

The Book of Isaiah

Bro. Frank Shallieu

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Chapters 1–39

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1. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
2. 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.
3. Finally, Bro. Frank has not reviewed 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

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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. 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 of the books of the Bible are in sequence, especially if some are 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 will show their ministries were of even 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/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 says that the utterances to follow are of significant import and He desires His people to *hearken*. In other words, “*Hearken, O heavens and earth, to the message of this book. Hear God 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.”

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" would be 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" = "Alas." Instead of being hypercritical, the Lord has a heavy heart. The situation is 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 this generation and their parents and their parents' parents, etc., etc., were all sinful.

God calls attention to His title: "the Holy One of Israel." Why does He use this title? He is 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.

Strong language! The whole head being sick and the whole heart being faint suggests that the condition is terminal; it is a hopeless condition that is 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 is 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 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 ministry? The context suggests that Isaiah concluded the book just before his

death. 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 didn't 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, about the desolation in Hezekiah's day that affected the *ten-tribe* kingdom. Notice that God said, "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 should have awakened the two tribes to recognize their own sad condition. "Look what is happening to the ten tribes. You, Judah, are also in a pathetic condition. Take note what is occurring and reform lest a similar fate befall 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.

"Daughter of Zion" = 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 happen on a worldwide scale in the Time of Trouble. The coming conflict is irrepressible; it is just a matter of time until it will occur.

The nation of Israel was left as an *abandoned* "cottage in a vineyard" when the season of harvest was 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 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 hadn't left a remnant in Israel, they 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 writes about a *future* occurrence as though it were *past*.

Israel is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah, which were two prominent twin cities in the fertile vale (valley) of Siddim (later covered with water to become the Dead Sea). After a violent earthquake, the two cities were buried under water (the Dead Sea). The cities remain under the Dead Sea, and some relic of their civilization would be preserved to this day. Just as Lot's wife was encased in the molten lava to appear like a statue when the lava cooled, so the cities, at least in a measure, would be 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 is addressing Judah and Jerusalem and 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” would be the “rulers,” and the “earth” would be the “people.” And Isaiah’s own personality comes in here. *He* said, “Hear the word of the LORD,” and not “The word of the LORD declares ...” The prophet himself is getting emotionally involved in connection with this judgment of God of their condition. It normally takes a strong personality to deliver a strong message.

The rulers were identified with Sodom and the people with Gomorrah, which 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 would minimize the Law of types and shadows in the Old Testament by using Scriptures such as this one. They say the Lord does not delight in animal sacrifices but is more interested in character development. While 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 God instituted these sacrifices and, in some instances, even established a death penalty for failure to perform them correctly, it would be contradicting the Lord to say, “Who required this of you?”

To get the right slant in verse 11, 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. In Hosea’s day 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 John the Baptist, who said when the scribes and Pharisees came to him to be baptized, “Who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?” Isaiah was saying that he wasn’t happy to see the people coming with sacrifices because they were offered out of prudence and out of 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 last 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 is 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.

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 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 sabbaths, you can have them.” It is like getting a gift from a person who is so estranged from you that you resent it. Of course you 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 about forgiveness. Under such circumstances, the gift is obnoxious—it would be better if no gift were given. *God*’s saying “I cannot away with” is like His saying, “I am fed up with this to the gills.”

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.

This would refer to prayer leaders who sometimes lift up (“spread forth”) their hands toward heaven, as well as raise their voices, to implore the Lord to hearken to their prayers. Spreading the hands suggests opening the heart for a response from the Lord.

“I will hide mine eyes from you.” The *Great* Jehovah speaks to Israel like a person and reasons with them on their level.

In verse 14 He said, “It is *your* new moons and *your* sabbaths that my soul hates.” Because of their heart condition and disobedience, the Lord 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 the Lord. For instance, in antitype, the Catholic Church kept adding feast days, feeling that the greater the number of feast days, the holier they 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 “I’m sorry.” Evil is usually a *habit*; 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”? By making sure their judges were honest, fair, and unbiased; this 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 them. 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. They were to “plead for the widow,” to 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 the Lord says, “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; the same thought is being expressed twice. As a color, red is the most difficult to eradicate or bleach out. This is 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 sins that are scarlet 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 the scarlet dye impregnates the 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; the stain must be worked on *repeatedly* in order to remove it. But even if the stain (sin) is worked at, 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 ye be 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. For instance, 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 said, “My people do not consider; they do not reason or think.” Now He is inviting them to do so.

Reply: It is hard for us to love that way. When one 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 the Lord 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. This reminds us 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 the antitypical “city” is the professed Church (pictured as a white horse under the First Seal, as the Ephesus period, and as a woman clothed with the sun in the 12th chapter of the Book of Revelation). The early Church had a good beginning, hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Eventually the woman clothed with the sun became pregnant; 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 would picture the nation of Israel as a whole. The nation once was faithful and once was “full of judgment.” “Righteousness lodged in it.”

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*. Paul warns the Church in connection with sounding the gospel message. When an all-silver trumpet is sounded, the tone is very clear and mellow; it produces a pure sound with a good ring. In antitype this represents clarion truth. But if the trumpet were made of tin, it would produce a tinkling or tinny sound. In antitype the message would have the form of truth but would 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 would lose its ability to warm, encourage, and cheer the individual; it would lose 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 was 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 a favorable connotation. But instead the corrupt judges took advantage of the 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; their inheritances were taken away and they were left penniless. And 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*) means “fire.” The fire would be applied to the metal to smelt, refine, and purify it of its dross. A violent reaction pushes up the dross to the surface in a circular motion and burns it off. When the 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.

A strong process is needed to purge away dross. And so God was telling Israel 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, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow *if ye 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 would be punished for disobedience, a judge would be raised up to deliver them, Israel would again be punished, a judge would deliver them, etc., etc. In other words, the evil condition was halted each time with a judgment from the Lord. Without such judgments nipping evil in the bud, it 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. Harken 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. He was to exercise caution in selecting the 70. Moses' role was twofold: (1) He dealt with God, as it were, face to face. (2) The elders dealt with Moses. Moses was like a teacher of teachers. Hence he was a type of Jesus, who is Head and Teacher of the Church, who are to be kings (judges), and priests. Jesus is the King of (over) kings.

When the Law was *originally* given and justice meted out with stern punishments as necessary, the nation was considered favorably. In time, however, the hardened hearts of a minor element permeated, like leaven, the whole lump or nation, so that 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. Nevertheless, it was a mixed people that came out of Egypt, 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. But after the apostles fell asleep, 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, embraces the whole nation starting with their earliest beginnings. The judges that the Lord will restore refer back to the original arrangement that He instituted in connection with the giving of the Law and also in connection with the judges raised up during the 450-year period.

“Jerusalem” means city of peace (*salem, shalom*). Melchisedek was there at one time as the king of Salem. The apostle Paul, in Hebrews 7:2, calls Melchisedek a king of *peace* and a king of *righteousness*. Here Isaiah says 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 am returned unto Zion, and 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.” Zechariah

14:20,21 says, “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.” In other words, 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.” And 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 the others say, “Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord,” they will realize it is a holy, faithful city, 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 survivors are concerned—those who live through Jacob’s Trouble—they “shall be redeemed with *judgment*”; that is, the dross will be purged off. The Jews who withstand the test in Jacob’s Trouble, and who are humble and contrite before the Lord, will live through that trouble. They will be Zion’s “converts,” “her converts with *righteousness*.” Only those Jews who are hand-picked 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 the oak trees provides much desirable shade, yet the 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" = a used-up wick. "Both" (the worker and his work of art, the maker as well as the product of his making) would be destroyed.

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

This concludes the discussion of the preface to the Book of Isaiah, which was written at the end of his ministry.

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

Isaiah's ministry starts with this verse; it begins to record what he saw or experienced.

"The son of Amoz" was inserted to distinguish this Isaiah from other men named Isaiah. This was a common form of address 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, this is a Kingdom setting. The language is figurative, for the 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 the people will be melted from their former heart condition. Following the trouble, they will be soft and pliable and look 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 as the capital of the nations). Other Scriptures indicate 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 ...” The account does not say “*all*.” Similarly, we are told in one place that Jesus gave himself for *many*, and in another place that he gave himself as 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 (Zech. 14:16–18), but the nations will fall into line.

Notice, “many people shall go and say ...” Some people talk and then wait for the other party to take action, but here action *precedes* the speaking. In other words, with some the desire to go to Jerusalem will be so much a burden on their hearts 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 the 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 the Jew to worship, they will not be aggressively fighting the Lord. Pride will be keeping 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” has been exalted above all the hills and mountains of the earth; that is, God’s government is now 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 “pruninghook” is used to clip branches. Spears and pruning hooks are both *long* instruments; hence 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 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 at the end of the Millennium, it will not be an armed insurrection. 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, addressing them to the “house of Jacob” (natural Israel). “Ye” = the house of Jacob, natural Israel. “Us” = the Gentiles. The Gentiles will be asking the Jews, “Come . . . let us walk in the light of the LORD,” for they will know that God is with Israel. They will have heard eyewitness accounts of God’s 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 this 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. 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. Don’t be ashamed.” Up to this time the Jews as a whole 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.

In describing the attitude of the Holy Remnant when God delivers them out of Jacob’s Trouble, Ezekiel says (36:31), “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.*” Previously in history the Jews may have loathed their condition or circumstances, but they have never loathed *themselves* before.

Seeing this changed attitude of the Jews, the Gentiles will no longer be prejudiced against them but will be willing to receive instruction through them. The holy, repentant attitude will be manifest to the Gentiles.

The Ancient Worthies will be the instructors at the top of the nation and 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 will send them home with gifts similar to the leaving of the Israelites from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Gentiles, including some prominent ones, will even offer to help build Israel’s

cities and Third Temple.

Thus there is a lot of thought behind the short, little 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, the Israelites who were in a right heart condition applied it to themselves. There is also a fulfillment during the Gospel Age.

Israel's faults and sins that led to their rejection were that they were full of diviners "from the east" (magicians, astrologers, necromancers, etc.) and "soothsayers like the Philistines" and that they 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.

RSV: "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 other prophets did. Nevertheless, this verse shows he was a leading spirit with some fiery statements. In this verse Isaiah was not only acceding to the need for judgment but was asking the Lord to render that judgment: "Forgive them not!"

And yet 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 let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." That is not Isaiah's attitude now. Here he sees the necessity for a judgment, for stripes.

Comment: Israel's chief sin seems to be pride, and that is why Isaiah says, "Forgive them not." They still haven't humbled themselves.

Reply: They were stiff-necked people. The humbling of verse 9 would be humiliation and a demeaning.

Verse 9 pertains to a demeaning of character, but in verse 10 the Lord is saying He will demean and humiliate the Jews to effect a basis for a change.

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.*” In other words, God’s deliverance of Israel and the inauguration of the Kingdom will be accompanied with such signs and wonders that the Jews will be frightened as to where they fit into the picture. Verse 10 is related to verse 19.

Notice, Isaiah is not condemning them for entering into the rock but is indicating their hiding is understandable. He was saying, “Since God will bring judgment, enter into the rock.” Isaiah was encouraging them to recognize and be fearful of the Lord 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. 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. Here in verse 9 Isaiah’s words to “Enter into the rock and hide in the sand for fear of the Lord” is really telling the Jews to *repent*.

To enter into the “rock” would mean to hide in caves; to hide in the “dust” would mean to dive into a hole or pit in the ground. The Holy Remnant will mourn as doves and, feeling the guilt, 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 such a 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. The ones who loot and pillage are apt to be killed by those 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 are the victim. Those who try to get out of the way of the steamroller and withdraw will have more chance of survival.

Lack of food and employment will be problems for all people. Where food is stored, such as 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 and influence and comfort will lose them. To be brought down to the level of the common people will be great humiliation for them. On the other hand, 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 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, meaning that transportation, including aircraft, will grind to a halt as well as all commerce and business activity. “All pleasant pictures” is “all the beautiful craft” in the RSV.

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” would be anything 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 ceases, 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 rocks of the mountains.”

Reply: In the French Revolution, the nobility and the clergy tried to lose their identities and hide 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 judgment of God against them. (Prior to that time, trouble has been attributed to *man’s* inhumanity to man.) Divine indignation, the wrath of God, will be manifest. When the wickedness, lawlessness, and blasphemy of man get worse and worse and then judgments occur (including natural ones), the people will realize 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 ... of gold” would 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. “In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and ... 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 rocks. When industry and transportation come to a standstill, their money will be worthless. Too late they will try to share their wealth.

Q: Would these two verses be 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. Their riches will prove valueless.

A special hard experience awaits those who have accumulated ill-gotten gains by exploiting their fellowman. Pornography kings, who exploit youth and others, would be one example. Liquor barons and drug lords are other examples.

Ezekiel 7:19 is pertinent: “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”; ie, 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 will not assure safety.

Some of those who seek righteousness and meekness may be saved. “Fear of the LORD” would imply 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, ie, *food*. The “staff” would be 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 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.

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 he was speaking of the trouble to come on Judah and Jerusalem in 606 BC, which was a still later event.

A “mighty man” would be an important man.

