we can almost see a beginning of fulfillment. For instance, let us say that one is on hand when the invasion of Gog and Magog is about to occur. The mixed multitude is in the distance, coming down from the north with the purpose of entering and destroying Israel. Wouldn't that development shake up many of the enlightened ones? They would realize, "This is it!" And Zechariah 14:2 indicates that Gog will at first even be victorious, although the host will not be able to expunge those whose names are written in the book of life to be survivors of Jacob's Trouble, that is, the Holy Remnant.

From this standpoint, wouldn't those who are enlightened call attention to Gog's coming down *with power* and to God's subsequent deliverance of the Holy Remnant *with mighty power*? Those with a nominal Church background, especially some of the Evangelicals, who believe Gog will invade Israel and are looking for this event as a sure sign are unaware that Israel will be temporarily defeated and look, instead, for an immediate dramatic salvation and rescue. However, the Scriptures show there will be a *delayed* response in order to demonstrate that the salvation is *not of human effort* in any sense of the word and that it is *God* who will intervene and fight for His people as in days of old. Obadiah 21 explains the rescue as saviors coming from Mount Zion. *Divine power* will be used on behalf of the Holy Remnant.

The time factor narrows down the prophecy of Isaiah 40:9,10. While, in one sense, both the Little Flock and the Great Company will know about the events taking place in Israel in Jacob's Trouble, evidently, for several reasons, it is just the Great Company class who will be identified with the message of this prophecy. Both classes will know earlier. For instance, Deuteronomy 29:29 states, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Psalm 25:14 was quoted in a recent study, and it was pointed out that a *Reprint* article translated the verse a little differently and better than the King James Version. Instead of the King James translation ending with "he [God] will show them his covenant," the improved translation reads, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; *he has covenanted to show it unto them.*" Where does this "covenant" come from? In Deuteronomy 29:29, God has promised to inform His people when the due time comes for information to be released.

Therefore, the Little Flock will know first, but the Great Company will be on hand when the prophecy of Isaiah 40:9,10 comes to fruition. The sound of the rumbling shows that the Great Company will be on the scene and receive their change just prior to Jacob's Trouble. They will be present when Israel is trembling, when Israel sees the magnitude of the Gog host that is coming down. However, the Great Company will be one of the two parts that is cut off before God rescues the Holy Remnant. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts [Little Flock and Great Company] therein shall be cut off and die; but the third [Holy Remnant] shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zech. 13:8,9). The third part is the purged nation of Israel, the Holy Remnant that will live through Jacob's Trouble. The Little Flock and the Great Company must both be off the scene before the Kingdom can officially commence. Isaiah 40:9,10 shows that the Great Company class will be here right down to the very end. A little period of time is involved after the feet members are taken—probably 3 1/2 years—before the final end. During this time, the Great Company will wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, the tribulation, and give a message (Rev. 7:14). In other words, the Great Company class have to live into the Time of Trouble to be shaken up as to the need for reform. In another picture, the foolish virgins will have to go back to the marketplace, to the experience of the Time of Trouble, to get their hearts in the proper condition.

Thus the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:9,10 is narrowed down so that only the Great Company will be giving this message at this time. However, that does not mean the feet members won't give a message to Israel earlier, but the message of Isaiah 40:9,10 will be given later **WITH POWER**. Based on Song of Solomon 5:7,8, the Pastor thought the Great Company would give a witness to Israel at the end of the age. Also, a strengthening of the Great Company to give a message to Israel harmonizes with Habakkuk 3:17,18, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The time setting is when the Little Flock is off

the scene but the Ancient Worthies have not yet been installed into office. At that time, the Great Company class will be strengthened to give an *inspired* message to Israel.

First, the Great Company will have an experience of disappointment, chagrin, and gnashing of teeth, as indicated by the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Afterward they will be revived and strengthened in connection with renewing their covenant of consecration with real dedication. They will be reinvigorated to give a message of consolation to the Holy Remnant and will thus die with understanding. The sound of Isaiah 40:9,10 shows the *nearness* to the very end of the age; the setting is beginning to be initiated for the *final* events.

The fall of nominal Christendom will be a proof that the door is closed. There will be a time period of about 3 1/2 years between the fall of the nominal Church and Jacob's Trouble.