

The Book of Isaiah

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Chapters 40–66

The following notes were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

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.

Isa. 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

From Chapter 40 to the end, the Book of Isaiah consists of prophetic sermons and prophecies. There is a definite character change in the book. Dates are not pinpointed, and the words are not tied down to any one king's reign. Based on Isaiah 1:1, we know the prophet's public ministry extended from King Uzziah's reign into Hezekiah's reign, but whether Isaiah's death occurred before or after Hezekiah's death we do not know. Because the nature of the book is considerably different in the 40th through the 66th chapter, these wholly prophetic chapters may have been written when Isaiah was in "retirement" from actively going before kings. At any rate, they seem to be the result of one who is in meditation and of one who is giving considerable thought to the subject. (Of course the Lord helped to exercise Isaiah's mind in the proper channels so that the results would be an expression of the mind of God.)

Verse 1 is a directive, a mandate, to the Church to comfort natural Israel: "Comfort ye my people."

Isa. 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

This message of comfort was to be given when Israel's warfare was accomplished, when she had "received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." One of the ingredients of the harvest message at the Second Advent is related to this message. Based on certain parallelisms, the Pastor explained the fulfillment or expiration of this mysterious "double" of disfavor as occurring in 1878.

This verse tells the nature of the message of comfort for natural Israel. "*Speak ye comfortably*" suggests a softer, more private approach, whereas "*cry unto her*" implies a more public message or pronouncement.

"Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished [ended]." What "warfare"? Israel's punishment, her "appointed *time*" (KJV margin), "*time of service*" (RSV footnote). In other words, Israel's "warfare" is not merely a date but a *period of time* that terminates with a date.

The "appointed time" or "time of service" is the "double"; that is, it is the time period of Israel's *punishment* or *sentence*. A "double" is a fixed period of time having a beginning and an ending that correspond to a previous beginning and ending. The first part of the double was a period of *favor* of 1,845 years, and the second part of the double was a period of *disfavor* of equal length or 1,845 years. The turning point in the double was the year AD 33, the middle of the 70th week. (Messiah was cut off in the midst of the last week of the 70-week prophecy in Daniel.) The 1,845-year period of favor began with the death of Jacob, for at that time God began to deal with Jacob's 12 sons as a nation (of 12 tribes). The blessing that had previously been on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob passed on to the 12 sons of Jacob. From Jacob's death through AD 33 was the period of favor when God dealt *directly* with Israel and *only* with Israel out of all nations (Amos 3:2).

Why is this period of 1,845 years called a period of *favor* when, throughout its duration, Israel was punished many times with defeats in battle, including the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the 70-year period of Babylonian captivity? God dealt directly with Israel as a parent deals with a child. While there were occasions in which He temporarily

withdrew His face from them (for their own good), it was for a relatively short duration of time compared with the 1,845 years of disfavor or rejection. In AD 70 Herod's Temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed, the surviving Jews were sold into slavery and dispersed throughout the nations, and God no longer communicated to them through prophets. During the 1,845 years of Diaspora, they seemed to be wandering aimlessly and their lot was a very forlorn one.

Another ingredient of the message in verse 2 is to inform Israel that in 1878 a change in dispensation occurred and that God is now dealing differently with them. In 1878 a Jewish colony was established in Israel called Petatikva ("Door of Hope"). Disraeli, the first Jewish prime minister of England, negotiated a treaty with Turkey that was favorable for Jews to return to Israel and purchase real estate. Only a handful of Jews went back, however. After World War I the Balfour Declaration helped open up Israel for the Jews. Other nations began to recognize Jewish rights regarding Israel. Hence the fig tree began to put forth green leaves (but the fruitage is *still future*).

Also "cry unto her ... that her *iniquity is pardoned*." This element of the message has not been sufficiently emphasized. The Diaspora was *due to sin*, and we should not compromise this fact. Israel's sin is now pardoned because she has received of the Lord her "double" of punishment. As regards the *nation* (not as regards the people, their flesh), there has been a radical change since 1878—even though since that date millions were put to death under Hitler, pogroms were carried out in Russia, etc. After all, during Israel's earlier double of favor, Jews were brutally treated and massacred such as in Nebuchadnezzar's day. In Israel's earlier period of favor and now since 1878, the nation is being divinely guided. The people have been weaned from the various countries where they were scattered to yearn for a homeland. God is disciplining and instructing the Jew as a father would discipline and instruct a child. Hertzl, Weizmann, Pastor Russell, and others have been raised up to give direction and guidance. Therefore, Israel's experience since 1878 should not be confused with disfavor any more than trouble in a Christian's life. Jesus was crucified, but he still had God's favor. He was being dealt with as *the Son of God* in preparation for his future office. And so some of the experiences of Israel since 1878, though very harsh, have been disciplinary to prepare the Jews for their role in the Kingdom as the blessing nation. The weaning and whittling down will continue until eventually a Holy Remnant emerges. This dealing with the Jew is quite different from the previous aimless experiences, and the land of Israel has been developing and growing in material prosperity since 1878 when the double of favor began. Each of the World Wars resulted in further progress toward a Jewish homeland. In 1948 the nation of Israel was officially recognized. Although it will not be a recognized nation from God's standpoint until after Jacob's Trouble when He institutes His own government under the Ancient Worthies, we do, nevertheless, see a government and rulers there as preparatory work. (However, the individual people should not be confused with the nation, for many Jews are becoming more ungodly and even atheistic.)

The prophecy states that "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*" (Luke 21:24). This prophecy applies to *Israel*, the *land*, the *nation*, and not to the people. Jesus spoke of this as occurring future to his day. Therefore, even though the double of disfavor started in AD 33, the trodden-down condition did not commence until AD 70. In AD 70 the *land* suffered, and Jerusalem was suppressed. Liberties were no longer enjoyed in Israel.

Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

At the First Advent, John the Baptist was “the voice” crying in the wilderness. Jesus, in referring to John, quoted this prophecy (Matt. 3:1–3), and John also so identified himself (John 1:23). However, that does not end the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Pastor showed that John the Baptist represents a class, the Church in the flesh at the end of the age. The difference between John the Baptist and Elijah is that John represents only the feet members and Elijah represents the Church over a longer period of time, from 539 to the end of their experience. John the Baptist’s ministry occurred during the days of Jesus’ First Advent. The feet members, the antitypical John the Baptist, are on the scene during the days of Jesus’ Second Advent. Or it could be stated that the antitypical John the Baptist class represents *only that segment* of the Elijah class who are living at the end of the age.

	<u>The Voice Introducing Jesus</u>
At First Advent:	John the Baptist
At Second Advent:	Feet members

Bro. Russell was the one who called attention to the end of Israel’s double of punishment. His role is pictured back in Israel’s history in connection with Moses, Aaron, and the plagues. When God instructed Moses to go back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites, God commissioned Aaron as Moses’ mouthpiece. In the audiences with Pharaoh, Moses was the representative of God, and Aaron was the representative of Moses. (Incidentally, contrary to the usual thought that Moses had a speech impediment, he spoke very well and was the mouthpiece of God on many other occasions.) When Moses was originally in Egypt, he represented Jesus at the First Advent, who manifested interest and love for the Jews, for example, by weeping over Jerusalem. When “his own” rejected him, he had to go away—to heaven. And Moses, whose heart was burdened by the injustices and suffering of his people under the taskmasters, manifested his love for the Israelites when he killed one of the taskmasters. However, his brethren rejected him for this act and he went away for 40 years. When Moses returned to Egypt, when he went to Egypt the *second* time, Aaron was his mouthpiece. And so when Jesus returned at his *Second* Advent, Bro. Russell was his mouthpiece. This reasoning harmonizes with Matthew 24:45–47, which shows that at his Second Advent Jesus would select a servant to feed his people.

Second going to Egypt:	Moses	Aaron (as mouthpiece)
Second Advent:	Jesus	Bro. Russell (as mouthpiece)

(It could be said that the Pastor was the most prominent mouthpiece but that others associated with him in the harvest work are pictured by Aaron as well.)

Notice: “Prepare ye the way of the LORD,” “Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH.” Keep this thought in mind throughout the 40th chapter of Isaiah.

“Make straight in the desert a highway for *our* God.” The word “our” indicates that “the voice” who will utter this cry is a *class*. While John the Baptist was “the voice” at the First Advent, his work was only a miniature picture or fulfillment of what the feet members will do at the Second Advent. The John the Baptist *class*—ie, the feet members—are to prepare the way of God.

Trinitarians use this verse to prove that Jesus is Jehovah. They quote Scripture to prove that John the Baptist was “the voice” who introduced Jesus at his First Advent. Next they

reason that if John the Baptist, “the voice,” introduced Jesus at his First Advent and verse 3 here in Isaiah says that “the voice” will prepare the way of Jehovah, then Jesus and Jehovah are synonymous terms. Fortunately, many other Scriptures show that Jesus is not Jehovah, but his representative. He came at the First Advent as the *messenger* of God; he came to earth to die in harmony with *God’s* plan. Therefore, as regards the First Advent and John’s role, the implication is “Prepare ye the way of Jehovah’s *representative*,” “Prepare ye the way of the One who is coming in the name of Jehovah.”

Isa. 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

This is another part of the message to Israel. Ingredients of the message so far are (1) Israel’s warfare is accomplished, (2) her iniquity is pardoned, and (3) she has received double of the Lord’s hands for her sins. Notice that iniquity and sins are a part of the message. Of course this portion can be handled tactfully with a statement such as “We have all sinned. All are born and shapen in iniquity.” Caution: we must be careful not to be so exuberant and enthusiastic in speaking comfortably to Israel that we forget to say Israel’s *iniquity* is pardoned and she has received double for her *sins*. In preaching the *whole* message, we are preparing the Jews for their future experiences in Jacob’s Trouble and for their need to seek meekness and righteousness to be part of the Holy Remnant. A fourth part of the message, therefore, is that God is seeking and preparing a faithful remnant.

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.”
 “The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.”

Notice the *contrasts*:
 Valley vs. mountain and hill
 Low vs. exalted
 Crooked vs. straight
 Rough vs. plain

What is the difference between the valley and the mountain? Both are large and/or on a large scale. A “mountain” is a symbol of a kingdom. In other words, the present and past *exalted* kingdoms of this world, the large autocratic governments, will be *lowered*. Governments will be adjusted to be subservient to Christ. The great ones (individuals) of earth are the leaders of these nations. On the other hand, the “valleys” will be *exalted*. “Valleys” represent the common people, those who are ruled and oppressed (racially, financially, in castes from birth, etc.). Thus the mountains and valleys pertain to *rulership*—a rulership adjustment.

“Crooked” and “straight” pertain to *character*—a moral or character adjustment. That which is crooked in this life will be made straight. What is immoral and dishonest will be made right. In the Kingdom the laws and the government will be righteous, and conformity thereto will be required. The mountains and the valleys are a *vertical* adjustment. The crooked and the straight are a *horizontal* adjustment.

“The rough places [shall be made] plain.” Stumbling blocks will be removed. These are still finer adjustments to level the remaining little bumps. In other words, adjustments will be made in the life of *each individual*. Each person must individually bow the knee.

Isa. 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The glory of *Jehovah* will be revealed to *all* flesh during the Second Advent. (This verse does not refer to the First Advent, for Christ was humiliated and rejected as the messenger at that time.) Beginning with the conclusion of Jacob's Trouble when God miraculously defeats the forces of Gog, delivers the Holy Remnant, and resurrects the Ancient Worthies, His glory will be revealed to all nations. And all of the living generation will "see it [God's glory] together," not piecemeal. All peoples will be apprised of the fact that God reigns.

Isa. 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:

See the RSV: "A voice said, 'Cry!' and I said, 'What shall I cry?'" First, God instructs the consecrated to comfort Israel. Now He tells them to "Cry," and the inquiry is, "What shall I cry?" The rather long answer that follows seems strange; it starts as a dirge. What is the purpose of such an instruction? The answer to this question will be given after subsequent verses are discussed.

Isa. 40:7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Verses 6 and 7: "Flesh is as grass, and the beauty of the grass is the flowers that are intermingled among it. In due time, both the grass and the flowers perish." Decay normally occurs because of seasonal changes; they wither and die in the fall and winter levels them. However, this grass and the flowers of the field wither not because of a seasonal change but because "the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it."

Isa. 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Verses 7 and 8: Both verses begin with the refrain "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth." Why do they wither and fade? Because the spirit of the Lord God blows upon them ... just as in winter a blast of wind comes and causes the decay. What is the lesson? The permanence, the *enduring* quality of God's Word is contrasted with the *transience* of the grass and flowers of the field. How different God's Word is—it is not like the grass that withers, but is an *eternal* hope, a *sure* promise. We would do well to wait patiently for its fulfillment.

Why is this type of reasoning embedded in this prophecy? This chapter began with God's instruction to comfort natural Israel in three ways. Next came the prophecy about "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," followed by a Second Advent application where not only would the mountains and valleys be adjusted, etc., but the glory of God would be revealed. Then comes this mandate to cry that all flesh is as grass, that the beauty of the flower will fade but the Word of God endures forever. (Keep in mind that the segments of this prophecy are all related, notwithstanding the paragraph indication of the translators.)

So again the question: Why introduce the reasoning of verses 6–8 into this prophecy?

Comment: It is somewhat like the situation prior to Noah and family entering the Ark. The rest of the people, preoccupied with their daily affairs, were oblivious to the coming Flood. But what God had predicted regarding coming events was a sure thing.

Reply: That reasoning is somewhat related to the prophecy here. At the end of the age, the

Time of Trouble will humble man and prepare him for the Kingdom. When, in the Time of Trouble, the Lord blows on the earth, as it were, the people will realize that all of their dreams, hopes, joys, sports, and pleasures are *ephemeral*. When there is no food on the table and no heat in the furnace, people will radically change their values. The *basic* rudiments of life, which have been taken for granted—food, shelter, etc.—will then be seen to be all important. Lacking these in the anarchy, the people will curse *their* god and *their* king and look up to the Lord God for deliverance and pray to Him as the only hope. They will recall having heard that God’s Kingdom is coming, that God’s purpose is to humiliate man, and that thus there is a reason for the trouble. As the people see society crumble and anarchy prevail, they will be encouraged when they remember having heard not only that the trouble would come but that it would be cut short lest all flesh be destroyed.

We must preach the *whole* Word. Our message should be that trouble is coming because of sin and iniquity as well as that the Kingdom, restitution, and blessings will follow. As we near the Time of Trouble—and since 1914 has come and gone, ending Gentile Times—the message of the Day of Vengeance is becoming more important. The time is coming for a stronger message. In the earlier part of his ministry, Jesus gave beautiful sermons, such as the Sermon on the Mount, but his message got stronger toward the end of his ministry, as when he cast out the money changers. And so restitution was a prominent theme earlier in the Second Advent, but as we near the Time of Trouble, the message should correspondingly change or adjust. Restitution should not be omitted, but the tenor of the message should change because it will help people more to tell them of the coming trouble. The feet members will have to give this message before they die, as shown in the next verse.

Isa. 40:9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Here “Zion” and “Jerusalem” are *spiritual*. This is a message for the *Church* to give. The instruction for the feet members is to “get thee up into the high mountain.” In other words, they are to take the initiative and to “*be not afraid* [to give the message]!” The message will be given this side of the veil and *under great pressure*. The Zion class are to get up into the mountain and *shout* this message of “good tidings” as if they are shouting it from a mountain top. “Lift up thy voice *with strength*; lift it up, be not afraid.”

As we near the very end of the age, we are to *boldly and energetically* preach this message. We are to get to a vantage point and *shout* down to the people. We must seek opportunities to preach far, wide, and near.

Notice, the instruction: “Say unto the cities of *Judah*, Behold your God!” This message is to be given not to the world but to *Israel*. The feet members are told to preach to *Judah*.

Q: How will the message given to Israel by the feet members differ from that given later by the Great Company?

A: The feet members will have an opportunity to give this message to Israel, perhaps on television, to a worldwide audience, but the opportunity will be *very brief*, possibly only two or three minutes. The Great Company will subsequently have more time to speak (and with clarity of detail) because they will enter *into* the Time of Trouble.

First, a general popular message will be given by both Elijah and Elisha. All the workers will be active in the vineyard just before the penny is given. They are to speak to many nations, peoples, and tongues (Rev. 10:11). At his First Advent, Jesus became popular with thousands following him up to five days before his crucifixion. The height of his popularity occurred the very week of his death and rejection. When he rode into Jerusalem on the white donkey, the people hailed him and spread palm branches.

Next a hard, smiting message will be given by Elijah. In smiting the Jordan, they will reprove Babylon, Christendom, and give a message to Israel.

Comment: The KJV margin has “O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion” and “O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem.” Therefore, it would seem that in both cases either Zion and Jerusalem are *doing* the speaking or Zion and Jerusalem are *receiving* the message.

Reply: Zion and Jerusalem (synonymous terms) would have to be either both natural Israel or both spiritual. If Zion and Jerusalem are the recipients of the message, they would be natural Israel (KJV margin). However, if Zion and Jerusalem give the message, the terms are spiritual (KJV as it reads) and would be the feet members. There is one other possibility: that Zion and Jerusalem, as the speakers, are a broader term that includes both the feet members (Little Flock) and the Great Company. If so, the terms would be used in the same inclusive way as the church of the firstborn.

At any rate, the good tidings will be given to natural Israel, and the one delivering the message will do so on this side of the veil and is to lift up the voice and not be afraid. The bringer of the good tidings has to be a *spiritual* class, and it is probably the Little Flock. In that case Zion and Jerusalem are spiritual and Judah is natural.

The only question is whether Zion and Jerusalem are the *giver* or the *recipient* of the message. If they are the recipient, the implication is broader that both the Little Flock and the Great Company can give this message.

The reason for the alternate reading in the KJV margin is probably based on Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” The only problem is that Isaiah 52:7 applies to a different time period; it is future when the Church is complete beyond the veil.

The instruction to “Be not afraid” suggests that a period of depression will come on the feet members but that they will be given a dispensation of the Holy Spirit to overcome the depression. Similarly in Gethsemane, Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and questioned his own relationship to the Father. He agonized with tears until an angel came and comforted him. After that he was calm, and when Judas entered the garden, Jesus submitted. A second wave of great depression came upon Jesus on the Cross when he said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But he finished his course triumphantly when he cried in a very loud voice, “It is finished!” It was necessary for Jesus to feel forsaken in order to pay the price of Adam, who hid naked behind a tree when the Logos went through the garden. Some can be completely innocent of a crime and yet psychologically feel guilty because of circumstantial evidence, false witnesses, and extreme pressure. Innocent victims can be brainwashed by evil powers into feeling guilty. And so, like their Master, the feet members will have periods of depression and strengthening.

Peter's experience in the storm on the Sea of Galilee illustrates their experience. When they hear the roar of the wind and the waves, they will begin to sink, but then the Lord will put out his hand and save them. Momentary fear is not necessarily an indication of unfaithfulness of any kind.

Isa. 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

The title "Lord GOD" (*Adonai* followed by "God") belongs to Jehovah. He will "come with strong hand" at the time of Jacob's Trouble to save Israel, the Holy Remnant. "His arm [Jesus] shall rule for him [God]." In the Old Testament, Jesus is frequently referred to as the "arm" (instrument) of Jehovah.

"His reward is with him." God's reward will be with Jesus at that time. The emphasis is on *God's* role. *God's* Kingdom will be set up in power and glory through Jesus, God's agent and representative. Isaiah is describing the setting up of *God's* Kingdom. *God's* promises are to be in the custody of Jesus, who will dispense them.

"His work [is] before him." God's work is before Jesus. Possibly this clause can be understood as Jesus' work being before God. Either way the primary credit goes to *God* because of the previous part of the verse.

What "reward"? What "work"? The reward can be considered two ways. Since Jesus died for the Church and for the world, dispensing the blessings will be his pleasure and privilege. It will be a blessing for the Church to be associated with Christ. And it will be a blessing for the recipients of the reward. The reward that Jesus has is one that all will enjoy. "For the joy that was set before him," Jesus endured the Cross (Heb. 12:2). That "joy" includes the Kingdom, restitution, and especially having a Church class to divide the spoil with (Isa. 53:12). Thus the reward can be considered two ways: from the standpoint of Jesus' own personal satisfaction of being able to dispense the blessings and from the standpoint of those who receive the blessings. Jesus will joy over his Bride as well as over dispensing restitution blessings—what he originally came to earth to prove worthy to be able to do. The reward will be a great radiating happiness *for all* who are involved.

Isa. 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Why is the illustration of a shepherd's role introduced here? From the natural standpoint, out of Jacob's Trouble will come deliverance to a remnant of Jews. Through Jesus, God will gently succor them as a Shepherd in three ways: (1) He will feed them, (2) He will hold them close to His bosom, and (3) He will gently lead those who have young. A shepherd would be very careful with all types: with a ewe heavy with young lest she be hurried and have a miscarriage, with the lambs, and with all the sheep to help them find food. In other words, God, through Jesus, will treat gently, as a Shepherd, individuals as well as all, like a flock. "The Father himself loveth you" is the principle, even though that text refers to the Church (John 16:27). God is the Great Shepherd, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Isa. 40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Verses 12–31 give a reassurance of God’s GREAT power so that there will be courage to SPEAK OUT! What is man but a drop in the bucket? But when the ALMIGHTY GOD, who created the planet, says to lift up the voice, do so and MAKE IT HEARD!

The “voice” at the Second Advent (verse 3) may have started in 1878 with the Pastor, but the context shows that there will come a time when God’s providence enhances the volume of the message so that it enlightens the Holy Remnant.

The *primary objective* of Chapter 40 is to *comfort Israel* (verse 1). The Church should try to comfort Israel even now, but the effective comfort will come later through the Great Company. The comfort message will be successful when the Church is gone. In fact, one of the responsibilities of the feet members is to enlighten the Great Company class, who will be giving this message.

Verses 12–17 are not exaggerations. From a materialistic standpoint, all the nations are *less than nothing* before God! Negative (minus) values, used in mathematics, are very real. No matter how impressive natural phenomena and scenery are on both land and ocean, the earth is tiny compared with the rest of the universe; it is like dust on the scale.

Because of God’s love and compassion (His Shepherd qualities), He can be approached and sees our smallest need. If He lacked this attribute and were just intellectual and powerful, sinful mankind would not be of interest to Him.

The Jews need to be depressed so that they will cry to God for help instead of to the United States and other nations. God will then truly be before them. Israel is being weaned away from earth toward God. When the time comes that they cry to Him alone, then He will answer them.

The universe is held together by gravity. The moon stays in orbit because it is attracted to the earth. The earth, in turn, stays in orbit because it is attracted by the sun. All of the heavenly bodies are moving through space, even the sun. They were twirled at a certain speed, and they were thrust in a certain direction or orbit, and they all maintain their speed. Moreover, the planets and the stars had to be weighed accurately, down to the last atom, in order to stay in their orbits and fit in God’s plan. Even the seas were measured. God manifested *such care* with these tremendous heavenly bodies—the measuring, the meting, the weighing. He measured the seas, He meted out the heavens with a span, and He weighed the mountains in a scale.

Comment: Similarly the Lord very carefully weighs every inch of the cross that each of us must carry. Our trials (crosses) are weighed exactly to what we can bear.

Reply: Yes, the same principle applies to Christian life. A Christian’s trials and experiences are tailor-made.

Comment: If the Lord took such care in preparing the planets, the seas and mountains of earth, etc., then He also took care as to where He placed earthquake faults.

Reply: Yes, certain eccentricities were intentionally calculated or built into the earth to cause events to happen at exactly the right time. Examples are the collapse of the last water ring to cause the Flood in Noah’s day and the earthquake and volcanic eruption that

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Mathematics is generally the root of trees of knowledge. That is true here as well, but love is the soil in which it grows.

Isa. 40:13 Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

Isa. 40:14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

Isa. 40:15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Isa. 40:16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

Isa. 40:17 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Isa. 40:18 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Verses 18–22 contain many questions. There is a sequence that pertains to the making of images. “To whom then will ye liken God?” Man is making a likeness of God. First, gold (the king of the metals) is used, then silver, then wood (descending order). The wealthy had gold and silver images; the ordinary, poor people carved images out of wood. The point is that man wants to create with his own hands a likeness of God.

Isa. 40:19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

Isa. 40:20 He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.

“The graven image ... shall not be moved.” The statue was placed in a spot where it was not to be moved; it was to be a permanent memorial in a permanent place of worship and veneration. But trees *will rot* and statues or images *will crumble!*

Isa. 40:21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Isa. 40:22 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

The expression “circle [sphere] of the earth” revealed back in Isaiah’s day that the earth is *round*.

Comment: What a powerful picture! Just think of Jehovah sitting on the earth and the inhabitants appearing as grasshoppers in comparison.

Reply: God condescends to picture His greatness, majesty, and power in comparison to our smallness as “grasshoppers.” We do not realize just how tiny we literally are. And in order

for God to measure out the Atlantic and Pacific oceans *in His hand*, He would have to be much larger than is expressed by His sitting on the circle of the earth. In fact, the whole heavens cannot even contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). One purpose of the expression is to show the earth is under His control.

Comment: Size-wise, as the grasshopper is to the earth, so the earth is to God. Staggering proportions!

Isa. 40:23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Isa. 40:24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

Isa. 40:25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Isa. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

The fact that God created the host of the heavens should give us some idea of His size, power, and intellect. He has a name for *each* of the heavenly bodies, and *not one fails*. Science, astronomy, tells us that the stars are failing, that they are exploding and dying, but astronomers are seeing things that occurred billions of light-years ago. (Light travels at 186,000 miles per second.) They have many unproved theories, such as the black holes. Also, much of what they see can be vapor or gases, or even the creation of new planets. The Apostle Paul said the things that are not seen can be more real than the things that are seen (2 Cor. 4:18).

The majestic verses in the 40th chapter of Isaiah furnish keys for other thoughts.

Isa. 40:27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Jacob (Israel) is saying, "My way is hid from the LORD." This sentiment will be felt more in the future, just before Jacob's Trouble and after a period of respite, peace, and prosperity when they are increased with cattle and much goods and dwell with unwallled villages, having relaxed their preparedness for warfare (Ezek. 38:11,12). With anarchy prevailing in other parts of the earth at that time, including Magog (Ezek. 39:6), the booty in Israel will attract the forces of Gog. With no transportation, no police or fire department, no supermarkets, etc., those with guns and ammunition will band together and head for Israel, robbing and pillaging as they go. In this common circumstance, all distinctions of race, nationality, and religion will cease. Anarchy will be a leveler among the forces of Gog, the unifying factor being a common animal instinct of survival. Their intention will be to seize food and control from the strategic location of Israel.

Isa. 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Isa. 40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth

strength.

Isa. 40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

Isa. 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

In context, this prophecy applies to the Holy Remnant. (A secondary application, or at least the principle, is for the Christian too. One might experience depression, sorrow, or fear, but strength comes after praying to God.) This verse applies to the very end of the age and Israel's extremity, and the Jewish element who have the hearing ear at that time will survive. Their names are written in a book and *nothing* will kill them (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). They will be strengthened and encouraged *as individuals* as they realize God is on their side.

Chapter 40 begins with the thought of giving comfort to Israel, and this thought continues throughout the chapter. It can also be considered in a secondary sense as a *broad* message to *all* the right-hearted everywhere. We should urge people to seek righteousness and meekness so that they may be hidden in the Time of Trouble (Zeph. 2:3). In other words, the same principle applies in a general way to all those who have a right heart attitude. "Comfort ye, my people" (first the Jew and then the Gentile who wants to do the Lord's will). They should get out of the way of the Lord's steamroller. The difference is that the obedient Jew *will* be hid and the Gentile *may* be hid, so the message of Isaiah 40 is especially for the Holy Remnant.

Isa. 41:1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

"Keep silence before me, O islands [republics and the more distant nations from the Middle East]." What is the setting? God, the Holy One of Israel, gives the command: "Keep silence ... O islands; let the people ... speak." The people respond: "Let us come near together to judgment."

Isaiah 2:3 is similar to this verse: "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." In the Kingdom there will be a *joyful* coming to judgment to learn of God. Realizing they cannot judge themselves, the people will draw near, and in humility seek help and instruction from the Lord to walk up the highway of holiness.

"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near." After Jacob's Trouble, when mankind is in awe of God's power, He will address and assure them that He does not intend to destroy them. It will be to their benefit to come to His counsel; they will "renew their strength." And in joy the people who hear the message will invite others to come with them and share the blessings and knowledge (Isa. 2:2,3). The principle was the same when Philip met Jesus. He left immediately to get Nathanael, who was praying under the fig tree, to share news of the Messiah.

"Keep silence before me." The exercise of divine authority will be so definite and manifest in that day that God will be exalted and known as the Holy One of Israel. His counsel to the people to come near and renew their strength will be made known through The Christ in

glory and through the Ancient Worthies down here. The Law will go forth from Zion, but the word of instruction will issue forth from Jerusalem through the Ancient Worthies (Isa. 2:3).

Isa. 41:2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

Jesus is the “righteous man from the east.” The Tabernacle entrance (pertaining to Jesus and the Church) was on the *east*. In Ezekiel’s vision of the Third Temple, the glory of the Lord God entered the *east* gate and went through the various courts into the temple structure itself. In Revelation 16:12 the Church are called “kings of the *east*.” In Revelation 7:2 Jesus is the angel “from the *east*.” Isaiah 41:25 reads in part, “I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the *rising of the sun* shall he call upon my name.” Two points of the compass are mentioned: north and *east*. The “righteous man” who comes from the east also comes from the north (Pleiades, the seat of divine government or control). In connection with setting up the Kingdom in glory and power, Jesus will manifest his presence in Israel with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. He comes from the north, but to harmonize the deliverance down here with other prophecies, it is pictured as coming from the east.

God will call Jesus “to his foot,” to Mount Zion, to Israel. Zechariah 14:4 tells that God’s feet will be seen on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem; ie, God’s presence or authority will be manifested in the rescue of the Holy Remnant through miraculous physical phenomena: earthquake, pestilence, flood, etc. In other words, Jesus, the “righteous man from the east,” will make manifest the deliverance of the Holy Remnant at Jehovah’s *footstool*, which is Jerusalem. In Psalms 99:5 and 132:7, the Third Temple is mentioned as God’s “footstool.” Thus the earth (Isa. 66:1), more specifically Jerusalem, and even more specifically the Temple Mount within Jerusalem, are all considered God’s footstool.

The “east” is the way of sacrifice, and the “kings of the east,” those who are faithful unto death, will get crowns, for those who suffer with Christ will reign with him. The Tabernacle pictures the calling of the Church. The Tabernacle is the way of the Church, which was opened up by Jesus, the forerunner. Its objective is the Most Holy, which is entered progressively through the gate on the *east*, the Court, and the Holy.

Of the various gates in Ezekiel’s Temple, the east gate is to be closed forever because the Church will be complete when the Kingdom is set up. A *Reprint* article mentions that the appearance of Jehovah entering the Temple in Ezekiel 44:1,2 pictures the closing of the door. The north and south gates will be kept open for the world. Those who enter the north gate must exit the south gate and vice versa so that all who enter will pass the altar.

God will give “the nations before him [that is, before Jesus],” and make him “rule over [or among] kings [the Church].” Jesus will also be King in authority over all the earth. He will be the King of kings in both senses of the word.

In this picture we are gradually being introduced to Cyrus the king. Remember, the chapter divisions of our Bibles are arbitrary, and in subsequent chapters, which are the *same* context, Cyrus will appear.

Isa. 41:3 He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with

his feet.

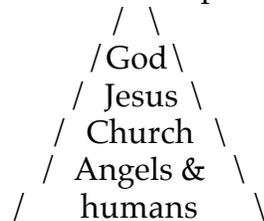
As The Christ in glory (referred to as “saviours” plural in Obadiah 21) pursue the enemy forces of Gog, they will use supernatural judgments, not human methods. An example of a supernatural judgment is the literal earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives so that the faithful remnant can flee for safety in the resulting ravine. This same earthquake will help to slay Gog. Similarly the Red Sea opened an avenue of escape for the Israelites to flee dryshod and, at the same time, created a grave for their Egyptian enemies.

“He” (The Christ) will pursue the enemy forces of Gog and pass on safely. As divine beings, they will not be confined to the mechanisms of our three dimensions down here. They will fight the battle in a supernatural way that is unfamiliar to man.

Isa. 41:4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.

“LORD” would be Jehovah, who is “the first” and “the last.” In Revelation 1:11 Jesus is also called “the first and the last” but in a different sense. The distinction is that the honor and the prerogatives of His office God will give to none other. He will always be preeminent over all other beings in the universe. The principle is expressed in Isaiah 42:8, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.” God does not share coequal honor with Christ.

Jesus is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, as (1) the first and only directly begotten Son of God and (2) the first and last head of the Church, the head of the body. That headship Jesus will not share with another. Thus there are two headships, one subordinate to the other. God is the head over Christ, and Christ is head over the Church. Underneath are all other beings, both angelic and human. This hierarchy of headship is well illustrated by a pyramid.



Q: Why does verse 4 use “with”? “I the LORD, the first, and *with* the last; I am he.”

A: The expression “the first and the last” is used without “with” elsewhere in Isaiah. “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel ... *I am the first, and I am the last*; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 44:6). “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; *I am the first, I also am the last*” (Isa. 48:12). Inserting the word “with” is another way of saying “I was, I am, and I shall be.” That position He will never give to another. He is the great I AM; He has always existed, from everlasting to everlasting, whereas Jesus did not exist either prior to his creation or during the parts of three days and nights that he was dead. Jesus’ title in Revelation 1:11 as “the first and the last” pertains to his office in the Church. Jesus even stated this in Revelation 1:8 when he says, “I did not give myself this title. The ever-living God gave me this authority.” “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

The word “with” signifies *continuity*. “I am the first, and with the last” means there is *no interruption* in Jehovah’s role. God always was the Creator and always will be.

Isa. 41:5 The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and

came.