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

“Captain of *fifty*” (that is, units of 50) are identified with the Hebrew system, not only in the Jubilee but in groups of 50. Instead of having a Roman centurion over 100 men, the Israelites used groups of 50. “Cunning artificer” = a wizard, an advisor. All these 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” will not be favorable rulers, for they will “oppress” the people (see verse 5). In other words, the structure of society will be turned upside down. A new, inexperienced, immature element will 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 will 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.”

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 wants 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 are two elements: those who formerly ruled and the young (not necessarily in age), untried, inexperienced element. The people would remove the inexperienced element if only the “brother” in the house would accept the responsibility. The “brother” is a third element. The whole stay and staff of Judah and Jerusalem were crumbling—both their food supply and their counselors (the mature, experienced counselors were leaving office and being replaced by a ruthless, inexperienced element).

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—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 in Noah’s day, conditions got worse and worse. Noah’s day 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.

“Children are their oppressors” means that those who were 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. 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.

With the rulers, to “grind the faces of the poor” would mean 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” meant 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.” The Lord’s vineyard was the nation of Israel itself, who were nominally the Lord’s people. The parallel down through the Gospel Age has been the spiritual vineyard, the professed people of God. In regard to the spiritual vineyard, there will be a time of reckoning at the end of the harvest. The vine of the earth will be harvested.

Jesus gave a parable about a certain man having a vineyard (Mark 12:1–9). Finally he sent his son to see how the crops were growing and the caretakers (the rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical) 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.”)

“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.” Strong language! To deliver his message, Isaiah had to appear before nobles, usually in the outer court of the Temple and sometimes at the chief gate entering the city. He would cry out as the king and other nobles and judges went or rode by. The implication is that the faces of the poor were 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” become the woman (singular) as the nation of Israel, showing that these criticisms are directed to the nation as a whole. Their 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 are subtle. Judah was complacent, feeling the judgments that came upon the ten tribes would not touch them.

The Lord 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 Lamentations, which is a song that graphically describes poverty and famine in a foreign land.

“The Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.” This

would be leprosy. When Isaiah started his ministry, the very king, Uzziah, was smitten with leprosy when he presumed to go into the Holy. “When he 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” (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 him, 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 king of the nation, he was the “*crown of the head*” (verse 17); this was a strong prophecy and it points forward to an even more powerful fulfillment.

The mention of the “daughters of Zion” in verse 17 would refer to retribution too: 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. They were bold in their sins “as Sodom” (Isa. 3:9). In antitype the harlot has on her *forehead* “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (Rev. 17:5). This scab is the mark of the beast, a stigma, a 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.**

There were no chapter divisions in the original Hebrew writings. 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 would take hold of “one man,” Christ, and say, “We will eat our own bread [doctrine] and wear our own apparel [our own justification],” etc. But the phrase “in that day” is puzzling. When would that be?

Reply: The next verse (4:2) also contains the phrase “in that day.” Matthew 24 keeps using “then”; sometimes it 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 the forgiveness of sin, walking in the narrow way, etc.); they just want his name. There are many forms of *self*-justification and *self*-righteousness: social works, candles, etc.

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. 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. They wanted to be known as true Israelites. In this prophecy in Isaiah of the Diaspora, it was a reproach or a stigma to be a Jew, so they desired to be looked upon favorably. At one time many Jews even desired to be Christians. For example, many Jews are identified with *Christian Science*, which is 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 would apply verse 1 to their national judgment when they were in a condition of separation, without homes, wealth, loved ones, goods, reputation, and “lovers” (alliances with other nations). The Jews would be looking for consolation and security in the sense of esteem from their fellowmen. This is what happened to the Christian Church in the days of Constantine after the 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” applied to the nominal Church during the seven phases of its experience, then the phrase would 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 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.

Verse 2 in the KJV states, “them that are escaped of Israel.” The RSV has “the survivors of Israel [of Jacob’s Trouble].” That they 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: It is interesting that verse 3 says, “he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called *holy*.” This would harmonize with other Scriptures that indicate the 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 *survivors* in verses 2–4: “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 uses 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—that the Holy Remnant are *hand-picked* survivors. 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 everyone 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 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 those of the Holy Remnant are to be kept alive. With this understanding, Daniel 12 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 [ie, 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 “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth [who] shall awake” (Dan. 12:2) pertains to the resurrection of mankind, starting with the Ancient Worthies. 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 it 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 could tell that the stench was human blood and hair burning. But 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 that judgment and how they should react to it. Those Jews who listen to the message and respond will be among the survivors.

Q: Will Isaiah 3:10,11 apply to the Holy Remnant too? “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, they 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 and was in “hellfire” wanting a drop of water to cool his tongue. There was a great gulf between, for God had, as it were, turned His back on them. However, in Jacob’s Trouble, those who respond to the instruction will see that it 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 they 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 to be their leaders. Truly the “branch of the LORD” will be “beautiful and glorious”—truly humbled and hand-picked by God.

When those of the Gog element who live through the trouble go back as eyewitnesses to their home governments, 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 is fighting 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. You 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 sand storms, which are devastating in the wilderness. They were also protected from the danger of flash floods in the wadis.

A "covert" is a cover, and it means that the cloud was like a tent (almost like a *literal* tent) above the Israelites. In the sky this cloud exercised an influence that preserved them from "storm" (sand storms) 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 sand storms 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 calls attention to this particular experience helps us to realize the POWER of the larger picture and fulfillment. Back there the cloud shielded them 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 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 also a general lesson of how God will be with Israel in the future as He was in the past. The RSV says that "the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion."

Reply: 1 Corinthians 10:2 says that the whole nation was baptized under the cloud and in

the sea. In other words, they all 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 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 unto 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 the nations who 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 could be either good or bad depending on the fruitage they developed within themselves. "Wild grapes" would be the development of evil fruits. 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 the Lord, 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 were untutored, unruly, untrained, undisciplined, and nonsubmissive; they 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 grapes that are

stunted, bitter, hard, and immature; 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, something out of one’s substance, to the Lord. 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 the Lord 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.” “Now 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 the Lord 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, we should have a good “forgetter” and 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?

Verse 4 reminds us of the 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; ie, 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: elevation, sharp cliffs on three sides, etc.

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 it as off limits. Spiritually, the “hedge” was the Law, which said, “If you do so-and-so, I will do so-and-so. If you fail to do so-and-so, I will fail to do so-and-so.” The Lord’s blessings and the Lord’s 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” all around Job, so no wonder he was obeying God. Israel’s

“hedge” meant that if they obeyed the Law, they were favored with natural blessings of crops, health, etc.

Incidentally, notice the order: the hedge precedes 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 people of Israel, He would produce a miracle to deliver them. If the hedge, the favored circle of God’s providence, were 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 is answered in verse 7 by saying that the vineyard belongs to God and that His vineyard is the house of Israel. The “men of Judah” are 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. A citizen 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.

The “hedge” is used from another standpoint. The whole parable is based upon a vineyard. It is proper for a vineyard to have an enclosure, a line of demarcation, which is usually quite thickly foliated to keep out the intruder 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 just runs off.) Hoeing also aerates the soil. 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, the One superintending the pruning is God Himself. Therefore, “pruning” would be ordered trials and discipline. The “hoeing” would be a stirring up of the individual in one way or another; eg, having someone speak—and to utter strong words if necessary—to awaken the individual out of lethargy, a hardness of heart, etc. The “hoeing” could be described as counseling.

Q: Could this 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. The hard hearts of the people caused the situation to be otherwise. Therefore, the Lord had someone else “take away the hedge thereof,” “break down the wall thereof,” and tread down the vineyard.

God “looked for judgment” but beheld oppression; He looked “for righteousness” but beheld “a cry [for justice].” Unfair judgments were rendered, causing the people to audibly weep for their hard lot or experience. Thus the judicial system was corrupt. 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 holds seed and distribute it on the land, but they came back with a *smaller* container of the actual crop. An ephah is smaller than the 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. One who went out with a homer of seed came back with a little crop that was only 1/10 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.

Comment: The seed of a homer was supposed to yield a hundredfold. Therefore, if one started out with 10 grains of seed, the normal yield would be 1,000, but now the yield would be only 1/10 of a homer or a 1 to 1,000 ratio.

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. At mid-morning, instead of coffee, more liquor was consumed. By nightfall such a quantity had been consumed that their senses were dulled. In this state they could not be thinking about the Lord. In fact, wine, music, fancy homes (verse 9), and large property holdings all beclouded the mind. They were living off the fat of the land. Jesus said, "They that [know they] are sick are in need of a physician"; ie, the wealthy usually do not feel the need for redemption. 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 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 is a hint directed to Judah. The ten-tribe kingdom would go into captivity for their disobedience. "Take a hint, Judah, lest the same thing happen to you," but the inhabitants of Judah were unaware not only of the providences in their own lives but of the providences with respect to the ten-tribe kingdom.

"Their honourable men" were the aged who longed for food and the poor people who were thirsty. Those in power ignored the plight of the people. The wealthy had the wells on their 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.

Sarcastic! The rich and the poor die alike—they go into the same hole in the ground—despite the fact 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 is 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.

See RSV: "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). In other words, the people said, "Let the Lord's day come speedily. We would like to see it. Let God's will be done," but their words were *hypocrisy*.

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:

Woe to those who think they are heroes for consuming large quantities of liquor!

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

"Woe unto them" is used four times (verses 18, 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.

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 not only had they cast away His Law but they had previously been His covenant people.

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; Isaiah 6:1 shows that the time setting here is the days of 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.

Moreover, Uzziah was high-minded. He presumed to enter the Holy of the Temple to offer incense and 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 at that time. 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. Why? Because the punishment was adequate for the sin. The Lord 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.”

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 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. But these kings kept the Temple worship pure and that was their primary responsibility.

This gives us an insight into how God judges. Consider some of the reformers. Certain things in their lives and doctrines may be improper and erroneous, but the Lord considered the age and the circumstances under which they lived. Their hearts were right and they received good judgments. In regard to King Uzziah, it was the people who were doing the evil sacrificing. Uzziah 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. Had they 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 will occur is not stated. Neither is it stated whether this judgment is 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 will be seen.

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*." Very 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 was 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 are sharp and all their big bows are 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 just scrunch the animal, bones and all, when eating it. 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. This time period of defeat for Israel will be difficult for many, even in the Bible Student movement, who are not expecting it. "Then [ie, *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).

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 them. Many in Israel today are being encouraged by Protestant Christians that the Lord will save them when Russia comes down, but when Gog comes down 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 hand-picked; only those who are written in the book of the living will be spared for the establishment of the Kingdom. 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 delivered them.

God will put hooks in the nose of Gog and pull them 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 God's 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 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. 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 the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; ie, 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 suggested that *judgment* was about to occur (eg, 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 is telling us that this was a *gigantic* vision! Not only was God high and lifted up, but he was of *immense stature!*

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

The two wings covering the face of each seraphim 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. God's character is covered in the mystery of His Word.

The two wings used for flight show that whenever God moved, the movement was in harmony with His character and Word.

Two wings covered each seraphim's feet. Feet are used for *standing*; ie, 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 a divine providence. When the Lord speaks, let the earth be quiet. Here in Isaiah 6 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 the Lord—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, because there are four living creatures in Revelation 4. The seraphim of Isaiah 6, the cherubim of Ezekiel 1, and the living beings ("beasts") 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 [abroad] 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. God 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 seraphim 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 be too stable. When something trembles, it can be removed. In other words, God will level the old order. The things that can be removed will be removed. A *radical* change is suggested. He wants to build a new 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 would apply only at the very end of the age. When Jerusalem was taken and the Temple destroyed, it was apparent that God had withdrawn His favor from them because it was *His* Temple and city that were destroyed. However, 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 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. He gave David the instructions on how it was to be built. But the setting in Isaiah 6 is 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; He would 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 is comparing his own *humbleness* with the *glory* of God that was just 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 not only says that he is a man of unclean lips but that he dwelled in the midst of a people of unclean lips. As the Lord’s representative, he had been admonishing others, criticizing them for their wrongs. Now, after seeing this *glorious* vision, Isaiah 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; ie, “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 the lips of Isaiah as if to symbolically sterilize them. Remember, Isaiah had said, “I am a man of unclean lips, dwelling 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. “Then I [Jeremiah] said, ... his *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 to either 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.” Put yourself 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 had really wanted to reform the people and to help them mend their ways, would He issue this instruction and use these terms of command? The Lord 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*” this people “understand ... 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 their eyes with supernatural power if He had so chosen, but the Lord’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 the 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. His words were unproductive, largely because of his personality.

Of course the Lord so overruled, for, first, 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 the Lord keeps us in His favor. And the Lord’s disciples were used by the Adversary. Jesus said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” 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.

The Lord 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. (1/10 = Judah, 9/10 = Israel.) *Within* the tenth (Judah) that remained after the ten tribes were taken captive was the holy seed element. (Unfortunately, spiritual pride developed because 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; hence the escapees from the 606 BC slaughter were taken captive into 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. This reminds us 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 “How long, O Lord?” He was told that when the people were taken into captivity, they would begin to understand that he and Jeremiah 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 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.

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.” The Lord had promised that of David’s seed He would make an everlasting covenant, so those who had faith in God’s promises rested secure, feeling that their future was assured. They were confident until this threat came. Now they were shaken up, especially with one of the enemies coming down to war against Jerusalem being their own countrymen.

Verse 1 had said that Rezin and Pekah could not prevail against Jerusalem. This was a statement of the *final outcome* of the two troublemakers coming down. Now verse 2 goes back and tells 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 Shearjashub 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, Shearjashub. The son’s name means “the remnant shall return” (see KJV margin). Isaiah 6:13 had told about the holy seed remnant. To give force to the prophecy of Chapter 6 of an ultimate returning seed, Isaiah had named his son thus. Now Isaiah was told to take his son (and all the people knew what his 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 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 though the ten-tribe kingdom would ultimately go into captivity, a tenth part would be spared. (The people of Judah would assume they were the tenth part rather than 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: “Don’t be afraid of the two tails [Rezin and Pekah] of these smoking firebrands.” “Smoking firebrands” is based on the account of Samson, who caught many foxes, tied them together, and lit their tails. In panic they went helter-skelter through the

field and destroyed it. Nothing could stop those foxes. Here the “two tails of these smoking firebrands” means 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 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 the Scripture “in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength” (Isa. 30:15). *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 the calamity, but because of a restful heart of faith, it 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. However, Ephraim was actually destroyed about 30 years later. How can this difference be harmonized? This technique of the Lord puzzles many. Isaiah was not saying that the 65-year period began the day he was talking to Ahaz. Although we are not given more information about Isaiah’s son, Shearjashub, 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). When Isaiah began his ministry in the days of Uzziah, the 65-year period was first mentioned. Isaiah was now reiterating what previously had been predicted when he had begun his public ministry. Now Isaiah is 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 the Lord speak to Ahaz, and why did He proffer a sign? Isaiah was speaking, so why does it say, “The Lord spake”? To make the question to King Ahaz, king of Judah, a personal one. Ahaz was personally asked to request a sign of God 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 the Lord; yet the Lord 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, “Don’t be fainthearted. Be calm. The Lord 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 9 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 a personality conflict between Isaiah and Ahaz. Maybe he didn’t appreciate Isaiah as a person and hence was reluctant to inquire of the Lord through the prophet. 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 would suggest that more culpability was attached to his refusal than merely a personality conflict. Ahaz did not want to hear.

The Lord gave a sign: “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and 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 and say 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? That would not be a miracle but 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 (“God with us”) was recognized by very few Jews at the First Advent, but when the Kingdom is established in Israel under Christ’s reign, then his name will be known by the public as Immanuel (“God with us”).

Q: 2 Kings 16, in mentioning some of Ahaz’s evil deeds, says he burned his own son as an

offering. Would there be an emphasis on “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 or emphasis on a son being born of a virgin.

A: Yes, it 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” curds (butter) and honey. Verses 21–25 apply here, suggesting 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. The honey would be wild honey, and the 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.

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

A double sign may have been given here; ie, there may have been a fulfillment in the type as well as with Jesus. 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 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 this is a prophecy of Jesus, who is the primary fulfillment of the sign and is 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.

This is a reference to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria (2 Kings 16). 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 Israel against Judah. Considering 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—ie, since Solomon, since the first 120 years of the 513 years of the kings—there had not been such trouble. Since the birth of Ephraim, the ten-tribe kingdom, in the days of Jereboam 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 their crops and stores. The effect was that they figuratively “shaved” the nation clean—they took Israel’s superfluous strength and produce. “A razor that is hired” = the Lord had a foreign “barber” (especially Assyria) come in and clean up the land. The Lord whistled for the bee and the fly; they came and filled the land and cleaned it out. The wages were the booty. “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” = Assyria beyond the river Euphrates. Egypt and Assyria were both great powers, but of the two, Assyria was greater.

“[It 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 represents Assyria, and the fly 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.

“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” (RSV). The land where 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 it is just saying 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 large 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 it.

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. Purpose of notarizing the document: When the event would take place, this would prove Isaiah predicted it ... and also that he 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. She would thus be a *prophetess* from two standpoints.

This verse 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 fulfillment and a natural one.

Another illustration is the Passover lamb, which was to be slain between the two evenings; ie, 3 p.m., which is 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, and it had to be 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 prophetess 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) would mean Maher-shalal-hash-baz was probably no more than three years old at the time the prophecy was fulfilled.

Prophecy: Before the child, Maher-shalal-bash-baz, 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;

“This people” = Judah. “Waters of Shiloah” = the Pool of Siloam (the pool at Hezekiah's Tunnel).

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:

Verses 6 and 7 give a contrast between the water of Siloam (which feeds the king's pool) and a mighty river (the Euphrates) in Assyria. “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 (7:3,4).

The water 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, ie, 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 with Samuel speaking on behalf of the Lord 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].” (Remaliah's son was Pekah.)

“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 the Lord would take care of them and they were not even to defend themselves. The army of Sennacherib did come to Judah. After prophesying about Tiglath-pileser, Isaiah abruptly starts to prophesy about Sennacherib and uses 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" is used, but this time it is 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.

Verses 9–13: Three historic events are alluded to here, but not according to the sequence in Kings and Chronicles. The events are 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 themselves into a stronger religious group whereby they can proclaim a message warning the populace against what they see as existing dangers of communism, etc.

However, back there, when the Israelites heard an enemy was coming, they usually tried to get an ally to be confederate with them. Israel would then play 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, Isaiah being 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/dread”).

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.

“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. The Lord was testing them. With one class the test would result in their downfall, and with the other class the test would bring out meretorious qualities. “Many ... shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken” (verse 15).

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.

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 is 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. The Lord used Isaiah as a prophet to utter things that even he did not fully understand, nor his “disciples.”

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 the Lord 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 will “wait” on the Lord, trusting in faith.

“I will wait upon the LORD ... and I will *look* for him.” Some people trust in the Lord’s providences, but they stop looking and say, “The Lord will let us know when it comes.” 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. The present Lord is primarily responsible for the message. “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 three children, to whom he gave odd names, or (2) Isaiah's followers, who were harassed (as was Isaiah himself—he 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 the naming of him "Immanuel"), but only one thing took place at the First Advent (the birth of the child). 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?**

In the future, because God's voice is not being heard, the people will seek occult sources. Instead they should implore *Him* more.

"And when they [the people of Judah] shall say unto you [Isaiah], Seek unto them that have familiar spirits..." the question is "Shouldn't a people seek unto their God and not to 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. 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 there, the loyal remnant of Judah heeded Isaiah's message, but 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 of the image of the beast. The "mark" will be a union, a confederacy, to fight against the common enemy: agnostics, atheists, 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 is warning us not to unite.

Verse 19 is telling us 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 the Lord's counsel is to the contrary: To avoid the temptation, turn to *prayer* (to sanctify God) and to the *Lord's 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” would be communication with fallen angels and with 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 the Lord’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.” 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, first, a communication from them. Later on will come the deluge.

Verses 19–21 indicate several problems in addition to lying wonders: unemployment, crop failures, starvation. The people walking through the land will have no food. With the money worthless, employment will cease. With crops being pillaged, farmers will cease to grow 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 out of hand, martial law will be established. Next they 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 get so bad no flesh would be saved without divine help. How else would conditions get stabilized? Crops don’t 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 RSV 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 the 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 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); ie, 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 came into 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. The Romans were an example, occupying the southern end and the western shore (including Tiberias) 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 they would get a future blessing in the Naphtali and Zebulun area of Galilee, and this was fulfilled 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 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 birth place, 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, it has been the *Gentiles* who 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 Zebulon 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 called Immanuel. There is *much* in Isaiah about *Jesus*; in fact, it is called the Christological book. Here Messiah is brought in again.

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

RSV: “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 is the “spoil” being divided? Who are those rejoicing as in the harvest?

There is a twofold application. Naphtali and Zebulon were greatly favored, but Jesus criticized Capernaum because with all of the mighty works done there, the people did not bring forth proper fruitage. “Thou, O 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 is slow, for it is taking 2,000 years to complete the Church. Principle: 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. Because this country has been blessed with the gospel, comforts of life, greater education and civilization, etc., it will suffer proportionately more than Third World countries when the Time of Trouble comes with unemployment, hunger, etc.

Verse 3 in the Revised Standard Version explains the favor and joy that were ignored and resulted in trouble.

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.

“Thou” = God.

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.

The breaking of the yoke, the burdensome staff on the shoulder, and the rod of the oppressor are 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 him. And 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 the 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. And he was a “wonderful Counsellor”—“Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). And he was a “mighty God” in the sense of being a mighty prophet doing wonderful works. POWER was vested in him, and he was a teacher—they would think of him as a “father,” taking much time to counsel and teach them. The “child” was given unto them.

But the *real, larger, and full* fulfillment will be in the Kingdom. What Jesus did at the First Advent was a sampling of what he will do in the Kingdom.

Verse 4: The type, however, pertains to the land of Israel. The prophecy was a comfort to those living in Isaiah’s day. Verse 4 refers to a 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 is saying that the yoke of slavery and oppression will be broken. And 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).

“As in the day of Midian” refers to another situation where the odds seemed overwhelming: 300 men against hundreds of thousands. 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 the sword of Gideon,” they did not have literal swords, and the Midianites slew one another. The enemy will be as a cloud covering the land, and the Lord 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 did take part in the battle; they took the offensive and initiated the battle. When Gideon

gave the signal, they broke the trumpets and shouted. The exception or difference in the future is that the Israelis 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*. 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: This verse 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]." In other words, the real authority is God's, and Jesus is His active agent. In Daniel 2:44,45, in connection with the stone smiting the image, the account says, "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.

"Throne of David [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 Jesus would be honored in connection with Israel's restoration. The throne will be in Jerusalem, and the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies is implied, among whom will be David.

"David" means "beloved"; ie, 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. Here four names were used for the ten-tribe kingdom: Jacob = Samaria = Ephraim = Israel. The ten tribes were saying, "The bricks are fallen down, but instead of bricks, we will use superior hewn stone and make it 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;

Rezin = king of Syria. Earlier Rezin and Pekah, king of the ten tribes, had made a covenant to defeat Judah and put their own king on the throne. God had predicted 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. Now Israel (the ten tribes) 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. (Their reasoning was that "the bricks are fallen down, so we will 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 they 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 the Lord.

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. There are several categories: (1) head, (2) tail, (3) branch, and (4) rush. "Rush" = the more numerous *common people*, the grass element. "Branch" = something more secure and used for support, ie, 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" would be the less numerous *ruling class*, the more elite. The "head" would be the same: the leaders, the ruling element, "the

ancient and honourable" (judges, princes, advisors, Sanhedrin, etc.). The categories are summarized below:

branch	vs.	rush
head	vs.	tail
leaders	vs.	"they that are led"

The "branch," the "head," and the "leaders" are all more or less the same. However, there are distinctions 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 us 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. They observed which way the wind was blowing and acted in harmony with it for reasons of personal advantage. They were "yes" men to the leaders. Therefore, 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. 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—it was a necessary judgment.

The people were "godless" (RSV); they were *not repentant* (see verse 13). They did not turn to God.

Isa. 9:18 For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars 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 suggests *retribution* (their wickedness, as the Lord's people, brought upon them a corresponding responsibility and judgment), and it suggests the trouble would purge and cleanse them as a people.

Just as briars, thorns, and stubble burn rapidly, so the fire of wickedness burning and devouring briars and thorns emphasizes the *violence and suddenness* of the judgment. In other words, their final captivity 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 to have bards act as journalists and go from place to place to tell the news. This was how the news spread. Many of the bards were quite accomplished, and they would often extemporaneously translate the news into story *songs* or poetry or prose that was sometimes accompanied with music. Hence some of the Old Testament prophets probably composed prophecy songs. Then assistants would learn the prophecies by heart and go throughout the land telling/singing them. As they traveled, they would depend on the goodwill of the people to support them. The prophets and their assistants—probably thousands of them in Old Testament times—would get two reactions: benefactions and rebuffs. The way these prophecies here in Isaiah are phrased suggests they were put to music.

The reason the trouble (wrath and darkness) was brewing and the reason the people would be as fuel for the fire was because 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.” In other words, as a result of the war, the people would forage for food and be starving. “They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm” means they would bite their “brothers” under the same Law Covenant. Ephraim and Manasseh, brothers and the two sons of Joseph, were devouring each other. Together, Ephraim and Manasseh were against and tried to devour Judah, also a kinsman. Hence is seen the *terror of anarchy* with brother devouring brother.

In antitype we see that Christendom (Israel) is composed of Catholicism (ten tribes) and Protestantism (two tribes). This very condition of trouble and anarchy will come to pass at the end of the age. First, Catholicism and Protestantism will unite against a common enemy. Then the veneer of Christianity will wear off and they will attack and devour one another like beasts for survival. Disorder will increase to the point of no return: anarchy. All government will cease. When the 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. This 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 the *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 and/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 antitype, all the *radical* movements will be involved in tearing down *Christendom*. Somehow the dissidents will group themselves together and simultaneously cause anarchy. 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 are categorized as 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 captive the ten tribes (Isa. 8:4). See 2 Kings 18:1–16. 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 with the two tribes (although Jeremiah 52 mentions three stages, two with regard to Zedekiah and one with Jeconiah).