“The [far-off] isles [islands—verse 1] saw it, and feared.” What will they see and fear? God’s miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant. The surviving Gentile eyewitnesses of Jacob’s Trouble will go back to their homelands and report what they actually saw and heard. Some of those eyewitnesses will be part of the Gog forces (only 1/6 of them survive), and some will be helpless onlookers (those from Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish).

Isa. 41:6 They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.

Isa. 41:7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

There is a strange break here. The description of a condition of idolatry is foreign to the earlier verses. From Chapter 40 on, the Book of Isaiah is *all prophecy*. Prior chapters concentrated on historical events. From now on, allusions to historical events, such as those regarding Cyrus, will be spiritualized.

Here everyone is helping his neighbor in craftsmanship (see RSV) and foundry work. But what are they doing? They are making idols. First, before tying in verses 6 and 7 with the rest of the chapter, we will discuss the making of idols.

(Jer. 10:3–5) “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.” One cuts a tree out of the forest, removes the bark, and carves it into the shape of an idol. The wooden idol is overlaid with gold and silver to give it a metallic appearance. Spikes are then driven into the feet to fasten it onto some kind of platform.

(Psa. 115:3–12) “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.* O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.” The italicized part is humorous—dumb idols and dumb idol-makers! This is a prophetic Psalm, but it brings in instructional points about idols and making them, and then ties in the points with the nation of Israel. Most of the people in the world make and worship idols. These idols, the product of *man’s* hands, can do nothing of themselves. God, the great Creator, the great I AM, made the maker of idols; He made man. “I am the great Creator. Who made me?” He is trying to shame the idol makers, those who make dumb little images of birds and other creatures as their conception of God.

Next in Psalm 115, God identifies Israel’s salvation with Him. “O Israel, trust thou in

Jehovah." *God* is Israel's shield. Not only is Israel to be restored, not only is a New Covenant to be made with the house of Israel, not only will there be a new Temple arrangement and Temple, but He will restore their judges as at the first (Isa. 1:26). (In fact, as Ancient Worthies, many of the *same* individuals will again be their judges.) Hence many features of the old Mosaic Law Covenant will be reinstated, but with a better Mediator and some modifications and additions. The house of Aaron will again be involved in Temple services, but the priesthood will be restricted to the Zadok line, who were loyal to King David under adverse circumstances. (In other words, the sons between Aaron and Zadok will *not* be priests in the Third Temple arrangement.)

All down through history there have been false gods and literal idols. Catholicism has statues of saints, for example. An image of Mary is carried around on a platform at certain festivals so that dollar bills can be pinned to her. In other words, even today the majority of religious people have idols. Idols can also be human beings who are revered or worshipped, money, honor, power, etc. We should not bow down to, worship, or use anything or anyone as a means of approaching God. Jesus is our only means of approach.

Revelation Chapter 18 shows that many industries profit from their connections with mystic Babylon (makers of statues, candles, incense, vestments, etc.). Here in verse 7, Isaiah is saying that many receive their employment directly or indirectly from the false systems. Gentiles will have to learn that they have been following and supporting dumb idols. The God of Israel, who will speak in Jacob's Trouble, will show that He is a LIVING God, a POWERFUL God, a TRUE God, a VERY INTELLECTUAL God. Verses 1–5 show that those who were previously employed in the worship of sticks and stones will come for instruction. Mankind needs to be instructed by God.

The fulfillment of verses 1–5 *follows* the time setting of verses 6 and 7. This technique of reverse-order prophecies is intentionally used in places in Scripture to make the meaning more difficult to discern.

Isa. 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Isa. 41:9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Verse 8 indicates that *Israel* is the *place* of instruction. After Jacob's Trouble, when the Kingdom is established, there will be a second regathering of Jews back to Israel, so that all surviving Jews in lands other than Israel will be shipped back by the Gentiles. They will be "taken from the ends of the earth, and called ... from the chief men thereof" back to Israel.

Isa. 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isa. 41:11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

Isa. 41:12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

Isa. 41:13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Verses 10–13 (and succeeding verses) are an allusion to Jacob’s Trouble and the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. The enemies of the Lord shall be scattered. The confusion and noise will be like a nightmare, with fire, earthquake, pestilence, other demonstrations of nature, and the destruction of the enemy—and then, all of a sudden, it will be over and calm will prevail in a new era.

Paraphrase of verses 10–12: “Fear not because the time will come shortly in which those who are now at war with you will be as nothing. Those incensed against you will become ashamed and confounded.” This message will help to prepare the Holy Remnant for their coming experiences in Jacob’s Trouble. They will listen to this counsel and reform their ways so that they pass under the rod and live into the Kingdom. This chastened element will be the nucleus of the Kingdom.

Even now some Jews are listening and are somewhat knowledgeable, but they do not feel the inner urge to consecrate and follow the high calling. As with Jacob, who heard Joseph tell his dreams, these Jews hear and keep the message in their hearts. The feet members will have an opportunity to give a message to Israel, but the Great Company will perhaps be more successful in giving the message after the Little Flock is complete. And at that time, even some of the Holy Remnant may try to give this counsel to help their fellow Jews, who will not heed them. The Elijah-Elisha type indicates that three years will be the time interval between the completion of the Little Flock and the establishment of the Kingdom. (The sons of the prophets searched three days for Elijah’s body.)

Israel will be ashamed and crushed when they realize that Jesus, one of their own, is the true Messiah and they lost a golden opportunity. This experience will make them more merciful in dealing with their enemies in the Kingdom. As the Apostle Paul said in Romans 11, if by the casting off of Israel, the Gentiles have been richly blessed, then they should not be high-minded, for the Israelite olive branches could easily be grafted back into the tree. If the casting away of Israel is the reconciling of the world, what would receiving them back be but life from the dead? The Church will have mercy on the Jew, and the Jew will have mercy on the Gentile. Both the Church and the Jew have had the similar experience of being persecuted in the Gospel Age. Under the Kingdom arrangement, both will exercise mercy on behalf of others. With the Holy Remnant, the horror of persecution coupled with the shame of recognizing Jesus as Messiah, will make them a people whose repentance is so manifest that others will desire to take hold of the skirts of those who are Jews (Zech. 8:23). Certainly that is not the condition today, for the Jews think that all of their persecutions were injustices against them, whereas the Lord’s Word says that some of the persecutions were punishments. The changed, repentant attitude of the Holy Remnant will be similar to one who, during the Gospel Age, is converted from the world and becomes a true Christian.

“I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand ... Fear not; I will help thee.” This is a highly prophetic passage. God will figuratively hold the hand of the Holy Remnant in Jacob’s Trouble. He tells tiny Israel to “Fear not” when the confederacy of nations invades from the north, coming like a cloud to cover the land. (This confederacy is called “Gog” in Ezekiel, the “Assyrian” in Isaiah.)

Isa. 41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the

LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

“Thou worm, Jacob.” Psychologically, the Holy Remnant will feel small and helpless. No other nation will be able to assist them because of the prevailing anarchy throughout the earth. A worm is known for its nakedness, and hence Israel will receive no aid, armaments, or help from others at this time. A worm is defenseless, slow, and vulnerable, and that is how Israel will feel.

“I will help thee, saith the LORD, and [even] thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Despite the odds, Israel will be victorious because God will help the Holy Remnant. Notice that Jehovah calls Himself the “Redeemer” or Savior of Israel. He is the *great* Savior, the great Shepherd, and Jesus is the under-Shepherd. Throughout this book, Isaiah emphasizes the Father’s role, the primacy of His position in the universe as the Author of creation. Jesus is repeatedly shown as God’s agent or prime minister.

Isa. 41:15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

Isa. 41:16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

God will make Israel (the Holy Remnant) “a new sharp threshing instrument ... [with] teeth” that will “thresh the mountains [the kingdoms or nations that attack Israel in Jacob’s Trouble].” A threshing machine not only mows or cuts down the wheat but it levels the soil. In other words, God will use the Holy Remnant as a “sledge” (RSV) or threshing machine to cut down the nations and “beat them small.”

The old-fashioned way of threshing was to beat the wheat with a rod to separate the wheat from the stalk, but a lot of chaff was mixed in with the wheat. Therefore, the next step was either to fan the mixture into the air and let the wind carry away the chaff or to beat the grain small on the ground and then fan the ground to blow the chaff away. In this case, the type of fanning or threshing would be the latter type, ie, that which took place on the ground. Not only will a wind blow the chaff away locally in the neighborhood, but a *whirlwind* will violently blow the chaff completely away.

This is strong language. The Holy Remnant is to “thresh the mountains [nations],” “beat them small,” “make the hills as chaff,” and “fan them”; then the wind will carry them away, and the whirlwind will scatter them. After that, the Holy Remnant will “rejoice in the LORD” and “glory in the Holy One of Israel.”

How will these actions be accomplished? Will they be done militarily? Just what will the role of the Holy Remnant be? We must look at all the facts lest we jump to a wrong conclusion. In the parallel account in Micah 4:11–13, the prophet takes up the refrain of Isaiah: “Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the [threshing] floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”

When the nations come against Israel in Jacob's Trouble, Jehovah will gather them as sheaves of wheat on the threshing floor. "They know not the thoughts" of God; ie, the nations will be unaware that it is God's plan to gather them to Israel (Micah 4:12; Zeph. 3:8). The events will be like a game of chess. There will be confusion and turmoil, but the Almighty God above will cause everything to coalesce into the great drama that closes the age. "Others do not realize that my purpose is to gather these nations like bundles and bring them to my threshing floor in Israel" (paraphrase). There the nations will witness God's *glory* when He establishes His Kingdom.

The many nations gathered against Israel will "look upon Zion" sadistically, wanting to see her defiled and destroyed (Micah 4:11). Similarly, people gather to watch a firing squad.

"Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people" (Micah 4:13). This clause is much like Isaiah 41:15, "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small." Micah 4:13 continues, "And I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD." The "gain" is called "spoil" elsewhere in Scripture. In other words, when the many nations come down to execute and exterminate Israel, they will come down as a military people with weapons and armaments.

The "horn" or antler of an animal is its offensive weapon, its instrument of attack. Although it protects them up to a certain point, it can break, so for the "daughter of Zion" to have an "iron horn" signifies an effective, deadly weapon of attack.

"I will make thy hoofs brass." In a bullfight, for example, the bull will use its hooves to trample a fallen matador. Hence this little, defenseless, powerless nation (called a "worm" in Isaiah 41:14) will become the opposite at the end of Jacob's Trouble. With *God's* help it will become a *mighty* threshing instrument, a weapon of *offense*, that will beat the enemy nations into pieces.

"O daughter of Zion ... I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." This is very explicit information. "O daughter of Zion" would be natural Israel, ie, the Holy Remnant. (Of course The Christ in glory will be operating *invisibly*, but the description is being presented according to the *visible* scene down here.) From the tremendous retaliation blow of little, insignificant Israel will come God's Kingdom.

Q: Will the Holy Remnant do the fighting?

A: The detail presented is powerful, but it is actually the *Lord God* who will defend and fight for Israel as He did in the days of old. Gog's intent will be to exterminate Israel, but the next minute a TREMENDOUS POWER will come out of this little nation, for the spiritual realm (The Christ, the "saviours" that come up on Mount Zion—Obadiah 21) will effect destruction and victory. Earthquake, fire and brimstone, torrents of rain, hail, disease, the darkening of the sun and the moon with eclipses, etc., will all occur to save Israel, and none of these phenomena are literal weapons. The only way weapons will be used to defeat Gog is when they slay one another in fright, panic, and confusion. Thus it will not be an armed Israel that beats the nations into small pieces. When the multiple simultaneous miracles take place, the Holy Remnant will realize God is with them.

In the past God's miraculous help for Israel occurred as *isolated* incidents over *many* years. The opening of the Red Sea was one event. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a separate event hundreds of years later. In Jacob's Trouble everything will seemingly happen *all at once!* The evidence of God's intervention on behalf of Israel will be overwhelming for the eyewitness onlookers and survivors. The world will be convinced that Jehovah has manifested His feet (His presence) in Israel. One of the first miracles to occur in nature will be the earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives, allowing the Holy Remnant to flee in safety to a town called Azal (Zech. 14:4,5). This will be like the opening of the curtain to the great drama that closes the age.

In summation, the Holy Remnant will not "thresh" through military might. Through God's miraculous deliverance of them, the world will see that the great God of nature is really the "Holy One of *Israel*." Now we understand the drama behind Israel's being called a "worm" and the startling subsequent events. God is drawing a *powerful* picture in His Word.

Isa. 41:17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Isa. 41:18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Isa. 41:19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

Isa. 41:20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

Here is a picture of Israel as a poor and needy class who are hungry and thirsty, yet the Scriptures indicate quite clearly that at the time the forces of Gog come down, Israel will not be in this condition. It is from a *military* standpoint that Israel will be defenseless. The other nations will be in anarchy, so little Israel, dwelling in the navel of the earth with unwallled villages and having gotten *much* cattle and goods, will be attractive as a booty. With the rest of the world in dire straits, only Israel will have a relatively stable economy.

In what sense, then, will Israel be hungry and thirsty? The setting is *after* Jacob's Trouble. When the other nations realize what miracles God has wrought there, they will quickly send back to Israel all surviving Jews in their own lands. Great will be the sudden influx of homeless, poor, and needy immigrants, and here God is promising sustenance for them by fructifying the land. He will "open rivers ... and fountains" in valleys and deserts, and He will plant trees in the wilderness. In other words, He will turn deserts, including the Negev, into fertile gardens with greenery and trees. Not only will the trees provide shade, but they will attract clouds which bring rain.

What has occurred in Israel thus far in reclaiming and cultivating the land is nothing compared with what is yet future. Even today Israel is not nearly as fertile as it was in the ancient past when it was called "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8). Therefore, when the land bursts forth with crops and fruitage, *all will know* that the *Lord God Almighty has done this*. When the Lord blesses the Holy Remnant, a truly converted element, the whole world will sit up and take notice.

Verse 20: *All will “see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.”* The word “together” is to be emphasized. Today there is trouble in the world, but it is not *the* Time of Trouble. What is happening at present is a drop in the bucket compared with the trouble that is coming. In fact, in the past there has been much greater trouble than what is being experienced today. The Time of Trouble will be worse than that which occurred at the time of the Flood, when the angels materialized and took wives as they chose and the earth was filled with violence and lust and all men’s thoughts were evil continually (Gen. 6:13). For this very reason—ie, in order to make the earth even more violent, terrible, and oppressive than it was in the days of Noah—there will be another mass materialization (a flood) of fallen angels. When the four winds are loosed, there will be an inundation of fallen angels here on earth. And the fallen angels will temporarily be deadly in deceiving the people into believing that they are superior helpful beings from outer space. One of their motives will be to discredit and undermine the Bible. Because the fallen angels are more intelligent than human beings, have greater power, see more, and have lived much longer, they are deadly in their deceptions.

The miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant and their conversion, the fruitfulness of the land of Israel, and the instruction and wisdom of the Ancient Worthies will cause the Gentiles to take hold of the skirt of the Jew and say, “God is with you.” That is not true of Jews today, for they are unrepentant. They do not see that as members of the human race, they are fallen and have sinned. It is “for the *fathers’* sakes” that God is recognizing them and blessing them as a people, not because of individual personal merit (Rom. 11:28).

The attitude of the Holy Remnant will be completely different, and seeing this change—seeing what God has done to that land and that people—will melt the stony hearts of the rest of mankind who live through the trouble and will voluntarily cause them to say, “We want the same thing to be done in us, for we are sinners too and in need of help and instruction.”

Isa. 41:21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

The Lord now returns to what He previously discussed about the making of images and idols (verses 6 and 7). Various types of people are employed in this work. The lumberjack cuts down the trees. Another person takes the tree to the mill for pruning and preparation. Another carves the idol or makes a mold. The product, the *dumb* idol, cannot walk or talk—yet the nations bow down and worship it. In other words, the people bow down to the work of their *own hands*. Although those in Israel today are not literally making idols and images, this characteristic is inherent in fallen man. For example, incense, candles, and little glass cups are used in their religious services much as in the Catholic Church. And Jews worship the Torah, but they do not study it. In fact, people of all nations worship the product of their own hands, thinking, and activity in various ways: money, profession, sports, ability, etc. To a philosopher, the product of his thinking can be his idol. Some derive great satisfaction from building a financial empire and wielding influence over others. Thus idol worship goes beyond the literal making of an idol to include any product of one’s own hands that is worshipped. In looking for a panacea, man is seeking everything *other than God, the great Creator, the Holy One above*—the United Nations, Eastern religions, hypnotism, etc. If we were in His stead looking down, how foolish man would appear! God’s patience, mercy, and compassion in granting fallen man an opportunity for salvation

in the Kingdom will greatly magnify His character. Man's foolishness will be manifested and contrasted with God's supreme knowledge. In fact, someday, in the Kingdom, man's present foolish, aimless hurrying and scurrying will be viewed and laughed at.

Isa. 41:22 Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

In continuing the sarcasm of verses 21–23, God rhetorically says, “Produce your cause; bring forth your strong reasons; tell what will happen in the future; state your case” (verses 21 and 22). God has been telling the people through Isaiah what will happen in the future—and with great detail. But what do the people do? They go to all other extremes and to great lengths to speculate on the future, but the answer is in God's Word. Isaiah uttered these prophecies almost 3,000 years ago, and yet today, when Israel is so much nearer the climax, the people do not know what will happen because they do not set their hearts to understand God's Word. Whereas the Lord tells not only about the trouble but also about the coming salvation through Jesus in the Kingdom, man dwells only on problems, trouble, and hopelessness (nuclear extermination, population explosion, chemically poisoned food, etc.). There is *much* to fear from the natural man's standpoint and no real answers, no solutions. Only God has the answers. Only He can purify the air, the language, government, the heart, etc.

The Lord continues, “Show the *former* things.” Very little is actually known about human history, about the past. But God can state the exact *year and day* the Flood came, for example. The Bible contains *much* ancient history. Thus the Scriptures not only foretell in great detail what will happen in the future but record in great detail what has happened in the past. And in His Word, God even tells us some things that happened before the earth was ordered for man. It is a marvelous book of *bottomless depth*—a mine, aye, deeper too than mortal man can ever go! The more we study, the more we realize its *inexhaustible wisdom*.

Today people are generally unaware of the prevalence of oracles or gods in the past. The fallen angels were associated with these oracles, such as the oracles at Delphi. For example, people would stand before a hole in the ground and ask a question. Voices (of fallen angels) would come forth from the hole uttering great wisdom at times and predicting events. Although they did make mistakes, the superior vantage point of the fallen angels enabled them to fool and deceive the people.

The lack of understanding of God's Word is pathetic! He promises that those who hunger and pray and knock and seek will be fed, but unfortunately, there is not sufficient hunger for truth. Pride can inhibit the asking of questions.

Isa. 41:23 Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

Verses 22 and 23 indicate that there is an audience in heaven viewing what is going on down here on earth and seeing the foolishness. In addition to God and Jesus, the holy angels are watching and look on mankind as drunk, drugged, and blinded by Satan. Poor, pitiful humanity!

“Yea, do good, or do evil.” God is saying: “Produce *your* cause. Tell me what will happen, or make something happen, good or bad, on such-and-such a date.” Man cannot accurately

predict far ahead, but the fallen angels can give some prognostications because they are able to first prophesy and then to manipulate and fulfill the prediction or because they, with superior sight, can actually see what will happen (such as a car crash). But *only God* is reliably *infallible* with regard to the future. For others, all kinds of uncertainties, quirks, and foibles interfere. The fallen angels can be and often are wrong, and it is dangerous to listen to them.

Isa. 41:24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

God says, "Your work is *nothing*, and those who seek an idol or the maker of an idol—ie, a source or 'altar' other than God—are an abomination!"

Isa. 41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

Who was raised up from the north? "I [Jehovah] have raised up [beckoned] one [Cyrus] from the north[east]." This prophecy was given more than 100 years before Cyrus invaded Babylon (ie, more than 100 years before 536 BC). The effect of this invasion was to liberate the Jews who were in Babylonian captivity. The New Testament uses Cyrus as a symbol of Jesus and the Church, who come from the north (Pleiades). "Cyrus" means "sun," and he is the one called "from the rising of the sun." Revelation 16:12 calls the invaders of mystic Babylon the "kings of the east," and the sun rises in the east.

Isaiah does not yet identify Cyrus by name, but says that this individual whom God would stir up would trample underfoot opposing nations or powers. A relatively insignificant captain, Cyrus rose in the ranks to become a world-renowned general and the head of the Persian Empire, which succeeded the Babylonian Empire. Babylon was taken during the reign of Darius the Mede and Cyrus was his general. The two-pronged second universal empire, Media-Persia, is described in Daniel 8:3,4 as "a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one [Persia] was higher [greater] than the other, and the higher came up last." The Mede aspect of the kingdom predominated at first, and later the Persian portion under Cyrus gained the ascendancy. The Media-Persian Empire is also described as the two arms and breast of silver of a great image seen in vision by King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:32). Jesus, the antitypical Cyrus, is the Sun of righteousness who shall arise with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2).

Isa. 41:26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.

The rhetorical question is asked, "Who has declared these things?" About 150 years before Cyrus came on the scene, the Prophet Isaiah not only predicted that he would come from the north but even gave his name (Isa. 44:28). "Who else among you is a prophet? Let him tell something comparable." NO ONE but GOD could have predicted that this conqueror would come *long before he was ever born!*

"He is righteous" should be "He is *right*," as in the RSV: "Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforetime, that we might say, 'He is right'? There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed, none who heard your words." In other words,

“Where is *your* prognosticator? Let *him* tell of someone way in advance so that you can say, ‘He is right.’”

Isa. 41:27 The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

RSV: “I first have declared it to Zion, and I give to Jerusalem a herald of good tidings.” God is informing Israel through the Hebrew Scriptures that such a one as Cyrus (Jesus) will come. Hence God reveals His Word to His people. Back there in Isaiah’s day, He revealed the coming of Cyrus. To the Christian, God reveals the coming of Messiah—in antitype particularly the Second Advent aspect in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom. The coming of Cyrus was good news (“good tidings”) to the Jews in Babylonian captivity. Isaiah warned the Jews to get out of the city lest they be slaughtered when Cyrus invaded Babylon, and those who obeyed were not killed. The call to “come out of her, my people” applied literally to Jews back there and now spiritually in the harvest to Christians still in the nominal systems. They must come out of mystic Babylon to escape her plagues and her fall, which will occur shortly after the pouring of the seventh plague. When Cyrus invaded literal Babylon, no mercy was shown. The heads of babies were dashed against stones, and all in sight were butchered. The fall of mystic Babylon will also be sudden and violent.

Isa. 41:28 For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

Isa. 41:29 Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

“I” in verses 27 and 28 would be Jehovah. He saw no counselor with answers, for the people were deceived by their false gods and claims. Take Papacy, for example. Earlier in this century, the Pope issued annual encyclicals deploring the dangers of communism and telling the people that if they didn’t do so-and-so, then such-and-such would happen. These were repeated declarations of *faithlessness*. We know that what the Lord declares in His Word will come to pass and the future is not in jeopardy. Only God can shape the future; He has His own timetable and plan.

“Their molten images [false systems] are [empty] wind and confusion.” When they consult their own leaders, nothing of substance comes forth. All is vanity.

Isaiah was the last notable prophet before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel came on the scene as contemporaries. Isaiah’s contemporaries were Micah and Hosea. In the earlier part of Isaiah’s ministry, the ten-tribe kingdom had not yet gone into captivity. In the latter part of his ministry (about now, Chapter 41), the captivity occurred. Therefore, the Jews living at that time thought the coming deliverer would deliver the ten-tribe kingdom. The liberation did not take place, however, until after the two-tribe kingdom had been in captivity for 70 years. And the primary fulfillment is yet future in connection with Jesus and mystic Babylon.

Isa. 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

“My servant” would be Jesus. He is God’s servant or agent. Matthew 12:18–20 furnishes

proof: "Behold *my servant*, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

Jews think this "servant" is the nation of Israel, but this interpretation makes them distort other prophecies. Isaiah 49:3–6 is one such prophecy, and verse 3 does seem to teach that Israel is God's servant: "And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Verse 6 seems to say that Israel will be a teacher nation to the Gentiles; that is true based on other Scriptures but not this text. "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." However, verses 4 and especially 5, the in-between verses, introduce another personality, who brings Jacob and Israel back into restored favor with God. "Then I said, I have laboured in vain: ... yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength."

The Jewish interpretation that the "servant" is the nation of Israel forces them to say that they are the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, but the whole chapter contains many personal details about an *individual*. They continue to reason that they have suffered indignities and been persecuted by the Gentile nations but that in the end God will restore them to favor and they will be His agent. Some of the orthodox Jews admit a personality is involved but they say Isaiah 53 is describing a *false* Messiah. Thus there are two interpretations of the "servant": (1) the nation of Israel is the Messiah and (2) a false Messiah is being identified. Both interpretations are faulty because (1) an *individual* is being described and (2) God views this "servant" *favorably*. The only honest interpretation is that Jesus is the true Messiah.

Isa. 42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

This verse refers to Jesus at his First Advent. Some parts of this prophecy refer to Jesus at his First Advent and/or during the Gospel Age, and some at his Second Advent during the Kingdom. When Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection, the two angels described him as the "same Jesus" (Acts 1:10,11). Paul said of the resurrected Jesus that he is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). In other words, those parts of this prophecy that pertain to Jesus' character are the *same* in both ages. But certain techniques would pertain to just one of the two ages.

Here Jesus is being described at his First Advent. He did not come in an ostentatious fashion with proud manners and haughty bearing. His demeanor was humble, and he befriended the sick and the meek. He came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, particularly those who felt they were sick, for those who considered themselves whole did not recognize their need of a physician, their need to respond to the ministry of Christ (Matt. 9:12). In reality he did not attempt to convert the nation at his First Advent. In the Kingdom his technique will be different; he will raise his voice and the whole world will know that he is the Messiah and will have to bow the knee to him.

The prophecy of verse 2 gives a little clue, long in advance, as to the disposition of the

promised Messiah at his First Advent. He had to come first as a suffering, humble Messiah to give his life a ransom for all. Later, at his Second Advent, he would come as King to rule and to restore.

At his First Advent Jesus did not lift up his voice or cry but was meek and gentle and even said, "Do not tell anyone about the miracle I have done." He did not want to excite the people into making him King, but in spite of his efforts, his ministry grew in popularity to such an extent that near the end they spontaneously hailed him as King.

Isa. 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Verse 3 refers to Jesus in both the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age. This is a description of how he deals with those who need his help. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax. What is the difference between the two? If a reed or stem is bent in a floral arrangement, the temptation is to prune it out because it detracts from the beauty, but Jesus allows *time* for those with weaknesses and failures (those who are like broken reeds) to be restored and to become whole. He is not hasty because a person's *life* is involved, and he is concerned for the destiny of that party.

A reed can be hollow like a stalk or it can be leafy, but either way, it is rather stiff. Hence if it were not broken or bruised, it would be upright, *proud*, and glorying in its own strength. A "bruised reed" is one who is brokenhearted, broken in spirit. Jesus' desire is to heal or restore such a one to wholeness. Jesus' ministry was directed to such: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Jesus invited the weary to come to him, promising comfort and peace to their very souls.

The "smoking flax" represents another class: "the smoking flax shall he not quench." A smoking flax is a fluttering, dimly burning, smoking wick. The wick smokes and burns improperly and feebly because of a lack of oxygen. Like the bruised reed, the temptation is to cut it off and get a new wick or flax that will provide a better light. But Jesus waits, desiring to restore the flame. "Smoking flax" pictures one who has already been enlightened but is backsliding because of the flesh and/or other problems. The individual is still alive and trying to hold forth the light, but the light is too feeble. Rather than snuff out such a one into Second Death, Jesus wants to save the individual if possible, and so he again allows *time*.

In summation, verse 3 refers to two classes that Jesus tries to help in *both* the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age, for his character is always the same:

1. The penitent and brokenhearted are encouraged to come to him.
2. Those once enlightened and in the way who begin to backslide are given opportunity for restoration.

But notice that Jesus *does make a judgment*: "he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." In other words, these classes will be cut off if, after sufficient time is allotted, they *remain* bruised or smoking and do not bring forth fruit. Unless the bruised reed responds, it will die. Unless a change takes place, the light will go out. Jesus illustrated this principle in John 15:2 with the illustration of a branch: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he [the Father] taketh away."

As a physician, priest, judge, and lawgiver, Jesus wants to bring forth judgment unto truth, unto a condition of righteousness, unto *victory* (see Matthew 12:20). Until one shows he is incorrigible, Jesus continues to give aid. He is not hasty but allows time.

Isa. 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Now the emphasis shifts to the Kingdom Age. From Israel, the Gentile nations afar off will be converted by the work of Messiah in the Kingdom. They will wait to hear his law, his instruction, for he is the Messiah not only of Israel but of the world.

Jesus will “not fail nor be discouraged.” This is a play on words, as shown by the RSV footnote: “He will not burn dimly or be bruised.” Jesus will neither quench smoking flax nor burn dimly himself. He will neither bruise a broken reed nor be bruised himself. The point is that Jesus *will not compromise or lower his perfect standard in order to heal a sinner*. When one deals with sin, the temptation is to compromise. One is so desirous of helping the sinner that he comes down to the sinner’s level. But such is not the case with Jesus. His heart condescends to the person being afflicted, but he does not lower his standard. (Of course we must be careful in matters of judgment that we do not criticize the splinter in another’s eye and fail to see the plank in our own eye. The danger of hypocrisy and false judgment is ever present with the Church in the flesh, but nevertheless, we are to judge certain matters.)

Even when Jesus was among publicans and sinners, he kept his standard inviolate. Having trodden the narrow way on earth himself, he is aware of the weaknesses of fallen man and is sympathetic, but his perfect standard is never lowered. “The isles shall wait for his law” “till he have set judgment in the earth.” For Jesus to “set judgment in the earth” means he will set the perfect standard, the standard for attaining life in the Millennial Age, but he will be merciful and allow time for mankind to come up to that standard *as long as the heart attitude is right*. A “bruised reed” signifies a repentant attitude. A “smoking flax” realizes he is backsliding and asks for help. As long as both remain in that condition of heart, they will be helped.

Jesus’ dealings with sinners and the poor in spirit were radically different from what Israel’s religious leaders were doing. Even his disciples were surprised when he gave a long sermon to the Samaritan woman at the well, but he took time with the ones who felt the need of spiritual help. He wants to save those who desire to be saved.

One reason the Father’s soul delights in Jesus is his concern for others (Isa. 42:1). The Father Himself said, “The choice between life and death is before you. *Choose life* that you may live. I have no desire to put anyone in Second Death, so choose life” (Deut. 30:19). The Son, the Servant, has the same disposition as his Father, and he will do just what the Father wants. “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,” for “I have put my spirit upon him” and “he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,” saith the Lord God (Isa. 42:1; 52:13). Then verses 2 and 3 show that when Jesus came as Messiah at his First Advent, he would not be recognized. In fact, Isaiah emphasized several times that Jesus would not be recognized, and the climax is Chapter 53.

Isa. 42:5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth

breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

The Heavenly Father calls attention to the fact that He is the Creator God. He stretched out the heavens and spread abroad the earth, and it is He who gave the breath of life to mankind. In view of the subject matter of the chapter, why does He emphasize His role as Creator here? Part of the answer: God is saying that just as past predictions came to pass, so He will make future predictions and they too will be fulfilled. His Word is sure.

Isa. 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

The Lord God tells about the call of His Son. God will give Jesus “for a covenant of the people”; that is, God will make Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Father selected Jesus to establish and successfully conclude the New Covenant. “I have selected you to bring about the successful completion of the New Covenant on behalf of the people and to enlighten them” (paraphrase).

God will also give Jesus “for a light of the Gentiles [*nations, peoples*]; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison,” etc. Because of context, the word translated “Gentiles” in verse 6 should be “nations”; ie, Jesus will be a “light” not just to Israel but to the whole world.

Verses 5 and 6 remind us of Isaiah 45:18, where God says that He created the earth to be *inhabited*. God’s purpose is to have a *living* race, a race of undying people. Therefore, the work of Jesus at his Second Advent is to reclaim the fallen race, and all the willing and obedient will inherit the earth. It would be strange for the great Creator to make a place called the “earth” and to have His Son come here to die if He were not sure His plan would succeed. God would not go to all the trouble of setting the stage, preparing the earth, and creating mankind only to have His plan fizzle. He is saying, “I am the One who created the heavens, and I have set the earth in space. I have appointed Jesus as Messiah to make sure I have a *living* race to dwell on the earth, not a dying one.” Jesus will bring forth from the prison house of death a *regenerated* race (verse 7). He is to be the Father of a regenerated race (not a new race but a *reclaimed* one), for he will bring forth judgment unto victory.

In Gethsemane Jesus prayed for his disciples. He prayed that all whom the Father had given him would be saved. During his ministry he did his utmost to help them make their calling and election sure, and he lost only one apostle out of the twelve. That is a successful percentage, for through trials and tribulation the consecrated have minds of their own to serve God or not to serve Him, to obey or not to obey. At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus was saying to his Father, “I know I will die on the Cross shortly. To the best of my ability, I have tried to do everything you instructed me to do. As proof, I have lost none that you gave me except one.” And that is also his mission for the world as Savior—to save as many as possible, as many as are willing.

Suppose the same ratio of 11 out of 12 applies to the saved of the world of mankind in the Kingdom. Out of 96 billion people then, 88 billion would live and 8 billion would die. Thus when Revelation 20:7–9 indicates that a large number will go into Second Death at the end of the Kingdom, the percentage can still be small. “And when the thousand years are expired [expiring], Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And ... fire came down from God

out of heaven, and devoured them.”

IMPORTANT: Chapter 42 is telling us that if a person fails to get life, it is because of his *own willfulness*, for the Savior will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax, until he brings forth judgment unto victory. There is a time limit, but he will be slow, not hasty, in his dealings with the consecrated now and the world of mankind in the Kingdom.