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 represent *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 the three unclean spirits 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 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 would 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. Gog, comprised of communists and their sympathizers, 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 is so successful in his exploits that he uses an illustration to show his greatness: his commanders, generals, and princes are equal to the *greatest* of other nations. Boastful!

Calno, Hamath, and Samaria correspond to places in Lebanon and Israel today. The king of Assyria was 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 the 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 the Lord's intention after "Assyria" does its work. In antitype, the power that destroys Christendom will itself be destroyed after the work is accomplished.

The type: 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*.

The 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 hand-picked 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 (ie, 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 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 the 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. Take 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 (Ezek. 39:6), the armies of Gog will continue to tear through the land, taking spoils as they go.

Verse 12: The language of this verse, 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 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 briars 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 1/6 of Gog will survive. The forces of Gog will come down like a cloud upon the tiny land of Israel, but when God delivers the Holy Remnant the "trees" of the "forest" of Gog will be decimated. Very few of the enemy will survive when God fights for His people as in days of old.

Tarshish, Sheba, and Dedan 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. In other words, the survivors of Tarshish, Sheba, and Dedan 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:

Babylon falls

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). "Sword" = 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 Jacob." This verse is a reminder of Isaiah 4:2-4. The following expressions are used—why the use of "Jacob" vs. "Israel"?

Isaiah 10

Such as are escaped of *Jacob*

Isaiah 4

Them that are escaped of *Israel*

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. Isaiah 4 and 10 refer to the same incident, but Isaiah 4 emphasizes the purification or *purging* of Israel: the remnant "shall be called *holy*," 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*. With all their problems, the Israeli leaders 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 hand-picked and a relatively small number.

If the application is to the Jews worldwide, "the sand of the sea" would number between 7 and 9 million.

Or 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]" would be 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.

“In the midst of all the land” refers to Israel 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 is translated “a full end.” If considered in this sense, it would be the sinner, at least temporarily, of both Israel and the enemy. “For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many” (Isa. 66:16—pertains to the purging of the Gentiles in Jacob’s Trouble). “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” (Isa. 66:17—pertains to the purging of Israel). “Eating swine’s flesh” refers to Jews who are breaking their covenant by eating unclean meat. In other words, this 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 the ungodly Jews see dramatic, strange events occurring in Israel in Jacob’s Trouble, their consciences will bother them and they will want to convert. When they realize 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 smooth and happy things, but truth is truth. The whole counsel should be declared. When informed that the trouble is coming and the Lord 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 is in harmony with Ezekiel 38:11,12 and Zechariah 14:2. Jerusalem shall be captured and half of the people taken into exile. 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.

The Lord, then, is telling those Jews who will be properly exercised to be patient, for He has predetermined that the Jacob’s Trouble experience is necessary and that in a little while His wrath will be passed 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 tells Israel, “Be not 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 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, and 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. See Judges 7:25. “*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.*” Oreb and Zeeb were two Midianite princes who were slain by the Ephraimites, and the heads of Oreb and Zeeb were brought 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. See Judges 8:1–3.)

Prior to Oreb’s slaying, the Midianites had fled in confusion. Likewise the Egyptians who were pursuing the Israelites were thrown into confusion when the cloud that had been leading the Israelites moved to their rear and was thus between them and the enemy; 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). Thus God will divide the land as He had 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,” ie, to Jerusalem (Isa. 8:8). It will look like utter defeat for Israel, for when the head goes underwater, the individual drowns.

However, at this very place, 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, ie, The Christ] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S” (Oba. 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/Gog will come from the north, so these verses are saying that word will spread as the enemy comes closer and closer. Realizing that they are hopelessly outnumbered, those in Jerusalem will experience great fear.

“He [Gog] 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).

Notice the set-off treatment of verses 28–32 in the RSV. This is a clue 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 “little while” has elapsed, during which Jerusalem will be taken (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*, then the nations by stopping the anarchy. And God 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 TV, 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 angels. (Many of those in the guerrilla bands will destroy each other when their food supplies run out, but 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:

This 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" is 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 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.

Verses 24 on in Isaiah 10 describe the Gog and Magog setting at the end of the age. 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 the Lord 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 is the little twig who will grow 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, ... counsel and might, ... knowledge and ... the fear of the LORD." This ties in with the four titles of Isaiah 9:6, "... his name shall be called [1] Wonderful [delete comma] Counsellor, [2] The mighty God, [3] The everlasting Father, [4] The Prince of Peace. Both Isaiah 11:2 and 9:6 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 in Exodus 30:23–25, “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.” 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” would be good *advice*. A person might have experience and yet not counsel others; both qualities are needed. In counseling others, one draws upon his previous experience. And 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 one suffers, he gets more knowledge and more grace, etc.

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

3. The “spirit of knowledge and of the fear [reverence] of the LORD.” Here in Isaiah 11:2 reverence for God is coupled with knowledge. Because of his preexistent knowledge, Jesus will justify many. “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*” (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 at the First Advent). Hence Jesus had knowledge from two sources: as the Logos with the Father and later as the man Christ Jesus here on earth. One problem with Satan is that he misunderstood God’s motives, whereas Jesus understood them. When, during his earthly ministry, Jesus was perplexed by something, 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, fear of the Lord. Verse 3 will explain 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 shall have a quickness or keenness of sense or scent; ie, 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 shall the spirit of the Lord make Jesus “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord”? He shall 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 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 = *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 = *development* based upon obedience and working for the development. Examples of the fruits are joy, peace, etc.

Intuitive knowledge will be given mechanically to Jesus as a reward. Jesus 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.” Verse 1 started, “And there shall come forth ...” Verse 2 began, “And the spirit of the LORD ...” Verse 3 started, “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 verbal reproof], and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” If the verbal reprimand is 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.

Why is the “girdle” mentioned? It 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. Hence Jesus will *accomplish* things in the Kingdom. There will be *activity*. Jesus will be faithful as the Messiah: faithful to each individual, faithful to God, 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.

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.

Lamb = docile, harmless
 Wolf = ferocious, harmful

Kid = joyous, spontaneous, harmless
 Leopard = adroit, ferocious, agile, calculating

Calf = harmless, defenseless, domesticated
 Lion = survival of the fittest, ruthless, wild
 (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.

Cow = tame
 Bear = 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 (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. 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 nor destroy *because* the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. 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 reminds us of the Garden of Eden before Adam sinned; it 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.

“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.” People from other nations will go up to Jerusalem.

In warfare an ensign (flag or standard) was used as an insignia to show where the king or 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 that the nations will go to? 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*) the gathering of Jews (the “dispersed of Judah”—see verse 12) will take place 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

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, the U.S., etc.)

Hence this is an *international* picture—ie, the four corners of the earth—as Isaiah would have expressed it in his day.

The gathering of a remnant the *second time* from all over the earth and setting up “an ensign for the nations” (Isa. 11:12) 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.

Ephraim = 10 tribes	}	A spirit of rivalry existed in times past. Ephraim was
Judah = 2 tribes	}	jealous of Judah because Jerusalem and the Temple were there,
	}	and 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 reminding Ephraim about her advantages and taunting Ephraim. That will not be the case in the Kingdom.

Antitypes:

1. Ephraim = Papacy; Judah = Protestantism.
2. Ephraim = nominal Christians; Judah = Jews.

Regarding the second antitype, there was an attempt to discard the roots of Judaism. The Catholic Church took 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” = the Philistines. “Them of the east” = 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. Verse 11 showed *the Lord* 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 by Israel will help to stir up hatred and jealousy around the world against Israel. This resentment, as well as the desire to take a spoil (Ezek. 38:12), will be factors in Gog’s going down against Israel. And notice that the nations of verse 14 are 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 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 dryshod. 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 and 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 head waters of the Nile, ie, the Aswan Dam area. Zechariah 14:17,18 mentions that upon the nation, particularly Egypt, that will not recognize Jerusalem, no rain will fall. For Egypt to have no rain/water 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. 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 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 all of the Israelites who came out of Egypt—all 2 million people. Isaiah is saying that the future remnant will come out of Assyria (Russia) after Jacob’s Trouble *as* Israel came out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

“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 post haste. 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: Do not confuse this “highway” 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”) is 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” = The Christ. This is a reference to Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman regarding the Church being a well of water springing up unto life. 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.

This 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 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 conquering of Israel in 606 BC.

In the type Cyrus (meaning “son,” ie, Jesus) 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.

The prophet is hastening the last members to get into the gates (into 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.) The “gates of the nobles” 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.

(Rev. 2:26,27) “And 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.”

(Psa. 149:5–9) “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.”

“Shake the hand” would be waving the hand to beckon the last members to hurry into the

gates of the nobles.

Comment: In effect, it is like the last call to “Come out of her, my people.”

Reply: Yes, that is all involved. The consecrated ones 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” would be the Church. Here they are being summoned for the Time of Trouble (verse 4).

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.

This verse pertains to anarchy in *all* kingdoms or nations, not just in Israel. (Israel will be the climax or last feature of the 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 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, received a kingdom, and returned.

This verse commingles the work of the Church and the instruments down here who are the sledge hammer. 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 arrogance 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 Isaiah 13:8 should not be confused with the *pang* (singular) of 1 Thessalonians 5:3, “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 Isaiah 13:8 indicate that all segments of society will experience great anguish: violence, distress, famine, etc. “Their faces shall be as flames” means that the anguish and all-encompassing distress will be reflected in their faces. There will be some selectivity, 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.

False sun = Papacy. Moon = its canon law. Stars = its clergy.

(*Counterfeit light*, including Protestantism and Christendom in general, will dim.)

On the other hand, 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; ie, alliances of Christians and/or groupings of ministers, the World Council of Churches, etc. All of these will be uninformed as to what is happening.

Arrogancy 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 here in Isaiah the literal is not the emphasis. With verse 10 saying that the day of the Lord will be very “cruel” and hard and that He will punish the wicked, we can see that in addition to mental anguish and sorrow, there will be physical pain and death as well. 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, there will be a literal darkening of skies 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 is great wealth and gold if it is worthless? Referring to the “golden wedge of Ophir” is comparable to referring to the valuable King Tut’s mask of gold. The golden wedge of Ophir was a literal famous wedge in an arch in the land of Ophir. At that time 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 of 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*, 1/6 of the enemy will survive. No flesh would be saved if the days were not cut short, but they will be cut short.

“... 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 this 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 up and removed. Organized society would include police and fire departments, business institutions, banks, etc. The “heavens” would be 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*.) 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, a shepherd pursues it, takes it up in his arms, and returns it to the flock. But here the people are likened to a sheep without a shepherd—and like a deer chased by the hunter. A shepherd is interested in saving the 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 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 these 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 being discussed earlier—a tumult of all the earth involving all nations—but now a localized, natural application about the Medes coming down to destroy Babylon. “Behold, I will stir up the Medes ...”

The Medes did not regard the silver or the gold. When they captured Babylon, no doubt the people of the city tried to buy them off—but unsuccessfully, for the Medes were fierce and already rich.

This verse 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.

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 would pass through, but none would desire 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)—ie, imaginary creatures—danced there at night. God put a curse, as it were, on the city of Babylon, which originally was glorious. The superstitious bedouin did not want to be among the ruins at night but pitched outside the city.

Earlier God magnified the city of Babylon as the instrument of His judgment on the nation of Israel, but when the king gloated over the glory of Babylon and the empire had served its purpose of keeping the Israelites away from their land until the 70 years of desolation were fulfilled, then 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.

“Dragons” = hyenas and jackals in the RSV. In other words, the animals made the ruins their habitation. At night their 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. 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.

“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.

“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.

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 hand-picked 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. 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 would 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 in the future 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 is called a “golden” city. In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, his empire was pictured by the head of *gold* (Dan. 2:38,39). 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). This will be seen in subsequent verses. 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 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 the breaking of the staff of the wicked: (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

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.

"He" = Papacy and, in the highest sense, Satan, the oppressor, the "god of this world."

Isa. 14:7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

To 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 were Satan's weapons. He was 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.

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 is a highly dramatized *figurative* picture. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand, whereas a 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, the strength, and the 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 will not only 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 also 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," the real day or morning star (Jesus) will take over. Jesus 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. Jesus will occupy the very place Satan wanted: on the sides of the north underneath the Father.

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.

"How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" At his First Advent, Jesus said he had beheld the Adversary as a great light falling from heaven (being cast down). "He said unto them, 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 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.

Isaiah 14:12 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*." True, Satan was cut down to *tartaroo*, to earth's atmosphere, but this verse 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 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." 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 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 this earth and he was allowed to temporarily usurp that rulership.

The 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 ⇒ 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"—it fits under and conforms to the top stone. 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" (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 earth-born 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 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 Satan’s humiliation and debasement enacted. (2) If Satan does not materialize, those in the *spiritual* realm will see his abasement.

The RSV 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 (order: Church complete ⇒ Babylon falls ⇒ Satan 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 uses the picture of Satan’s being bound in a prison house merely to show 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 be used to 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. At any rate, 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,” “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.