Isa. 42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Prisoners of death will be brought out of the darkness of the prison house into the light, but not into everlasting light. “God ... will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” but only those who *obey* the knowledge will inherit everlasting life (1 Tim. 2:3,4). All in their graves shall come forth to an *opportunity* for life, but only those who hear and obey will actually get life. Awakening from the tomb is one thing; hearkening unto life is another. There is a limit to what Christ can do; the rest is up to the individual.

Isa. 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Isa. 42:9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

“Behold, ... new things do I declare.” Later on in this chapter there will be some clues as to what the “new things” are that God will declare. The “former things” have already happened. What “former things”? Verse 6 shows God has already selected Jesus to be His agent, His servant, His mediator, in the recovery work yet future; ie, Jesus will later open the blind eyes. Other “former things” that have come to pass are the selection of the apostles and the seven messengers of the Church. Of course, in Isaiah’s day the application was more limited. The next generation after Isaiah saw Cyrus as a fulfillment of prophecy.

The chapter opened with Isaiah viewing the future as if it had already occurred. God had already predetermined in His mind the selection of Messiah, but he had not yet come.

Before Cyrus was born, God gave him a name (Isa. 49:1). Cyrus is a type of Jesus, and before the world was ordered for man, long before Jesus was born of Mary, God gave him the name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14).

Isa. 42:10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

A little time after the Kingdom has been in operation, the people will rejoice and speak with real conviction of their experiences and blessings. This is figurative language with all nature rejoicing in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom: wilderness (desert), sea, isles (verses 10–12 RSV).

A “new song” will be sung by the world in the *new* order in the Kingdom. (The old song is sung in the present life.) Psalms 96 and 98 both begin similar to Isaiah 42:10, “O sing unto the LORD a *new song*.” All segments of society will ultimately express appreciation and joy for the benefits of the Kingdom.

Isa. 42:11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

“Kedar” is related to Edom, an area south of the Dead Sea that at one time went all the way down to Aqaba. In this territory is Petra, a center of activity in ancient times but a wilderness today with just a few Arabs. The point is that in the past Edom was a *very fruitful* land teeming with people and hundreds of thousands of sheep. Because of the barrenness of this land today, the prior prosperity is hard to believe. Prophecy said that Edom would become desolate and it has.

Verse 11 is saying that the people who formerly lived in Edom will be resurrected there—and they will rejoice! The “rock” is Petra (Hebrew *sela*). (*Petra* is the Greek form of the word *sela*.) The land of Edom that was once filled with flocks, people, and activity is now silent, desolate, and (relatively) void. In fact, Petra is called “the lost city” because it was forgotten for centuries and just rediscovered in the 1800’s when an explorer going through the deserted ravines found the ruins of a Roman amphitheater. But this barren place will again be inhabited when those who formerly lived there are raised from the tomb. When these generations return to the lands of their nativity in the resurrection, they will sing with happiness because God remembered them and awakened them out of death. In their *rejoicing*, they will “shout from the top of the mountains”—shout with the exuberance of happiness, health, and vitality!

Isa. 42:12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

In Scripture “islands” usually represent republican or democratic governments in contrast to dictatorships. An island is offshore, away from the mainland, hence isolated. Since the prophets lived in Israel, they viewed land and geography from the standpoint of Israel. Therefore, the “islands” of Scripture are the United States, England, etc.—lands far from Israel. Verse 12 is saying that all the ends of the earth, all the people who are isolated and live in remote areas, will be remembered. When the influence of the Kingdom reaches them, they will rejoice and “declare his praise.”

Isa. 42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

The rest of Chapter 42 is a flashback to Jacob’s Trouble, the beginning of the Kingdom. Jehovah “shall go forth as a *mighty man ... of war*.” He will “stir up jealousy [*his fury—RSV*]”; that is, His zeal will be stirred up. He will “cry, yea, roar”! This is not the cry of defeat, pain, sorrow, or even joy, but a roar expressing *anger*, terror, indignation.

When God “stirs up [His] jealousy,” He will cry and roar and “prevail against his enemies.” The word “prevail” reminds us of the text about Jesus in Revelation 5:5, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah ... hath prevailed.” The animal that roars is a lion, the king of beasts. Combining these thoughts (roaring like a lion, the king of beasts, and prevailing) shows that the roar is a *battle* cry of indignation and fury.

Isa. 42:14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

For a long time God has held His peace and been still. He has refrained from His “roar,” His anger, because the due time has not yet come. Meanwhile, He has hated the injustices, the blasphemies, and the misrepresentations of His character. In addition to the time factor, another reason for delaying the trouble is that the husbandman (God) is waiting until the “precious fruit” (the Church) is complete (James 5:7). God has not yet revealed Himself lest the world be converted before the Church is beyond the veil, and the Church must walk by *faith* in this age to prove their worthiness of the divine nature.

God has been still. He has “restrained” (RSV) Himself. But when the time comes for His fury, He will not only roar like a lion but will “cry like a travailing woman.” These multiple descriptions of the roar and cry help us to see how God will “stir up jealousy” as a “man of war.”

The thought of “travail” in verse 14 *does not mean spasms* of trouble and indignation. Neither is “spasms” of trouble the thought in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 (“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape”). The Greek word translated “travail” is in the singular and means the *one sudden birth pang*. “... sudden destruction cometh upon them, as the pain [*singular*] comes upon a woman.” (Note: When the same Greek word is used in the *plural*, it means the series of spasms or pains of travail.)

“A travailing woman” might have a series of cries—a spasm of pain followed by a scream, a lull, another spasm of pain followed by a scream, etc.—but that is not the thought in verse 14, for notice the rest of the verse: “I will destroy and devour *at once*.” The reference is to *one* outcry. Hence the *suddenness* of the outburst is stressed. Jehovah has a long time been patient, so when the outburst comes, when His wrath is revealed, it will be SUDDEN.

Some say God never does anything suddenly, but the Scriptures say otherwise—and emphatically! For instance, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was SUDDEN. The hail that came down in Joshua’s day to destroy the host was SUDDEN. The start of the torrential rains in the Flood of Noah’s day was SUDDEN. God can expand or contract an activity. He can make something telescopic or microscopic. According to 2 Peter 3:8, He can compact a thousand years of activity into *one* literal day (or He can do the reverse: make one day as a thousand years). Jehovah can do things as fast or as slow as He wants, and we cannot speed up or delay Him. Time is relative, so what seems long to us is short to God. In considering a Scripture, we must check the context to see which viewpoint of time (ours or God’s) is in a passage.

Verse 13 emphasizes the *anger* and the *power* of God’s cry. Verse 14 emphasizes the *suddenness* of that same cry. Chapter 2 of Daniel shows that the smiting of the image will be sudden and complete, and not in gradual phases. As a dry clay vessel is *shattered* to pieces, so the trouble will come *suddenly*. As the wind blows the chaff *away*, so the crash will be *thorough*. Here in Isaiah 42:13,14 God purposely described His future “cry” from several standpoints to aid our understanding.

Isa. 42:15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

Isa. 42:16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Verse 15 sounds unfavorable, but God means it for *good*. The world, the people, the governments, will get light instead of darkness. In a drought the brooks shrink, leaving rocks and higher parts as islands in the rivers, and then in time, the pools dry up too.

God's reason for doing these things is not to forsake the people but to bring blessings to them. He will use this technique to make them ashamed and convert them. As their Creator, He will bring about a change of heart. Trouble brings people to their knees. When they do not know where their next meal is coming from, they are more apt to pray to God for help. On the other hand, those with wealth tend to feel comfortable and satisfied, and hence do not search for God; they remain blind. Thus the object of the trouble is to make the people ashamed so that they will repent and can be recovered.

Q: Are the mountains, hills, islands, and rivers literal or spiritual?

A: Partly literal but mostly spiritual. The "mountains" are mountains of difficulty, trouble, sorrow, confusion, etc., that prevent one from thinking (or even praying) straight. God will remove these burdens so that the people can think normally, thank Him for deliverance, and receive instruction.

God will "dry up all their [bitter] herbs." Instead of softening the people, the bitter trials might have previously distracted and embittered them, but the trials and trouble will be removed. As Christians, we sing the hymn "Send sorrow, send pain; sweet will be thy messengers, sweet their refrain." In asking for trouble, we are really asking the Lord to help us get a balanced and proper outlook in how to serve Him. We are asking for trying experiences that will open our eyes and help us to grow in appreciation, character, and understanding. To people in the world such trouble and severe experiences are crushing and overpowering, but we are to expect them and to be rightly exercised thereby (Heb. 12:11). People in the world have as much sorrow as we do, but they do not realize the experiences can be stepping stones to a relationship with God. In stopping the Time of Trouble, God will remove enough of the severe experiences to enable the people to see straight and receive instruction in their weakened condition. He will not forsake the world but "will bring the blind by a way that they knew not" and "will lead them in paths that they have not known."

God will make "crooked things straight" and "darkness light." The "darkness" of not understanding will be removed and changed to light. Examples of making "crooked things straight" is the application of divine help to extricate an individual from a crushing environment or to help one overcome an overpowering bad habit. In the Kingdom, the world will have to surmount the same things the Church must overcome now. The people will have to consecrate and walk *uphill* (up the highway of holiness, ie, exert effort), but unnecessary stumbling stones will be removed (Isa. 35:8).

Isa. 42:17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

"Graven images" are worshipped today by Catholics: statues in gardens, on car dashboards, in churches; crosses at the head of a bed; candles in a glass cup; images of the Virgin Mary being carried through the streets; etc. High Protestants (Episcopalians) do this in principle too. Medallions are carried to protect from injury. And there are other types of "idols." Isaiah's words applied to those in his day as well as to the generation living today. Paul said

in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that the main thrust of what happened to Israel was for our instruction and admonition, “upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Evidently, the worship of graven images was prevalent in Isaiah’s day. Those who trust in idols and images today, as well as back there, will be “greatly ashamed.”

Isa. 42:18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

Isa. 42:19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD’S servant?

Isa. 42:20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

Isa. 42:21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Who is this “servant” that is blind and deaf to certain things? He may see, but he doesn’t obey or observe. The nation of Israel is sometimes called God’s “servant,” and Jesus is the “servant” of verse 1 of this same chapter, but it is difficult to identify the “servant” here.

Comment: If this “servant” is Jesus, it would mean that he focused on his mission and did not let other things interfere. In this sense, he was “blind” to all that would have distracted.

Reply: Paul summed up this principle as “This one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13).

Comment: Isaiah seems to be contrasting the “deaf” and “blind” of verse 18 with the “servant” of verse 19.

Bro. Frank is inclined to think the “servant” is Jesus, but he cannot harmonize all the details in the context. Verse 21 is the strongest reason for identifying Jesus as the servant, but verses 19 and 20 seem to nullify this suggestion. Bro. Frank is inclined to think there is a *double play on words* in which the *true* servant Jesus is being contrasted with the *professed*, supposed servant Israel. Subsequent verses do apply to the nation of Israel (Jacob). God punished Israel very severely at various times (606 BC, AD 70, for example), but the experiences did not convert the nation. A paraphrase could be: “Who is blind? My servant Jesus or Israel?” God is pleased with Jesus and displeased with Israel.

This technique is used a number of times in the Book of Isaiah. Earlier the people criticized the prophet for speaking in babblings, and they accused him of having imbibed strong drink, for he spoke in dribs and drabs and they could not understand what he was saying (Isa. 28:10–13). Possibly Isaiah had some kind of impediment, for the people ridiculed him and likened him to a drunkard. Yet the manner and content of his words were *the Lord* speaking through him. God explained elsewhere that this technique was intentionally used so that the people would find fault and be oblivious to the fact Isaiah was a true servant. Yet by that same technique of “here a little, there a little,” God revealed His plan to babes. Similarly, when the Lord has revealed the divine plan to individuals during the harvest, not many learned have accepted the truth. The wise regard the truth as foolishness. It is to the poor, the sick, and the weak that the plan and its deep wisdom are revealed. The Apostle Paul praised God for His wisdom in revealing truth selectively in this way. Jesus said, “I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast revealed these things unto babes and not to the

wise and the prudent of this world" (Matt. 11:25).

Isa. 42:22 But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

Isa. 42:23 Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

Isa. 42:24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

Isa. 42:25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

Verses 22–25 pertain to natural Israel. There is a play on tense here. (In Hebrew phrasing it is sometimes difficult to know whether the tense is past, present, or future, and this difficulty helps to hide the meaning until the due time.) Israel's dispersion was a period of chastisement for past sins. When the Jews' eyes are opened at the end of the age, they will realize the reason for their trouble and not think all their sufferings were simply the result of being persecuted for righteousness' sake. The Jews must come to the realization of past sins and guilt before God will accept them fully back into His favor. When they mourn for Jesus as for an only son, God will pour upon them the spirit of consolation.

The Jewish people have not understood the "seven times" of punishment for disobedience (Leviticus 26). The reason for their persecution down through the Gospel Age is twofold: (1) for disobedience, as set forth in Leviticus 26, and (2) for crucifying Christ. The Jewish people living at the time of the Crucifixion said, "His blood be upon us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25).

"It burned him [Jacob, ie, the nation of Israel], yet he [Jacob] laid it not to heart." They feel they have been made the scapegoat, and they consider the nation itself to be the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Religious-minded Jews interpret the persecutions as coming upon them because they are the sin *bearer*. This concept is wrong, for the Scriptures state the persecutions are punishments *for their sins*. We must have *God's mind* toward Israel—be kind as He is kind and blunt as He is blunt.

"Therefore he hath poured upon him the *fury of his anger*, and the *strength of battle*." The Jews were violently dealt with in 606 BC, AD 70, and AD 135, and will be again in Jacob's Trouble. In Deuteronomy 11:17, God had said through Moses, "When you find that the heavens do not bring rain, your women do not bear children, and everything seems to be going wrong, you will know that I am speaking to you."

When calamities came on Israel, they were *visible* evidences of God's displeasure with them. At those times the Jews should have prayed for forgiveness for their sins and fasted as Daniel did. God deals differently with the Christian. Both Israel and the Christian must be careful not to misunderstand providences. Providences may be punitive or instructive or both, or we may suffer for righteousness' sake (for *obedience* instead of disobedience). We are to rejoice if we suffer for truth or for righteousness' sake. That is why Paul and Silas sang

for joy when they were beaten and imprisoned. When we have hard experiences, we should not always assume they are punishments and feel guilty. We should ask, “Did I do something *wrong* (this would bring a corrective punishment), or did I do something *unwise* (this would bring an educational experience)?” If not, then the experience is being permitted because of *obedience* and *faithfulness*.

The Jews err because they cannot see that they have sinned. Some hard experiences are necessary in Jacob’s Trouble, but God will forgive them.

Isa. 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

What is the setting of verse 1? It is progressive, leading up to the end of the age.

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.” God has redeemed the nation of Israel by providing a covering (Christ) for the Jew. He has also redeemed them in other ways, such as when He delivered them from Egypt. Redemption can be considered as a purchase with money. A slave could be redeemed out of bondage to freedom.

Isa. 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Isaiah wrote this prophecy seven or eight centuries before Christ. Therefore, the use of future tense (“when you pass through the waters, I will be with you,” etc.) can be taken from two standpoints:

1. Down through history in the Diaspora, various nations tried to eliminate the Jew. (The true Christian and the natural Jew had somewhat similar experiences.) Jews were severely persecuted (they were touched with the “flame” in some respects), but *as a people they survived*. This survival as a people, without losing their identity, is a miracle.
2. In Jacob’s Trouble, the Jews will have severe experiences. Two parts (classes) will be cut off previously, but a third part (the Holy Remnant) will pass through the fire of Jacob’s Trouble and *survive* because their names are written in the book of life.

The same principle applies to the Christian. We might get sick according to the flesh, be in an automobile accident, etc., but the Lord guarantees we will be preserved as new creatures as long as we remain faithful and have the right heart condition. Severe trials and trouble in the flesh are stepping-stones for the rightly exercised new creature to develop added character, grace, and knowledge.

Isaiah, more than any other prophet, repeatedly throughout his book speaks of the Holy Remnant and how God will deal with them.

In regard to the Holy Remnant’s passing through the waters and rivers and walking through the fire, they will be protected from literal torrential rains, a flood, plagues, an earthquake, molten lava, etc., in Jacob’s Trouble. Verse 2 can also be taken figuratively.

Isa. 43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt

for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

In what way did God give Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba for a ransom? The word “ransom” has several meanings: “freedom,” a “purchase,” a “covering,” and a “corresponding price.” In Proverbs 21:18 (“The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright”), “ransom” does not mean a corresponding price from the standpoint of a perfect man for a perfect man, but it has the thought of *retribution* upon the opposing or offending class. An example of such retribution is when someone wrongs you, and then under divine providence something happens to that person to teach him a lesson.

To understand why Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba were brought into this picture, we need some history. Isaiah is saying that these nations will be requited for what they did to Israel. A century later, Jeremiah wrote about what Egypt did to Israel and predicted that Egypt would be taken into captivity just like Israel and the land would lie desolate without inhabitant. Formerly a glorious land, Egypt was reduced to poverty and “nothingness.” Ethiopia and Seba were also involved, being situated along the Nile. Therefore, “ransom” in verse 3 is used in the sense of retribution.

Egypt had a hard experience under King Nebuchadnezzar, and yet there is no record of this in Egyptian art and records. (What happened is attributed to later Persian monarchs, such as Cambyses.) The Pharaohs of Egypt had a habit of hiding any information they didn’t want remembered. Another example is Moses, for nothing is written about him in Egyptian history. Pharaohs characteristically erased their predecessors’ cartouches and replaced them with their own. They even turned upside down blocks of stone containing cartouches that could not be erased; then they used the same stone for their own hieroglyphs. For these reasons historians cannot coordinate Egyptian and Jewish history—unless they have faith in and use the Bible. The Bible is the only stable, accurate history that can bring order out of chaos.

“Proverbs” are short, terse statements usually without continuity. Psalms have continuity.

Isa. 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

The Holy Remnant—contrite, meek Jews with a changed heart condition—will be the *true* Israelites. At the end of the age, this humble element that goes through the trouble will be like the faithful Jews of Old Testament days. Hence they will be “precious” in God’s sight, and He will love them and set up His Kingdom in Israel with the world capital at Jerusalem. God’s program for them, recorded in advance, includes the Third Temple, the layout for Jerusalem and its suburbs, and the government or cabinet with the Ancient Worthies. He will be very happy to use the contrite Holy Remnant as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

If the apostles were in our midst today, they would be giving strong sermons to professed Christians, including Bible Students. We are so soft physically, mentally, and morally that it is hard for us to realize our true Laodicean condition and our need for correction.

Isa. 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

Isa. 43:6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons

from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

This regathering of Jews from the north, south, east, and west—a worldwide calling—will take place *after* Jacob's Trouble. The bulk of the regathering to Israel will take place then. To date most of the returned Jews have come from the north (Europe). When the Kingdom is established, there will be a universal exodus to Israel of those Jews who survived Jacob's Trouble in Gentile nations. Notice that it is *God* who will call the Jews to Israel: "I will bring thy seed ... and gather thee;... I will say ... Give up; ... Keep not back; bring my sons ... and my daughters from the ends of the earth." This calling will last through the Millennium as the various generations come forth from the grave.

And what about all the Jews in the tomb? They will be resuscitated in whatever country they died—and then go to Israel. It will first be necessary for them to identify with their former estate and to realize what has happened.

Thus far a nucleus, a remnant, has been regathered, whereas verses 5 and 6 refer to the gathering of *all* Jews, of "every one that is called by my [God's] name" (verse 7). God purposes that redemption for the world will be through the nation of Israel under the New Covenant. Later chapters of Isaiah will treat the second regathering of Jews in great detail.

Isa. 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

The regathering of "even every one that is called by my name" pertains to the fulfillment of a *natural* promise to the house of Israel. This second regathering will be mandatory. When the Kingdom is set up, all Jews in foreign lands will have to return to Israel.

"For I have created him [natural Israel] for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." God speaks of the Jews who are called back to Israel as if they were a special creation. How will they be to His glory? One aspect is that Jacob's Trouble will be God's opportunity to dramatically save the Holy Remnant and, at the same time, to manifest *His* glory. Thus will God magnify *His* name and sanctify *Himself* and "be known in the eyes of many nations" (Ezek. 38:23). The *collective* aspect of God's manifestation of His glory on behalf of Israel is testified by many Scriptures, but here in Isaiah the *individual* aspect is shown, for "even every one" who is brought through Jacob's Trouble will be hand-picked and given special providential care. Those names of all Jews who comprise the Holy Remnant, and thus are marked for survival, will be found in God's *book of the living* (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1), which is different from "the book of life."

Q: Since verse 7 follows verse 6, is the thought that not only in Israel but *worldwide all Jews* who survive Jacob's Trouble (and Armageddon) will be hand-picked?

A: Yes, they will be hand-picked even in the other countries—in the east, the west, the north, and the south. The Jews who survive outside of Israel will be called back "from the ends of the earth" and specially honored by God, as shown in verse 7. In other words, this is a regathering of *changed, contrite* Jews. They will be hand-picked to be of a character that is in harmony with the setting up of the Kingdom. Even though the government will be in the hands of the Church in glory and the Ancient Worthies will be the representatives of the spiritual invisible Kingdom, the individual Jews who survive the trouble throughout the world, the *Holy Remnant*, will be in heart harmony with the Kingdom when it starts. In verse 7 the Lord takes credit for changing them, for "forming" them, not in the womb but

in the character transformation that will take place in connection with the trouble. “I have *formed* him; yea, I have *made* him.” The class of Jews who die will be hardened by the trouble; the class who survive, the Holy Remnant, will be *tenderized* by the trouble.

Q: Can the phrase in verse 7 that says “even every one that is called by my name” be related to the similar phrase in Amos 9:12, “That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, *which are called by my name*, saith the LORD”? Rotherham says, “that they upon whom my name is called.”

A: Yes, there is a relationship. And Acts 15:16,17 is the other reference: “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, *upon whom my name is called*, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”

Isa. 43:8 **Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.**

Who are these “blind people” who have eyes (but cannot see) and ears (but cannot hear)? They have the organs to see and hear but cannot do either. This verse refers to the world, to all who are skeptics, both Jew and Gentile—to those who are identified in verse 9 as “all the nations.”

Isa. 43:9 **Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.**

The people are to be gathered together and assembled. “Who among them can declare this”—declare what? This chapter of Isaiah tells what will happen in the future and how God’s glory will be manifested in the Holy Remnant. After that occurrence and the setting up of the Kingdom in Israel with Jerusalem as the capital, etc., God will say to those who previously were blind and deaf, those who felt they could predict the future, “Who among you could have predicted *these future things*?” (This is a rhetorical question that is not expected to have an answer, for of course none can predict the future as God does.)

Q: Why is the question worded “Who among them can ... show us *former* things”?

A: This chapter presents a little different slant than we are accustomed to. The setting is *future*—it is when the Kingdom has been established and after God has manifested His glory on behalf of Israel. Then, at that time, God will ask the world, “Who among you was able to explain in great detail the things [the ‘former things’] that just happened, which I predicted thousands of years earlier in my Word?” God will figuratively lecture the world in this manner after Jacob’s Trouble.

God continues to speak: “Who among them [the people] can declare this...? let them bring forth their witnesses,... *or* let them hear, and say, It is truth.” He is saying (after Jacob’s Trouble), “Now come forth. Bring your witnesses if you can, all who could do the predicting. Or, if there are no witnesses, admit the truth. Admit that I testified these events in advance and that my glory was manifested. Acknowledge my ability.” The people’s attitude should be: “God’s authority is supreme and we are convinced that His Word is truth. We have nothing to say except that God is right.” The next step would be to bow their heads and consecrate.

Isa. 43:10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant.” In the future, when the second regathering takes place and the New Covenant is made with Israel, the Jews (that is, the Holy Remnant) will be God’s “witnesses” and God’s “servant.” (Note: Although here the “servant” is the nation of Israel—ie, the Jews—who will enlighten and instruct other nations, elsewhere in Isaiah the “servant” is Jesus.)

Today most Jews do not know what their own Torah (the Old Testament) teaches, for it is kept under lock and key in the synagogues. Only the half Torah (select, noncontroversial fragments of the Old Testament) and the Pentateuch are used.

God has chosen the Jews (the Holy Remnant) to be His witnesses and servant so that they will *know and believe Him*. He wants a pure nation, a holy lump, for the start of the Kingdom. God will take a certain segment of the Jews living at the time of Jacob’s Trouble and tenderize them to be a suppliant, obedient people—and then He will save that segment out of Jacob’s Trouble. At that time they will know, believe, and understand that God is God!

“I am he: before me there was no [other] God formed.” Why did God make this statement? One reason is because many do not realize that the Jewish religion *preceded* all other religions; it is older than Mohammedanism and Hinduism; it is the progenitor of all religions. The world has been so indoctrinated with false information about the antiquity of other religions that even Jews believe this and fail to appreciate the fact that Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, is *the God*.

“I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.” This is another way of saying that God is a jealous God and that He will never give His glory to another. Even though Jesus is to be greatly magnified, Jehovah will always retain His position as Emperor of the universe.

Incidentally, this is one of the verses improperly used by JW’s to say they are God’s witnesses.

Isa. 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

God is the Author of the plan of salvation. Several chapters here in Isaiah, one after the other, emphasize and extol Jehovah (the LORD God), the Creator. Some of the earlier chapters of Isaiah magnify Jesus.

Isa. 43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shown, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.

“When there was no strange god among you,” God declared, saved, and showed. When was that? From the time Adam and Eve were created through the Flood in Noah’s day, the people had no god by any other name. “Strange gods” came subsequently.

The Jews have gotten away from the Word of God and have listened to the teachings of

other nations to such an extent that they think perhaps the others are right. *If sure of God's omnipotence*, they would pray to Him, fast, and beseech Him for deliverance, and not look to the United States for aid, etc. If they would just think about their own history, they would realize the God of *Israel* appeared to them. Their entire history starts and ends with God. If they would return to the Word, their faith would be re-established. Some Jews are turning to the Word now, and this will happen to a greater extent in the near future as the Holy Remnant is prepared. (The preparatory work is already occurring and will become more marked in the future.)

Both Jews and Gentiles need repentance. *All* are guilty before God.

Isa. 43:13 **Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?**

"Before the day [of creation] was, I am he," saith the LORD. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.... and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:2–5). The earth was formed long before God's spirit began to move "upon the face of the waters" to prepare the surface of the earth for man's habitation. "In the beginning" the world was (for a *long* time) without form, dark, and void. In other words, God existed *long before* He said, "Let there be light," *long before* He created Adam. Then, 48,000+ years ago He began to order the surface of the earth for the eventual creation of Adam.

Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and [now] I work" (John 5:17). For six (7,000-year) days God worked, and then, on the seventh day, He rested from His creative works. He will resume His creative work again in the future.

"I will work, and who shall let it?" is rendered in the RSV: "I work and who can hinder it?" In other words, when God sets something in motion, no one and/or nothing can stop it, slow it down, or reverse it. Isaiah devotes about five chapters to this theme because, though the concept is easy to understand, we easily forget.

Isa. 43:14 **Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.**

This verse is past tense in the King James, but it is future tense in the Revised Standard Version. The Hebrew grammar is difficult, so context will determine which tense is correct.

Isaiah's reference to the Lord's visiting a judgment on Babylon and the Chaldeans is an indication of when he was writing this chapter. Chapters 1–39 of the Book of Isaiah are historical; they contain a lot of current events, telling what various kings did. However, Chapter 40 through the end consists of prophecies, principles, and soliloquies, of sermons that are not geographically pinpointed. The fact that the specific name Babylon is thrust into this context as an exception is a clue that when Isaiah wrote this chapter, a goodly portion of the ten tribes had already been taken captive to Assyria. Another exception in Chapters 40–66 is the mention of the specific name "Cyrus." Otherwise, personalities do not appear in this latter part of Isaiah.

"I ... have brought down ... the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships." The RSV reads: "And the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentations." The Chaldeans are not normally thought of as a sea-going nation, so the Revised Standard wording is better. The thought is that God will change the shouts of joy in mystic Babylon into lamentation. At Belshazzar's feast the people were rejoicing and drinking out of the silver and gold vessels of the Lord. When the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus, the sounds of happiness were abruptly changed to sounds of mourning.

RSV: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars." The prison bars will be broken down, as it were, when the time comes for Israel's liberation.

God will deliver His people from bondage to mystic Babylon. In the Book of Isaiah the communist power is pictured by the "Assyrian," and Christendom is pictured by "Babylon" and the Chaldeans, who were part of Babylon. (However, in Habakkuk the Chaldeans represent communists, socialists, and nihilists—the "bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs"—Hab. 1:6.) The Chaldeans were a very fierce, brutal, ruthless people in Babylon.

General guidelines for Scriptural interpretation:

1. In those contexts where "Babylon" represents the communist element, "Israel" pictures Christendom, and "Jerusalem" would then represent *false* Christians, the nominal system. A number of times in the Bible the Lord calls Babylon to come down and visit judgment on Israel, and Babylon gets the victory. And the Lord even calls King Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" (Jer. 25:9). The Israelites were taken into captivity, and their city and temple were destroyed.
2. From a *natural* standpoint, the king of Babylon, who comes down as a "lion" from the north, represents the forces of Gog and Magog, whose intent will be to destroy natural Israel (Jer. 4:7). The time element is different from (ie, later than) the fall of Christendom. In that setting, the king of Babylon (Gog and Magog) will be defeated, and the Holy Remnant will be rescued.
3. Old Testament references to Israel can be natural (nominal or true) or spiritual (nominal or true). Thus there are four possibilities. The context must be studied carefully to determine which application is intended. Where possible, we should see both a spiritual and a natural application.

Isa. 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Isa. 43:16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

God made "a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters" at the time of the Exodus and the opening of the Red Sea to defeat the Egyptians and deliver the Israelites. He will do this again with similar mighty demonstrations when He defeats Gog and Magog and delivers the Holy Remnant. God opened the Red Sea and made a dry path for the Israelites to walk on, but when the Egyptians foolishly pursued the Israelites, God caused the "mighty waters" to drown them. And so Gog will be defeated by similar miraculous power while the faithful remnant is being saved. Natural Israel will again be saved.

The primary application in this chapter of Isaiah is *natural* Israel. God says of the Jews, "Ye are my witnesses." The *spiritual* application, which is secondary, would be that all Christians down through the age have had a witness and could thus testify as to God's dealings with them. This witness will be a reproach to the world of mankind. When they come forth from the tomb, they will not be able to gainsay God.

Isa. 43:17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

Verses 15–17 pertain to God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant and the defeat of Gog. God will again exercise the mighty power that He used for the Israelites and against the Egyptians in the Red Sea crossing. Except for the 1/6 who are spared to be eyewitnesses to their homelands, the threat of Gog will be snuffed out. They will be "extinguished, quenched like a wick" (RSV). Similarly God snuffed out the pursuing Egyptians and Pharaoh by covering them with a wave.

Isa. 43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

A new technique is used for the rest of this chapter.

Verse 18 should be a question: "Do you not remember the former things, or consider the things of old?" (paraphrase). In other words, "Israel, you should realize that I can do this," saith the Lord. The Jews of today do not realize God's great power; otherwise, they would be calling upon Him.

Isa. 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Isa. 43:20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

God continues to address Israel. He will do a "*new thing*" in that He will establish the *New Covenant*, the implication being a fresh start and forgiveness. Moreover, the dry, arid wastelands will receive water and become fruitful; they will team with produce and animal life. Water will reach all areas.

The wadis, now dry, will become riverbeds with steady streams of water. For this to happen there will have to be very remarkable changes in the land through forces of nature (such as earthquakes) triggered by the Lord. The levels of different parts of the land could be altered so that water from a far-away source could be brought near. Also, hidden subterranean springs will break forth to the surface to irrigate the land. The Lord is saying, "I am going to make a way or path in the wilderness that will supply the land with abundant water." This abundant moisture in the arid wilderness will be "a new thing." For example, Beersheba, which is, for all intents and purposes, the last outpost of Israel, the southernmost extremity, has always been arid, even in the days of Solomon.

How will the "beast of the field," "dragons," and owls honor God? By becoming subjugated to man. Under the new arrangement those beasts that were once wild will be changed so that the wolf and the lamb will dwell together peaceably, the lion and the asp will be tame, and so forth. In the RSV the "dragon" is a "jackal," a vicious scavenger that represents

animals living in waste places. Both beasts and man will be changed in the Kingdom.

Many animals fight one another for survival, ie, to get food. When the food supply becomes more plentiful in the Kingdom, the animals will live together more peaceably. Eventually, through metabolism changes, their tastes will change to desire “straw,” a vegetarian diet. Similarly, at the end of the Kingdom, man will eat the fruit of the tree of life and no longer need meat.

Isa. 43:21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

God has “formed” the Israelites to show forth His praise. It is remarkable that in spite of Israel’s sins, in spite of their waywardness, God uses skill, ingenuity, providences, and hard experiences to change them, for He purposes that they shall be His specially chosen vessels. This is a lesson for us too, for who are we? God does not take drunks out of the gutter to comprise the Little Flock, but with few exceptions, He does not take the noble, the rich, or the mighty either. He is making a new creation out of ordinary people. The same principle applies to Israel. He can miraculously change ornery, stiff-necked people without interfering with wills by causing them to go “under the [chastening] rod” (Ezek. 20:37). The Jews who react favorably to the discipline of Jacob’s Trouble will be a chastened, contrite, meek Holy Remnant. Since God knows who they will be and is recording their names in advance, it can be said that He is “forming” the Holy Remnant to show forth His praise.

Isa. 43:22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

Isa. 43:23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

Isa. 43:24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

God is rehearsing some of the things that displeased Him about Israel. The nucleus of the Kingdom will not consist of Jews who have this disposition of improper and deceptive sacrifice.

The word “cattle” is a broad term to mean all domesticated animals, particularly those used by man for food. “Small” cattle would be those domesticated animals that are smaller than the steer—the lamb and the kid, for example.