The kings have mausoleums or sepulchers for their burial. In comparison, Satan is cast out without a grave and dies with dishonor, his clothing being figuratively disheveled as with those who die in battle.

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.

Whether or not a person has a proper burial in a grave, he will still be brought forth from the tomb 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 with Satan. We are told here that he will not have a proper burial, yet he can 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 Satan being drawn or pulled out of the river Nile with hooks in his jaws and being 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.” (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. Those who go up against the camp of the saints in the little season, and hence fail to get life, will be the devil and his angels. 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.

2 Kings 19 tells of an unusual experience Israel had with the Assyrian Sennacherib, who invaded Judah. He sent his general Rabshakah 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. Sennacherib 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 is 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 the yoke.

Verse 29: “Whole Palestina” suggests that the *whole area of the Middle East* 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, don’t get overconfident, for you will have a *worse* experience. You shook in your boots over Sennacherib, but I delivered you. A situation even more severe is coming.” The prophet was saying that they would have a temporary reprieve, but out of that same serpent would come forth another and *worse* experience.

Who was the “cockatrice”? King Nebuchadnezzar, one of the world’s greatest *conquerors*. He was also a great architect and builder of cities and temples. Hence he is pictured as the head of *gold* in Daniel 2. King Nebuchadnezzar did affect all of the surrounding nations (the whole area of Palestine / Philistia—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 (verse 31) 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 the surrounding land.

Nebuchadnezzar’s fruit was a “fiery flying serpent” in that not only was the invasion terrible, but it was *lasting*. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar 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 vine dressers to keep the land. After the vine dressers subsequently slaughtered Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar made the whole land utterly desolate (as Jeremiah had predicted).

Verses 29–31: The historical event in the past was real, but verses 29–31 are an allegory of what will happen to Israel in our day. A temporary peace will come. Message: Don’t get overconfident, for an enemy from the north (Gog, the Assyrian) shall return with *more* destruction.

[My question: Is the Sennacherib defeat a type of the yet future Arab defeat alluded to in Psalm 83? Both bring a *temporary peace* (Ezek. 38:11,12) before *great destruction*. In both cases, overconfidence will be a problem.]

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 were the important cities in Moab, an extensive area at that time (from the river Arnon to Jericho). Nebo and Madeba exist today in Jordan. The prophecy was that all of these leading cities would be destroyed.

The men of Moab were proud of their luxurious beards. When Moab was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, the beards were roughly cut off, their 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 was a punishment 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 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.

Verse 5: Zoar is the little city where Lot fled when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Gen. 19:20,22). "Zoar" means "little." (The Dead Sea did not exist prior to Sodom's destruction—Lot chose that land because it was a fertile valley. The earthquake *radically* changed the land so that there was no outlet for the Jordan River.) 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.)

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.

Even the escapees would be violently killed. 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 would be pursued.

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.

2 Kings 3:4 states that Moab *gave a huge* tribute or levy to Israel: “And Mesha king of Moab ... rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.” The lambs and rams were sent by the Moabites in Petra to the king of Israel via the desert or wilderness.

Sela = 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. (When the Israelites were trying to enter the Promised Land, they were prevented from using this route and had to detour way around.) In other words, God was counseling Moab to send gifts to Israel, His people, as pacification; but He knew they would not. Hence they 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.

God’s future capital will be identified with Israel; hence it was good to pacify Israel.

The “tabernacle of David” will be Ezekiel’s Temple, from which Messiah’s judgment will go forth. “David” is 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. Moab, once a great and prosperous nation, 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.

In Colossians 3:12 Paul said to “*put on* therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.*” We develop “*bowels of mercies.*” By thinking of others and praying for them, we can cultivate sympathy for the brethren going through trials.

The treaders of grapes sang songs in the vineyard and shouted to keep their rhythm and to make the job more interesting and happy. This joy, etc., 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 tells 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 tell King Ahaz about 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. “Benhadad” is a title of the rulership in Damascus, 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.)

In Isaiah 7:10–16, the “both kings” of verse 16 who were a threat to Ahaz were Rezin of Syria and Pekah of the ten tribes. In Isaiah 8:1–4 the king of Assyria is again shown desolating Damascus. Sequence: (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: a “virgin” (a “young maiden” of purity and chastity—RSV) would conceive and bare a son. The Hebrew word for “young maiden” was used because there was to be a twofold fulfillment: the type and, of course, Jesus. 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 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 by the elect, Israel will be saved.

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. 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, Elizabeth, would give birth to a child, and the child was to be named “John.”) The dumbness was removed when the child was born and named “John.” Hence there are two kinds of man-child: (1) the false one in Revelation 12 and (2) the true one in Isaiah 66. “Shall a

nation be born in one day?" (paraphrase of Isaiah 66:8). 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.

Fulfillments of the destruction of Damascus:

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.

Verse 2: Damascus *will be* a place for flocks, a place for pasturage, a place of peace where none are afraid. In other words, 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 spoken of *negatively*. In other words, 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 ... that rob us.” The evil intent of Gog will be to take a spoil (the “cattle and much goods”). 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 the *dawn* will follow the trouble. Darkness precedes the ushering in of the Kingdom in its grandeur and light, the morning of the new day. At “eveningtide” there will be trouble; ie, at the very end of the age, there will be great trouble. Israel’s trouble will be called Jacob’s Trouble.

Verses 12–14 can be taken as a *general* picture of the world’s trouble with the sunrise of the dawn following the trouble. However, these verses can also be taken as a *specialized* picture of Jacob’s Trouble; verse 14 shows 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. Why did the Holy Spirit use “shadowing wings”? To show watch-care, safety, shelter—God’s providence in this direction.

Young's Analytical Bible and other translations use "Ho" instead of "Woe." "Ho" suggests a message of comfort will follow. "Ho" 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 is 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 a U.S. emblem. In the Old Testament, eagle's wings are a symbol of divine providence.

"Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia." Ethiopia, the land the Queen of Sheba came from, 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!

Who are the "ambassadors [sent forth] by the sea ... in vessels of bulrushes"? Messages of truth. These messages are based upon the utterances of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus himself. The messages of truth are shipped abroad and dispersed throughout the nations of earth in "vessels of bulrushes" (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"; ie, it does not have to be the river in Egypt. The point is that the messages 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" (*qal* or *qol*) can mean "light." The 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. They are messengers with messages of sound, voice, light, and truth. "Go, ye sound/voice messengers." "Go, ye light/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."

"Scattered and peeled." This holy nation consists of a mixed people of various tongues and backgrounds scattered throughout the world.

“Shadowing ... wings” (verse 1) indicates not merely that divine providence sheltered the holy nation but that the United States, in turn, sheltered others. The U.S. has sheltered people of all nations through God’s providence; it has beckoned the persecuted to come here (see verse 3). God’s care was on this country, holding it 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) were driven out of foreign countries through persecution.

The allegory here is of the Church in various parts of the earth. As the mother eagle stirs up her nest by removing the down to expose the 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 here.

The wings on the cover of the original Volumes indicate that “messengers” of comfort and hope would go out about the “Sun” (also on the cover) of righteousness, who would arise with healing in his wings.

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.

This country 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, there 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 a message 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—put into the barn.

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 of the harvest.

The “sour grape [that] is ripening in the flower” would be the Church.

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.

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” = “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 are 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 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 element (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. The Great Company will share in the world’s Time of Trouble at the hands of the masses. The Church will be harvested while it is yet summer. When that 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 that time” = “during that time.” During that time the present of the Little Flock will be brought to God. 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,” ie, 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 subject matter of Chapter 19 is “the burden of Egypt.”

“The LORD rideth upon a swift cloud.” A cloud can be a cloud of blessing or trouble. A dark cloud would indicate trouble. Here the cloud comes *suddenly*. The Lord will ride or fly on a swift cloud to bring judgment against Egypt.

(Isa. 60:8) “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves [homing pigeons] to their windows [to their roosts]?” This verse has a vague similarity. Isaiah 60:3–5 tells that 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 their assistance and cooperation with Israel.

Many Scriptures tell us that God takes a certain action, but sometimes the context indicates that He accomplishes the matter through others, rather than doing it first-hand. For example, King Nebuchadnezzar was used as His “servant” to visit judgment on Israel. And Cyrus was the Lord’s “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 (Memphis) and Zoan were also punished. King Nebuchadnezzar was the “cruel lord” of Isaiah 19:4—“And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord.”

Certain clues indicate a probable future fulfillment of Isaiah 19:1–18 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 against neighbor indicates 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 the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, in the past.

Isa. 19:5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

The Nile is referred to in this verse (the “waters” and the “river”). Although its headwaters are Lake Victoria, a large and deep lake, that body of water would 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 is reckoned as coming from the Lord in the sense that He predicts it—even if other agencies are used.

The “sea” would be 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). This judgment is different from the one here in Isaiah 19; it will occur later.

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) 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 are fools (verses 11 and 13). (Memphis was from an earlier period.) One of the Pharaoh's residences was in Zoan. Pharaoh was regarded as the son of Ra (ie, 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. Hence *Ra* was part of Pharaoh's title or name. 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.

Judah is mentioned as a "terror."

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 are just before the frequently quoted "Pyramid" verses. Notice the term "in that day" starting to be used in verses 16 and 18.

Five Egyptian cities will speak Hebrew (the "language of Canaan") and swear to Jehovah God (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/Judah.

Judah will prosper *until* Gog and Magog come down. 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 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. Similarly, many Egyptians, even those living in Cairo, have never visited the Pyramid, *the great testimony of a Savior in their own land*, and it is related to Jesus. The Pyramid will "speak" in the future, revealing its secrets. Just as Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and long identified with that nation, was unaccepted and unrecognized (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 Pyramid, then, will be especially significant to the Egyptians when they realize what the monument that was *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 the Lord to superintend the building of the Pyramid. In Egyptian mythology Shem was considered to be the Savior 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 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.” (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 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 Pyramid identifies who the Savior is—he is the true and tried (top) stone, the head of the corner, which the builders rejected.

Verse 21: While it is true that Egypt will know the Lord in that day and give sacrifices and oblations 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” (consecrate).

The 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 /or tangible; for example, the Bible is a sign—and so is the Pyramid, which is the *Bible in stone*.

Witness = the Pyramid shows *God’s 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. The Pyramid testifies of God’s plan.

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 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 them 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 Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.” In other words, Israel is between the two and both will recognize Israel’s role in the Kingdom. In the final picture at the end of the Kingdom, they will all 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.

The larger fulfillment:

Israel = the Jews.

Egypt = the religious (“Christian”) nations; ie, Christendom.

Assyria = 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). In other words, 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.

“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. Furthermore, Hezekiah may have been the grandson of Isaiah. If so, what an interesting family! Amos ⇒ Isaiah ⇒ ? ⇒ Hezekiah.

In connection with the besieging of Ashdod, the Lord used Isaiah to demonstrate a prophecy.

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;

The prophecy 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 her 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 Isaiah walked in.

Isaiah's appearance was shocking even though he probably was not stark naked but had the barest of coverage. In walking in this manner, with his buttocks uncovered, Isaiah simulated the humiliating experience that befell prisoners of war. (Prisoners 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. This was the real purpose of Isaiah's demonstration—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.

"Inhabitant of this isle" = "inhabitants of this coastland"—RSV.

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.

This is a prophecy against Babylon and Arabia. Notice the terrain: "desert of the sea," "whirlwinds in the south," "the desert," "a terrible land." In other words, the reference is to great wastelands of desert in the areas of Babylon and Arabia. 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 a 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 has an emotional reaction when he hears and sees this vision. His loins are filled with pain, he has pangs like a woman in travail, and he is 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 continues. 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 is saying, “Prepare your food and 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”; ie, grease the shield so that on-coming 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.

“Watchtower” is a reminder of the early days of the *Reprints*, which were called *Views from the Watchtower*. 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 that they are *interested* 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 Version 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* cries *as a lion* (ie, with a *strong* voice). The purpose of the lionlike roar is to *warn or alert* listeners to the danger. The watchman, in wanting to faithfully discharge his responsibility, feels an inner compulsion to declare what he sees. The lion represents *justice* (and wrath).

The watchman cries, "I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights." In other words, the watchman is at his post day and night; he has a spirit of concern. He continually watches 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.

Revised Standard Version: "'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 is looking and he sees in the distance riders in pairs. Then he makes the statement, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon, and all of her images he has shattered to the ground." This is a reminder of the white horses and riders in Revelation 19:11–16 and of the rider coming back from Bozrah—ie, of the *victorious return* of The Christ after the smiting of Babylon.

(Rev. 19:11–16) "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.”

(Isa. 63:1–3) “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.”

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. At that time 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.

A camel is a ship of the desert. It 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.” 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.

This verse is addressed to the feet members 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, he asked a painter to paint an open Bible on the window but 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 Bible and *Watchtower* Society. Of course today that name has a stigma because of the JW's, 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 = Seir = *Christendom*.