The Israelites did not bring willing sacrifices. Certain offerings were mandatory, but the great bulk were to be voluntary or freewill. What God really appreciated were freewill offerings from a grateful heart (thank offerings, peace offerings, etc.). The Israelites sacrificed grudgingly, and sacrifices brought grudgingly were worse than not bringing any sacrifice. Grudging sacrifices did not honor God (“neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices”). “I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.” In other words, God was saying, “I did not command you to bring these sacrifices. When you bring them with the wrong attitude, it would be better for you not to bring any sacrifice.”

An additional problem was the bringing of lame, sick, and imperfect sacrifices (Mal. 1:13,14). Such sacrifices were deceitful, for the Jews who brought them pretended they were healthy. For example, when an offering was to be completely burnt, sick animals were knowingly brought. As soon as it was killed, skinned, flayed, and prepared, no one but the offerer and the Lord could tell that the animal had been sick. In the confusion of numerous sacrifices, the sick animals seemed perfect, but those who offered them knew they were being deceitful.

Spiritual Israel can be guilty of similar deception in not giving the Lord their best. In the past, natural Israelites thought they were getting away with their deception, but in the Kingdom those Jews will be shamed and dealt with harshly. The *invisible* Lord, the *great* Creator and King, was aware of their heart condition and practices. Those Jews who died in these sins without repentance incurred responsibility that must be faced when they come forth from the tomb. The Holy Remnant will repent and be changed *before* the Kingdom is established, whereas most Jews will come forth in the resurrection with stripes for sins unrepented of and have no special honor just because they are Jews. The Holy Remnant will *voluntarily* repent and not wait for *forced* righteousness.

Q: With the Christian, what is the difference between being lame, sick, and halt?

A: With the Christian, there is lameness of walk, haltness of speech and perception, and sin-sickness.

“Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money.” “Sweet cane” is incense, which consisted of cassia, cinnamon, and other sweet spices that were used for the Tabernacle or Temple services or for the personal consumption of the priests and their families. Tithes were used to support the priesthood, but these spices were not brought by the unrighteous class. Malachi 1:13 tells of their attitude toward tithing and sacrificing: “What a *weariness* this is!” (RSV).

Our God and His principles and the information in His Word *far transcend* in nobility of thought and in purity of character that of any other religion. There is explicit detail in the Bible on creation, history, chronology, etc. In view of what we do understand of God’s Word, when we come to a portion of Scripture that we do not understand, how do we react? We should not say we are weary of it, yet Israel, who could understand the Law and God’s righteous principles and saw great wisdom and justice in the Word, got weary over the repetitive sacrifices they did not understand. They were told to bring sacrifices for sin year after year, but with their lack of understanding, they grew tired of following the procedures and they felt the sacrifices were an economic drain. However, the sacrifices taught the necessity for the shedding of blood for the remission of sin. Instead of getting weary, the Israelites should have thought, “Why is God constantly requiring these sacrifices? Why is He teaching this lesson over and over again? I do not understand, but I know there is a reason and I would like to understand.” The right-hearted, who recognized their own shortcomings and God’s greatness, found the Law to be a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. In Malachi the people were weary. In Isaiah God is the weary One—He was weary of Israel’s sins and their imperfect sacrifices and their slowness of heart. Nevertheless, in time (in *God’s* time), the proper number will be obtained for His plan, whether that number pertains to the Holy Remnant, the Ancient Worthies, or the Little Flock. It has taken 2,000 years to obtain just 144,000 Christians for the Little Flock (70 a year on the average), yet *millions* of believers have consecrated.

Isa. 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

God is speaking.

Isa. 43:26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

“Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified” sounds like Romans 3:4, “Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” “Let *God* be true and everyone else a liar” (paraphrase); it is *God* who is to be justified, not man. But man has a quirk in his thinking—he judges God by asking: “Why does God do this?” “Why does God do that?” “If I were in charge, I would do such-and-such.” High-minded man thinks he finds flaws, but the fault really lies with man. In the final analysis, God will be thoroughly vindicated and honored.

God is speaking in verses 25, 27, and 28, but verse 26 seems to be a parenthetical interpolation. Verse 26 indicates a time will come, yet future, when the people will realize the true circumstance of what has happened. In the past the Israelites offered sick, lame, weak animals over and over and forgot about them. Similarly Christians may have murmured and done things in the past that they did not recognize as being wrong. Or if Christians did realize the wrong, they forgot about it as time went on. But in the future when this class of Israelites are made aware of their past sins, they will want to make amends. When the Kingdom is established, there will be a national mourning in Israel. The Holy Remnant will mourn for Jesus as for a firstborn son, smite their breasts, and separate themselves from their families. When they realize they crucified Christ, they will cry *collectively* in recognition of their need for repentance and in their need for God’s counsel.

Acts 3:19 reads, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” In the *present* life the Church’s sins are not blotted out but are covered by Jesus’ merit. However, when they are changed in the first resurrection, the sin and imperfection in their bodily organisms will be gone, for they will be raised perfect. Stated another way, the Church’s sins will be immediately blotted out when they are raised.

Although the Holy Remnant, as a changed people, will be the nucleus of the Kingdom, they will not be perfect until the end of the Kingdom. They will be forgiven, but it will require the whole Kingdom for their sins to be completely blotted out. In other words, their blotting out will be gradual. Later chapters of Isaiah will furnish more information. The obedient of the world of mankind will also have their sins gradually blotted out in the Kingdom. “God shall [gradually] wipe away [eradicate] all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Verse 26 can be understood as follows: “O Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults by revealing them to me. Call them to mind.” “Let us plead together” can be thought of as communal or national pleading, or as individuals asking God to disclose their faults. “Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified” would be “Speak, Lord, and I will hear. You

are justified in your sayings. Previously I did the speaking without understanding the sinful condition that existed. Now I want you to speak to me, O God." (Note: The Hebrew word translated "plead" means "be judged": "Let us be judged together.")

The apostle Paul uses the same slant in the early chapters of Romans when he tries to show that God is just when He punishes for sins. God is not harsh or inconsiderate but is *justified* in requiting sins with punishment. The time is coming when mankind will realize that God has *always* been just in His judgments.

Isa. 43:27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

Who is the *Jews'* "first father"? (The *world's* "first father" who sinned is Adam, but not the *Jews'*.) From the standpoint of being first in *time*, Jacob is thought of as the father of the Jewish nation, but not from the standpoint of being first in *primary importance*. Here the "first father" is based on Malachi 2:11, "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god." Of the 12 tribes, Judah was the most important, for out of Judah the Messiah was to come, it occupied a much larger land area than any of the other tribes, it was first in military matters, etc. But why would Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, condemn Judah as profaning the holiness of God? The same principle is illustrated in Zechariah 12:7, which says that God will honor Judah by saving its tents first. "The LORD also shall save the tents of *Judah* first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah" (Zech. 12:7). And the Lawgiver comes out of Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). The promises are true as regards Judah, but sometimes the best of God's people can have the worst character traits if they do not overcome. (Stated another way, depending on the individual, the *same* conditions can result in righteousness or unrighteousness.) Jacob's son Judah, the progenitor of the tribe of Judah, had a mean streak in his character that was revealed in different ways. For one thing, he married a Canaanite woman named Shuah. Of their three sons, Er and Onan were cut off for being very wicked. Nevertheless, the Savior came from this tribe. With fallen mankind, God has purposed a people for His name (both naturally and spiritually). But that does not mean, for example, that those comprising the Little Flock, who come mostly from the Western nations, are intrinsically better than Asian and African people. God directed that the gospel go westward, and the Bible has accordingly uplifted and enlightened the people in those nations, but if the gospel had gone eastward, the enlightening influence would have accompanied it in that direction. Hence the honor and credit belong to *God* for the selection and development of the Little Flock. (Of course to be a member of this class of ordinary people, one must be *rich in faith* and must *hearken to the Lord's Word*. By grace through *faith*, one is led to hope, love, and the first resurrection.)

The gospel is like a magnet. That "magnet" went westward, attracting those who had *natural* faith. Natural faith (faith that there is a God and that God will reward those who search for Him) comes first, but it *must be accompanied by spiritual* faith in order to be productive. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; ie, *spiritual* faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Of the class in the world, especially the Western world, who have *natural* faith, the gospel reaches some, and they respond and through the Word develop *spiritual* faith.

"Thy teachers have transgressed against me." Israel's "teachers" or "interpreters" were its

priests (who explained or interpreted the Law) and its prophets (who made declarations and predictions). The priests transgressed by misinterpreting and warping the Law, misapplying it to favor the wicked.

Isa. 43:28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

The “princes of the sanctuary” were primarily the priests, but also the prophets.

The reason God cast off Israel and gave them hard experiences was that they ignored and disobeyed the Law Covenant. If obedient, they would have been a kingdom of priests, ie, the Church.

Isa. 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Israel is being addressed.

Isa. 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

God “made” and “formed” Jacob “from the womb.” When did He do this? Jacob’s name was changed to “Israel,” meaning “the people of God.” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were individuals, patriarchs. When Jacob, the last of the patriarchs, died, God dealt with his twelve sons and their progeny. Stated another way, Jacob’s twelve sons inherited the position he had occupied as a patriarch. In Egypt, just before Jacob died, he gave a blessing to each of his twelve sons. This act marked the beginning of the nation of Israel. Therefore, since the nation grew and developed in Egypt, Egypt would be the “womb.” When Israel was called and led out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, the nation was baptized in the sea and under the cloud. The apostle Paul linked the beginning of Israel with the Exodus rather than the death of Jacob, and that would be true from a certain standpoint. Israel labored in the womb under taskmasters for 215 years in Egypt and then was born or baptized in the Red Sea in the Exodus from Egypt to begin a new life. Elsewhere the picture is carried forward, and Israel is likened to a babe still attached to the umbilical cord. Then God dried up the baby and nurtured Israel as an eagle stirs up her nest and cares for her young (Deut. 32:11,12). Eventually, after 40 years, God led Israel into the Holy Land. Thus He was instrumental in forming the nation and in causing the name Jacob to become significant.

“Jesurun” (or Jeshurun) is usually defined as “the darling upright one,” referring to Israel. However, depending on the vowels, it can mean “the one in whom God delights.” Jesurun is a term of endearment and forgiveness (Deut. 33:26) that includes the thought of “happiness.” Before his death Moses gave two prophetic talks to the nation of Israel in which he used this term (Deut. 32:15; 33:5,26). He prophesied how Israel would go astray like a spoiled child and ultimately be brought back into favor. Moses pointed out that the Israelites did not realize how favored they were and hence they needed lessons.

Isa. 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Isa. 44:4 And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

God says He will “pour” water upon the thirsty and “pour” His spirit and blessing upon

their seed, their offspring. In other words, God will multiply their offspring. Near the end of this book, Isaiah speaks of this blessed offspring as a class that will be born in the earlier stages of the Kingdom, for the begetting of children will not immediately cease when the Kingdom is established.

Verses 3 and 4 must have a future fulfillment, for God did not pour out His spirit on Israel in Isaiah's day or in any time up to the present. In fact, shortly after Isaiah uttered this prophecy, the ten-tribe kingdom was taken captive, and a century later the two-tribe kingdom was taken captive. And when Israelites returned to their land in 536 BC, they were under Gentile dominion.

Zechariah 12:10 shows that the spirit God pours out on Israel will be a spirit of mourning. "And I will *pour upon the house of David*, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit of grace and of supplications*: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall *mourn* for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." After the Holy Remnant repents, God will bless them abundantly as the nucleus of the Kingdom.

Isa. 44:5 One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

This verse is future; it will be fulfilled at the introduction of the Kingdom. When the Holy Remnant is saved, they will *all* be religious and dedicated, consecrated, to the Lord. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that *they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent*" (Zeph. 3:9). "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for *they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD*"; this will be particularly true of the nation of Israel when it begins (Jer. 31:34).

One will say, "I am Jehovah's." Another shall say, "My name is Jacob." Still another will say, "I am a Jew." They will all be proud to be Jews. The Holy Remnant will openly profess their religion at that time, whereas now Jews generally try to hide or lose their identity.

In principle, "orthodox" Moslems do this now, for they must have "Mohammed" in their name as one, two, or three syllables in any order. Especially in former times, Catholics had to have saints' names or Biblical names.

Isa. 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Jehovah is Israel's King and Redeemer. He is the "first" and the "last," and beside Him there is no other God. In other words, *He alone* is the Chief One worthy of worship.

Isa. 44:7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.

RSV: "Who is like me? Let him proclaim it, let him declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old, the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be." The force of this verse will not be recognized until prophecy is fulfilled. When the Kingdom is

established with the capital at Jerusalem, with Messiah ruling, and with the Ancient Worthies on the scene, it will CLEARLY be seen that in the Old Testament God foretold 4,000 years in advance what would happen. Who else could prophesy in this manner?

Isa. 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

A message will be given to the Holy Remnant *before* Jacob's Trouble. While that message will make Israel cognizant of the fact that the horde of Gog and Magog will come down and would annihilate them if God did not intervene, they will not necessarily know about Jesus until around the time the Ancient Worthies appear on the scene in the midst of Jacob's Trouble. The message will be one of comfort in which they realize God has purposed to save those in the right heart attitude and bring them through the fire.

While the *first message* of general reassurance will be given *prior* to Jacob's Trouble, the *second message* of reassurance will take place *after* Jacob's Trouble and will be something like Joseph's revelation of his identity to his brethren. The brothers' first reaction was fear and shock that the one they had left to die was now the prime minister of Egypt. And so the Holy Remnant will experience guilt and shock at the realization Jesus is their Messiah. In their remorse, they will mourn for Jesus as for an only son. God will then pour His spirit of supplication upon this contrite remnant class. Verse 8 seems to be the message *after* Jacob's Trouble.

In summary, there will be two messages of "Fear not":

1. A message *before* Jacob's Trouble: "Fear not; a Holy Remnant will be saved."
2. A message *after* Jacob's Trouble, when the Holy Remnant is chastened, fearful, and mourning: "Fear not; Jesus is your Savior."

Isa. 44:9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

Why is the subject of graven images inserted here? Not today but back in Isaiah's day, idol worship was practiced by Israel. The Lord was quite displeased at the stupidity of *man* to worship things made with *human* hands. Man should be able to see *God's* handiwork all around in nature. The foolishness of idol worship is mentioned several times in the Book of Isaiah.

"They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit." And why will they not profit? Because "they [the dumb idols] are your own witnesses." Men are *dumb* to worship *dumb* idols that cannot speak, hear, or move! God is saying to Israel, "I brought you out of Egypt and nurtured and blessed you, and what are you doing now? You are worshipping sticks and stones. What is the matter with you? To form a thing yourself and then worship it is ridiculous." God gave Israel a tongue lashing, yet He was merciful to them. Sometimes it is necessary for hurt to precede blessing and true mercy.

Isa. 44:10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for

nothing?

Isa. 44:11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

Isa. 44:12 The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

Isa. 44:13 The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

Isa. 44:14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

Isa. 44:15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

Isa. 44:16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

Isa. 44:17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

What sarcasm! To make a metallic god, for example, the blacksmith heats the metal and then laboriously shapes and beats it with muscle. As he gets tired and thirsty, he stops in *weakness* to rest, eat food, and drink water (but God *does not tire!*).

Then the picture changes to the maker of a wooden idol. He waits years for the tree to grow just right. (The various trees used to carve statues are listed: cypress, oak, cedar, ash.) Meanwhile, he prunes the tree to encourage the shape he has in mind. Finally the day comes when he cuts down the tree and cuts off the branches and wood that are not needed to make the idol. Then, using a compass, he begins to draw the figure of a being on all sides. As the temperature drops, he uses the surplus branches to build a fire. When he gets warm, he says, "Aha, I am warm."

What a farce and foolishness! *Mortal* man tries to make an *immortal* statue that will give him advice when he prays to it. Mortal man puts considerable thinking into making the dumb statue, and as soon as he puts it on a pedestal, he prays and bows to it as if it underwent a miraculous change. But the idol cannot talk or hear; it is *powerless*. Such worship and obeisance show just how thick-headed the human race can be!

This principle of fashioning with one's hands an object for worship is larger in scope than just a literal statue or idol. Some make an idol out of an evangelical work. In effect, they consecrate to an organization and look to that organization for direction. They forget that a *personalized consecration to God* is the main thing. Jesus said to the Church of Ephesus, "I

know your labors and your works, but you do not love *ME* as you did at first." There is a tendency to lose the personal relationship with God by straying into activity (social or otherwise) and there seeking advice and comfort. Activity has its place *if it is subservient to the supreme worship of the Creator and His Son Jesus*. Do not let either activity or an organization supersede such worship.

The maker of the statue "falleth down unto it, and worshipping it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." The statue is his god, yet it is the product of his own hands.

Comment: In certain instances, wouldn't Satan do some strange things through these gods?

Reply: On occasion. When a "miracle" occurs, we should weigh the *moral circumstances* and the *moral atmosphere* in which it is performed. The Lord does miracles for His people through His holy angels, but since Satan also does supernatural things to deceive, we must reason on the nature of the miracle and pray about it to discern whether it is of God or of Satan. Deceptive "miracles" are performed by Satan and the fallen angels for selfish purposes and not for the good of the individual. Healings that are done in an atmosphere where nothing edifying is preached from the Word should immediately be suspect and avoided. "Miracles" that do not lead to a study of the Bible are deceptions. Ask the question "What would following and accepting this do to me in time?"

Isa. 44:18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Isa. 44:19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

Isa. 44:20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

These verses point out the need to inspect *motives*. If the maker of the statue had analyzed his motive, he would have seen that there was a "lie" in his right hand, that worshipping the statue was not true reverence for God. An example of an improper motive would be the worker's wanting others to see and admire his skill in workmanship and the beauty of the statue. After a while the worker becomes enamored, as in self-hypnosis, and begins to believe his product is truly wonderful. A person's heart could be deceived into making and worshipping an idol through the influence of another human being, the suggestion of a fallen angel, or even by his own thinking.

"He feedeth on ashes." When all is said and done and no answer is forthcoming from the idol, it ends up in "ashes." We use the expression "gone up in smoke." "Your dream has gone up in smoke"; ie, "your dream has deteriorated."

Isa. 44:21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

Isa. 44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Isa. 44:23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Isa. 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

Isa. 44:25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

Isa. 44:26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

The setting of verses 21–26 is after Jacob’s Trouble. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your [the Church’s and Israel’s] sins may be blotted out [at Christ’s Second Advent], when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). While Isaiah Chapter 44 gives Israel a tongue lashing, it also gives the Jews a strong message of *hope*. (The sins of Christians are only temporarily covered now; sins will be permanently blotted out when they receive their spiritual change. Israel’s sins will be blotted out after Jacob’s Trouble.)

Verses 24 and 25: “Thus saith the LORD, ... I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.” Sometimes a person who is under the influence of the fallen angels will cut open an animal and read its organs like tea leaves and prophesy of the future. Many such prophecies were true back there because angels have superior capabilities of knowing things that are happening a thousand miles away. But when God had a particular purpose in mind, the fallen angels could not operate in that area. When God so desires, He intervenes in Satan’s occult dealings and causes them to go awry. Back in Isaiah’s day, those who were regarded as being wise in their counsel suddenly could not reason straight.

Verse 26: “I am the LORD ... that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers.” Through the Old Testament prophets, God uttered various prophecies, but now, in the time setting here in Isaiah, predictions materialize; that prophetic word is confirmed. Now is the time for the establishment of the Kingdom. In the rescue of the Holy Remnant, Jerusalem will be leveled, and verse 26 is saying that the time has come for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. “I am the LORD ... that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.” This prophecy will be fulfilled when Jerusalem is rebuilt. “Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof” (Jer. 30:18). God will then have confirmed His former predictions—His predictions made thousands of years ago.

Isa. 44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

Isa. 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be

laid.

“I will raise up the decayed places thereof [the wastes of Jerusalem—KJV margin].” Isaiah wrote these prophecies in the days of King Hezekiah, which was about 150 years before Cyrus came on the scene. Jerusalem was still intact, for this was prior to 606 BC. Isaiah’s prediction was that Jerusalem would be leveled and then rebuilt, and that Cyrus would somehow be identified with a reconstruction work. In time Isaiah died. Later the city and Temple were destroyed, and the Israelites went into captivity, leaving the land desolate for 70 years.

When the 50,000 Israelites returned from Babylon after Cyrus’s decree, they rebuilt the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. At that time they read this prophecy of Isaiah and thought its fulfillment had come; they even thought that their transgressions had been blotted out. They expected all of these blessings at that time and did not realize that the fulfillment was more than 2,000 years in the future, at the end of the Gospel Age.

Verse 27: The deep river that would become dry is the Euphrates River. Cyrus was irritated and frustrated at the strong, entrenched position of Babylon with its high, strong wall, and somehow the Lord put into his mind the thought of digging a channel to divert the water. (Since Isaiah had already recorded Cyrus’s name in Holy Writ years before he was born, someone may have pointed out that prophecy to him.) When Cyrus diverted the river, he was able to enter the city under its gates and to capture it.

Verse 28: Did Cyrus say to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built”? No, but Isaiah 45:13 would seem to say he did: “He shall build my city.” In the *Second Volume* chapter that discusses the date of Jesus’ First Advent, the Pastor answers this enigma by saying the Hebrew word *ir* can be applied to an enclosed place, such as a court. From that standpoint, Cyrus did build the enclosed place or court of the Temple. However, the Pastor did not answer the statement of verse 28, which is even stronger: “Jerusalem ... shalt be built.” According to the Hebrew, there should be a change in verse 28. The words “even saying” should read “and saying to”: “I am the LORD ... That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: *and saying to* Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” It is not Cyrus but *Jehovah* who will say to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built.” This thought can be traced from verse 24: “Thus saith the LORD [verse 24] ... that frustrateth [verse 25], ... that confirmeth [verse 26], ... that saith [verse 27], ... and saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built.”

2 Chronicles 36:22,23 verifies that Cyrus was to build the *Temple* (“house”), not the city: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an *house* in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.”

Ezra 1:1,2 also shows Cyrus was to build the *Temple*: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God

of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an *house* at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."

Succeeding verses in Ezra also emphasize the *Temple*:

"Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the *house* of the LORD which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:5). The Jews who returned to Jerusalem went there to build the "house" of the Lord.

"And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the *house* of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments" (Ezra 2:68,69). The Temple had not been erected yet; neither had the foundation been laid. Some of the returning Israelites went to the desolate Temple site and began to donate freely.

"And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the *temple* of the LORD was not yet laid" (Ezra 3:1-6). The Temple was still not finished; even the foundation had not yet been laid. A *temporary* altar was built so that offerings could be made.

In the second year of the second month, workers were appointed to lay the foundation of the Temple: "Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the *house* of the LORD. And when the builders laid the *foundation* of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel" (Ezra 3:8,10).

Ezra 5 tells us that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy. Then Zerubbabel and Zechariah rose up and started to build the Temple with the prophets encouraging and helping them. Next some outsiders began to find fault: "At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this *house*, and to make up this wall [of the Temple]?" Both Tatnai and Shethar-boznai wanted to know the names of those Jews who were responsible. Tatnai wrote a letter to Darius the king: "Be it known unto the

king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them. And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up. But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished. [Tatnai sums up his letter as follows:] Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter." Notice that the Temple is still not finished. Notice that nothing is mentioned about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. Notice the humble attitude of the returned Jews.

Ezra 6 continues the narrative. When King Darius found that Cyrus had made a decree years before for the "house" (Temple) to be built, he told Tatnai to *cooperate* with the Jews and to supply them with animals for sacrificing. Even some of the tribute (tax) money was to be given to the Jews to assist with building expenses. Those who would not cooperate with the Jews were to be hanged with timber from their own houses. Under these conditions the work began to prosper, and the foundation of the Temple was finished. Finally the Temple itself was completed.

As the Book of Ezra continues, we are told that there was a second exodus (much smaller than the first) of Jews from Babylon. They returned to Israel with free-will offerings of silver and gold, but again the work was frustrated—this time when they began to build the walls of the courtyard. (The next step would have been to build the city walls, making Jerusalem defensible, and the objection was that the Israelites would then no longer pay taxes.)

Long after Cyrus, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, in the month of Nisan, Nehemiah was given permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall of the city (Neh. 2). Critics of the chronology of the Pastor say that if the 70 weeks are applied from Nisan, then the 69 weeks would have to end in Nisan and the one-half additional week (69-1/2 weeks until Messiah was cut off) would terminate in October—but Jesus was not crucified in October. The following explanation is offered.

While it is true that Nehemiah got permission to rebuild the city wall in the month of Nisan, he needed some time to prepare for the four-month journey. (We know it was a four-month journey because that is the time needed for Ezra to return.) And even when

Nehemiah reached Jerusalem, he stayed there for three days incognito so that he could secretly examine the city at night. The account tells that it took 52 days to rebuild the wall. The 3 days added to the 52 days are a total of 55 days. On the 25th day of the month of Elul (Neh. 6:15), the wall was finished. This month is not mentioned again in the Bible, but the Book of Maccabees and other places declare it to be the sixth month, which would be late September. The Pastor thought Jesus returned on October 1, 1874, for his Second Advent, but he said it had to be in the range of September 25 to October 5. The earlier date, September 25, seems reasonable, for that would match exactly the date given in Nehemiah for the completion of the city wall.

In antitype Cyrus pictures Jesus and his work in the Kingdom. The word "Cyrus" means "sun." *God's Kingdom* will be established with Jesus as His agent or representative.

Isa. 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

Notice, God calls Cyrus, a *Persian* king, "his anointed" as well as His "shepherd" (Isa. 44:28). Cyrus is the king who issued the decree to build the court walls of the Temple. Jehovah held the right hand of Cyrus "to subdue nations before him."

How did God "loose the loins of kings, to open before him [Cyrus] the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut"? It would be the opposite of having the loins girded. The thought is that Cyrus subdued many nations without a battle. Because Cyrus was so victorious, the very fear of him so intimidated and unnerved the populace of various cities that they often beseeched him for a truce and thus surrendered without a battle. Without warfare they opened their gates and acknowledged him as their conqueror. As for those who opposed Cyrus, God strengthened the hand of Cyrus in a way that he could miraculously overtake them.

At Sardis in Turkey is a high, very steep mountain that served as an impregnable fortress, yet Cyrus was able to conquer King Croesus, who sat in this citadel. (Croesus of Sardis is the fabled king who had so much money.) Sardis was the capital of the Lydian Empire.

Isa. 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

No matter how strong, the fortifications of those who resisted Cyrus were to no avail, for God broke "in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

Isa. 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Isa. 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

What "treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places" were given to the literal Cyrus? The cities stored their wealth in *underground* vaults. Croesus was supposed to be the richest king at the time Cyrus marched on Sardis, but the accumulated wealth of Babylon was even superior to that of Sardis. History tells us that when Cyrus captured Sardis, he got

\$600 million or 20,000 pounds of solid gold, plus artifacts and vessels of gold and silver. These “treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places” were emptied by Cyrus.

Jehovah, the God of Israel, called Cyrus by name *before he was born*.

Isa. 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

God “girded” Cyrus in two ways. (1) He gave Cyrus supernatural power in overcoming his enemies. (2) God prepared Cyrus as a child and fashioned him for his future work; He trained him for his position as general and renowned conqueror. In other words, not only was God’s providence over the victories Cyrus later attained, but that providence operated from his earliest youth—even from his baptism, as it were, when he was given the name Cyrus. God’s remarkable foreknowledge is thus displayed one and a half centuries before the events occurred.

Isa. 45:6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

The Hebrew thought is “from the rising of the sun, and from the setting of the sun,” ie, from east to west. What does this suggest? What did Cyrus do as far as Israel is concerned? After he conquered Babylon, he issued the decree that Jews could return to Israel to build the Temple and he also decreed how large the Temple could be (that is, he limited the size of the Temple because he did not want the resultant structure to outdo what he contemplated building).

Actually Darius the Mede is given the credit for conquering Babylon because the Median Empire superseded the Persian Empire at that time. Cyrus was the general and military planner or strategist of King Darius. The prophecy in Daniel 8:3 shows that the Median horn came up first, and after that, the second or Persian horn under Cyrus came up higher. “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.” The same principle operates in our country. Even though the President is higher in office and is called the Commander-in-Chief, the actual battles are planned by a general or generals.

Spiritual significance: Cyrus captured Babylon. “Cyrus,” which means “sun,” pictures Jesus, and Babylon pictures mystic Babylon. Jesus will overtake mystic Babylon. Revelation 16:12 is pertinent: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” In the symbolic Book of Revelation is the prophecy that the symbolic “great river Euphrates” will dry up. This prophecy is based on the actual event in history when Cyrus diverted the waters of the river Euphrates into another channel so that they would not go through the center of the city of Babylon but would leave the riverbed dry. Thus Cyrus and his armies were able to march into Babylon under the gates and capture the city. In Revelation 16:12 the word “kings” (*plural*) is used to indicate The Christ; that is, the water of the great river Euphrates will be dried up so that the “way of the kings of the east [The Christ]” will be prepared. Hence Cyrus represents The Christ in this picture, for the Church will be part of “The Sun.” A proof text is Daniel 12:3, “And they that be wise [the Church] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [the sun]; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” “The Sun” is a composite Sun, ie, The Christ, The Messiah, in

glory. Bro. Frye used the illustration of a daisy; its yellow center is composed of 144,000 tiny pollen nibs, which, altogether, form one golden crown. In the literal picture, Jesus and the Church can be represented either (1) by Cyrus alone or (2) by Cyrus (Jesus) and his followers (the Church).

The allegory follows through: Long before Jesus was created, Jehovah named or appointed him as His agent, as the Anointed One. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). In the Old Testament Jesus was predicted in advance as the Messiah. Therefore, prophecies that pertain to Cyrus are analogous to the experiences of Jesus. Cyrus was called God’s “shepherd” before his birth (Isa. 44:28), and Jesus was predicted to be God’s Anointed. And Jesus’ preexistence, his birth as a human babe, and his childhood through his adulthood were all part of his being fitted or “girded” for his future role as King of earth. Moreover, Jesus will be victorious as King of kings; all of his foes will be vanquished.

Not only will Jesus be instrumental in the fall of mystic Babylon, but the Church will be associated with him beyond the veil. When Babylon falls, those of the consecrated who remain behind in the flesh will know the Church is complete and glorified.

Now we will read a little more to see how Israel reacted to this prophecy about Cyrus. An interesting and helpful observation is made in verses 9 and 10.

Isa. 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

God did not create moral “evil” but *natural* evil, such as storms—the opposite of peace. He makes peace, and He makes trouble. In other words, He blesses and He punishes.

Isa. 45:8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

Verse 8 will be fulfilled in the Kingdom. The skies pouring down righteousness like water are sometimes referred to as “showers of blessing.” God has long held these blessings in reservation until the Kingdom.

Isa. 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Isa. 45:10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

Isa. 45:11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

Isa. 45:12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

All of a sudden, the Lord asked Israel, “Does the pot say to the pot maker, ‘What are you making?’” “Do you ask the father, ‘What are you doing?’” “Do you ask the mother, ‘What have you brought forth?’” What is the relationship between the deeds of a king named

Cyrus, the rising and the setting of the sun, peace and trouble, light and darkness, and the Lord God as Creator? Why was Israel asked these questions? Why was God (through Isaiah) criticizing Israel? Because the Israelites were questioning God's providence in bringing punishment and trouble upon them. They never thought they deserved punishment.

Imagine that you were a Jew back in Babylon in captivity and you heard that Cyrus, a *heathen* king, was coming to conquer Babylon. Wouldn't you have asked how a heathen king could be the Lord's "anointed" and Israel's "shepherd"? Jews would have questioned the authenticity of Isaiah's prophecy. Thus God was asking Israel, "Are you criticizing ME, the Maker not only of Israel but of the *whole* world, from the east to the west? I created light and darkness; I formed the earth. Are you questioning ME as to why I called this man Cyrus and surnamed him my shepherd and my anointed? Who are you to speak to me?" This method seemed strange to the Israelites, and they reacted the same way toward Jesus, saying he was a false Messiah and of the Adversary. When the nation realizes Jesus truly is their Messiah, it will be a shock to them.

Isa. 45:13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

Cyrus's decree for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple was made not with "price" or "reward" (tax or toll). They were allowed to return in *liberty*. And so in the future Jesus' message will go forth without price: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life *freely*" (Rev. 22:17). In both cases, the opportunity is freely offered to all, but not all exert themselves to take advantage of it. With Cyrus, only 53,000 Jews went back to Jerusalem.

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways." This prophecy of Cyrus sounds like Isaiah's earlier prophecies of Messiah in Chapters 9 and 11.

Isa. 45:14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.

This verse has a twofold aspect. Probably Daniel and the three Hebrew children showed Cyrus and other officials in the Persian Empire that the name of Cyrus was in their religious writings. As a result, the great emperor was compassionate toward the captives of the tiny nation of Israel and granted them liberty to go back to the Holy Land. He did not regard their liberation as a potential threat because their own prophets had predicted his overcoming. No doubt Cyrus had noticed many unusual (and seemingly miraculous) providences in his life that resulted in so many victories, one after the other. Then along came several Jews who told him that ever since he was named as a babe, their God had prepared him and loosed the loins of kings before him to assure victories. Cyrus realized this was the answer to what he had observed. In gratitude and appreciation, he granted the Jews liberty first, and then a year or so later, he gave liberty to other peoples. In the Kingdom antitype, God's miraculous deliverance of Israel and destruction of Gog will open the eyes of the Holy Remnant to Messiah and also help open the eyes of other nations.

Regarding Egypt, the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans, Isaiah 43:3 is pertinent: "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Seba is difficult to locate, but it is associated with Africa (Ethiopia and Egypt), and the Sabeans may be the Nubians, a strong, courageous black people of large stature. The future picture is that the other nations will recognize God is with Israel in their deliverance from Jacob's Trouble. The captives of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba will go to the Jews in their chains and prostrate themselves and acknowledge that the God of Israel is the true God (Isa. 2:3). Thus the destruction of Babylon prefigures the destruction not only of mystic Babylon (the *religious* standpoint, as shown in the Book of Revelation), but also the *political or civil* aspect of Babylon (as shown here), which will occur later. The political aspect will fall in connection with the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel.