“Watchman, what of the night?” The watchman replied, “[Millennial] morning comes [in 1874], and also the night.” In 1874 the 7,000-year day chronologically began. 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
- (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 and 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. 21:1–12)

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 says, “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 and inquiring and entreating 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 itself was “*Watchtower*,” 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 shows 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 (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, 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 Rebecca 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 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.

Revelation 17:14 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]." Revelation 19:14, "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." 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 (verse 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 (verse 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 has 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 on horses 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 clues in this connection also 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, ie, 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 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 (ie, the *choice* corn, *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)—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.

Tema was a city in northern Arabia on the edge of the desert in the vicinity of Edom.

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.’”

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 bedouins, 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 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 bedouins 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, the Philistines, etc.

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 [Edom area], which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”

Bozrah, Dedan, Tema, Kedar, and Sheba all refer to the desert area of Arabia. The bedouins 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 is a prophecy against “the valley of vision.” It 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.

This is a *spiritual picture* in verses 1–3. 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 is 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 to be 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 sees 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.

This is 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:

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.

This verse continues where verses 1–3 left off.

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 just 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. The people 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. (General rule regarding tradition: 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 is ignored, the judgment (with both) becomes 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 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. The sanctity was violated.

The same idea is carried on by the Catholic Church. The ground in Catholic cemeteries is considered to be holy. It is 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 walls of the church. 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." Hence 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," ie, 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. It is the same principle 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). 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 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.” In other words, 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 of Tyre on the island. Alexander scraped the debris and stones from the mainland into the harbor to form a land bridge on which his soldiers would march 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 that Tyre and Sidon had been destroyed.

“Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle [of Cyprus].” The reference to Zidon (Sidon) indicates that the inhabitants of Sidon 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”; ie, the city was so well supplied with goods that it was like an *international* seaport. The local river Sihor 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. Thus 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.

The meaning of this verse is uncertain. Sidon derived its wealth from being a sea power. If this verse is a threat, it would mean 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.

Sidon is being addressed: “Be thou ashamed!”

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. Verse 5 is saying: when the news of Tyre’s destruction reached Egypt, the Egyptians were 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. Now that Tyre was 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 Crete, where they had fled for refuge from Nebuchadnezzar. They were being told: “Go back and look at the city you thought was so great and so joyous. It is in ruins.” This is sarcasm! (2) The people of Tyre were being told to stay on Crete.

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. This 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. 11:18).

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 the mention of Tyre's "antiquity" 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." Included in this prophecy of Tyre and Sidon is the more comprehensive picture of Christendom. 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.

RSV: "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.

This 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 honorable of the earth.

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. Daniel starts the four universal empires with Babylon, and this is true if the universal empires begin with the year 606 BC. 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 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; Shem lived 500 years after the Flood. 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, there were many Armenian Jews 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 a harlot”; ie, 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.

Verses 16 and 17: Tyre would recover, singing as a harlot and winning back her paramours. She would sell herself for money and goods (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. When the city was rebuilt, it 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. In some respects, this wound was more effective than 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 of the Pope and imprisoning him 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 (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”; ie, 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 “house cleaning” and different leadership 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—are 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 (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 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 account would seem to be literal, but it is not. Other Scriptures help us to know it is not literal (eg, Zeph. 3:8). Nevertheless, there will be *universal* suffering and distress of the inhabitants. All will be “burned” figuratively.

“Few men left.” It 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, there will be many deaths and calamities. 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."

(Zech. 13:8,9) "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."

(Ezek. 39:1,2) "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 5/6 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 frivolty will stop. Even the instruments will be silent.

"Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it." Some people who are given to drinking can drink strong liquor with pleasure. But this verse is saying that 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.

"City of confusion" = 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, dragon, and 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 doctrine will not bring happiness and safety; hence it will be "strong" and "bitter" to those who drink it. (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 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.

“City” = Babylon, Christendom.

“The gates are battered into ruins” (RSV). This is a reminder of the invasion of Babylon by Cyrus, who went under the gates of the city of Babylon.

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]”; ie, it is international.

“As when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done.” 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 “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.

The first 13 verses 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 ... From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.” Isaiah is standing in the middle, occupying center stage in the Holy Land. Prophetically he hears jubilation from the eastern and western extremities of the earth; hence there is 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.

“I” = Isaiah. The prophet said, “My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! ... the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.” This is a flashback in time, prior to the trouble. For “My leanness” the KJV margin has “My secret to me”; Isaiah (like the Church) would have 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.

Verses 17–20: 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 it is triggered).

One lesson: 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 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, eg.) 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 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.

Verse 18: "The windows from on high" will be open. This same expression was used at the time of the Flood, at the time of the end of the world that was (Gen. 7:11). Now the expression is 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 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 they follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24).

Verse 23: “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 [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 the Ancient Worthies will be the first ones resurrected here on earth and have a role to play. Just as Jesus and the Church are the first fruits 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, ie, 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 has communication with the peoples of various nations. It boasts of being “THE Church” because of the universality of its communicants. “Strangers” implies its communicants are not really God’s, not really Christians.

In the future mystic Babylon will never be rebuilt (RSV). “It shall never be built [again].”

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” to praise Him. The “strong” 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 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 that many had who lived in tents in the desert, “storms” can be storms in life, ie, 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, the end *precedes* the beginning. 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 the great Time of 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 this country, we can use the illustration of a severe wind storm that threatens to destroy a house. The pressure can be felt; it sounds and seems as if a wall will collapse because of the pressure. 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 that will threaten the destruction of all flesh, threatening 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), bringing a calm.

(2) Gog coming 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 it 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 their noise as well.

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” class 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” (verse 1). His “counsels of old are ... truth” in the sense that His Wisdom and Justice permitted the evil in order to apprise mankind of their need for salvation. 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, 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.

“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 an occasion 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. The “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.

This verse 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, the hope of everlasting life, justice for all, mercy, perfect health with no more sickness, 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 (Matt. 13:15). Why did Jesus not want the conversion? Because 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.

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.

This verse 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 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" would be primarily 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.

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. Then 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.

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.

The breaststroke is referred to here. The power of strong swimmers doing this type of stroke sometimes causes little whirlpools. This shows that the proud boasters in front will be put behind. The Lord, 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 “spoil,” the Moabites were known for the 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 is 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.” “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?” (Num. 23:19). In other words, the truthfulness of God’s utterances can be relied on and their surety of fulfillment.

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,” that is made “an heap” of ruins and “no city” and that “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 the Lord but who will, through awesome judgments, now reverence the Lord. They now see the Lord in the proper perspective. The “strong people” would be 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 the Lord 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 be glad to follow Jesus’ instructions because they will immediately see the benefits of doing so. They will recognize Jesus as the Wise Counselor, the Mighty God.

“A refuge from the [sand]storm” and “a shadow from the heat” (compare Isa. 4:5,6). 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, but 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 very 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. (With the cloud covering, the Israelites could not see the sun, the moon, or the stars.) 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.

Isaiah 4:5,6 is saying that just as in the past God supernaturally led Israel and protected them, 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 hand-pick the survivors, He will subsequently favor them *all* as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

Isaiah 25:4 is saying that 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” of the enemy. In other words, verse 4 is talking not about a literal sandstorm, heat, or flash flood, but about protecting them 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 the deliverance of Israel 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 is written to be either sung or narrated in the future. At that time the Book of Isaiah 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." 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 some day 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. Consider the natural first. Heat can silence tumult. On a hot day, the people languish and are weakened. And so the Lord can quiet the rambunctious anarchistic element, with all their noise and tumult, by causing an especially hot day. It is lawlessness that 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 the Lord 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, the Lord 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 is extolling the greatness of God in verse 1. In His own time and manner, God 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]," God will intervene. 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." God can still that tumult just as He can cool the heat of a scorching hot day with a cloud. When necessary, God 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. 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 speak of a branch of government. In other words, while Gog will consist of ruthless individuals, yet 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 much goods." 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 but 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. In other words, God 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 ones,” 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”; ie, 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 pressures from 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. It 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, know 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 they 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 is used here because that same attitude is manifested today by the Arabs.

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 will bring down the pride 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 we will see 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.

Setting: 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 be *sung* in the future. Today each nation has its own nationalistic songs, such as the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," for the United States. Isaiah is describing a song of deliverance of fleshly Israel, which 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 such as Psalm 22 will be sung—songs that are deeply spiritual but deal with a particularly important moment of history.

Q: Ezekiel 48 shows that when the land is divided into parallel strips, Judah will be just north of the part set aside for the Temple. Is that why Isaiah is 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.

(Psa. 118:19,20) "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 stairs, through a long vestibule gateway, and then into the outer court (which is for the world of mankind). The seven stairs indicate that only those with the right heart condition (the "*righteous nation*") may enter in. The opening of the gates in the Kingdom will mean that the time of opportunity has come.

"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, 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 would show hearty acquiescence to the Lord's deliverance. These verses pertain to God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant from Jacob's Trouble. He will figuratively enter the gates and deliver them. And those comprising the Holy Remnant 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:

“... 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, strong city, and temple. The strong city (the Kingdom) is contrasted with the city to be destroyed (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 7–9 the Church is speaking and looking *forward* to the Kingdom. “With my soul have I desired thee in the [Gospel] night.” The Church speaks of the time yet future when “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

Comment: This song, then, would 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.

“Land of uprightness” = the Kingdom.

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.

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 would be allowed to verbalize their thoughts or intentions. Amos 8:5,6 also reveals the thoughts of the incorrigible.

The willfully wicked will not see (ie, know) the majesty of the Lord. "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" (everything in everyone).

"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" (verse 11 RSV). This is the same principle as the nations that will not go up to Jerusalem not getting rain. God's favor and blessing will be there waiting for them, but they will not recognize, acknowledge, or appreciate the extent of that favor and blessing. In other words, the willfully wicked will not appreciate the favor God shows in the Kingdom. Later they will be made to feel shame and to experience the "fire" of 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 is speaking. In the past other "lords" ruled over them, but now (in the Kingdom) they acknowledge God. These "lords" would be Satan, money, earthly rulers, and all other types of bondage permitted 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).

In other words, those who live on into the ages of ages will express these sentiments and 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 the people consecrate and come into harmony with God's ways, the borders of the Kingdom will expand too. "... thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land" (RSV).

The Kingdom will start with Israel but 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 is speaking about the chastening of 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 italic words are omitted in the King James translation, the verse begins, "Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall arise ..." Why is 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 age—to the *meek of Israel*, who recognize the meaning of events about to transpire. When news of Gog coming down reaches those in Israel, some will mourn like doves and hide themselves meekly in the clefts of the rock. Thus 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. It ends (verse 20) with 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."

Several classes are mentioned in this chapter: natural Israel, the true Church, the false Church, and the Holy Remnant.

"... 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.

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.

In the RSV "Leviathan" is capitalized and is called the "fleeing," "twisting" serpent. Leviathan is "that old serpent, called the Devil" (Rev. 12:9). He is the "dragon" in the midst of the "sea" of mankind.

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 the largest monster (whale), vicious (alligator) and devious (serpent). The strongest evil individual or personality 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" would be Israel. In the Kingdom Israel will be the vineyard of the world; ie, from Israel will go forth the great blessings.

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; refreshment will go out to the world from there. God will water and protect this vineyard.

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 make peace with God (take hold of God's strength) or he can 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.

After Jacob's Trouble, when the Kingdom is established, Jacob (Israel) will take root, bud, blossom, and "fill the face of the world with fruit." Never again will Israel 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 Jew. 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 would be like a parenthesis, a break in thought. Isaiah is 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 them 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. The habitation or homeland of Magog will become like a wilderness. Verse 7 mentioned how God will smite the enemy.

Verse 7: 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 [that which was once] the [a] defenced [fortified] city shall be[come] 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.

RSV: "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." 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 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.

RSV: "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. 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 10th 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, the Lord will have mercy on the consecrated—ie, the Great Company—who will be spiritually delivered following a hard experience 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, and 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*. This verse 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—ie, 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 hand-pick 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 shall be captured and half of the people taken into exile (Zech. 14:2). Israel will actually be *defeated* for a short while so that when they are delivered from the gigantic host of Gog, it will be obvious that *God* has done this. In the miraculous deliverance, 5/6 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 and the taking of some into exile 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 is 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. 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 this verse 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 hand-picked survivors will heed the true counsel and have faith. Rabbinical leaders have misled the Jew 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.

Strong language! This verse 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 true instruction, which will come from a spiritual class. Nevertheless, verses 9 and 10 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, ie, the milk of the Word. 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. We are 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 do not receive direct instruction for our experiences but indirect 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 very 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" (verse 12). God's Word was 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. The Apostle Paul says that by using this method, God shows 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 it 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. This class has 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 replies 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.

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: 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's 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. Then 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.

This verse (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 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 it 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 they think they have had enough trouble already. We can speak comfortably, but we must also speak the truth. God will *purge* Israel and hand-pick the survivors one by one. If we can show them 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.

This verse 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 even 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. What is God’s “strange work”? What is His “strange act”? 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.

This verse refers to the particular “consumption” at the end of the age. The Lord has decreed a consumption of the Gentile forces that come down against Israel as well as 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,” His “strange work” (verse 21). The method God uses 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 *God’s* 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, 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 article #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; ie, 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* = mount; *El* = God). The word for the “altar” of Ezekiel’s Temple is “ariel” (Ezek. 43:18). The lion (Justice) is one of the four attributes of God. On the altar the sacrifices were made acceptable, the hearth of the altar representing 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.