The Nubians are in Upper Egypt, above the cataracts of the Nile. Ethiopia was Cush's country (that is, the land of Cush), whereas Egypt was the land of Ham. Seba was a child of Cush. Thus Ham's lineage included Canaan, Cush, and Seba. Canaan went to Palestine, Japheth went to Asia Minor, and Shem went to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and part of Turkey.

Isa. 45:15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

Isa. 45:16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.

Isa. 45:17 But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Israel will be saved with an "everlasting salvation" in a "world without end." In other words, after the deliverance from Jacob's Trouble, never again will Israel be destroyed or overcome by a foreign power.

Isa. 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

God is saying, "If I am the One who created the heavens and formed the earth, no one will thwart my purpose. All of these predictions will surely be fulfilled."

Isa. 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

God repeatedly calls attention to the fact that He is the Author of Israel and of the whole world and that His Word can be relied upon. He speaks righteousness with constancy and lies not.

Isa. 45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

"Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are *escaped of the nations*." Verse 20 refers to an assembly or a convening of the *spared* attackers (Gog), onlookers (Sheba, Dedan and Tarshish), and Jews (Holy Remnant) *after* Jacob's Trouble. When the Lord fights

for Israel as in the day of battle with pestilence, disease, fire and brimstone, a flood, confusion that causes the enemy to slay one another, a plague of blindness, etc., many will die. Only 1/6 of Gog will survive.

God is addressing the surviving Gentiles: “Come, I want to talk to you. Your gods and religions are a form of worship but without definiteness or any particulars in regard to prophecy. Haven’t I predicted events long in advance? What have your gods of sticks and stones told you? Whether you are of the enemy heathen nations or whether you are the spared onlookers, note this point: what happened this day in Jacob’s Trouble was predicted long ago with great detail and clarity.”

Earlier in Isaiah, Gog was pictured by the Assyrian. Here Cyrus and his defeat of Babylon are co-related to the experience of Gog and Magog. In other words, certain incidents of the past, such as the fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus, help us to understand prophecy, for they are informative and illustrative of the climax at the end of the age. Following the fulfillment of the antitype, in which the real salvation occurs, Israel will not be confounded any more, “world without end.”

Q: Verse 20 reads, “Assemble yourselves and come.” Is this addressed to all who “escape”?

A: Yes, to all who “escape” *in Israel*—Gentiles as well as the Holy Remnant. Before the New Covenant is established, God will lecture and instruct the Gentiles to go back to their homelands and give eyewitness reports. The Ancient Worthies, who will be on the scene at this time, will make sure the Gentile eyewitnesses are transported back. (Perhaps the same boats or planes that are used to ship the eyewitnesses back to their homelands will be used to send the Jews who survive the trouble in other nations back to Israel.) The Kingdom will be in process of being established, and the booty, the armaments of Gog, will be melted down and converted into farming equipment. In addition, the corpses of the forces of Gog will have to be buried.

Q: Will the sequence be as follows? God will stop the trouble in Israel, and very shortly after that, the trouble will be stopped worldwide. However, there will be a little pause before the Gentile survivors return to their homelands. In the anarchistic conditions, communications will be adversely affected, but will some news of the situation in Israel filter back to the nations prior to the arrival of the eyewitnesses?

A: Communications will be momentarily disrupted in the anarchy, but the nations will first hear a report about conditions in Israel and then receive eyewitness accounts from the survivors. The resurrected Ancient Worthies, angels, and the Church in glory will bring order out of chaos.

Q: Won’t the earth be so devastated by anarchy that when the final battle of Gog and Magog takes place, the people elsewhere will already have stopped fighting?

A: The worldwide anarchy that will be occurring during Jacob’s Trouble will end when God delivers the Holy Remnant, not before. Psalm 45:16 tells that the Ancient Worthies will be made “princes in all the earth.” In other words, the Ancient Worthies will come forth in Israel and be instructed by the Church in glory. The Church will then, as divine beings, instantly place the Ancient Worthies in (that is, translate them to) the various nations. With each Ancient Worthy having a jurisdiction under his or her control and authority,

the people will be instructed, and order will be brought out of chaos. The Ancient Worthies will *tell* of Gog's defeat and the Holy Remnant's deliverance. Subsequently the eyewitness survivors will say what they actually *saw*.

The anarchy will be brought on by man's inhumanity to man. All the beast instincts of man will surface in the Time of Trouble.

Isa. 45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

Isa. 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Isa. 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Isa. 45:24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Isa. 45:25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

The Lord repeats and repeats this lesson because the nations of earth are so insensitive. "Wake up out of your stupor! Come to your senses and realize what has happened for your own good. Turn to me." In connection with the Kingdom, God will tell the nations to repent: "Look unto me, and be ye saved.... unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." This message of repentance is in the same chapter as the mention of Cyrus, who pictures Jesus.

The feet members will be spoiled *before* the fall of Babylon, as shown in the type of Belshazzar's Feast. With the fall of Babylon will come the release of the Great Company class.

"Look unto me [for salvation] ... all the ends of the earth." Isaiah is lifting up his discussion from Israel to all people on earth. Not only will the world, the people, obtain righteousness, but they will consecrate in the Kingdom ("every tongue shall swear"—verse 23).

Verse 24: "All [Jews] that are incensed against him [Jesus] shall be ashamed." They will be ashamed of how they reacted toward Jesus. In fact, very strong language has been used against him. This verse proves that Israel will come to the knowledge that Jesus is the true Messiah. "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (verse 25).

Isa. 46:1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

Isa. 46:2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

These two verses are a unit by themselves referring to Babylon and its false gods and statues. Bel was the chief god of Babylon. (Bel represents the pope in mystical Babylon.) "Bel" is the equivalent of "Baal." Nebo and Bel were both gods, Nebo being the son of Bel. *Nebu-chadnezzar* is a derivative of Nebo. *Nabo-pileser* and *Nabo-nidus* were kings based on "Nebo." King *Bel-shazzar* took the name of the god Bel. And the statue on the plain of Dura

was of the god Bel. Hence the Babylonian kings took the names of their gods. Daniel was called *Bel-teshazzar*.

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle.” What is the relationship between these two primary gods and Babylon and beasts? In a vision Isaiah sees this panorama of Bel and Nebo being transported by beasts and cattle into captivity. In other words, 150 years *before* 606 BC, Isaiah is mocking the Babylonians who would hold the Israelites in captivity for 70 years. As is told elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah, when Babylon fell, both the Babylonians and their captives were taken out of the city in chains, and the prophet tells how the tall Nubians, who were prisoners in fetters in this procession, turned to the Israelites and praised their God. Of course Cyrus was the one who liberated the Israelites from Babylonian captivity. When he learned that his victories and name had been prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures long before he was born, he was very generous to the Israelites and allowed them to return to their homeland.

Verses 1 and 2 are somewhat the same relationship. When Cyrus came, the Babylonians and their captives tried to leave Babylon and were loading their possessions, including statues of these two chief gods, on beasts of burden, but the load was too heavy. The beasts were panting and laboring under the weight and burden of carrying these two gods. Even though the statues had a wooden core, they were covered with gold and thus were very heavy. As the beasts struggled along, the statues on their backs were ready to topple. “Your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity” (verses 1b and 2). The mockery is that these *great gods*, who were supposedly the *power of Babylon*, were being hastily transported under conditions of duress. Isaiah is mocking this scene, which he “realistically” sees in vision. The gods could not help (1) themselves, (2) the people (the Babylonians), or (3) the beasts.

The people knew God was speaking mechanically through the prophet Isaiah. God was giving him this realistic scene 150 years in advance of their captivity. When the captivity actually occurred, the Israelites read about this prophecy with much greater interest and realized it showed the startling foresight of God.

Higher critics say this prophecy does not comport with the cylinder of Cyrus, which says that he had a liberal attitude toward the religions of others. That was true later, when Cyrus became the ruler, but not during the period of siege. Darius the Mede captured the kingdom of Babylon under the command of Cyrus, his general. (History usually erroneously reverses the roles of these two individuals.) When Darius died two years later, Cyrus ascended the throne and was then liberal toward the religions of his captors.

Note: Bel represents Papacy and Nebo Protestantism.

Isa. 46:3 Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

Isa. 46:4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Notice the play on words, analogy, and reversal of verses 1 and 2. In the first two verses the beasts carried the false gods (idols), and now the true God carries the people of Israel. How did Jehovah bear the nation “from the belly” and carry them “from the womb”? And He

will carry, bear, and deliver them even to the “old age.” God began to deal with Israel as a nation when Jacob died (they were *begotten* in Egypt). As time went on, they struggled as slaves under Egyptian taskmasters with heavy burdens. The Israelites’ being in Egypt was somewhat like being in the womb and undergoing travail and labor. When they were delivered in the Exodus, they were exalted as a people. From their role as menial slaves in bondage, God miraculously delivered them by the hand of Moses. That deliverance can be considered as their *birth*. Thus Israel was begotten in the womb in Egypt, born in the Exodus, and nurtured by God in the wilderness like a baby. God bore them on eagles’ wings for 40 years (Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:9–11). By miracles and startling events, God carried, nurtured, and rescued them, whereas false gods and dumb idols do nothing.

“Even to hoar hairs will I carry you” means God will bear Israel to the end of their destiny. Similarly, Jesus said to the Church, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). At that time the Church’s career will terminate and faithful Christians will receive the crown of life (their promised destiny). Here God is saying He will carry the Jewish nation from inception to the victorious end of their career, from birth to their destiny.

Isa. 46:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

Isa. 46:6 They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

Isa. 46:7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Verses 5–7 are a different scene but are related to the previous. Isaiah is soliloquizing on the same subject matter. Isaiah is telling how idols are made. The base or core is wood, and the features of the idol are carved into the wood. Gold and silver are heated until they become molten; next they are poured out into thin sheets, which are hammered onto the wood to form gold and silver plating. Isaiah is telling of the diligence and care of the goldsmiths, the workers, as well as of the generosity of those who furnish the gold (“they lavish gold out of the bag”). Such work to *manufacture* a god, an idol, an *inanimate* thing!

In verse 7 Isaiah especially mocks the efforts of the idol makers. When the idol is finished, it is carried—it cannot walk!—to a previously planned place, such as a temple, and placed upright upon a base or pedestal. And there it stands, rigid and dumb; it cannot move or speak. Yet the people worship it and pray to it. This shows the *stupidity* of men, for *dumb idols cannot help them*. (Praying to patron saints in the nominal church is in this category.)

Isa. 46:8 Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

Isa. 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

Isa. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Verses 8 and 9 both start with “remember”: “remember this” and “remember the former

things.” What is the lesson? They were to remember (1) what God just told them through the prophet Isaiah and (2) what God did to help and protect the nation in the past. For example, He opened the Red Sea for their passage, He fed them manna in the wilderness, He prevented their shoes and clothing from wearing out for 40 years, and He covered them with a cloud to protect against sandstorm and flood. In contrast, what did dumb idols ever do for them? Nothing! The Israelites were to recall, on the one hand, the *impotence* of the false gods and, on the other hand, the *power* of Jehovah as exercised on their behalf in the past. Now He was testing their faith.

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (verse 10). God gave numerous prophecies in advance. Specifically, He prophesied about Cyrus, even giving him a name in advance, and said he would defeat many enemies and have many victories. When the man Cyrus actually appeared on the scene, the Jews must have followed his progress and successes with great interest, for they would have heard about his victories and should have meditated on the prophecies about him. As captives in Babylon, they would have been joyful to hear he was coming down to Babylon.

Faithful Jews would have left houses and some possessions to follow the admonition “Come out of her [literal Babylon], my people.” They would have left the city proper. The unfaithful Jews who remained in the city were slaughtered by Cyrus’s armies because they did not obey the call to “come out.” (Thus there are both literal and symbolic interpretations to the text to come out of Babylon so as to not partake of her plagues. The chief reason for the literal picture is to be a spiritual lesson to us upon whom the ends of the age do come—1 Cor. 10:11.) In time Cyrus gave the favorable decree permitting the Israelites to go back to Jerusalem and build the Temple.

“Remember this, and show yourselves men” (verse 8). As the Jews back there saw these prophecies being fulfilled, they realized that they were transgressors and that their captivity in Babylon was a punishment. (When Daniel knew the end of the 70 years was drawing near, he prayed earnestly to God and, putting himself in the place of the nation, admitted, “We have sinned”—Dan. 9:2–5.) The lesson here in Isaiah was to remember what God did in the past, so that as the Jews saw the prophecies reaching fruition, they would get courage and strength to obey and leave Babylon. They should recall these prophecies, encourage one another, and have rekindled hope. Instead of being forlorn and dejected captives with no hope, they should be reinvigorated by remembering not only God’s mercy but His ability to declare “the end from the beginning.” They saw the utter impotence of the gods of Babylon, for when the time came for liberation through Cyrus, no one could thwart the Almighty God.

Isa. 46:11 **Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.**

The “ravenous bird from the east” was Cyrus, God’s “shepherd” and his “anointed” (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). This verse shows that God can use *worldlings* to help His people. Cyrus, a heathen king, prefigures Jesus at the Second Advent when he liberates the “captives” from mystic Babylon at its fall. However, this particular description of Cyrus as a “ravenous bird” refers to the literal event only (and not to Jesus). (Another picture showing the use of worldlings is the feeding of Elijah by ravens.)

Seventy years earlier, in 606 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar was called God’s “servant” when he

captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. The Lord told Nebuchadnezzar, "Since you got no wages for your services, I will see that you capture Egypt and obtain its wealth." Now the Lord would pay wages to Cyrus in two ways: (1) through "hidden riches" of the city of Croesus (Isa. 45:3) and (2) through the wealth of Babylon. These riches helped to satisfy the "ravenous" qualities of Cyrus.

God says, "*I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*" We do not realize how many times the Lord has brought to pass things that He has spoken. To reflect on history to a certain extent is profitable and rewarding, for tracing God's dealings provides a basis for faith. "Faith" is not credulity but the exercise of the mind on real and established truths. The Word of God is truth, and we can rely on future prophecies *to be fulfilled* because we see that past prophecies *were fulfilled*. The Bible removes the cobwebs and confusion of historical legends and tells the real truth of history in great detail. Fulfilled prophecies and historical accounts are designed to be springboards to higher planes of faith.

Verse 11 describes the literal Cyrus. The Revelation 16:12 picture of the way being prepared for the kings of the east is a spiritual picture only, but it is based on the literal account of Cyrus in the Old Testament. The beast of Revelation is based on the Daniel beast but is a little different. The Cyrus of Revelation 16 is a little different from the Isaiah Cyrus, for Revelation 16 shows the Church associated with Christ. The capture of Babylon in Jeremiah 50–52 is both literal and spiritual in some verses, only literal in other verses, and only spiritual in still other verses.

The Christ in glory will use earthly agencies for the actual destruction of Babylon. The Lord's army, composed of the discontents of mankind, will help to tear down mystic Babylon. This element can be pictured by ravenous birds, for all the fowl of heaven will be called to a feast (Rev. 19:17). Fowl will also be invited to a feast, sacrifice, slaughter, at the time of Jacob's Trouble (Ezek. 39:17). Order: fall of Babylon, fall of governments, Jacob's Trouble.

Isa. 46:12 **Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:**

Isa. 46:13 **I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.**

"Hearken to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from deliverance: I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off ..." (RSV).

These verses were recorded 150 years in advance of the actual event, yet God said His deliverance was "near" and it would "not tarry." In what sense? In that the salvation would occur at a *fixed date* or point in time. The land of Israel was to lie fallow and desolate without inhabitant for 70 years, until it had fulfilled its sabbaths, and then, in 536 BC, the salvation *would come* by God *on time!* God purposed it and He would do it!

There have been many disappointments in the past with regard to prophecy, but as we come to the very end of the age, the Lord's people will know it—and will know the outcome. For instance, when mystic Babylon actually decrees that the mark be put on everyone's hand or forehead, the Lord's people will know that the end of the age has arrived.

These verses have an antitype in regard to Israel's deliverance from Gog in Jacob's Trouble.

“I will place [appoint] salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” God has a *fixity* of purpose with regard to Israel’s great deliverance; He has a *fixed time and place* (ie, Jerusalem). There God will manifest Himself, His POWER, on behalf of Israel. The salvation will be for *Israel’s glory*.

Isa. 47:1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

Isa. 47:2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

Isa. 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

The picturing of Babylon as a woman ties in Isaiah 47 with Revelation 17. She is supposed to be a virgin in Revelation 17 but is, instead, the mother of harlots. “Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground” indicates she is dethroned. She has been removed from her position of honor as a queen and is made to sit on the ground as a peasant. Verse 1 shows how Papacy will be humiliated, defrocked, and brought down to the ground from its exalted position of prominence, glory, honor, praise, and adornments.

In what sense is Papacy “tender and delicate”? Its clergy receive honor but do not work hard; they are in a position of receiving honor, praise, wealth, etc., not of giving. Hence the system, pictured as a woman, is tender and delicate in its life of comfort and ease; cardinals, bishops, and priests are furnished with temporal needs and honor. They do not work like the rest of humanity.

Comment: At the time of the French Revolution, the clergy and nobility rubbed dirt in their hands to try to develop calluses and look like hard workers, thus hoping to avoid persecution.

“Uncover thy locks.” A woman’s hair is her glory and she coiffures it to attract men. As a delicate and genteel woman, Papacy was dressed in glorious robes and had a regal bearing. But at the time of the woman’s destruction, none of her former attractions will remain. Her hair will be shorn when she is exposed as a false or apostate church.

“Take the millstones, and grind meal” indicates retribution. Previously Papacy caused others to grind with the millstones and then took the spiritual food and diluted it: three measures of barley to one measure of wheat (Rev. 6:6). In time of famine Papacy doled out the food without doing the work. This condition is a reminder of Samson. When he was in captivity to the Philistines, they made him grind meal with the millstone as a paired yoke of oxen did. Here Papacy is getting retribution. The system was on the throne; now it is off the throne, stripped of garments and honors and having to work like the common man.

“Make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers” refers to an unfavorable exposé of Papacy. When the queen stepped out of a carriage, Sir Walter Raleigh removed his rich tunic and used it to cover a puddle so that the sole of her foot would not get wet or dirty. Here, in this picture, the harlot will have to lift up her petticoat and wade through the stream as an ordinary person. In other words, instead of being worshipped, Papacy will be

brought down to a common level with all the people.

The retribution that is indicated in verses 1–3 is a reminder of Revelation 18:6, “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.”

Papacy’s “nakedness” will be exposed—its false position as the vicegerent of Christ and its lack of Christ’s robe of righteousness. The people go to the system for forgiveness of sins and harmony with God, but Papacy cannot provide these.

It is *sarcasm* to say Papacy is a “virgin daughter.” The end of verse 3 implies she is a harlot: “I will not meet thee as a man.” The sarcasm used in regard to dumb idols is used here for Papacy.

Isa. 47:4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 4 is a parenthetical verse, an insert. Who would be the speaker? The chapter has been discussing the “virgin daughter” of both literal Babylon and mystic Babylon. In one application, natural Israel is the speaker from the standpoint of Papacy’s anti-Semitism down through the Gospel Age. Verse 6 gives credence to natural Israel’s being the speaker.

Isa. 47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

The Chaldeans were an especially ruthless people in the Babylonian Empire; they were “bitter and hasty,” “dreadful and terrible” (Hab. 1:6,7). An early *Reprint* article (No. 622, “Habakkuk’s Prophecy”) says the Chaldeans in Habakkuk represent communists, nihilists, etc. However, in Isaiah 47 the term “Chaldeans” applies to Papacy (mystic Babylon). “Babylon” is similarly used to represent sometimes the communistic element and sometimes the papal element. The context determines which meaning to use.

Why is Papacy called the “daughter of the Chaldeans”? Because of its ruthlessness during the Holy(?) Inquisition. The system was just as ruthless as the most ardent anarchist. The persecutions could not have been more devilish, cruel, bitter, or long than those endorsed and sponsored by the papal system.

Isaiah is sarcastic: This delicate, tender lady on the throne calls herself a “virgin daughter” (verse 1). The Roman Catholic Church considers itself to be a *virgin* church, yet uses the title “*mother*” church, which is a contradiction. The true Church will not become a “mother” until the marriage in the Kingdom. The Roman Catholic Church improperly appropriates to itself now, in the present life, *Kingdom* titles, prerogatives, and principles. “Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life [and the throne]” is the correct principle (Rev. 2:10). “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50).

“Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans.” “Darkness” and “silence” are descriptions of *sheol*, the unconscious condition of death. “The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into *silence*” (Psa. 115:17). “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in *darkness*, in the deeps” (Psa. 88:6). “For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in *darkness*, as those that have been long dead” (Psa. 143:3). There is no remembrance in the grave. “For in death there is *no remembrance* of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” (Psa. 6:5). There

are two stages with Papacy. First the system, pictured as a “lady,” is in the forefront, where she dictates and rules. Then she will be dethroned and sit in the dust, being relegated to the background, to a position of silence and darkness, the implication being *death*. Progression is shown: from a position of elevation to a position of humility, from a position of humility to a position of death, oblivion. The papal system is doomed for destruction.

“Thou shalt no more be called, The lady of *kingdoms* [plural].” Now Papacy is called the Catholic (universal) Church, ie, the church of many nations or kingdoms. There are the Roman Church, the Irish Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, etc.

Isa. 47:6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

“Upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.” The Jews, whom Papacy persecuted, were God’s people in “ancient” times. They lost exclusive favor because of disobedience, but Papacy should have been more merciful to the Jews in that much of Christian understanding of Scripture comes from the Old Testament. In fact, studying the Old Testament should make us as Christians more sympathetic to Israel, in spite of their stiff-necked attitude and their going astray. We should have some sympathy for Israel in that they lost the chief favor. Instead Papacy not only supplanted Judaism but hated and persecuted the Jews.

Isa. 47:7 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

Papacy says, “I shall be a lady for ever.” She boasts that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her and that Peter’s rock confession about Christ represents Peter as the first pope in the Roman Catholic Church (Matt. 16:18). The claim is that the papal system will endure forever and that (papal) Rome is the “eternal city.”

Isa. 47:8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

“Thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly.” The Catholic Church and its clergy amass riches, honors, and adoration.

“I am, and none else beside me” is another boast of Catholicism. The Catholic Church has claimed in the past to be the one and only true church; only in the last 50 or 60 years has this claim been softened. Now, in the ecumenical spirit, the Catholic Church speaks of Protestants as her *fratelli separati*, her “separated brethren.”

“I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” This, still another boast, is quoted in Revelation 18:7, “She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.”

Isa. 47:9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

Isa. 47:10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy

wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.

Isa. 47:11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

The SUDDENNESS of Papacy's humiliation is emphasized. "But these two things shall come to thee *in a moment in one day*, the loss of children, and widowhood: ... and desolation shall come upon thee *suddenly*." This chapter is too emphatic to apply only to literal Babylon. The fall of literal Babylon in the type was preceded by a siege, but the actual destruction took place in a matter of hours when the river Euphrates was diverted.

Two things will happen to Papacy suddenly, "in a moment": (1) the loss of children and (2) widowhood. Papacy's death is not mentioned in these three verses, but that will also occur suddenly. What these verses are saying is that *before Papacy's death*, she will be defrocked, taken down from the throne, and humbled like a slave grinding at the millstone. Consider Samson, who was blinded and then used to turn the millstone. Delilah (Catholicism) caused the eyes of Samson (the blinded masses) to be put out, and in past ages the Catholic Church kept the masses in ignorance. Just as Papacy was instrumental in the cruelty of the Inquisition, so retribution will come on that system. Before death will come humiliation. In other words, there will be enough time prior to her death for her to feel shame: silence, darkness, and grinding at the millstone (verses 2 and 5). No longer will the people support her.

"The loss of children, and widowhood ... shall come upon thee [Papacy] in their perfection [in full measure]." In other words, Papacy will lose *all* of her children (the Protestant churches). Papacy is not a widow today, for she is still recognized by the nations. Representatives of the Vatican even address the United Nations. The hour of strong power is yet future.

The loss of children and widowhood will occur suddenly; that is, in a *very brief period of time*, the world will witness these developments. Revelation 18:8 is related and yet a little different: "Therefore shall her plagues come *in one day*, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Revelation 18:8 and Isaiah 47:9 both indicate *suddenness*: sudden death and the sudden loss of children and widowhood, respectively.

Incidentally, the seven plagues of Revelation 16 are not the same as the three plagues of Revelation 18. One proof is that even when the seventh plague is poured, the death of Papacy is not mentioned. On the other hand, the three plagues start with death: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, *death*, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire" (Rev. 18:8). In regard to the second plague, mourning, who will mourn? Kings and merchants—ie, those who benefited financially from that system—will mourn the death of their source of revenue (Rev. 18:9–11, 15–19). The third plague, famine, will result from Papacy's death. Papacy's being "burned with fire" would be complete destruction with no hope of resurrection.

In regard to "loss of children," the other church systems will become disenchanted and try to disassociate themselves from Papacy. But they, too, will be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone (*gehenna*). Catholicism (the beast), Protestantism (the false prophet), and

civil power (the dragon) will unite in the hour of power, but after that, the great city Babylon will break up into three parts. Of these three parts, the Lord will deal quickly with two of them; Catholicism and Protestantism will be destroyed forever. The dragon will be dealt with later. Thus the kings and merchants of the earth will stand afar off, witnessing the burning of the religious systems (Rev. 18:9–11).

Papacy will experience retribution for her past atrocious acts. During the Inquisition Papacy tortured and executed true Christians, but prior to execution their children were raped or killed in front of them. Here Papacy is seen to suffer the loss of her children (they will be put to death too) and she will be forsaken by her friends and lovers (kings and merchants), leaving her a “widow.” Isaiah 47 and Revelation 18 present two different aspects. Isaiah 47 emphasizes the *experience of Papacy*; ie, she will witness the “loss of [her] children” and “widowhood” before her destruction. Revelation 18 emphasizes the *experience of the kings and merchants* who witness the destruction; ie, how they will react to the destruction of Papacy.

Papacy’s humiliation and desolation will come because of “the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments,” and because “thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: [and] thou hast said, None seeth me.”

Verse 10: Papacy is known for its diplomacy, for keeping a foot on both sides of the fence until the victor is apparent; then Papacy supports the victor solely. If one side caves in, Papacy has enough representation on the other side to appear as the champion of the successful side. Diplomacy is having a forked tongue; it is speaking out of both sides of the mouth at the same time. This type of political savvy has enabled Papacy to weather the storms of centuries, but it will be to no avail when the Time of Trouble comes upon that system.

Verse 11: “Therefore shall evil come upon thee; [and] *thou shalt not know from whence it riseth.*” This is startling! Papacy will not know whence the trouble arises. “Thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which *thou shalt not know.*” The picture of the Medes coming in suddenly and unexpectedly under the city gates of Babylon presents one aspect. King Belshazzar was put to death the very night that Daniel was explaining the handwriting on the wall to the overconfident king and entourage, who were having a drunken orgy and drinking from the gold and silver Temple vessels. Daniel’s message was “Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin”: “God has numbered the kingdom and finished it. You are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Q: When Jezebel painted her face to seduce Jehu, was she aware of the coming trouble?

A: Yes, and the two pictures harmonize. The king was aware of the siege, of the danger without, but he was confident that the city walls would protect the kingdom and that he would not be taken. Jezebel realized Jehu’s intent, but she was confident that applying her rouge and cosmetics would effectively charm him, for that method had worked in the past. She thought that by making herself attractive to Jehu, he would change his mind, but this time her attempts to charm were not successful. In antitype Jehu’s attitude of coming to destroy Jezebel is shown by the text “I will take vengeance [and destroy you], and I will not meet thee as a man [seeking wanton pleasure]” (Isa. 47:3).

Isa. 47:12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

Isa. 47:13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

Isa. 47:14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

Isa. 47:15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

Verse 12 shows Papacy using her beguiling charms and putting on her enchantments: "Stand [up] now." This ties in with the picture of Jezebel, who stood in the window and showed herself to Jehu. The fact she saw him riding furiously indicates she knew his intent, but she was confident she would disarm him with her charms.

Verse 13 is related to Belshazzar's feast. When the handwriting appeared on the wall, the king called for the astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, but they could not interpret the writing. "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof." (Dan. 5:5–8). The aged Daniel, picturing the feet members, will interpret the handwriting; that is, they will give a message and then be changed into their garments of glory and beauty beyond the veil. In other words, they will die just before the fall of Babylon.

The type of John the Baptist adds more details. During the early part of the hour of power of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, the feet members will be imprisoned. A little later, when the occasion is propitious, Queen Herodias will arrange a feast and get King Herod drunk. When the daughter Salomé dances, the king will be so pleased that he will make a rash promise to give her whatever she asks. At the queen's behest, Salomé will ask for the death of the feet members. The message that resulted in John's imprisonment was his denouncement of King Herod's illegitimate marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife. Herodias subsequently arranged John's death.

Verse 14: "Behold, they [the astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators] shall be as stubble." Papacy will suddenly see that destruction is imminent and will in panic seek counsel, hoping to stop the trouble. But the counsel will not make sense; her advisors will be "as stubble."

Q: Who will destroy Papacy?

A: A radical, anarchistic element (communists, nihilists). Jehu called to the queen's own eunuchs to throw Jezebel out the window. Thus Papacy will be betrayed from within by those who previously consecrated themselves to the Roman Catholic Church, eg, priests and nuns. Just as Salomé, Herodias, and Herod were involved with John the Baptist's death (the death of the feet members, the true Church), so various ones will be responsible for the death of the false Church, eg, Jehu, eunuchs, and dogs.

Verse 14 in the RSV reads: "Behold, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!" Papacy will not be able to control this fire; it will destroy her, raging out of control like a forest fire. Trees in the forest are cut down and used for various purposes, and so, in the past, Papacy harnessed the masses to be her servants. But now they become an uncontrollable opposing force that cannot be manipulated.

Q: What about the Gog element that destroys Papacy and then has hooks put in their jaws to redirect them down to Israel? "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog,... And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth" (Ezek. 38:3,4).

A: That is another picture, a picture of the communist element. Isaiah 47 discusses the clerical element.

In her dilemma and fear, Papacy will summon various "wise men"—even theologians with whom she was at loggerheads in the past—but to no avail.

Verse 15: "They shall wander every one to his [own] quarter; none shall save thee." Papacy's former supporters will forsake her and look after their own interests. When Papacy is destroyed, they will try to hide their former identity and association with that system.

Isa. 48:1 **Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.**

The chapter is addressed to the nation of Israel, the progeny of Jacob. God is giving them a tongue-lashing. He is finding fault because the great majority are the nominal mass and are not really His people in the sense of loving Him with all their hearts.

Israel came forth "out of the waters [loins—RSV] of Judah." While in the Hebrew the word is literally "waters," the Revised Standard translators felt that God was speaking of the development from the male (rather than from the womb of the female) and thus properly used the word "loins." Four women were identified with Jacob: Rachel and Leah (the two wives) and Bilhah and Zilpah (the two handmaids). However, the 12 children who were born of these women are called the sons of *Jacob, the father*, the one whom God dealt with.

Isa. 48:2 **For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.**

The people of Israel called themselves "the holy city," that is, "Jerusalem." The Temple there was the house of prayer—and it will ultimately be the house of prayer for all nations.

They had so many blessings, but they did not worship God in truth or in righteousness. In other words, they were not the people of God that they professed to be.

Isa. 48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

God “declared [prophesied] the former things [in Leviticus 26] from the beginning [of Israel’s being a nation].” Jacob was the father of Israel (his name was changed to “Israel”). His children are called the children of Israel, and God began to deal with them when Jacob died. God miraculously called the children of Israel out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Through Moses, He gave them a Law, which they promised to obey. God said He would bless them if they obeyed and punish them if they disobeyed. In Leviticus 26 Moses prophesied that the Israelites would go astray and receive punishments. Then God said, “If after all of these punishments, you continue to disobey, I will give you a strong lesson: ‘seven times’ of punishment [7 x 360 = 2,520 years, the Times of the Gentiles].” In other words, God prophesied these things long in advance—and even details such as the fact the Israelites would want a king like other nations. Therefore, using Moses, God predicted long in advance, “from the beginning,” what would happen, and it came to pass “suddenly” in 606 BC after a short siege. The city and Temple were destroyed.

(The children of Israel sojourned a total of 430 years, which break down as follows: 215 years in the land of Canaan and 215 years in Egypt.)

When Jacob was about to die, he called his sons together and blessed them (Gen. 49:1). In doing so, he prophetically told of their characteristics, both good and bad. Later Moses gave a prediction about the characteristics of the progeny, both favorable and unfavorable. Piecing together the two prophecies yields much information about the history of the Israelites centuries before the actual events. When the events occurred, however, they seemed sudden to the contemporary Israelites who were not studying the prophecies. God had patiently dealt with them for many years but finally had to give the lesson prophesied “from the beginning.”

Isa. 48:4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

Because God knows about our genetic background, our problems, our family history, the traits we must fight against when we become a Christian, and our environment, He knows what experiences and lessons we need in order to develop and grow (and He even knows, in advance, whether or not we will be successful in overcoming). Even though Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and without sin, he needed to be perfected through sufferings in order to become a sympathetic High Priest. His being born on earth helped him to have sympathy for the human race. Thus there are different types of perfection: moral, physical, and qualification for office. Jesus’ experience fitted him for the office of High Priest over the world.

Similarly God knew the weaknesses of the Israelites (they were obstinate, stiff-necked, and stubborn), and He knew what experiences would humble them. “Thy neck is an iron sinew” is a way of saying they were stiff-necked. Being stiff-necked—ie, having “iron sinew” or iron ligaments in their necks—meant their necks would not bend to the yoke of servitude. The brittleness of iron makes it inflexible and unyielding. And what experience did God give the Israelites to try to humble them? They were slaves in Egypt for a long time

and even performing the menial task of making bricks out of *mud*, among other things. But were they humbled by that experience alone? No.

The same is true with us. God instructs us through providences and gives us experiences, but we do not always get the point, the lesson. We may misinterpret providences and give them a slant and meaning that God never intended. Sometimes our lessons are not understood until later; we grasp them in retrospect—and then we become repentant and desire to change, but not until after many hard knocks. God judges us by the sincere desire of our hearts, not by perfect performance.

The great Roman Empire was infuriated by the obstinacy of tiny Israel; they regarded the nation as a thorn. The most qualified Roman general was sent down to Israel to teach the people a lesson. As prophesied, Israel received a threshing. The point is that Israel's history has shown this quality. However, if a combative nature (obstinacy) is converted to Christ *and schooled*, it becomes firmness and strength in serving God. Obstinacy can be turned into a good trait. (In contrast, there is little to train or channel in a wishy-washy person.) The Christian is like a diamond; there is a firmness of character, but it requires direction, polishing, and re-forming. And so Israel needed instruction as we do. A proper response to that instruction results in a better person. The same principle is true with a horse. The wilder and more spirited the horse is originally, the better the animal is when broken and trained for war or racing. When a horse's spirited resistance is broken to the master's will, the animal becomes invaluable; a bond of obedience, friendship, and loyalty is developed in that horse toward its master.

"I knew ... thy brow [is] brass." A "brass brow" indicates a bold, brazen attitude, one that will not hearken when wrong is pointed out. Here of course the connotation is negative, but this quality can be a good one *when it is set for doing God's will*. In fact, an ordinary person does not have the guts to obey in the face of adversity. An example of this quality being used for good is what God said to Jeremiah: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak ... all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. *For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land*" (Jer. 1:17,18).

A great shock still in store for Israel (ie, God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant in Jacob's Trouble) will produce the full conversion that has not occurred in the past. And "iron" is used in a good sense to describe the rule in the Kingdom, for to say Jesus will rule with a "rod of iron" means that he will not tolerate any back talk.

Isa. 48:5 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

Isa. 48:6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shown thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

Isa. 48:7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

Isa. 48:8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast

called a transgressor from the womb.

Verses 1–4 emphasize one slant of God’s predicting things in the past. Verse 5 continues in the same vein to a certain extent, but it is preparing for another slant that will become apparent by the end of verse 8. Way back in Israel’s beginning as a nation, God predicted certain things that would come to pass many centuries later, and they did occur as predicted. In verses 1–4 God was reminding the people of these fulfillments of prophecy so that they would see His divine foresight and sagacity. Now, in verse 6, God said He would tell “*new things*” they had not heard before, so that when they came to pass, the Israelites would be aware of God’s foreknowledge. Jesus illustrated this principle in Gethsemane when he said to his apostles, “These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them” (John 16:4). In other words, “I am telling you these things now so that when they happen, you will know I was not taken by surprise but went voluntarily. You will not comprehend my words at this time, but after I am raised from death and the Holy Spirit comes, you will understand.”

One of these “new things” was the startling prophecy about Cyrus *150 years before he was born*. God told Israel He was raising up a servant, Cyrus by name, who would be a king and defeat enemy after enemy. Cyrus would also liberate the Jews from Babylon and allow them to return to Israel to build a Temple. Now Isaiah is beginning to hint about something else that would happen (God deferred His anger—see verse 9).

Comment: In verse 5 God said He was telling them all this in advance so that they could not get away with the excuse “My idol, my graven image, did it.”

Reply: Yes, God had informed them in advance so that they could not blame their graven images and thus shirk their own responsibility. (Just as Adam tried to justify his sin by saying, “The woman told me to do it,” so there is a tendency in fallen man to blame others. All of us must struggle against this weakness.)

Verse 5: “Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.” To a large extent, the people of Israel, like the Greeks, went to famous oracles, such as the Oracle of Delphi. For instance, a king with a problem either went in person or sent a trusted individual to consult with a temple oracle about the future. The fallen angels used these situations to give advice (often in the form of a lyric poem) that the king would act upon. Instead Israel should have consulted *God and His prophet* (Isaiah in this case). Then Israel would put the blame on the misinformation received from the oracle or “idol,” whereas they should have blamed themselves. God knew in advance that Israel would have this weakness as a nation, that they would “deal very treacherously”; hence He called them “a transgressor from the womb” (verse 8). In other words, God knows the weaknesses of a people (their national traits).

The remarks in this study are not anti-Semitic, for God speaks strongly in Scripture. In fact, many Jews find fault with the Gospel of John, claiming that it promotes anti-Semitism, but the Old Testament speaks just as strongly. All of Scripture must be read and considered, not just part, and the truth is the truth. For proper instruction both the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, must be revealed. Israel is the “apple” of God’s eye, but the Bible is honest and true (Deut. 32:10).

Isa. 48:9 For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

“For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger.” Although Israel deserved instant punishment, God delayed His anger because He has His own times and purposes when His name will be vindicated and glorified through them. This prophecy was uttered prior to 606 BC, which was one time God did not defer His anger. In 606 BC Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. Another time God did not defer His anger was AD 70.

Comment: His anger was also deferred when Moses pleaded the cause of the Israelites.

Reply: Yes, and even under the judges. When the nation prayed for God to be merciful, He would raise up a judge to deliver them. After the judge’s death the nation lapsed back into disobedience. When problems again occurred, the nation prayed and God gave them another judge, etc. Thus the judges were really deliverers. They may have spoken hard things, but they actually helped the nation.

Under the judges—and under the kings too—Israel was spanked. When the Gentile Times began in 606 BC, God turned His back on Israel and their long 2,520-year period of punishment started to count. But even under this period of Gentile supremacy, God showed the Israelites some favor. For example, at the end of 70 years, they were allowed to return to Israel, He gave them prophets both during and after the 70 years, and Messiah came at the First Advent. However, when Israel rejected Messiah, their house was left desolate, and their punishment (of a different kind) lasted until 1914.

1,845-year period of favor from Jacob’s death	}	
in 1812/1813 BC to Jesus’ crucifixion in AD 33.	}	Period of favor
	}	followed by equal
1,845-year period of disfavor from the	}	period of disfavor
crucifixion in AD 33 to 1878.	}	

The Times of the Gentiles lasted 2,520 years from 606 BC until 1914. When Messiah came, Israel was a captive people under the Roman yoke. After his rejection, they went into Diaspora until 1878.

Thus there are different time cycles in the Bible. The point is that when God spoke harshly and angrily to His people, the words were meant to be constructive, edifying, and instructive. Those of fleshly Israel who responded were blessed.

Isa. 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Isa. 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

“For my name’s sake ... will I refrain” (verse 9). “For mine own sake ... will I do it” (verse 11). Moses pleaded with God not to kill the Israelites for the sake of His (God’s) own name. Moses reasoned, “What will the Gentiles think if, after you brought the nation of Israel miraculously through the Red Sea to the desert, you kill them there? They will say you were able to bring them out with a high and mighty hand but now you cannot take them any farther.” God reasoned this way too, but the incident shows how wonderful Moses’ character was.

Comment: Many prophecies elsewhere in Isaiah show that God will destroy Israel's enemies at the end of the age to vindicate His name.

Reply: Yes, the Holy Remnant will be greatly changed when they are converted. It will be somewhat comparable to a lifetime reprobate suddenly realizing Jesus is his Savior and giving his heart and soul to the Master. Other Christians beholding the conversion know that it is genuine because of the great change in the individual; they know that divine power effected it. And so, when Israel is converted as a nation to realize that Jesus truly is their Messiah, their anguish at their former attitude will be so deep and heartfelt that the world will know their conversion is genuine.

In the Apostle Peter's case, after he had followed Jesus for 3-1/2 years, the Master said to him, "When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Peter was already converted, so this statement indicates that there are two types of "conversion":

1. The individual gives his heart to the Lord.
2. The individual has a certain weakness or causes a certain harm, so the Lord gives him an experience that brings a *thorough* conversion.

Similarly, all of the Lord's people need lessons after consecration. Hopefully, all will be thoroughly converted.

Verse 10: "Behold, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction" (RSV). Ezekiel 22:17–22 helps to clarify the meaning of this verse: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you." First, God said Israel was like the *dross*, the trace or foreign particles, and not like the silver. Then He said He would refine them as silver by gathering them together, blowing on them, and burning them with His anger. The dross will be consumed and Israel will be purified.

In summary, whereas Ezekiel 22:17–22 is discussing the outcome of Israel's experience, Isaiah 48:10 is talking about God's dealings with Israel *prior to* 606 BC. Isaiah was preparing a people to receive Jesus. While the nation was not converted at the First Advent, God's plan prospered through the little element who did accept Jesus as their Messiah. The same is true in the literal refining process, for the objective is to end up with a small pure amount out of a large quantity of ore. The process is considered successful when a tiny pure ingot is obtained.

In verse 10 the Lord is telling Israel (through Isaiah), "I *have* refined you [in previous experiences], but you are still dross." Leviticus 26:3–18 tells of the seven times of punishment that would come on Israel if they disobeyed: "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and

ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. *But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.*" If Israel obeyed, they would get blessings. If they disobeyed, punishments would come. And that is what happened: Israel did disobey and they did receive punishments—but these punishments were not yet the refining of silver. If, after receiving punishments, Israel still did not hearken unto God, they would be punished yet seven times *more* (that is, for an additional period of 2,520 years). In other words, God did refine Israel (in the "furnace of affliction" in Egypt and later, prior to 606 BC), but He had *not yet* refined them *as silver*. They remained stiff-necked and unconverted after their trials in Egypt.

In 1878 the fig tree put forth blossoms, and 1914 marked the end of Gentile Times. Israel has had some favorable experiences since 1878, but is not yet converted as a nation. During Gentile Times down through the Gospel Age, the Jews suffered much like true Christians, the difference being that Christians suffered for right-doing, whereas Jews suffered because God had turned His face from them. The Jews' past severe experiences have prepared a remnant for conversion in the near future. The "silver" is potentially in Israel and will be revealed when the eyes of the Holy Remnant are opened. Their conversion will be thorough, real, remarkable, and dramatic.

All Jews know their past history—that Jesus was a Jew and that he was crucified, but they disclaim any responsibility. Yet in the meantime, the Jewish people have experienced much suffering. Of Jesus' crucifixion the contemporary generation said, "His blood be on us, and on our children"—and that has been the case (Matt. 27:25). They lost Jerusalem, they were pushed out of Israel, they were the victims of pogroms, etc. Although the Jews did not get the lesson, they did get the experience. They know about the circumstances and events that led up to their having a homeland again but attribute them to their *own* efforts. Today they still do not see their punishment or their re-establishment as a nation as being ordered *of God*. When in trouble, they turn to the United States and the UN for help instead of having a national repentance in sackcloth and ashes and calling upon God as in olden times. But they will be enlightened in Jacob's Trouble as to their responsibility in crucifying Jesus—and then they will be converted. Their long history of suffering in Diaspora has been necessary, and it has been deeply impressed in their national mind.

Comment: The account of Jesus' crucifixion is repeated, year after year, by Christians right in

Jerusalem.

Reply: Yes, the drama of Jesus carrying the Cross along the Via Dolorosa is reenacted every year.

There is much needful repetitious instruction in these chapters of Isaiah, but the people of Israel still do not get the point.

Q: After the purification takes place in Jacob's Trouble, can the nation be likened to silver?

A: Of the time when Gog and Magog come down, the Scriptures say: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire [of Jacob's Trouble], and will refine them *as silver is refined*, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zech. 13:8,9). Jacob's Trouble will be a short, sharp "birth pang" experience that produces a Holy Remnant to be the nucleus of the Kingdom under the Ancient Worthies; it is not the long Diaspora, the long seven times of punishment.

Isa. 48:12 **Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.**

Jehovah is "the first" and "the last" in this verse. If the supplied words are deleted, the last portion would read: "I he; I the first, I the last." Jehovah is the first and the last in that He will always be the Emperor of the universe. Throughout eternity His glory will never be given to another. Deuteronomy 32:39 brings out another perspective: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." In other words, whatever God decides, there is no being to say Him nay. He has sole supremacy, and He will do what He will. If He desires peace, it is peace. If He desires war, it is war. He holds those prerogatives in relationship to His authority as Emperor of the universe.

Jesus is also called "the first and the last" but from different standpoints (Rev. 1:11,17; 2:8). (1) He is the only *directly* begotten or created Son of God; ie, he was created out of nothing, as it were, with no intermediary power being involved. His primacy underneath Jehovah, his being the Prime Minister of God's universe, will exist throughout eternity; he will always be the head *under God*. "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). (2) Jesus will always be the head of the Church, the head of the body.

But why did God address Israel in this manner in verse 12, which is in the context of the creation and/or foundation of the earth, the heavens, Babylon, and the Chaldeans (verses 13 and 14)? One reason was to give the Israelites hope when they were captured by the Babylonians. Verse 12 is a break in thought, a new paragraph. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, *my called*." God is "the first" and "the last" in the sense that He begat Israel; He formed them from the womb. God created other beings with free moral agency. Based on their own decision to obey or not to obey Him, some will get life and some will not, but He will not interfere with their free moral agency. The decision is the responsibility of each individual. But here in Isaiah 48, God is assuming a responsibility for Israel, and He will not shirk it. What is that responsibility? *As a national entity, they will be preserved*. God has determined that Israel will be His representative nation on earth, that Jerusalem will be the

capital of the world, that Israel will be honored above all other nations. That promise started with Abraham and it continues. God will remain constant regarding His purpose to *preserve the nation of Israel*; that future is assured. (As to individuals, that is another matter.)

Now the title “I he; I the first, I the last” brings out a different significance. God was the first and the last in that He began Israel’s calling and He will finish it. Just as Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our salvation, so God is, as it were, the Starter and the Finisher of natural Israel’s preservation. He formed or created Israel, and He will bring His purpose through them to fruition. God is saying, “Pay attention, Jacob and Israel. I, the great Creator, am He who called you and gave you this assurance in the beginning. Call to mind my purpose with regard to you as a people. I am the first and the last, I am the supreme Emperor of the universe, and *nothing will thwart my purpose.*”

Verse 13 is related to verse 12. In verse 13 God calls attention to His authority and power in connection with the creation of the earth and the spanning of the heavens.

Isa. 48:13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

God speaks: “When I call unto them, they stand up together.” In other words, when God calls, the heavenly bodies (constellations, stars, etc.) obey Him. God is like a drill sergeant. When He calls “Attention!” these inanimate heavenly bodies “stand up together” *like an army* of animate, intelligent beings *and obey Him*. This principle is the basis of His title “Lord of hosts” (plural). In their pageantry or progression through the heavens, they are obeying the divine law. At all times the heavenly bodies are underneath His control. Israel would have implicit faith if they would consider this GREAT POWER of God, who talks to His *little pygmies* down here—the tiny nation is nothing compared with the expanse of the universe! It should not be necessary for the GREAT GOD to condescend and come down to reason with puny, mortal man, but fallen humanity—we and they—need to be reminded of God’s power. How can man question the outcome?

“Mine hand also hath laid the *foundation* [singular] of the earth.” Compare “foundations” (plural) in the following two texts: “Whereupon are the *foundations* thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof” (Job 38:6). “Who laid the *foundations* of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever” (Psa. 104:5). The “foundations of the earth” are portrayed by the four socket stones of the Great Pyramid, which is a mathematical symbol of the earth. Isaiah 48:13 uses the term in the singular. The KJV margin for Psalm 104:5 is “He hath founded the earth upon her bases.”

Isa. 48:14 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.

Isa. 48:15 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

The Almighty God, who controls all inanimate heavenly bodies, now condescends to say to Israel, “All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear.” He humiliates Himself, as it were, to come down to the level of fallen human beings on earth and say, “I, the One with these prerogatives, will talk to you. *Pay strict attention and listen to what I am going to say!*” And how many did assemble themselves? Very few.

“Which among them hath declared these things?” Here God picks up the thread of previous remarks and continues to tell what He purposes to do. Earlier the Lord had prophesied about Cyrus, a future great deliverer who would free Israel from the yoke of bondage in Babylon, and about the rebuilding of the city and the Temple. At the time of this prophecy, the city and Temple were still intact. Isaiah assures the Israelites that when the city and Temple would be destroyed, they should not be utterly dejected because God’s ultimate purpose is to restore Israel.

“The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.” At the time Isaiah wrote this prophecy, the ten tribes were about to go into captivity, and the defeat of the two tribes was still 150 years in the future. Nevertheless, God tells about Israel’s deliverance from Babylon and the Chaldeans. Therefore, some very important thinking is presented here.

Notice verse 15: “I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him [Cyrus].” The end of verse 14 and all of verse 15 refer back to the prophecies about Cyrus that were given in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. Isaiah keeps returning to the main theme, which is that after God punishes Israel, He will deliver them from Babylon and restore them. He even names in advance the human agent (Cyrus) through whom the deliverance will be accomplished and tells that this heathen king will prosper. All of these prophecies were given in advance.

Now imagine being back in Babylon in captivity. All of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the scrolls of Isaiah, would have been taken into captivity with the Israelites. For 70 years they were in captivity in a foreign land, knowing that their capital and Temple had been destroyed. While in Babylon, they would have wondered if God was dealing with them or if He had cast them off forever. As 536 BC neared and the Israelites read Isaiah’s prophecies about their deliverance, they would be encouraged. God had these prophecies recorded for their benefit.

The point to be made is that the Bible is not written for the Church alone but for God’s people *in any age*. The Bible was written primarily for Israel and for the Church at the beginning and at the end of the Gospel Age.

Verses 12–15 were a very important prophecy for natural Israel. God has likewise given information to Christians as to what will happen in the future, but we must study God’s Word in order to be informed. In fact, the great amount of detail about events for both natural and spiritual Israel in the near future is shocking. As God provided this encouragement for natural Israel in their Babylonian captivity, so He furnishes His people in other ages with similar encouragement. Therefore, verse 14 can be spiritualized as mystic Babylon. Those who are in captivity in mystic Babylon should be encouraged by this prophecy.

Isa. 48:16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me.

Verse 16 is rather touching: “Come ye near unto me, hear ye this.” The GREAT GOD speaks to natural Israel, who is *way below Him* in station. He says, “Come here and sit beside Me. I would like to give you some intimate counsel.” God speaks in a demonstrative way that can be visualized. It is like having a friend who is in need and saying to that friend, “Come

here and sit close to me so that I can confide in you.”

“I [Jesus] have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me [Jesus].” God was originally and primarily referring to natural Israel, but Cyrus, whom the Lord called and prospered to overthrow Babylon, prefigures Christ, who, as God’s agent, will deliver both natural and spiritual Israel. And so Jesus enters the picture in verse 16 and tries to give special counsel. Previously God was reasoning, and the prophet Isaiah faithfully pronounced His words. Now, all of a sudden, another personage, Jesus, mysteriously enters the conversation to give counsel.

In Old Testament times Jesus was involved, making sure God’s prophecies would be transmitted through the prophets. He is also called Michael, “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.” Michael, the archangel, was God’s special guardian or prince of natural Israel, whereas Satan was the prince of Babylon, Media Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Isa. 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Jesus gives counsel in this verse. Isaiah records the words, but Jesus is speaking. He is telling what Jehovah, Israel’s Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, said. The instruction and counsel are for Israel’s own good.

Isa. 48:18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:

Isa. 48:19 Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

If Israel had obeyed, their offspring would have been very prolific. “His [Israel’s] name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.” When did this happen? In the year 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and he took just 832 captives to Babylon. Jeremiah 52:28–30 mentions three captivities in Nebuchadnezzar’s day. Verse 28 pertains to an earlier captivity, but verse 29 describes the captivity in 606 BC when Jerusalem was destroyed and Gentile Times began. Out of 7 or 8 million people, only 832 survived from the city of Jerusalem and were taken captive to Babylon. That was a tiny remnant indeed! All of the rest were put to death except for Jeremiah and two others who were spared and allowed to go free. Of course when the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem, there were other people living elsewhere in Israel, but of those in Jerusalem only 832 were taken to Babylon. Those outside of Jerusalem were hunted down and killed except for the few who were left as vinedressers. However, when the vinedressers rebelled and assassinated Gedaliah (the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar), a Babylonian general was sent to Israel to put the people to death. In an effort to escape, they fled to Egypt.

And what was the net effect of all this? It was as if the nation of Israel had been cut off without a seed. If the nation had hearkened to God’s commandments, they would have prospered continually and not have gone into captivity. The year 606 BC marked the beginning of the seven times of punishment of Leviticus 26. True, some of the Israelites did return from Babylon 70 years later in 536 BC and had some respite, but they were a tributary

people without all of the liberties they had previously enjoyed.

The implication in verse 19 is that there would be a great decimation of the people, but that God would not allow them to be entirely and permanently cut off.

Isa. 48:20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

This verse starts a new theme, but one that is related to the previous verses (notice the mention again of Babylon and the Chaldeans). Earlier God indicated that the Israelites would be taken captive into Babylon but that, in time, the Lord would prosper a mysterious person called Cyrus, who would deliver them. As a result, they would be reinstated in their land.

Now verse 20 says, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans." When did this take place? When was this message obeyed? The words "*flee ye*" point to an exodus from Babylon that took place earlier than the actual fall of Babylon in 536 BC. This instruction was directed to those Jews who were living in the city of Babylon as the time was nearing for Cyrus to enter the city gates. The Jews in Babylon were beginning to hear about the outstanding victories of Cyrus in neighboring lands. Those in the city who knew the Scriptures would say with excitement, "Cyrus is the one Isaiah prophesied would deliver us from Babylon." Of course they realized that when Cyrus would enter Babylon and conquer the city, there would be a great slaughter. Therefore, knowing in advance that the bloodshed was coming and that Cyrus would be victorious, the faithful Jews would flee just prior to his attack.

The same thing happened just prior to AD 69–70. Jesus said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with [Roman] armies, then know that the desolation thereof [of Jerusalem] is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20–22). Vespasian had laid siege to Jerusalem when the emperor died in Rome. Vespasian, who was one of the contenders to become the next Caesar, rushed back to Rome, directing his son Titus to be in charge. During this brief period, the siege around Jerusalem was relaxed, and faithful Jewish Christians obeyed the counsel to get out of the city. They left their goods and fled to Petra and elsewhere. A short while later when Titus resumed the siege, no one could get out of Jerusalem.

The same principle of supplying information, counsel, and instruction in advance, before the trouble comes, applies to mystic Babylon. The warning to come out of her was given *before the plagues began*.

Comment: And again at the very end of the age, the warning will be sounded to "Come out of her, my people," but this time it will be "lest ye partake of the *seventh plague*."

God even told the Jews what to sing (or chant) when they left Babylon prior to 536 BC: "With a voice of *singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob*." What a slogan!

Isa. 48:21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the

waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

In this verse Isaiah reminds the Israelites how God cared for them in the Wilderness of Sinai and provided for their needs. But why does he twice mention water coming out of the rock? This is dramatic! *Two times* God miraculously gave the Israelites water from the rock (Exod. 17:5,6; Num. 20:2–11).

There was a practical lesson here for the Israelites. If water was not provided in a *natural* way, God would *cause* it to come forth. In other words, God's *authority* was shown. In both instances God gave the Israelites water, and they got it in *abundance*. How dramatic to see water suddenly *gush forth* from the smitten rock in a *dry, barren land!*

Isa. 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

The chapter ends with this seemingly isolated verse, but it is a lesson from God, a summation of the previous verses. Lesson: There is peace to those who are righteously inclined and willing to be led by God, even though they have trials. While God is committed to preserving the nation of Israel, who the saved *individuals* will be is up to each person. God's authority and power guarantee the restoration of Israel, but only the obedient will ultimately get life. The advice in Chapter 48 is not meant to encourage the wicked and disobedient.

The same principle applies to the Church. God guarantees there will be 144,000 in the body of Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth will defeat His purpose as regards the Bride class who are being called to be rulers with Jesus in the next age. But as to who the members of that body will be depends on the faithfulness of each individual.

There is still another emphasis. If the supplied words are deleted, verse 22 reads: "No peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." The Israelites went through the desert, and God fed and provided for them so that they survived (that is, the second generation and Joshua and Caleb survived). But did those who entered the land of Israel 40 years later have peace in connection with all of their wilderness experiences? No. Those who were faithful had *mixed* experiences. They had trials, battles, and discomforts, but to counterbalance their hard experiences, they had the cloud, God's instruction, victories, manna, etc., and they did enter the Promised Land. For the faithful, it was not a peaceful way, but one cannot say they had "no peace." Those who faithfully serve and obey the Lord have mixed experiences, but "the wicked" have no peace. (The term "the wicked" refers not to the world but to the Lord's people who willfully disobey.)

Isa. 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

"Listen, O isles,... hearken, ye people, from far." The "isles ... from far" would be republics that are a great distance from Israel, ie, the Western world.

Who is the speaker who was called from the womb by Jehovah? There are three applications in Chapter 49, although not every word would apply in each case. (1) Jesus would be the speaker in a primary sense, the Church in a secondary sense, and natural Israel in a third sense.

If Jesus is considered the speaker, the One whom God called from the womb, then who would his “mother” be? “From the bowels of my mother [the Sarah Covenant] hath he [God] made mention of my [Jesus’] name.” Sarah is the “mother of us all”; ie, Sarah in her covenant relationship to Abraham pictured Jesus and the Church (Gal. 4:26). In a lesser sense, Jesus was called from the womb of Mary, for after he was born of Mary, his name was particularly recognized. God mentioned that this Son to be born of Mary was to be called Jesus, the One who would save his people from their sins.

Isa. 49:2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

God made Jesus’ “mouth like a sharp sword.” Jesus spoke with *power*. With the scribes and Pharisees, he had a sharp, penetrating tongue. Jesus had a fullness of the Holy Spirit, and Hebrews 4:12 tells that the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, is “quick, and *powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword*, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” And out of Jesus’ mouth “went a *sharp twoedged sword* [the Word of God]” (Rev. 1:16). (The two edges of the sword cut the user of the sword as well as those it is used against, and Jesus was in perfect harmony with the sword of Holy Writ.)

“In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.” Why is this illustration of an archer inserted here? The words that come forth from Jesus are like arrows from a quiver. The shaft or main stem of an arrow with its rightly aligned feathers is polished for a smooth, straight flight to the target. The Father made Jesus “a polished shaft”; in other words, He prepared and schooled Jesus for his ministry. As the Logos at the Father’s side, Jesus received schooling. As a human being during the First Advent (from his youth as a perfect boy through his manhood and Crucifixion), all the experiences of life prepared him for his future work.

“In his quiver hath he hid me.” Primarily the time setting of this chapter is future, when all will hear of Jesus (verse 1). In the future in the Kingdom, Jesus will reveal his power and authority, but at present he is still hidden in the quiver. Jehovah has been preparing Jesus for his work in the Kingdom. In the meantime, this “polished” individual, with his wonderful background of divine power, wisdom, love, and justice, is still in preparation.

Psalms 45 is a prophecy of the Kingdom. “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s [God’s] enemies; whereby the people fall under thee” (Psa. 45:3–5). When Jesus takes unto himself his great power and reigns, when he manifests his authority in the earth, when the world sees that Jesus truly is the Messiah, then his words, his arrows of conviction, will be very penetrating. When all who previously were his enemies are figuratively shot in the heart with arrows of conviction, their consciences will be affected and they will cease to be enemies. They will fall prostrate and die as enemies. (The incorrigible will “die” literally; the sincere will die figuratively. In both cases, they will cease to be enemies.) Unto Jesus shall every knee bow, and every tongue shall confess he is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10,11). Jesus will then “ride prosperously.”

Isa. 49:3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

God is speaking. Of course when He fights for Israel, He will be glorified in them. But the word “Israel” has a variety of meanings; it can refer to a group of individuals, to spiritual Israel (nominal or true), to fleshly Israel (nominal or true), to the nation, or to Jacob (the individual whose name was changed from Jacob to Israel). Hence “Israel” is like the word “sheep” in that both terms can be singular or plural depending on context. “Israel” means “prince of God”; this title of honor was given to Jacob because he contended for the blessing (Gen. 32:28). (Similarly God will reward the Christian in the next life for trying to do His will and fighting the good fight of faith in the present life.)

In one sense, Jesus as an individual is also a “prince.” For example, Daniel 12:1 calls him Michael, “the great *prince* which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel].”

Isa. 49:4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

Jesus said, “I have laboured in vain.” The most perfect One ever to live on this earth had a Gethsemane experience. Jesus feared death (permanent extinction) in that he wondered if he had obeyed God perfectly (Heb. 5:7). Therefore, he did have doubts and even asked, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But this was not his general attitude. He had an inner peace except when God was testing him to the core.

At times the Church also feels that labor has been in vain, and so does natural Israel.

Isaiah 65:23 uses the word “labour” in the sense of a woman in travail: “They shall not *labour* in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.” If a woman goes through all the birth pangs and has a stillborn, her efforts are for nought. All the rigors connected with child bearing do not result in the birth of a healthy baby. That basic thought is extended to the farmer who labors for weeks harrowing the ground, planting seed, cultivating the ground, etc., and then something occurs to destroy his crop; ie, his labor in bringing forth is in vain. With agriculture, therefore, the thought of laboring in vain pertains to not bringing forth fruitage. Isaiah 65:23, being a Kingdom promise, states the opposite: mankind will *not* labor in vain.

Using the same thought of labor in the sense of a woman in travail, we will consider Isaiah 53:11, “He [Jesus] shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Verse 10 shows that God tested Jesus with suffering: “It pleased the LORD to bruise him [Jesus]; he [God] hath put him [Jesus] to grief: ... thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” Isaiah 53 describes the last moments of Jesus’ earthly life when he was made a spectacle before the nation. He grew up as a tender plant and was comely, wise, and outstanding as a natural man, but at the end of his earthly career, he appeared to be the opposite. He looked like an outcast, a sinner; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, wounded, given stripes, spat upon; he was crucified and forsaken by his followers (“we esteemed him not”—verse 3). “He opened not his mouth” while being led to the slaughter (verse 7), for he knew it was his time to die; he did not try to brilliantly defend himself but submitted to the humiliation. He made his grave with the wicked. It pleased God to reveal to us (and later to the world of mankind) what a wonderful, obedient Son Jesus was—and that *he was worthy* to be elevated to the right hand of God.

The statement “he shall see of the travail of his soul” shows how deep his sorrow was. In fact, it was so deep that he began to wonder if he had been faithful (Heb. 5:7). During his ministry he did not doubt, but he did experience this anguish and loneliness briefly at the end. Many Christians have similar experiences of loneliness and doubt as a final test before they die. The Adversary tries to convince them that they will never make their calling and election sure; discouragement is one of his chief weapons. And at times Jews have questioned if their struggle is worth all the suffering, and the temptation is to lose their identity as Jews and to become Gentiles. (Once again, all three—Jesus, true Christians, and natural Israel—have similar experiences.)

“Yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.” Jesus’ attitude, expressed in advance, is “into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Even though at that time Jesus did not fully understand the reason for the experience, he left the matter with his Father. Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Job did not know the purpose for his sufferings, but he showed faith, trust, and patient endurance by trusting God and not giving up.

Isa. 49:5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

Isa. 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Comment: Verse 5 seems to tie in with the mention of Jacob in verse 3. “And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring *Jacob* again to him...”

Reply: But verse 5 is a little different, and that is the clue along with verse 6. These verses reveal that the mysterious personage will be a “light to the Gentiles” and that he will restore Jacob and Israel. Therefore, the mysterious personage of verses 1–6 cannot be natural Israel, for Israel will not restore itself. God appoints this “Israel” as “his servant.” That “servant” or mysterious personage is Jesus, the “messenger of the [New] covenant” (Mal. 3:1).

Isaiah 49 is primarily a prophecy of Jesus and his schooling and preparation for the future work God has set before him. In a secondary sense it can be considered a prophecy of the body members, for in their association with Jesus, they will participate in his work and be a light to the Gentiles. In a third sense the prophecy has a bearing on natural Israel. Jesus, the Church, and natural Israel all have some similar experiences. Down through history it has been a paradox that the true Christian and fleshly Israel have suffered.

As an example of the prophecy being primarily of Jesus, secondarily of the Church, and in a third sense of natural Israel, consider the statement in verse 2, “in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.” All three fulfillments are hidden truths today, as follows:

1. Jesus’ role as Savior is hidden.
2. The identity of the true Church—and particularly the mysterious calling of The Christ during the permission of evil—is hidden.
3. Israel’s future prominent status in the earthly phase of God’s Kingdom is hidden.

How many today believe that natural Israel will become the capital of the world and that

orders will go forth from Jerusalem? Those will be startling events and/or revealments. Most forcibly and pointedly, however, the hidden truth applies to Jesus.

God said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved [the Holy Remnant] of Israel." As a people, Jews have a lot of doubts, a lot of hard experiences, but basically they do not want to lose their identity. At times it seems to them that God has hidden Himself.

God continues, "I will *also* give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." In other words, God is saying to His Son: "It is too little an honor for you to just save Israel. My plans for you are much grander, namely, the conversion of the *whole world*."

Isa. 49:7 Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

God identifies Himself as the Redeemer and the Holy One *of Israel*. He is talking "to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers." In the primary sense God is addressing Jesus, who was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). Jesus is the One whom the Jewish "nation abhorreth." Even today some Jews spit or curse when his name is mentioned. During his earthly ministry it was particularly the religious leaders who hated him and were jealous of his popularity with the common people.

At his First Advent Jesus was "a servant of rulers." He instructed his followers to be meek and humble servants, and as an example, he washed their feet. Jesus said the Gentiles wanted to be lords and rulers, and their greatness was measured by the number of servants they had, but the Christian would be great in the Kingdom if he was the servant of all in the present life. Except where conscience would not allow, Jesus was submissive to the authorities. He paid taxes to Caesar, obeyed his mother until he came of age at 30 and was baptized, etc.

In the Kingdom "kings shall see [Jesus] and arise, princes also shall worship [him]" when they see that he really is the Messiah. They shall worship Jesus "because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel." "He [God] shall choose thee"; ie, God will choose Jesus because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, because he humbled himself even to the death of the Cross, etc.