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: The message of doom is being pronounced, but yet more years must pass before the execution. Another thought: The clock is 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 till 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.

Verses 1 and 2: “Woe to Ariel.... Yet I will distress Ariel,... and it shall be unto me as Ariel.” This strange phrasing is a play on words. While “Ariel” was a known name for Jerusalem, here the Lord is using that title to say the very name implies 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 is behind this experience of the city of Jerusalem. “I will camp against thee round about [put Jerusalem under siege].” “I ... will lay siege against thee with a mount [make a ramp or 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 will be brought down to the ground and speak from a humbled condition—but “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 the future: though 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.

Regarding Isaiah's day: Rabshekah 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, *in one night* the destroying angel killed the enemy host. 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.

Later application: Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC as a judgment from God. Hence there is a double lesson that *Ariel needs judgment*. Judgment is necessary.

Chapter 29 could have started with verse 26 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, eventually God will 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 in "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, in confusion the enemy will slaughter one another, etc., to leave only 1/6 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 will cause a deep sleep in which prophet, priest, king, seers, and common people will be unable to understand the vision. What "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. 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 through 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 that 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 the events in the world 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 be setting 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:

Although the context of this chapter is Ariel (Jerusalem), there is a lesson for everyone, Jew and Gentile. Take the philosophy of verses 13–16, for example. In the midst of the coming confusion, can man say there is no God? When anarchy (Armageddon) comes, it will persist for a few years in a worldwide capacity. At the end of that Armageddon period of trouble will come *Jacob's Trouble*. The world, as well as Israel, will wonder at the Lord's "marvellous work."

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.

What is the "marvellous work" and "wonder" that God will do "among this people [Israel]" ? 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 hand-picked 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 occurs 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.

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?

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 is 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 shall become a “fruitful field” and a “forest” as in days of old with the cedars of Lebanon. (The cedars of Lebanon are a symbol of everlasting life; mankind will get everlasting life—if obedient.) Thus verse 17 is saying that the devastation of earth 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 here regarding 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” is approved of God as an instructor. He is trying to do that which is right, but he is falsely accused. In the past the people went to the gate for judgment and for answers to difficult questions on the moral code and legal matters. The right-hearted individuals who served in this capacity were often thrust aside, and the office of judgment was given to evil men. And 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 single 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, with Jesus the accusation was that this man said the temple would be destroyed in three days, suggesting he was a dangerous radical destructive of society.

A “snare” is a loop covered with leaves. When the 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 the animal for its pelt. Hence a “snare” is an unseen trap. Sometimes people set traps, spiritually speaking, to “turn aside the just for a thing of nought”; ie, 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. And 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 God do so-and-so?” or “Why doesn’t He do so-and-so?”

Q: Couldn’t 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 can 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” would be 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 several 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/is fruitless.

Lesson for natural Israel today: Egypt’s help will be in vain for Israel, even though a *temporary* peace may come. To Israel’s shame, since the re-establishment of the nation 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 [desert]” here because of the animals. Since the Hebrew word is the same for both, the context determines whether “south” (a direction) or the “Negev” (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 is talking as if he is living 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 vine dressers 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 is 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, prophecy deceits:

Isaiah was commissioned by God at this early date to make a *big* banner—large enough to attract attention—and inscribe it with this accusation: “You are a rebellious people, you are lying sons, who do not want to hear the instruction of the law and the Lord.” 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, ie, in this Book of Isaiah.

This is *strong* language! In the Old Testament God *castigates* 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 one. This was a very dramatic way of demonstrating the coming judgment on Judah.

(Jer. 42:11–16) “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 did disobey and 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.” “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" (Jer. 42:2–10). 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 vine dressers.

Note: *Human* reasoning is deceitful. 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! Don't tell us the Lord said this and the Lord said that. We do not want to hear the word of the Lord." How brazen! Isaiah was treated this way personally, and he also prophesied that Jeremiah would be rejected later. Jeremiah was put in stocks and mocked. Isaiah's death occurred when he was sawed 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 turns the picture from that of a breaking dam or high wall to that of a dry potter's vessel *smashed suddenly*. The potter's vessel illustration shows 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 was a *prototype* fulfillment of Jacob’s Trouble (just as the French Revolution was a miniature picture of the Time of Trouble at the end of the age).

(Jer. 19:1–5) “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 says 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 and there was an end to 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.

(Jer. 19:6–9) “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 first-born, 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, causing 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.

(Jer. 19:10,11) “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 smithereines to demonstrate *complete* destruction. Isaiah was alluding to this destruction, and it is a lesson as a prototype.

(Jer. 52:29) “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:

(Jer. 52:28) “This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty [3,023].”

(Jer. 52:30) “In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuzaradan 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.” 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. Therefore, the total number from all three captivities was $3,023 + 832 + 745 = 4,600$.

(Jer. 52:31) “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.” 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: “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” This is a principle we often quote. In context this advice was part of a prophecy given by Isaiah about what would happen in Jeremiah’s day. When the people would be packing and departing for Egypt on horses and camels, the instruction from God would be: “Stop. Go back. Return. Stay quietly in Israel.” But the people responded (verse 16): “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” (verse 17). 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. The Book of Isaiah is written as a witness for all generations. The Holy Remnant is a major theme of the prophet Isaiah. Already, up through chapter 30, there have been multiple illustrations from the past pointing 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: 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. Isaiah 4 spoke about the Holy Remnant. Isaiah 1 said that though Israel's sins were as scarlet, they could be made as white as snow. Although the Israelites have a history of disobedience, when the Kingdom is established, the contrite, cleansed people will be the representatives of that Kingdom. 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 (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, Jesus 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, “ye” (verse 22) would be 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; ie, as a people, they will no longer be the big bankers and worship money. (When barred from trade unions and other endeavors, they 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 that applies: “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” both in minerals and agriculture, (3) many cattle in “large pastures” or grazing lands as the desert is made arable, (4) plenteous springs and rivers. Israel will be a very changed land in the Kingdom. (Note: Although the blessings are primarily Kingdom blessings, 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—see Ezekiel 38:11,12.)

When an evil thought comes into the mind of Gog and hooks are put in its jaw, 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.

After the Millennium the animals *may* not die anymore (and may not reproduce either). However, they will not be resurrected.

Q: Would 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 on, they would be very minimal. The purpose of animal sacrifices in the Kingdom is 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 the graphic visual demonstrations, especially if they are televised with proper explanations. Once the Kingdom Age is complete, it would seem to be unnecessary to have repetitive sacrifices.

Verse 24 mentions “clean provender.” *Even the food of the animals* will be “clean” in the Kingdom; it will be unadulterated with fillers and impurities. The animals will get good, clean, hearty grain. Hence God provides for the welfare of the animals too.

The oxen and the young asses “ear the ground.” At first in the Kingdom 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 society will change to not have an emphasis on speed. In the present age everything is geared toward death, toward a short life span. People rush to get their 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 it is realized that life is everlasting, what would be the hurry? *Leisurely* outdoor exercise is a pleasure, whereas exercise done under *time pressure* and with our imperfect bodies can cause heart and other problems.

Spiritual Application

Verse 22: 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

and *love* 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.

Verse 25: 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.”

The “towers” that “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.

Verse 26: The “light of the moon” will be like the “light of the sun,” and the light of the sun will increase seven times. In other words, the “moon” light of the New Covenant will be as bright as the sun. The requirements of the New Covenant will be easily understood and infallibly taught. Whereas 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. In other words, it will be thoroughly understood and obedience will be mandatory.

The Bible will always be a permanent record; 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 now). The new “study book” 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* of both covenants 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 here in verse 26. From the Millennial Age standpoint, the eighth day would correspond 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). The Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Feast of Passover) applies to the Gospel Age. Christ’s sacrifice is followed by the seven-day Feast of Passover (picturing the Gospel Age), whereas the Feast of Tabernacles (or Feast of Harvest) occurs 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 contains the bullock, the Lord’s goat, and the scapegoat, the primary emphasis is on the *world of 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 in this Gospel Age of *faith* with instruction from God, how much more the world will be blessed in the Kingdom Age of *sight* and *works*! How much more resplendent will the Kingdom light 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, when Satan is loosed in the Little Season, it 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, he or she can still succumb to the wiles of the Adversary unless 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 is 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].” In other words, 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, 5/6 will perish. The 1/6 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

hand-picked to survive as the Holy Remnant. The sieve will not only 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 will deliver the Holy Remnant, and 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).

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. God 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, nostrils, etc.

The “overflowing stream” (the forces of Gog and Magog) will “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.

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. After the *solemn* assembly of the day was finished, a song of *gladness* followed in the night. This procedure was followed in Israel’s past. 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 prime minister.

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. God, as a Rock, will be in back of Israel's salvation.

How *frequently* fragmented illusions to *Jacob's Trouble* appear in the Book of Isaiah! The clues are "here a little," "there a little" (Isa. 28:10). Some examples follow:

(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." 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.

(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." 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.

(Isa. 10:5,24,25) "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." The Assyrian (Gog) will smite Israel with a rod.

(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." God will destroy the "tongue of the Egyptian sea" and use a "mighty wind ... over the river."

(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." Egypt will be afraid in that day, the day when God shakes His hand over it.

(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." 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.

(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.” The “mountain of the LORD” is identified with Jerusalem, the future capital of the world. This same phrase is used in Isaiah 30:29.

(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.”

(2 Thess. 2:8) “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.” 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 He raise and lower His arm with a descending blow, but with the 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 opened with the majesty of Jehovah. Not only will there be the destruction of an overwhelming host coming against the little nation of Israel, but 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 1/6 survivors of Gog will return to their homelands with fright and respect, and in awe 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. In

fact, “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 (ie, with a rod of iron), but even though Jesus does the work, the honor, authority, and majesty will be God’s.

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 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.

Do not vitiate these verses by giving them a mild application. Do 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; ie, Assyria will be the rod of God’s judgment on the other nations. Then, subsequently, Assyria will be turned with a hook 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.

(2 Kings 23:10) “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.” King Josiah defiled the literal place of Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, where fire worship of Molech was observed by passing the first-born son (and occasionally the daughter) through the fire.

(Jer. 7:31,32) “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.” 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 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 they can be killed humanely. Under the Law, the first-born, both of 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 Egyptian bull worship, instead of the bullock representing the perfect man Christ Jesus, who *voluntarily* gave his life as a substitute for Adam, it is 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, Satan tries to counterfeit and outdo or embellish it. A great imitator, Satan tries to appear as the innovator and author. Heathen practices are counterfeits of true religious practices, and not vice versa.

(Lev. 18:21) “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 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 had 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. He will gather all nations there for the final drama of this age. He is setting the stage, building the scaffolding, etc., 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 (the Holy Remnant). As we draw nearer that day, our responsibility 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 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 he sent emissaries up to Bethel 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. Hence his efforts represent a complete cleaning out.

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 Satan 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. Interestingly, 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.

Eisenhower wrote a book 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 the Lord was chastising Israel for their worldly alliances.

Symbolically or spiritually, “Egypt” represents the world or the worldly nominal Church. “Horses” picture doctrines. “Chariots” would be 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 they seek help from worldly organizations and not God, they become 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 is aware of this situation—that their hearts are leaning on others for support rather than on Him. Israel will 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 31 contrasts men and God, flesh and spirit. If God were on their (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. Thus Israel looked to Egypt because of their strong, capable leaders and their comfortable, pleasing doctrines. This seemed to be the sensible thing to do, but it was an affront to God. And it is an affront for His professed people to look to worldly leaders and to trust in worldly doctrines.

Both parties (Egypt and Israel) will suffer from their relationship—the helper as well as the one who is helped. “Both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down.”

Spiritual lesson: 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 would generally be fearful of pulling the lamb from the lion’s mouth, but if other shepherds were nearby, they would try to dispatch the lion and kill him even though the lamb could not be saved. (The taste of

blood would so excite 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 the Lord comes down to fight for Mount Zion, *nothing* will distract or deter Him from defending and delivering His people Israel, ie, 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.

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” (RSV). “Hovering” indicates *repetitive* judgments against Gog. God will protect, spare, deliver, and rescue Jerusalem (RSV).

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 its 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 the Lord, but in Jacob’s Trouble they will be *so outnumbered* that they will realize God is their only protection.

Israel’s idols of silver and gold—ie, *money*—will be worthless in Jacob’s Trouble. They were cleansed of literal idols from approximately 606 BC. However, today they have the idols of business, finance, money, etc., all of which will 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” (RSV). The *double emphasis* alludes to the earlier comparison of God and man, spirit and flesh (verse 3). Israel had been relying for help 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) shall pass away.

God will defend Jerusalem as a *lion roars* over its prey, as *birds hovering* and defending their young, and as a *furnace*. It is as though He is setting a trap and/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). The Lord’s “fire is in [natural] Zion” and His “furnace is in [natural] Jerusalem” to protect them.

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, “king [Jesus] shall reign in righteousness,” and “princes [Church in glory or 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 (Church in glory or 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.

RSV: “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). Now 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.

RSV: “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 the Lord *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 birth rights,” 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.

Verse 8 RSV: “But he who is noble devises noble things, and by noble things he stands.”

The “knave” is condemned; the “noble” individual is commended. In other words, God is taking cognizance of what people in the world are doing. Probably there will 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 RSV: “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 Revised Standard Version is correct, Isaiah could have been predicting a tremendous crop failure. He was also prophesying about the coming siege of the ten-tribe kingdom.

Spiritual application: “Women” and “daughters” are the nominal churches. This text may pertain to harvest results expected by the nominal churches at the end of the age—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 briars; Yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

In verses 9–14 Isaiah predicted the coming captivity of the ten-tribe kingdom (not in one year but in the near future). Thorns and briars would overgrow the idle land. The women would be especially fearful in time of siege as they thought about the desolate conditions to come on Israel. The men would be less 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 as they are related.

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, 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. This verse indicates 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" would be 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. The stone will start to grow in Jerusalem; 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 character development or bad character development (the wicked are likened to a "green bay tree"). A "forest" indicates a *multitude* of trees, ie, 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" (authority) of God will be especially demonstrated, attracting the eyes of all nations to look to that spot. 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 verse 20: "Happy are you who sow beside all waters, who let the feet of the ox and the ass range free" (RSV). 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. It 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 the source of their blessings: God. 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 *trouble coming*, 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, heeding His Word*. The tendency of present truth brethren is 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 their direst need, when complete extinction is threatened. The quicker they make that request to God, the better. Instead they 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.

RSV: "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.

RSV: "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 the Lord, 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 thyself 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.

RSV: “At the thunderous noise peoples flee, at the lifting up of thyself nations are scattered; and spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathers; as locusts leap, men leap upon it.”

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. There will be a general lifting up, but 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—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 all Gentile nations, will know that God is God!

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.

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). 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.

Men will leap upon the spoil as locusts (RSV). Vultures will feed on the carcasses.

The Kingdom will be formally inaugurated with GREAT POWER and GLORY. It will have an emphatic beginning.

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.

RSV: "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.

Verse 8 RSV: "The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceases. Covenants are broken, witnesses are despised, there is no regard for man."

This is 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 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 is saying there will be no crops or shelter. This is a picture of general destruction. Joel 2:3 says the land will be like the Garden of Eden before them, and like a burned-out wilderness behind them.

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 will be Jacob's Trouble, and 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, then another, but all of them prove futile. Here the Lord is 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 says 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 the 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 begin to worry what their position is 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 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, ie, the Holy Remnant.

Comment: The context here in 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 those disobedient Jews will tell

them they have been living astray from God and cause them to be fearful. This class of Jews know the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” and they will know they have ignored it. They will sense that they should seek meekness and righteousness—but *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 (Isa. 33:2). 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.” This would mean to have *nothing to do* with anything that involves the murder of another individual. This verse 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 he held the coats of those who did. 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 says that the sinners in Zion are afraid. “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, their defense and their bread and water shall 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 Isaiah 33:16, it is the Holy Remnant who 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. “Give us this day our daily bread” is the prayer. 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. The Lord 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 far off” in the sense of being way down the stream of time and yet future even today.

Spiritual (secondary) application: The Church will behold Jesus in glory beyond the veil. They shall see Jesus “as he is,” ie, “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.

RSV: “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 is saying that those who normally organized armies and 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,” ie, as 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.

RSV: “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 three ways, and all three meanings are 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 are 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 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 in "sackcloth" (Rev. 11:3). The doctrine of hellfire would be an example of "strange speech" that is foreign to God's character. When paganism and heathenism came into the Christian church (eg, the doctrines of a triune God and Mariolatry), it was 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" heathen 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.

This verse applies after Jacob's Trouble, when the Kingdom is set up.

Q: Why is the word "tabernacle" used here instead of "temple"? Verse 20 reads, "A tabernacle that shall not be taken down," etc.

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 of God in that He was dealing with them. 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 the tent 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." This means the reestablishment of a religious association of God with His people in a very intimate sense. Their judges will be restored as at the first. In other words, the word "tabernacle" is used figuratively to allude to the religious setup of the Kingdom, and it does not necessarily emphasize a literal tabernacle, for the literal structure will be the Third Temple.

This verse 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 Millennial Age.

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.

The Lord is called “glorious” because at this time His power, His glory, His Kingdom, 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, in the Kingdom, society 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 repeats 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 is contrasting 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 would hunt 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 are 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.

This is an illustration of a boat. Tacklings are loosed when a storm arises; the sails must be changed or taken down depending on circumstances. (The ships had different types of sails for different types of weather.) Here a great, strong boat is floundering. The storm cannot be mastered no matter what is 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 their surprise and dismay, Gog's 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 punish the enemy and preserve them. 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 Jew, shining light forward upon their path as they proceeded.

"Then is the prey of a great spoil divided." 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 it will be "divided" in that, in the final analysis, the Holy Remnant will take the goods and metal munitions left behind when the forces of Gog are destroyed. For seven years Israel will be able to use the booty of Gog and convert it into "plowshares," ie, *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) would 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).

Isaiah is quite different from the other prophets in that he describes Jacob's Trouble from *many* angles. Ezekiel and Zechariah consider it from one angle in primarily just one or two chapters. Isaiah gives a great fullness to the prophetic picture, makes 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 regarding 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 medically they will become healthier. 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 they 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. 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? 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/or 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 (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” would indicate zeal. “Rams” (male sheep) would be leaders. In other words, the great leaders of Christendom will share in the blood bath. 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 = priests. Bullocks = bishops. Bulls = archbishops. Unicorns = 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 does incur 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 has been done in the past will help bring the former leaders to repentance. That period of shame-facedness and humility will be good “soil” for their recovery. Their 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 necessary 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” would 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 revealment, 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 the Lord 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 “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.

The word “Mediterranean” means “middle of the earth.”

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 “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 Revised Standard Version “cormorant” is “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 “stones of emptiness” (“plummet of chaos” in the Revised Standard Version). 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 shame-faced 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 (RSV), wild beasts, vultures. The screech owl’s cry sounds like a woman being forcibly molested. Like the lion, it depends on its terrifying screech (roar) to paralyze its prey as it descends and viciously attacks at night.

One who happens to enter this desolate city at night would be 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. 13:32). 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. Just like human bullies, they are vicious but cowards. The criminal human element similarly preys on the elderly and the lame.

"Habitation of dragons" (verse 13) is the "haunt of jackals" (RSV).

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 "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." In other words, 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 article in the first *Reprint* has the subtitle "Foretold, 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, the birds must have their mates; 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 the one party and victory to the other. The doom and judgment of Babylon will bring shame and confusion of face to those who held 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, 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 is contrasting the majestic forested mountains of Lebanon and Carmel with the fertile, lush valleys or plains of Sharon. (“Sharon” means “plain.”) In other words, when the Kingdom is established, Israel will be fruitful and 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 to “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 the 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, 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 can see the 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 is the element who 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 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. The Lord is 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.

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 him. 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 he had very sound thinking.

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 he 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, dumb, etc., be healed (verse 6), but the returning of the "ransomed of the Lord" means resurrection. A large part of the "return" would be coming forth from the grave. It would also imply 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 this verse 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 Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, 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 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.

Rabshakeh 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 Rabshakeh, 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 Rabshakeh 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 a man’s hand 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?

Rabshakeh was very boastful and 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 Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian language so that the common people could not understand what was being said, but Rabshakeh wanted them to hear his derogatory words. He embarrassed King Hezekiah in front of the nation by reminding him that he had replaced the authorized altar in the Temple with an *ornamental foreign* altar. (Hezekiah then used the true altar as his own personal and private altar.) In effect, Rabshakeh was saying, “How much respect do you have for your God when you substitute a foreign altar for His altar?”

Rabshakeh made another startling remark: that Jehovah had sent him to destroy Israel. Of course this was a lie.

Hezekiah had properly removed altars to false gods, but to Rabshakeh and Sennacherib, it seemed as if Hezekiah 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.)

Hezekiah's motives may have been good in replacing the Lord's altar in the Temple with a foreign altar and even in introducing new practices, but his actions were improper. He probably thought he was adding to the attractiveness of the Temple.

This experience with Rabshakeh worked out well for Hezekiah by shaking him up and causing him to make a change in his life. Hezekiah did the right thing by consulting Isaiah, the Lord's prophet (37:1,2).

Rabshakeh not only embarrassed the king personally by calling attention to Temple practices instituted but also told the Jews on the wall that if they resisted, they would be made to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.

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, Rabshakeh 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." Rabshakeh 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. Rabshakeh 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 was telling the people to submit voluntarily to going into captivity to Assyria, a wonderful land where every man could sit under his own vine and fig tree. Evidently Rabshakeh was quite knowledgeable to be able to speak in Hebrew and to 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 Rabshakeh'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'll give you what you want *now*. Do not wait for pie-in-the-sky promises." The same temptation was facing 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 1950's 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 it was a social gospel he was preaching. 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 sounds 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.

In verses 16 and 17, 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, Sennacherib tried to conquer the world, just like communism.

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?**

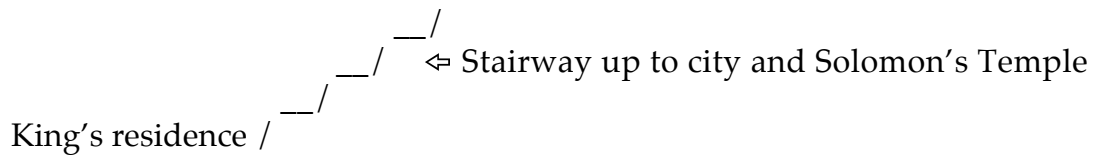
Hamath, Arphad, and Sepharvaim were fortified cities north of Jerusalem and their suburbs that resisted Sennacherib but were defeated. (Hamath was on the boundary line of northern Israel.) Now Rabshakeh is saying to Israel, "Are you any different?"

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 Rabshakeh. 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 was a proper emotional response for shame-facedness. Today we do not use sackcloth and ashes, but the Christian equivalent would be 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 and he would hear a rumor and return to Assyria, where he would be slain by the sword. (Elsewhere the "blast" is described as a "spirit"—God put a spirit in Sennacherib.)

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 Rezep, 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 is an Ethiopia near Iran and one in Africa. The Ethiopia in verse 9 is probably the former one, 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 from Sennacherib listing the terms of surrender, he went to the Temple and spread it before the Lord. This is a second instance of Hezekiah's humbling himself in connection with the threat from Sennacherib. In other words, even though Hezekiah had been embarrassed earlier by having his sin exposed regarding the institution and substitution of a foreign altar, he humbled himself and went to Solomon's Temple. There he spread the letter or scroll before the Lord and prayed for wisdom. 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, 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 and 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 continues through verse 20. In addition to being beautiful, it was simple and well thought out: "It's 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 is 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.

The Revised Standard Version is a little clearer in verse 22: "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. This God did to Sennacherib—and He did it drastically! In Jacob's Trouble the hook, which will be put in the jaw, 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 would besiege 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 them, and in little more than a year's time the Lord 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 (Isa. 37:7). (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 that 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. Verses 31 and 32 cannot apply to Sennacherib's day because Jerusalem was not captured back there. In fact, there was not even a battle. In both Isaiah and Jeremiah, portions of certain prophecies have a natural application back there 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 will be 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. 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 by the sons of the prophets for Elijah's body (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 the Lord 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 us 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. "Esarhaddon" is a title of office frequently used in Chronicles.

The names in this verse imply a history within a history. The countries that were absorbed by Assyria are reflected in these names. It was a mixed condition; 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 here in verse 38 indicate the mixed condition in the future.

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 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 his prayer when faced with the threat from Sennacherib (Isa. 37:16–20; 38:3). 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 his privacy for 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 chance comes for them to demonstrate what is in their hearts to do for Him.

God answered Hezekiah’s prayer not direct but through Isaiah. It was a comfort to Hezekiah to know God had heard his prayer, and it was a comfort to Isaiah to be able to give such good news, ie, that the king would live 15 more years. Moreover, in answer to Hezekiah’s prayer, God rescinded the earlier statement that he would die (verse 1). The extra 15 years approximately doubled the length of Hezekiah’s 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 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? 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 this prayer would be heard in another way too. Not only did Hezekiah receive an answer about his personal physical condition, but God promised to defend and deliver the city of Jerusalem (and hence the nation) that 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 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 the Lord "in the land of the living." Hezekiah wanted to live so he could praise God, but the gates of death were before him. (Note: The Revised Standard Version is good for these verses.)

In verse 13, Isaiah 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 the Lord gave Hezekiah the reprieve, the 15-year extension of his life, he 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 there were some sterling characters he could trust. Some examples are Jonathan, Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and the soldiers who brought him water at Bethlehem. 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 afterwards 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.

In verse 14 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 the Lord had spared his life. As a result, Hezekiah wanted to praise and please Him even more—and to continue to praise Him for the 15

years of his life that remained.

“We will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.” 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 recognizes 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 armor,” 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.

Lesson: 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.