Isa. 49:8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

Verse 8 is primarily addressed to Jesus. (With slight changes but similar principles, all of these verses apply first to Jesus, secondarily to the Church, and in a third sense to Israel.) God will give Jesus for the New Covenant in that Jesus will mediate and administrate the covenant to make sure the people come into harmony with God's wishes. As queen, the Church will share in that mediatorship with their King. God will give Israel "for a covenant" in the sense that they will be the blesser nation under the New (Jewish) Covenant.

As God preserved Christ, so He preserves The Christ and the nation of Israel lest they be wiped out.

Isa. 49:9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

The “prisoners” of death, the “prisoners” of the grave, will be awakened out of “darkness,” out of the shadow of the tomb, into light.

Isa. 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

This verse applies to the world of mankind because the context (verse 9) pertains to all coming forth from the grave. In the Kingdom the people “shall not hunger nor thirst.” In the present life the world has had unsatisfied longings (“hunger” and “thirst”). The permission of evil has been a time of affliction, misery, and much unhappiness for those who do not know Christ. Another application would be a “hunger” and “thirst” for the Word of God, for a hope of salvation, life, and relief from problems. These longings will cease in the Kingdom when the “desire of all nations shall come” (Hag. 2:7).

“Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them” in the Kingdom. In Scripture the “sun” can picture persecution (Matt. 13:3,5,6,21). The “sun” can also be a symbol of God’s searching Law. A person who is looking for God feels his or her own shortcomings and undone, sinful condition. “Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa. 33:14).

“For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” In the Kingdom, God will lead the world with truth, with “springs [plural] of water.” More than just the Bible will be available at that time. The spoken word will be used as well as the written Word. For example, the most serious problems will be taken to Jesus, somewhat lesser ones to the Church, and other problems to the Ancient Worthies. In other words, those on each level of instruction will recognize any deficiency they might have and refer the problem to the next higher level for light and guidance.

Revelation 22:17 is related: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” Symbolically, the water that will come from under the Third Temple teaches the same lesson. Not only truth and instruction but life, health, and refreshment are symbolized by water.

Isa. 49:11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

In the next age, God will make all *His* kingdoms (“mountains”) and all *His* highways a way to holiness. In the present evil world under Satan’s control, all the “highways” are broad roads to destruction. In the Kingdom, all the media will be conducive to uprightness and instruction in holiness. All the stumbling stones will be removed. “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there” (Isa. 35:9). The “way” will be for the redeemed. “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8).

There will be no such thing as a wayfaring man who does not know where he is going. In the Kingdom, there will be no danger of lack of knowledge.

Isa. 49:12 Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

“Sinim” is a mysterious word that appears in this form only once in Scripture. “North” and “west” are mentioned, but two points of the compass are missing. Is Sinim to the south or to the east? There are two theories, neither of which can be proved conclusively.

1. Sinim is to the *south*. Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 mention Syene, which is near Aswan, the outpost of civilization in Isaiah’s day. Ezekiel 30:15,16 suggests that the root word “Sin” is related to a city of Egypt. Sinai is also related, being the Wilderness of *Sin* (“Sin” means moon and refers to the moon god). Sinai, Egypt, and Aswan are all to the south.
2. Sinim is to the *east*. The prefix “sino” refers to China and the Orient.

“These [the dispersed Israelites] shall come from far” back to Israel after Jacob’s Trouble. If this verse refers to the Holy Remnant from other lands returning to Israel, they will be shipped back from the north, west, and *east* (India, China, etc.). Later the Gentiles will also go to Israel for instruction and enlightenment. Thus there is hope for Israel when the Lord takes control, and the sorrow of both Jew and Gentile will be assuaged.

Isa. 49:13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Verse 13, although a related subject, is somewhat a change of pace. (Note the paragraph mark in the KJV.) “Sing, O heavens; ... O earth; and ... O mountains.” In the Kingdom, the powers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will be under divine control and authority. While to a certain extent the various nations will retain their identities, they will all be under the New Covenant.

Isa. 49:14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

“Zion” being natural Israel here, verse 14 is a throwback to Israel’s thoughts during Jacob’s Trouble—ie, prior to the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. Specifically, the fulfillment of this verse will be when Jerusalem is captured, the houses are rifled, the women are ravished, and half of the inhabitants are taken into exile (Zech. 14:2). During this interim of time, the Lord’s deliverance will be delayed, resulting in much discouragement. The Jews will think they are forsaken when they are not delivered suddenly and gloriously according to their expectations. With their situation appearing to be a defeat, they will feel helpless and hopeless and cry out to God for help. God will delay the deliverance temporarily until they reach the utmost point of their extremity. Why the delay? To demonstrate conclusively that the destruction would have been complete and final if God had not intervened. In no sense of the word will Israel’s own arm of flesh or the arm of flesh of the Gentiles be involved with the deliverance.

Isa. 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

A woman, a mother, hardly ever forgets her nursing child, but God will *never* forsake Israel.

Isa. 49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

Israel means so much to God that the nation is engraved on His palms—and thus a remembrance of them would be in His sight continuously.

“Thy [Israel’s] walls are continually before me [God].” God is saying He is deeply involved with their circumstances. Israel’s safety is always on His mind, even when the nation needs punishments. Of course in Jacob’s Trouble God will be a wall, a means of protection, to Israel (the Holy Remnant), but in His own due time. “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee [severely] in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jer. 30:11).

Isa. 49:17 Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.

RSV: “Your builders outstrip your destroyers, and those who laid you waste go forth from you.” NIV: “Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you.” When Gog (Israel’s “destroyers”) is defeated, the 1/6 survivors will return to their homelands. Surviving Jews in other countries will return to Israel.

Isa. 49:18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

Israel is told to lift up her eyes and look about her. What will she be experiencing at this time? She will see other nations coming to her to worship God. “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side” (Isa. 60:3,4). These verses in Isaiah 60 harmonize with Isaiah 49:12, already considered: “Behold, these shall come from far.” There will be two parts to the “coming from far”: first, the “sons” and “daughters” (the dispersed) of Israel will come back, and then, right behind them, will be Gentiles, “strangers,” to help rebuild Israel in the Kingdom. “And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee” (Isa. 60:10).

“As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.” In the Kingdom God will “clothe” Israel with material goods. “The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee” (Isa. 60:5). The “forces” are the same as the “clothing.” The armaments used against Israel in Jacob’s Trouble will be melted down into farming implements. It will take seven years for this conversion of “swords into plowshares” and “spears into pruninghooks” (Isa. 2:4). In addition, Gentiles from other nations will send gifts and wealth.

What blessed promises for the Jews if they knew their Scriptures! Great faith would be inculcated to endure hardship and to wait for the Lord and His promised Kingdom. The Holy Remnant, though relatively few in number, will have such faith to sustain them to

go through the trouble, but that faith will be greatly tried, just as with the Christian. The Holy Remnant may be given a lot of light, but they also have crucial experiences, which test them to the core—in God’s time and way, and when they can take it, by God’s grace.

Incidentally, Ezekiel 20:37 about passing “under the rod” refers to the practice of every tenth animal being a tithe for the Lord: “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” This verse seems to indicate that only *one out of ten* Jews will survive as the hand-picked Holy Remnant.

Isa. 49:19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

The “waste” and “desolate places” in Israel have not yet been developed; they remain desolate even today. An example is the Negev Desert. That is one type of desolation, whereas “the land of thy destruction” refers to the desolation that will occur when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble—desolation from earthquakes, great hailstones, etc. Jerusalem will be leveled by an earthquake, for example. All this land will be reclaimed and built up.

As the Israelites come forth from the grave (as well as from other lands), the borders of Israel will be too small, “too narrow by reason of the inhabitants.” The land will seem like a straitjacket to them. Hence they will want more land, and they will get it.

“They that swallowed thee up shall be far away.” Israel’s enemies and oppressors will be off the scene in this peaceful time of reconstruction under God’s direction in the Kingdom.

Although mankind has been on the earth for more than 6,000 years, several factors affect the multiplication of the human race and, therefore, the total number that will be resuscitated in the general resurrection. For instance, relatively few will be resurrected from the period of 1,656 years before the Flood for two reasons: (2) many were of the hybrid race that will not come forth from the tomb and (2) the people lived much longer prior to the Flood. Others factors are famines, captivities, plagues, and wars.

Zechariah 10:10 provides information about Israel’s future expanded borders: “I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.” The people will come forth from the grave either to the place of their nativity or in the area in which they formerly lived. This will be true of Jews also, except that they will subsequently be transported back to Israel. But notice that two places (Gilead and Lebanon) are mentioned in Zechariah 10:10 as being part of Israel in the Kingdom. Since Gilead is located in present-day Jordan, much of Jordan will be within Israel’s borders in the Kingdom.

Assyria embraces eastern Turkey (Anatolia, Armenia), Syria, and part of Iran. Of course the boundary lines of many countries have fluctuated throughout history. Hence in the Kingdom the Lord will determine national boundaries.

Isa. 49:20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

God is speaking to the nation of Israel. Who are “the children which thou shalt have, after

thou hast lost the other [previous children]”? In the time setting of the Kingdom, children will have been lost in Jacob’s Trouble and/or the Diaspora. But after Jacob’s Trouble, Israel will have more children, and they will say, “The place [Israel] is too strait [too small] for me.” The “children” after Jacob’s Trouble include both (1) the surviving Jews in other lands who will be shipped back to Israel by the Gentiles and (2) those who will be raised from death. In verse 21 the question is asked, “Where did these [Jewish] children come from?” Verse 22 gives a partial explanation: from Gentile lands.

“Strangers” who settle in Israel in the Kingdom will be Gentiles who, in the present life, were born in Israel. These strangers will be given an equal inheritance in Israel, even though the land was especially deeded to the Jews. Hence *truly dispossessed* Palestinians will get an inheritance.

Isa. 49:21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

The general experience of Israel over the centuries is that they have been dispossessed from their homeland by Gentiles. However, Jacob’s Trouble epitomizes that circumstance. Here Israel reflects back on that experience, for at that time they will feel forsaken and unwanted. From a glorious beginning their state will be pitiful. But in their extremity, those with faith will pray to God for help—and receive it.

Unfortunately today, the nation of Israel looks to the United States and the United Nations for help instead of to God. Based on Old Testament history, they should have had two or three days of national fasting with earnest prayer.

Isa. 49:22 Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

“The Lord GOD ... will lift up ... [His] hand to the Gentiles, and set up... [His] standard.” Just as Christians are attracted to the Cross in the Gospel Age, so in the Kingdom the Jews who are miraculously delivered will want to return to their homeland. God’s standard is a rallying point. The illustration of an army helps to explain the concept of a “standard.” The men may be sitting on the field at rest and having their dinner. When the time for battle arrives, standard bearers put down markers (a pole with an emblem on top). Each battalion or company then rallies to its particular insignia and performs the assigned task. When the Lord sets up His standard, it will beckon the Gentiles to come. But what is that standard and how will He lift it up?

Isaiah 60:1,2 enunciates the principle from one standpoint: “Arise, shine; for *thy* light is come, and the glory of the LORD [Jehovah] is risen upon *thee* [Israel]. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon *thee*, and his glory shall be seen upon *thee*.” Just as the plagues in Egypt were literal, so the plagues that God will use to deliver Israel at the end of the age will be every bit as literal and marvelous. Pestilence, the eyes of the animals and people burning in their sockets, the slaying of one another in confusion like the Midianites in Gideon’s day, hailstones like those in Joshua’s day, etc.—all of the past deliverances will be used (on a smaller scale, of course) in the land of Israel.

The Israelites were baptized by Moses in the Red Sea with the cloud as a covering. When Moses lifted up his rod, the waters parted, the depths of the sea congealed or froze to provide a pathway, and the Israelites walked over dry shod, going through a tunnel, as it were, with the cloud as a canopy over their heads. That tunnel was God's providence or protection as the nation went through the Red Sea. (It was at Succoth in Egypt that the cloud first began to cover the entire host of Israel like a blanket and the pillar of the cloud to lead them.) As the Israelites entered the Red Sea, the pillar withdrew and, instead of going in front to lead them, went behind them, providing light all night for the Israelites but darkness and confusion for the pursuing Egyptians. As a result, the Egyptians were slowed down until the Israelites safely reached the far shore—and then the Lord allowed the waters to come together and drown the Egyptians.

The point is that just as God previously used miracles in nature to deliver His people, so at the end of the age, *the miraculous deliverance of Israel in Jacob's Trouble will be the "standard" or sign which the Gentiles will recognize and rally to.* Just as other nations witnessed how God protected Israel during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings (Josh. 2:9–11), so nations will (representatively) witness what happens in Israel at the end of the age, and the Gentile survivors will return to their homelands with eyewitness accounts. Therefore, as the cloud over Israel was like His presence on behalf of Israel, protecting, shielding, and saving them in the Red Sea experience, so His glory will again be manifested. "Then [in Jacob's Trouble] shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle [in Old Testament times]" (Zech. 14:3). *God's glory on behalf of Israel will be the ensign or standard that will cause the Gentiles to ship the surviving Jews in their lands back to Israel after Jacob's Trouble.* "I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people [saith the Lord God]: and [then, as a result] they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders [back to Israel]."

Isa. 49:23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

It will not be just the common people who are sympathetic and appreciative of what has happened and want to be instructed of the Lord in the Kingdom, but former great leaders will be ashamed and put their face down in the dust in humiliation and the realization of their nothingness. The word "kings" includes particularly prominent individuals in all realms of activity: political, religious, financial, sports, business, etc. (Psa. 72:10,11). Psalm 72 is a prophecy of the Kingdom, as are a lot of the Psalms past the middle of the book (many earlier Psalms are prophecies about Jesus).

Notice that the Gentile leaders will "*lick up the dust of thy feet* [the feet of the Jews]" in the beginning of the Kingdom. How different from conditions today where, for instance, the United Nations voted almost unanimously to equate Zionism with racism! (They even spelled Zionism with a lowercase "z.") Hence we know that God's deliverance of Israel will be MOST STARTLING in order to make present-day "kings" and "queens" so penitent! They will realize that the very God of nature, the God of heaven, has manifested that Israel is His people. Jehovah's demonstration will be SO STRONG AND SO CONVINCING that the great ones who currently despise Israel will grovel in the dust before them, bring presents, and provide free transportation back to the Holy Land.

"And thou [O Israel] shalt know that I am the LORD." Imagine Israel's humiliation too

when they realize that the One they rejected is truly their Messiah! They will recognize him and know that Jesus is God's Son. Not only will God lift up His hand to the Gentiles and set up a standard for them, but the surviving Jews will be dumbstruck with the turn of events on their behalf.

Verse 23 ends with an interesting clause: "for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." In other words, the Holy Remnant will not be ashamed to recognize Jesus. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa. 110:3). This clause in verse 23 suggests a measure of enlightenment to the Holy Remnant. Those Jews who exercise faith and obedience will live through Jacob's Trouble. But even with this faith and obedience, the Holy Remnant will be startled and dumbfounded when the miraculous events actually occur. In a somewhat similar vein, suppose we die and wake up as one of the 144,000. That is the lifelong hope of the consecrated, but to actually end up as one of the Little Flock would result in great surprise and joy. Imagine KNOWING that we made it! Therefore, for the Holy Remnant to "wait" and not be ashamed does not mean they will not be startled with the revelation. The reality of the experience will be one of wonderment.

Isa. 49:24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

Isa. 49:25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

Isa. 49:26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

These verses show that Chapter 49 is one coherent, harmonious theme. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the *lawful* captive delivered?" For example, when a lion captures a lamb and is holding the lamb in its mouth, who would suppose that the weak prey could be rescued? No one! The lion simply has to close its mouth and the lamb will be dead. But God will save *little* Israel, the weak prey, from a seemingly hopeless state in the hands of *mighty* Gog.

At first it will appear that God has forsaken Israel, for Gog will be victorious in capturing Jerusalem. It will seem as if the Jews are no longer God's people. If there is a God, and if He is the God of Israel, it will seem that He is not interested in them and that they are going to be extinguished in their own land. The enemy host of Gog will go right up "to the neck" (Jerusalem) and be temporarily victorious (Isa. 8:8; 10:27). Can Israel be delivered under that circumstance? "Yes, surely," saith the LORD. "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children [the Holy Remnant]. I will make our oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (RSV and NIV).

How will God feed Gog with their own flesh? Every man's hand will be against his neighbor in tremendous confusion as those of the enemy try to save their own lives. It will be like the consternation that resulted when Gideon and the 300 men broke their pitchers. The Midianites slew one another, devouring themselves in a panic and frenzy. "Sweet wine" confuses the mind, and so Gog will act "drunk," ie, without reason.

The theme of Jacob's Trouble is repeated over and over in Scripture. We often say that restitution is spoken of by the mouth of *all* God's holy prophets (Acts 3:21), but Jacob's Trouble is spoken of by *nearly all* of God's holy prophets. And the theme is veiled just like restitution, with "here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10).

Isa. 50:1 Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

Why did God ask Israel, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?"

Comment: Because they had left God and gone to worship other idols.

Reply: Yes, both the ten tribes and the two tribes went astray.

The question is next asked, "To which of my creditors did I sell you?" Then the verse ends with "You sold yourselves and for your transgressions your mother was put away." When did they sell themselves? At this time, only the ten-tribe kingdom had received judgment and been taken into captivity by Assyria, for Isaiah wrote this message more than 100 years before 606 BC. Therefore, Isaiah's dispensational message was primarily directed to "Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 1:1). (Hosea prophesied at the same time but to the ten tribes, who went into Assyrian captivity.)

Comment: God said to Jeremiah in the days of King Josiah: "Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a *bill of divorce*; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also" (Jer. 3:6-8).

Reply: Notice that a bill of divorcement was given to Israel, the ten tribes, the northern kingdom. Judah, the two tribes, witnessed this "divorce" but did not heed the warning. Therefore, at the time of Isaiah's writing in Chapter 50, Judah had not yet been put away with a formal bill of divorcement.

The prophet continues in Isaiah 50:1, with God telling Judah, "For your transgressions is our mother put away." The following verses in Ezekiel 16 furnish information about Judah's "mother":

(Ezek. 16:1-3,28,29,45,46) "Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and *thy mother an Hittite*.... Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.... *Thou art thy mother's daughter*, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children: *your mother was an Hittite*, and your father an Amorite. And *thine elder sister is Samaria*, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and *thy*

younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is *Sodom* and her daughters." The covenant was originally made with the whole nation of Israel (Ezek. 16:8), but subsequently in their development, the kingdom was divided into ten and two tribes. Then, in this same chapter of Ezekiel, the "mother" is pictured as having three daughters: (1) Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom, was the oldest; (2) Judah, the two-tribe kingdom, was the middle daughter; and (3) Sodom was the youngest.

Ezekiel 23:2–4 discusses two of the daughters: "There were two women, the daughters of one mother: And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah." Samaria, the older daughter, was called Aholah. Jerusalem (Judah), the younger daughter, was called Aholibah.

In Isaiah's day but prior to Chapter 50, estrangement began when the northern ten-tribe kingdom was carried away captive to Assyria. The Lord is asking Judah, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" The "mother" here would be the land of Israel; the people on that land (the ten tribes and the two tribes) are the product of the "mother"; they are underneath the "mother," which is also the covenant. God made the covenant with the entire nation, with both houses of Israel (the ten tribes and the two tribes). The ten-tribe kingdom was nominally called "Israel," which was the name of the whole nation, in contradistinction to Judah, the two tribes. In Isaiah's day God did divorce or put away the ten tribes, the older sister or daughter, whereas Judah's divorce did not occur until 606 BC, long after Isaiah had died. Isaiah is telling Judah that they should realize the situation. Although they have not been divorced yet, they are drifting away from their covenant relationship because of their sins and a divorce is pending.

The Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah Scriptures use different illustrations. The Jeremiah citation does not mention the "mother," whereas Ezekiel mentions both the "mother" and her daughters and Isaiah 50:1 speaks of just the "mother."

[Note: This first verse is difficult to understand. Therefore, the comments presented above are incomplete and may not be accurate. In the next week's study it was suggested that the fulfillment of the question "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?" might be along the line next suggested.]

"Where is the divorce document? Let's examine it and read the details. I did not put you away. Rather, you put yourselves away through your iniquities." Therefore, verse 1 would not be talking about the ten-tribe kingdom's going into captivity or about 606 BC, but about Jesus' day or AD 70. In AD 70 the two tribes were put away because of their sins, but all down through history the Jews have blamed the Gentiles for their sufferings. The Jews think they have been unjustly persecuted, and they fail to see that the Diaspora occurred because of their own iniquities. In the climax in Jacob's Trouble, however, the Holy Remnant will repent and admit their sins and call on God.

Q: Is this prophecy referring to Jesus' day?

A: No, it is referring to our day, but it is telling that the reason the nation was put in

Diaspora and cast away is because of sins and transgressions. And even today there is still trouble. This prophecy is a separate explanation of why Israel has had such a long period of hard experiences all during the Gospel Age—because they sinned. God was reluctant to punish them but was forced to do so.

Isa. 50:2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

God says, “When I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” Neither the nation nor individuals answered or responded when God issued an invitation through His prophet. There are two applications.

Jeremiah 3:13,14 states the principle that iniquity must be acknowledged in order for one to be forgiven. “Only *acknowledge thine iniquity*, that thou hast transgressed *against the LORD thy God*, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you *one* of a city, and *two* of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” In other words, although Israel went astray into harlotry and other things, God called out to the nation that if even one of a city or two of a family would repent from their backsliding condition, He would forgive and bless them. Jesus also issued an invitation, but how many responded? “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

The prophetic application pertains to Jesus’ day and the Diaspora. In AD 70 Israel’s polity was destroyed, and the survivors of both the ten and the two tribes were taken to other lands. The same is true of AD 135 and throughout the long period of the Gospel Age. Therefore, both houses of Israel had to experience the Diaspora because of their sins and because they crucified Jesus. When Jesus came at his First Advent, God was appealing to the lost sheep of Israel, but only a handful of people responded. (The 500 who truly responded out of the multitudes who followed him for the loaves and the fishes and out of 7 or 8 million in the entire nation would be considered as nothing.) Consequently, the nation was cast off from God’s favor.

Here in verse 2 God is pleading, “I have the ability to use great power on your behalf. As Jews, you all celebrate the Passover and the Exodus as a marvelous demonstration of my power, so why don’t you answer me?” The Lord even goes into the drama and provides an interesting detail—when He dried up the Red Sea to enable the nation to go over dryshod, a lot of fish died and the stench was very apparent.

Isn’t it strange that despite all of Israel’s experiences and despite all that God has done, hardly anyone really believes in God’s power? Even when viewing a movie like the “Exodus,” the people regard the dividing of the Red Sea as just an exciting story. But this event actually happened, and He who wrought such miracles in the past can repeat them in the future. His hand is not shortened. God has the POWER to deliver Israel. The Time of Trouble is needed like a spanking to make mankind realize their need for the Redeemer.

Today Israel, as a nation, does not pray together to God as they did under Ezra, Nehemiah, and King Josiah. No national fast has been declared. As the Israelites reflect on their past history and their being back in their land, the fact that peace still eludes them brings them

anguish of spirit. But as a nation, they have not called on God for His forgiveness, help, and explanation.

Isa. 50:3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

This verse should be coupled with verse 2. Just as God opened the Red Sea, so He caused a plague of darkness (and “sackcloth”) to come upon Egypt. God has such capabilities, He has used them in the past, and He will use them again in the future. He will repeat this POWER in Jacob’s Trouble: plagues, pestilences, and miracles.

Isa. 50:4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Verses 4–9 refer to Jesus and give his innermost thoughts prior to his crucifixion. Daily in prayer Jesus sought God’s instruction and help. In fraternizing with fallen human beings, Jesus learned many lessons. He was thankful God taught the meek and humble rather than the wise and learned (Matt. 11:25). As a result of being down here, he understood more fully the depth of the Father’s wisdom.

“That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” The wisdom of Jesus was superhuman in speaking the seemingly simple parables. He was given “the tongue of the learned” to be able to illustrate deep principles in this manner. He knew how to speak “a word in season” and to give help and comfort to the sin sick and weary.

“He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” Every morning Jesus prayed to his Father and then waited and listened for guidance and wisdom, and every day he learned more.

Isa. 50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

Isa. 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Many demeaning things happened to noble Jesus: obscenities, slanders, spitting, etc. Even the hairs of Jesus’ beard were plucked out by the roots. He yielded to all of these indignities and did not resist, submitting to the Father’s will and wisdom in permitting them. He reasoned, “Since God did not interfere, He wants me to have these experiences.” As his experiences continued, Jesus developed more and more wisdom as to how to deal with fallen humanity.

When the smiters did not listen to Jesus, he gave his back to them. In the Parable of the Vineyard, when the husbandman sent various servants to the people to whom he had let out his vineyard, they killed the servants (Matt. 21:33–44). Then the husbandman sent his son, but they killed him too. In the parable, Jesus was pleading with the nation, but they ended up killing him. This parable illustrates the questions in verse 2: “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?”

“I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” Jesus was immobile when spat upon; he did not turn away but kept his composure and let his persecutors do these demeaning things.

He was like a lamb dumb before its shearers.

Remember, Isaiah was prophesying of things that had not yet happened—of things that would occur at the First Advent. Although these prophecies were recorded many years prior to their fulfillment, they were stated in the past tense.

“I gave my back to the smiters” shows Jesus’ submission to the scourging.

Isa. 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

After using past tense, Isaiah now speaks as if the experience is actually happening to Jesus. It is as if Jesus is actually on his way to the Cross. He trusts God will help him, so he sets his face as a flint, knowing he will not be ashamed. He knows he will be vindicated, so he does not rebel against these shocking experiences.

Isa. 50:8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

“He who vindicates me is near” (RSV). Jesus has not yet been vindicated in the eyes of Israel or of the world at large.

Comment: These verses will help the feet members at the very end of the age.

Reply: Put yourself in Jesus’ place with all of the responsibilities he faced as the Logos—he was involved with the making of the Law Covenant, he was on Mount Sinai, he dealt with Moses (God gave Moses the instruction through Jesus), etc. Then, all of a sudden, he came down here to die for the human race, but the incidental experiences in connection with that death came as a shock. He would say to the Father: “I am willing to die, but is this necessary? Nevertheless, I know that you will soon vindicate me. My justification is near.” He was not rebellious.

Notice how Jesus gets courage. After he had shocking experiences and set his face as a flint, he asks, “Who will contend with me?” He gets bolder and more determined. In *Pilate’s Report*, Pilate asked Jesus, “Don’t you know that I have the power to free you?” Jesus replied: “There is nothing you can do. My whole experience is in the hands of God. Can you say to that water, ‘Back up and go up that hill?’ No, that water is to flow down the hill. And so I am determined to do God’s will, and you have nothing to say in the matter.”

“He is near that justifieth *me*; who will contend with *me*? let *us* stand together.” Why is there a change in pronouns from singular (“*me*”) to plural (“*us*”)?) Jesus was speaking in verse 7: “For the Lord GOD will help *me*.” Therefore, Jesus is also speaking at the beginning of verse 8: “He [God] is near that justifieth *me* [Jesus].” “Let *us* stand together” is almost a parenthetical statement, for Jesus again speaks at the end of verse 8: “who is mine adversary? let him come near to me [Jesus].” The time setting is Jesus’ last hours. Hence this prophecy of Jesus’ innermost thoughts at the time of his Crucifixion was written 700 years prior to its fulfillment. Moreover, the prophecy of this chapter in Isaiah is recorded in different tenses: past, present, and future.

In the prophecy Jesus talks as if his experience at the Cross is currently going on. Then the account says, “Let *us* [therefore] stand together.” This clause is a prophetic indication or

commentary that a *class* (the whole Church) would have a somewhat similar experience. In other words, “Let us [the Church, therefore] stand together [as Jesus stood alone at the time of his Crucifixion].”

There could be a further indication, as in the Second Psalm, that what happened to Jesus will happen to the last members of the body of Christ as a class. The Holy Spirit is telling the feet members to take strength, comfort, and consolation in recalling what Jesus had to go through, how he remained steadfast, and the victory he attained. Present tense is used to show what will happen in the future.

What point is being made in the rest of verse 8 and on into verse 9? “Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me [Jesus]. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me.”

Comment: It is as if Jesus is saying, “Who would dare to oppose me when I have God on my side?”

Reply: God did ultimately vindicate Jesus’ death.

Notice the strength of Jesus’ character leading up to his death. He steeled his nerves against the Adversary. At first in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, but afterward he was strengthened, so that when he went to his disciples, he was calm. (He had been praying for assurance that his sacrifice would be acceptable, and he got that assurance.) When his enemies came to apprehend him, he said, “Let these others go. I am the one you want.”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Satan was not allowed to interfere with Jesus’ prayer. But when Jesus finished his prayer and was strengthened, it was time for him to be led forth to be executed. He spoke with confidence, for what appeared as a dark, bleak situation would ultimately be revealed in light and God would vindicate him.

“Let him [Judas] come near to me.” When Judas came, “Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Jesus submitted to all the circumstances of the experience: to Judas, to the mob, to Caiaphas, etc. (Satan used various human agents to bring Jesus to the Cross.) However, Jesus was reconciled to what had to take place, and *now was the time*.

Isa. 50:9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

“Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?” Jesus was condemned at the trial with the two false witnesses, but this verse assured him that his cause would ultimately be justified. Notice his contrasting experiences. First, his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, to the point where he sweat blood and tears. After that, he was strengthened with assurances so that he was calm and kept his composure and senses as regards his disciples. (“It is me you are after. Let my disciples go.”) He submitted to his apprehenders. In other words, strength was followed by introspection in the Garden of Gethsemane (“have I been faithful?”). Again he was strengthened, but on the Cross he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” When he died a short while later, he called out triumphantly, “It is finished!” Just as Jesus had contrasting experiences of strength, followed by momentary weakness, strength, weakness, strength, so that is the experience of the Christian—and especially of the feet members leading up to their death.

Jesus did have feelings and so do we. He was not afraid of man, but he had moments of introspection when he wondered if he had been faithful. He was both bold as a lion and meek as a lamb.

Even John the Baptist had mixed feelings and emotions. After boldly preaching repentance to the whole nation and giving a strong message to Herod and Herodias, he experienced some doubts about his reasoning regarding the identification of Messiah. Yet he was the one who had said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The point is that we must be very careful in viewing our brethren and not judge by sight how faithful a person is when discouragement and/or depression occurs. We must look at the examples given in Scripture to develop an understanding and get a proper perspective of judgment. We must realize that a Christian's walk is not that of a stoic, not always immune to suffering.

"Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." Not only all of Jesus' enemies but all enemies will fade away by the end of the Millennial Age. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25,26). And what happens after that? There will be no more enemies; all evil will be eradicated.

As a garment decays with age and eventually is discarded, so those of Jesus' enemies who are incorrigible, although permitted to stay on the scene for a while, will wax old and eventually go into Second Death. Throughout the Kingdom, the elimination of evil will be a *gradual process*. It takes time for a moth to eat a garment; it will take time for the enemies of Christ to be removed permanently. His enemies may seem to prosper, but their days are numbered. Stated another way, the days of the Adversary himself or of adversaries (plural) are numbered.

Isa. 50:10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Paraphrase: "Who among you fears Jehovah and obeys the voice of His servant Jesus?" This verse is addressed to those who reverence God and recognize Jesus as the One sent of God—and thus try to obey Jesus' voice and follow in his footsteps.

"Who among you walks in darkness and has no light?" (paraphrase). Normally we say that God has called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light" and that He has "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13). But the words of the hymn give the proper slant here: "I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light." This class fear the Lord and trust and obey Him, yet walk in darkness. Things looked dark for Jesus at the time of his crucifixion, and they do for the Christian at times too.

"Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." This advice is given to those who fear (reverence) God, obey the voice of His Son, and walk in darkness during a difficult experience and trial. The instruction is to *continue to trust God*, to continue steadfast in this trust and hope, to continue to be of good courage.

Isa. 50:11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

This verse refers to a different class, a class who are *self-deceived* and *self-illuminated*, as opposed to those who trust God and walk in darkness. This class think they are walking in light, but it is *self-manufactured*. (They have “sparklers,” as it were, as on the Fourth of July.) The light they manufacture *themselves* creates an aurora or charisma about them.

“This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” While this class derive a measure of satisfaction, pleasure, and security from their *own* doings, eventually a day of reckoning, shame, and disappointment will come. The *short-lived* sparks, which *briefly* create a spectacular display, popularity, and *temporary* pleasure for this class in the present life through disobeying God and cultivating their own manufactured light, will result in *age-lasting* shame. Even if they are forgiven and get life, their shame will be preserved for posterity.

Isa. 51:1 Harken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

This verse is addressed to a class who “follow after righteousness.” Isaiah 50:10 is a somewhat similar verse.

“Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.” The allusion is to a stone quarry. What is the “rock”? We say a person is “a chip off the old block,” meaning a son is like his father. There is a double picture with (1) spiritual lessons for the Church and (2) a message for natural Israel. Christ is the Rock for the Christian. Peter (*petras*), whose name means “stone,” was a piece of the larger mass of Rock (Christ). And the Israelites “drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them [in the wilderness]: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). Thus the context is speaking of those who “follow after righteousness” and have Abraham as their father and Sarah as their mother (verse 2).

The instruction is to look back to the Rock whence we were hewn, to look back to the beginning of our Christian development. The Apostle Paul says there are times when we as Christians get discouraged. When such discouragement momentarily occurs, we should not be ashamed, for we all have fluctuating thoughts. In a hard experience it helps to consider Jesus, who “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb. 12:3). In other words, we are to look back to the example of Jesus for comfort and strength and to know that we are not alone in the trial and that God is not unreasonable to permit us to have the experience. We are being schooled and developed, as was Jesus. In fact, Jesus asked the Father in Gethsemane, “Is it absolutely necessary that I drink this particular cup of experience? If not, please let it pass. If so, I am willing to drink it.”

At times we have difficulty interpreting God’s providences. In a trial we are to reflect back to the Rock whence we were hewn and God’s previous leadings. If we cannot understand the reason for providences of the present, we should review God’s leadings of the past and then *trust Him*. Consider Paul, who was blinded by the vision of the risen Lord. Paul prayed three times for the full restoration of his eyesight, thinking that with good eyesight he could serve God more efficiently. But the answer was no because God’s strength could be perfected in Paul’s weakness. Paul was so brilliant that a full restoration of his eyesight could have been a deterrent to making his calling and election sure. Poor eyesight apparently kept him humble and constantly aware of his circumstance and dependence upon the Lord.

Isa. 51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

We are to look back to the beginning of our existence as a new creature, to the beginning of our identification with the high calling, to the Lord's early dealings with us that led to consecration. Miraculous things were done on our behalf whether or not we realize it. In the spiritual analogy, Abraham pictures God, Isaac represents Jesus (and the Church, for we are, like Isaac, the seed of promise), and Sarah is the Grace Covenant, the mother of the Church.

Why is there the need to look back to Abraham, to the source, to the beginning of our course? Because God directed Abraham and He directs us too. When we are in doubt as to God's current leadings, we should reflect back to the time when we are positive He did lead us. The easiest way is to review how God first called us, and then to consider in chronological order His subsequent leadings up to or close to the present. If we never reflect back, we may begin to doubt that we truly are Christians, especially if we cannot understand current experiences.

Q: How can Abraham represent God in this setting, for God says, "Look unto Abraham ... for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

A: Because the context has a double application, applying also to natural Israel. There is a principle here regarding both the spiritual and the natural application. Consider natural Israel. The Jews feel forsaken and are sorry for themselves, thinking they did not do anything wrong to deserve such persecution, but if they reviewed their history from the days of Abraham, reexamining themselves as a people and how they were originally called, they would have increased faith and be reassured. They would fast and pray as a nation to again have God's leadings as in the past.

Q: But are there Jews who "follow after righteousness" and "seek the LORD"?

A: The Holy Remnant will be reached.

"For I [God] called him [Abraham] *alone*, and blessed him, and increased him." Why was this thought inserted? The promise was given to Abraham. "Get thee out of thy country [Ur of Chaldees], and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1,2). Only Abraham was called, not Sarah, not Lot, etc. Sarah shared in the relationship as Abraham's wife, but the promise was to *Abraham* alone. He left Haran as an *individual* ("alone"), and God blessed and increased him. The account is showing that Abraham was called out of a multitude of people who were living in darkness and were not following after righteousness. Abraham alone had a consuming faith, a consuming desire both to know God and to do His will. Because of his act of obedience, God will not only bless Abraham but will increase (multiply) him exceedingly.

Consider Jesus and the spiritual aspect. At the time of his death everyone forsook him and he went through the experience alone, but he has been exceedingly rewarded for taking that stand for his Father. The Christian, too, seems to be "alone" in trying to serve God,

especially as the time approaches for Christ to reveal his Kingdom. The Master himself said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The implication is that the closer we get to the end of the age, the less faith there will be, proportionately speaking. Not only will there be fewer and fewer grains of wheat, not only will the salt of the earth depart, but eventually the Great Company will leave the scene too. Of the faithful ones, only the Holy Remnant will remain—a very small number in a limited sphere of influence.

Abraham had to *walk out* by faith and "*follow after* righteousness." He had to *leave* Haran and go to the place where God directed him. *Movement* is shown.

If the Holy Remnant class look back to the beginning of the Jewish nation and God's dealings with them (eg, in the Red Sea crossing and with the miraculous feeding of the manna), they will be greatly strengthened. Thus, for both Jew and Christian, looking back to God's original dealings with them when they became followers of righteousness is beneficial.

Isa. 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Verse 3 pertains to natural Israel. "The LORD shall comfort Zion" along natural lines. As Isaiah often does, he switches to the promises to natural Israel in connection with the Kingdom. (Isaiah 11 is an earlier example.)

God will make Zion's (natural Israel's) "waste places" like the Garden of Eden, the "garden of the LORD." ("Waste places" are deserts, barren hills without verdure, etc.)

Let us consider Genesis 13:10, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." At this time in Lot's (and Abraham's) life, there was no Dead Sea. Up until the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the "plain of Jordan," which is now under the Dead Sea, was a "well watered" plain with some slime pits here and there. The *mighty* earthquake that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (and several other cities) and changed the contour of the land also formed the Dead Sea. The shallow, well-watered valley was opened up by the earthquake into a great defile with a dead end. Prior to the earthquake, the Jordan River probably had a lot of tributaries that just petered out in the desert. After the earthquake, the Jordan River began to fill up the Dead Sea because there was no outlet.

The fresh water of the Jordan River carried minerals, so that when the earthquake created the depression for the Dead Sea and the water began to back up into it and evaporate in the sun, the remaining water became more and more saline from the minerals that were left behind. Eventually the fresh-water lake became a saltwater lake. And the Dead Sea will undergo another change in the future when God miraculously delivers the Holy Remnant.

Incidentally, Genesis 13:10 indicates that part of Egypt, the part along the Nile, was once *very fertile*. The plain of Jordan "was well watered ... like the land of Egypt."

Isa. 51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

Israel (“my people,” “my nation”) is being addressed. “A law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.” In the Kingdom, God’s law will go forth from spiritual Zion, and the word of the Lord (God’s judgment or justice) from Jerusalem.

Isa. 51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

“My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth.” The time setting is near Jacob’s Trouble and Israel’s deliverance. There is no question about Israel’s deliverance, for God’s “salvation is gone forth”; it is part of His plan, and it shall come to pass *in due time* and *on time*. God’s “deliverance draws near speedily” (RSV).

“Mine arms [plural] shall judge [rule—RSV] the people” vs. “on mine arm [singular] shall they trust.”

“Arms” = The Christ (Jesus is one arm; the Church is the other)

“Arm” = Jesus (he is the important arm in whom the people will trust)

Isa. 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

The heavens shall vanish, and the earth shall wax old. “They that dwell therein shall die in like manner.” When this chapter is finished, the context will be understood better. The prophet Isaiah is not being addressed here; rather, the instruction is addressed to no particular personality, and neither are other chapters in the last third of this book. The old heavens and earth are being described. In the new order, unrighteousness will not be tolerated. Isaiah 35:8 is a proof text: “An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those [for the unclean].” In the Kingdom the “unclean” will be instructed, and they will have to obey and bow to Jesus. The righteous, not the wicked, will predominate and flourish.

For the portion of verse 6 that reads, “They [the inhabitants] that dwell therein shall die in like manner,” the RSV has “They who dwell in it will die like gnats.” In other words, the wicked who prosper today and get away with it will be stopped in the Kingdom. There will be swift justice as well as opportunity for repentance and reform. In the new order both the civil and the ecclesiastical control of the people will be changed; these are described as the “new heavens” and the “new earth.”

In the present age, religious and civil institutions are more or less controlled by Satan, and the people underneath that control are adversely affected by the atmosphere. In fact, it is a miracle to survive in the truth today, for everything is poisoned—as in a gas chamber. Our protection is the armor of truth. The world, not having truth, gets worse and worse.

Verse 6, then, is a figurative impersonal directive to look upward (and not a literal personal directive to Isaiah), The setting is the end of the Gospel Age when deliverance is near. The wicked flourish now, but the present order is waxing old and decaying.

Isa. 51:7 Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my

law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

Isa. 51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

Verses 7 and 8 are properly a separate paragraph. They are addressed to the Church.

Isa. 51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

The new picture that begins here is based on the deliverance of Israel in the Exodus. In connection with that deliverance, God cut "Rahab" (Egypt) and wounded the "dragon," the crocodile (also a symbol of Egypt). Prior to the "wounding," Egypt was a great power. (Egypt was a world empire prior to the four universal empires from 606 BC through today.)

"Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?" The "it" is the "arm" of Jehovah. Jehovah's arm is told to "awake," to "put on strength" and to fight for Israel as in ancient days.

Isa. 51:10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

Notice that "the waters" were a "great deep." In other words, the parting of the Red Sea had nothing to do with tides and the Israelites crossing on a sandbar. In fact, the Scriptures indicate the opposite. Not only did the Israelites cross on dry land, but the sea is described as *high* walls of congealed water. The opening of the Red Sea occurred in a relatively deep portion of the Red Sea. The phrase "waters of the *great* deep" is not an exaggeration.

(Psa. 78:13) "He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap." God miraculously "divided the sea" and "made the waters to stand as an heap."

(Psa. 74:13,14) "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness." God divided the sea by His *strength*. He broke the heads (plural) of the dragons (plural) in the waters and broke the heads (plural) of leviathan and gave them to the people to eat. (The reason that "heads" and "dragons" are plural would make an interesting study.)

The arm of Jehovah "made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over." Who are the "ransomed" in this picture? The Pastor likened the people going through the Red Sea to the redeemed in the next age making their transit through the Kingdom. Those who reach the other side and look back (at the end of the Kingdom) will sing the song of great deliverance. If the night of the eating of the Passover lamb refers to the Gospel Age, then the subsequent deliverance of the Israelites through the Red Sea pertains to the deliverance of those who get life in the Kingdom. The passing over of the destroying angel in connection with the death of the firstborn occurred earlier and was not related to the crossing of the Red Sea. The destroying angel passing over the households of Egypt pictures a judgment that occurs at the conclusion of the Gospel Age. In summary, the "ransomed"

in this verse are the ransomed of the world.

Isa. 51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Isaiah tells more about restitution than any of the other prophets.

“And the ransomed [Jews and Gentiles] of the LORD shall return [from the grave], and come to Zion with singing” (RSV). Jews will return to Israel to live there, and Gentiles will go there to be nurtured, healed, and counseled. “In those days ... ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Representatives of nations from all over the earth will have to go to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles to obtain a blessing, or there won’t be any rain in the homeland (Zech. 14:16,17).

Isa. 51:12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

Isa. 51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

God is the One who comforts Israel. The salvation He has predetermined is a foregone conclusion, and it is coming nearer. But notice how the picture changes from happiness to sadness. The context has been describing what God did for Israel in the Exodus and the Red Sea crossing, and it has been telling about the joy and singing in the Kingdom. Now the picture, which is sobering and depressing, reverts back to incidents leading up to Jacob’s Trouble. The inhabitants of Israel will see the trouble coming; they will see the large invading host entering the land. PANIC will seize them. The Lord is saying (paraphrase): “Do not be afraid of men. It looks very ominous, but these men are like gnats [verse 6, RSV]. Even the fiercest, strongest, most wicked man is like grass, like a gnat, like nothing.”

The theme of Jacob’s Trouble is interwoven in the Book of Isaiah perhaps 30 or 40 times. Putting all the descriptions together furnishes an IMMENSE amount of knowledge. Collectively, the other prophets say a lot about Jacob’s Trouble, but Isaiah, as *one* prophet, gives abundant information.

“Where is the fury of the oppressor?” Gog, the invading host, will be very violent. Both the numbers and the ferocity of Gog will be frightening. Houses will be rifled; women will be ravished; Jerusalem will be taken. In fact, Israel will be temporarily defeated by Gog so that it will be apparent to all that the deliverance is *God’s*.

Isa. 51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

The half of Jerusalem that will be taken “captive” or into “exile” will be afraid they will perish (Zech. 14:2). This is a clue that the prisoners will not be treated well.

Isa. 51:15 But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.

What does this verse tell us about the literal Exodus? When Moses stood before the Red Sea and lifted his rod, the sea was stormy and boisterous (the “waves roared”). (This is a reminder of the two storms on the Sea of Galilee, one when Jesus was in the boat and one when he was not.) Just as it looked very bleak to the Israelites who were hemmed in with the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh and host behind them, so it will also look utterly hopeless for Israel in Jacob’s Trouble. At the *height* of the trouble in the Exodus, God simply chopped the Red Sea in half and let the Israelites go over dry shod. And at the *height* of the future Time of Trouble, God will cut short Israel’s trouble by delivering the Holy Remnant.

Isaiah’s information will be over the heads of most Jews. Only the Holy Remnant will receive, understand, and heed this comforting message. Even though all hope is lost, God is telling them to be of good cheer and not to fear man.

Isa. 51:16 **And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.**

Just like verses 7 and 8, verse 16 is addressed to the Church. Most of this chapter is related to Israel, but interjected in the message are occasional verses addressed to the Church. Proof this verse is directed to the Church is the clause “say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” God speaks unto Zion, the Church.

Comment: This verse in the Revised Standard Version sounds as if the Holy Remnant is being addressed. By the things God is doing and will do for the Holy Remnant, He is really saying to them, “You are my people.”

Reply: Yes, that could be. However, it seems more likely that God is addressing the Church, the *instruments* of salvation. Moses was used in connection with the Red Sea deliverance. Jesus was used in regard to the deliverance of the disciples in the boat, and at the end of the age, The Christ will be the instruments of salvation.

Psalm 45:16 speaks of the Ancient Worthies: “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou [The Christ] mayest make princes in all the earth.” The Ancient Worthies will be the “children” of The Christ; they will be “princes in all the earth.” The “fathers,” the Ancient Worthies, preceded the Church in time development, but in the Kingdom the Church will be over the Ancient Worthies. A similar reversal is shown in the prophecy about Jesus being “the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). When Jesus was made flesh, he was the offspring of David; in lineage he was the son of David born to Mary. Yet at the same time, he was David’s Lord, his “root”; in other words, Jesus preceded David in time.

Jesus and the Church will be the Father and the mother, respectively, of the regenerated human race or children. And the most outstanding of the children will be the “princes,” the Ancient Worthies. Therefore, God will “plant the [new] heavens,” ie, Jesus and the Church. And God will also “lay the foundations of the [new] earth,” ie, the Ancient Worthies, the civil aspect.

(Isa. 59:21) “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the

LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” Just as the Church has gotten the Holy Spirit during the Gospel Age, so the time will come when God will pour out His Holy Spirit on the world. This chapter of Isaiah incorporates both the Church and the Jewish people.

The Holy Remnant, having previously been informed, will be instrumental in helping Israel see their situation *after* Jacob’s Trouble. Verse 16 is presented from the standpoint that there is to be a message to Israel telling them what they are to do *in* the extremity of Jacob’s Trouble. That message will come basically from the Lord’s people (“my people”). The Holy Remnant will be the nucleus of the Kingdom, and at the head of that nucleus will be the Ancient Worthies. An interesting point to ponder is that when the Ancient Worthies are raised at the height of the Time of Trouble, they will need instruction. Being perfect men, they will grasp the information quickly, but they will require instruction. Other Scriptures indicate they will subsequently receive daily instruction from the Church on how to rule. But initially the Holy Remnant will be more informed than the Ancient Worthies when they come forth from the grave.

Isa. 51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

Isa. 51:18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

Isa. 51:19 These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?

Isa. 51:20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

In one sense Israel has been drinking the “cup of trembling” all down the Gospel Age during the Diaspora, but the bitter dregs of the “cup of his [God’s] wrath” will be Jacob’s Trouble (RSV). Who will guide and comfort Israel when she drinks the bitter dregs of the cup of trembling and fury in Jacob’s Trouble? None of her own leaders or people will be able to comfort her.

How can this trouble in the near future be harmonized with the fact that Israel is now in her double or period of favor? What is the purpose of this manifestation of the Lord’s fury in Jacob’s Trouble? To vindicate God’s name and *especially to purge out* the unfavorable element so that only a Holy Remnant will remain. All Jews will share in this experience in order to weed out the wrong-hearted ones.

Isaiah 66:15–17 describes the purging out of Jews not in heart harmony with God: “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.” The Jews who eat “swine’s flesh” are those who have violated their covenant; many are even atheistically inclined. They will be purged out, consumed, by fire and by sword. Although the “all flesh” here includes Gentiles, other portions of Isaiah using

similar language are particularly addressed to the Jew.

Verse 20 is better in the Revised Standard Version: "Your sons have fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God." The antelope, a more docile animal, is the correct thought, not a wild bull. Israel's "sons" will be like an antelope in a net. Realizing their situation in Jacob's Trouble, the "sons" will be pining and repenting; their hearts will be changed and softened by the experience. As Christians, we should, for the most part, bring our sorrow and problems to the Lord and not unnecessarily burden other people. We pray and commune privately with the Lord. But verse 20 is talking about a more public situation. Today many Jews do not convert because of the family opposition that would result, but in Jacob's Trouble the right-hearted Jews will not care what others think. Elsewhere we were told that in connection with their change of heart, they will be like mourning doves; in sorrow and contrition they will cry to God for deliverance.

Verse 19 mentions two things that will befall Israel:

1. Desolation (famine)—a forsaking, no help
2. Destruction (sword)

Isa. 51:21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

Isa. 51:22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

Isa. 51:23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

At the height of Jacob's Trouble, at the moment of their direst extremity, when they have drunk the cup of woe to its dregs, God will say to the Holy Remnant: "No more will you have this experience." God will remove the cup forever and turn the destruction against Gog (the Assyrian, the hammer or battle-ax), as shown when the gallows Haman designed for Mordecai were used on himself. And so the "gallows" that Gog and Magog plan to use to exterminate the Jew will boomerang.

Note: The cup *must be drunk to the dregs* before it can be removed.

Isa. 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Isa. 52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

"Zion," "the holy city," "Jerusalem," and "captive daughter" all refer to natural Israel. What an encouraging picture! "Awake, awake" is a call that will be given in the future. This dramatic, exhilarating wording will probably be set to music.

"Loose the bonds from your neck" (RSV). The shackles will be broken and the prisoners set free from the experience of Jacob's Trouble. Natural Israel (the Holy Remnant) will be released from their hopeless plight.

Isa. 52:3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

“Ye have sold yourselves for nought.” God overruled conditions so that the Israelites went to Egypt to get food during the famine. After Joseph’s brothers realized that he was in the high position of prime minister, the entire family was invited to Egypt as guests and to live in the Land of Goshen.

God told Abraham that he and his posterity would be afflicted by another nation (Egypt) for four generations. “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; ... But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again” (Gen. 15:13,16). Hence Abraham died not receiving the promise; the only land he got was a little piece of ground in which to bury Sarah and himself. But he knew that four generations hence, they would be liberated. Abraham passed that information on to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob to his children. Thus Joseph knew and had great faith.

Isa. 52:4 For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

The first part of the verse is one time setting: “My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there.” The last part of the verse is a different (and later) time setting: “The Assyrian oppressed them without cause.” The statement about the Assyrian is a form of sarcasm, for the Jews were so despised by the Assyrians that they were not even sold but were given away. The Jews were treated worse than cattle. Their families were divided as a spoil and no compassion was shown for the family unit. When God redeems Israel in the future, He will do the same in reverse fashion. He will not require a price of the antitypical “Assyrian” for their redemption. In other words, God has purposed to redeem Israel, no matter what.

In past ages, the Egyptians and the Assyrians both oppressed Israel without proper justification. The Israelites were permitted to have suffering experiences because *God* saw they needed them. During the famine Pharaoh invited the Israelites into Egypt, but in time, when they began to multiply, a succeeding Pharaoh got nervous, thinking it was just a matter of time until the Israelites outnumbered the Egyptians. Taskmasters were instituted.

Isa. 52:5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

Isa. 52:6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

When God delivers Israel from Jacob’s Trouble, He will speak in an authoritarian voice, “Behold it is I,” and Israel will *know* that they are *God’s* people and that *God* has spoken.

Isa. 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Down through history, Bible translators (Catholic and Protestant) have put a paragraph

break here in order to spiritualize verses 7 and 8, but there should be no break. These two verses are related to and connected with previous verses. "Zion," mentioned in verses 1, 2, and 7, is *natural* Israel. Although "Zion" often refers to spiritual Israel, the context determines the usage, and the context here is about natural Israel.

Through experience and study, when we find that a certain application is true in Bible interpretation, we tend to use that precedent as a hard-and-fast rule for other passages. For example, let us consider Isaiah 40: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1,2). "Jerusalem" is natural Israel, who had "received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" in 1878 when the time period of disfavor was fulfilled. This message has been given and is being given in the Harvest period. Now to continue on in Isaiah 40: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 40:9,10). This message is also being given, but it has *not yet been fulfilled*. Verses 9 and 10 are *good news* about what *will happen*, whereas from one standpoint verses 1 and 2 are *good news* about what *has already happened*. God has not yet come with a "strong hand"; His arm does not yet rule for Him. The purpose of this advance information is to encourage and strengthen the right-hearted Jew.

Nahum 1:15 is also pertinent: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." Again this is *future* good news (but spoken of as having occurred in the past). At this time the wicked shall no longer be in Judah. This message will be given in the future after Jacob's Trouble.

Q: What is the thought behind "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts"?

A: The New Law Covenant will have many features that are similar to the Old Law Covenant. Ezekiel speaks about the changes in sacrifices. Although slightly different, they will pertain to the Feast of Tabernacles, etc.

In regard to Isaiah 52:7, the following portion of that verse merits careful consideration: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him." In Revelation 1:10-15 the Apostle John heard a great voice saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ... What thou seest, write in a book." John then turned to see the voice that spoke with him and saw a personage "like unto the Son of man" clothed with priestly garments. "And his feet [were] like unto fine brass." Whose feet? The feet of *Jesus*, the Son of man, the One who identified himself as Alpha and Omega. Moreover, lessons about Jesus' feet were given to the Church of Thyatira: "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (Rev. 2:18). Since the message was given at the *beginning* of the Gospel Age and it applies to the *fourth* period of the Gospel Age (that is, long before the feet members of The Christ are on the scene at the *end* of the Gospel Age), the "feet" of Revelation 2:18 also apply to the feet of Jesus.

Consider 1 Corinthians 15:27,28. "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he

saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." "All things" will be put under *Jesus'* feet. The "Son" is Jesus.

Zechariah 14:3,4 uses "feet": "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Verse 3 clarifies that the "feet" here are God's. In that day *God's* feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. The "feet" cannot refer to the last or feet members of the body of Christ because the *whole* Church will reign with Christ and, in setting up the Kingdom, will establish their authority on the earth as the representatives of God. Therefore, *The Christ* are the feet of Jehovah in Zechariah 14:4. This order of authority is shown in the Tabernacle where the supernatural light or *shekinah* glory over the Ark of the covenant pictures God, the lid or mercy seat of the Ark pictures Jesus, and the coffer underneath pictures the Church (the lid and the coffer being *one* article of furniture). Jehovah will not actually come down to Jerusalem, but He will cause the Mount of Olives to *literally* split for several reasons, one being that it will produce a theatrical effect and a psychological effect on the Holy Remnant. (Of course there is a spiritual meaning as well, but the literal is very forceful and should be given primary emphasis.) God will establish His authority on the earth through The Christ. He will purge away ungodliness out of Jacob through the "Deliverer," called "saviours" *plural* in Obadiah 21: "And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." The figurative "feet" of Jehovah that will come down on the Mount of Olives are a picture of God's authority. He will make the earth His footstool.

When Jehovah puts His feet on the Mount of Olives, He will establish His authority in the earth and say, "Be still and know that I am God." In the day when the Mount of Olives is split by a great earthquake and all kinds of miracles occur in nature, the people will know it is God who is saying, "Behold, it is I." They will realize that the God of nature, the God of Israel, is speaking and that they must be still and listen.

The point is that the word "feet" does not have to apply to the feet members. When we see the word "feet" in Scripture, we must analyze *whose* feet and what time period are being discussed. Jesus' feet? God's feet? The feet members?

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that *publisheth* peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that *publisheth* salvation." "Publishing" can be done in many ways, not just with a printing press. For example, a message can be announced on television, on radio, in person, etc.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that ... saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" The Third Volume, entitled *Thy Kingdom Come*, contains a chapter title that uses this Scripture: "Thy God Reigneth." In explaining this text, the Pastor spoke of it as being fulfilled. He said the Lord's Prayer is answered, but is it? Has the Kingdom come? Is the Lord's will being done on earth today? Does God reign now? If the Kingdom is already here, why do we continue to pray for it? The Pastor, as a pioneer, was bubbling with such enthusiasm over this gem of present truth that he wrote like a poet, and in his idealism he

put that which is future in the present. God does this too; He sees future events as if they are present. For example, He says He is not a God of the dead but a God of the living and then uses Abraham as an illustration. The implication is that Abraham will be called forth from the tomb. Because of the certainty or surety of that event happening, God speaks of it as having already occurred.

Verse 7 is addressed to the nation of Israel. When will their God reign? When Israel is delivered from Gog. At that time the nation *will immediately know* God is reigning, and they will know *Him* from that day forward. In other words, there is a specific date in history in which the nation will be converted and know that the God of Israel has delivered them. "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward" (Ezek. 39:22). How blessed are the feet of God that will make this announcement: "Behold, thy God *reigneth!*"

Isa. 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

Israel's "watchmen" will sing and "see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion," *ie, after Jacob's Trouble*. This phrase is sometimes wrongly applied to the early years of the Harvest period. Proponents say that the brethren all saw eye to eye back there, that they were in mental agreement and they cooperated enthusiastically with each other. While that may have been true for a while, it was not characteristic of the whole period of the Pastor's life. Since the brethren knew the Scriptures declare, "Blessed is that servant," many were afraid to say anything else. But as soon as the Pastor died, mayhem developed (of course he had some very difficult experiences during his life too).

To refute this wrong application, notice the context and time setting of verse 8. The watchmen will see eye to eye *when God delivers Israel* and brings her out of captivity ("when the LORD shall bring again Zion"). "Zion" is *natural* Israel here; it is not a reference to when the sleeping saints are raised.

Let us consider some examples of how the word "watchman" or "watchmen" is used in Scripture:

Isaiah 21:11,12 reads: "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, *Watchman*, what of the night? *Watchman*, what of the night? The *watchman* said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." In these verses the "watchman" (singular) is the Pastor.

Daniel 4:13,14,17 reads: "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a *watcher* and an *holy one* came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.... This matter is by the decree of the *watchers*, and the demand by the word of the *holy ones*: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." The "watcher" and "holy one" (singular) is the Logos. The "watchers" and "holy ones" (plural) are the holy angels. Down through Israel's history, God stationed watchers to make sure His plan was carried out and not spoiled by the Adversary. God allows evil to seemingly triumph, but it can go only so far.

Daniel 12:1 reads: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for

the children of thy people [ie, for Israel, Daniel's people]." Michael will stand up—in other words, he will *watch out* for them.

Song 5:7 reads: "The *watchmen* that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." These "watchmen" are natural Israel, who will smite the Great Company in the future.

As can be seen from these examples, the words "watchers" and "watchmen" must be considered in context in order to properly identify them. The "watcher(s)" (singular or plural) can be in heaven or down here, and they can be in the present life or beyond the veil.

Now to return to Isaiah 52:8, the verse under discussion: "Thy *watchmen* shall lift up the voice; ... together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion." Who are these "watchmen"? Prior to the Gospel Age, God's people were natural Israel ("You only have I known of all the families of the earth"—Amos 3:2). Now God's primary people are the Church. When the Little Flock is complete, the Great Company will be God's chief concern. After that, His people will again be natural Israel, and that is the time setting of Isaiah 52:8. Verses 1 and 2 tell when God will "bring again Zion"; it will be when the shackles and bands are removed from natural Israel, ie, when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. Natural Israel will then return to the seat of God's favor, which is the position they occupied but lost when the crown was taken off Zedekiah (Ezek. 21:25,26). When God thus reinstates Israel, the New Covenant will be in operation (Jer. 31:31–33). Thus verse 8 is talking about the resurrection of Zion to the position previously lost.

The "watchmen" are The Christ, who will be concerned for Israel. But will Jacob's Trouble occur the moment the feet members are taken into glory? No, a period of time (about three years?) will elapse between the change of the last members in persecution and God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. And the Great Company must be completed during that time. Satan will be in a frenzy—like a person out of control with a bad temper or a temper tantrum. When he realizes he is losing the battle, he will want to bring the house down with him.

Comment: Since Satan will again try to deceive the people at the end of the Millennium, that means he will not have given up even at that point. Therefore, he certainly will not surrender peaceably at the end of the Gospel Age.

Reply: During the Kingdom, Satan will be incarcerated, but he will not reform. Only those with the divine nature will be able to contend with him.

When the Time of Trouble is occurring down here, the members of The Christ (as the "watchmen") will be careful not to let matters get so out of control that they interfere with the divine plan. Nevertheless, the Lord wants the people to be humbled and brought to their knees, so He will not rescue them right away. First stationed like guards to keep things from getting out of control, the watchmen will subsequently be given a free hand. At that point the Adversary will be summarily dispatched and imprisoned. The Church will perform a defensive act until the signal is given to overwhelm Satan and the fallen angels. Kingdom blessings will follow as The Christ assume their roles as kings and priests.

“When the LORD shall bring again Zion” is the time when the reign of Christ will begin, the New Covenant will go into effect, and the Kingdom will be established. All of the living shall then KNOW that the time has come.

In our own little localities, we are like miniature “watchmen” now, in the present life. In judging us to see whether we are fit for His Kingdom, the Lord, among other criteria, looks to see if we are concerned (if we are watchmen) about His Word, His truth, His people, His cause.

In summary, a number of events must take place between the going of the last members and the establishment of the Kingdom. During this interim The Christ will watch—but they will break forth in joyful singing when the Kingdom comes and they can get involved as kings and priests.

Isa. 52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

“Jerusalem” is natural Israel here. These sentiments will be said to the Holy Remnant at the time of their deliverance in the near future. The great horde of Gog will cover the land right up to the “neck” (right up to Jerusalem), capture the city, and be victorious long enough to take half of the people into exile, but the Adversary will be stopped at that point, for God will then fight for Israel as He did in times past (Isa. 8:8).

Isa. 52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

“The LORD [Jehovah] hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem” (verse 9). “The LORD [Jehovah] hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The fulfillment of these verses is FUTURE. God has not “made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,” let alone in the eyes of His own people, the nation of Israel. Jesus is the “arm” of God, His *mighty* power. Only a fragment of that power has been exercised in the past. Jesus is the arm, the branch, of the Lord.

When Jesus raised the dead, healed lepers, opened blind eyes, etc., he did it by the “finger” of God (Luke 11:20). All of these miracles pertained to *individuals*. When *national and international* events are involved, God’s wrist or hand is used. But the use of His arm will end all discussion. All will know it! The age of faith will be over and the Kingdom will be in operation.

Isa. 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Isa. 52:12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

Verses 11 and 12 are a different, new, and separate message from the beginning and end of Chapter 52. In other words, verses 1–10 are one picture, verses 13–15 are another picture, and verses 11 and 12 are a separate message.

The command is to depart out of the midst of “her,” a *symbolic woman*. This woman is

related to Revelation 18:4, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." In Revelation the "woman" is mystic Babylon. Jews were captives in the ancient literal city of Babylon for 70 years, ie, from 606 BC until 536 BC. All of a sudden God sent word through His prophet to the captives in the city to get out, for the enemy was coming. Those who had faith obeyed the call to leave, forsaking homes, furniture, etc. And the Jews who lived in the city were generally more prosperous than those in the suburbs. Thus leaving the city of Babylon required *sacrifice* as well as *faith*, and relatively few responded. The Jews who waited too long to leave the city were killed.

The woman is Papacy, the international "mother" church. Papacy considers Protestant churches to be her alienated "daughters." The papal system reasons that Protestants like Luther left the true fold to establish the Methodist, Baptist, etc., churches. It is the desire of the Roman Catholic Church to have the *fratelli separati* come back into the one fold again, thereby having only one church of Christ. The international woman of Revelation 17 is pictured sitting on many waters (nations, peoples, and tongues).

In proportion as we are enlightened, we are responsible to hearken to the Lord's message and to come out of the nominal system. God is calling His people: "Come out of her, *my people*." To be enlightened in regard to mystic Babylon is a blessing and an indication of God's favor. Therefore, it is an *individual* responsibility to come out of Babylon, and we should not rant and rave about others.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." In other words, do not be involved in the plagues that will come upon Babylon.

"For the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward." God guards in the front and protects at the rear. This statement in verse 12 is an allusion to the Exodus. God was both *in front of* and *behind* the Israelites when they left Egypt. When Moses led the Israelites down to the water, the Egyptians said, "Oh, those fools! They have hemmed themselves in between the mountain ranges on each side." With the sea in front of them and the pursuing Egyptians behind them, the Israelites appeared trapped. At that point Moses said, "Stand still and see the salvation of your God." When he lifted up his rod and beckoned to the water, the Red Sea miraculously opened up before them. Thus what Pharaoh thought was a deathtrap became a means of salvation.

The cloud canopy that had been over the 2 million Israelites as they walked from Rameses to Succoth to Pihahiroth to Migdol to the Red Sea continued with them. A little pillar extended downward from the cloud so that the host would know the direction of travel. This pillar (called "the angel of God" in Exodus 14:19,20) was in front of Moses, and Moses was in front of the Israelites (Israelites ⇒ Moses ⇒ cloud pillar). The host could not see Moses, but they could see the pillar. At the Red Sea the cloud lifted up and changed position; ie, it moved from in front of the Israelites to behind them and there dropped like a curtain. As the pursuing Egyptians with their chariots entered the Red Sea to chase the Israelites, the cloud acted like a black curtain that the Egyptians could not see through. At the same time, the front part of the cloud curtain reflected light *ahead* for the Israelites, and the back side of the cloud curtain reflected darkness *backward* to the Egyptians.

(Exod. 14:19,20) "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind

them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

Comment: The implication in Exodus 14:19,20 is that it took all night for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea.

Reply: Yes, and they crossed a major part of the Red Sea, not at a narrow point or on a sandbar.

The Exodus was ancient history at the time of Isaiah’s ministry, but he alludes to this event in Israel’s past in connection with the Harvest of the Gospel Age. Just as back there when Israel left bondage in Egypt, God miraculously assisted and delivered them, so those who by faith obey His voice at this end of the age and leave mystic Babylon will be miraculously safeguarded as new creatures.

There is a difference, however. “For the LORD will go before you [the spiritual Israelite]; and the God of Israel [the same God who delivered the nation at the time of the Exodus] will be your rearward.” Back there the Israelites left Egypt *in haste* following the tenth plague with the death of the firstborn of all those not under the blood. The Egyptians beseeched Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave lest they all perish. Pharaoh, whose own household was affected, said, “Be gone!” The very next morning, after the Israelites had eaten the Passover lamb, they rallied at Rameses and left from there according to Moses’ instructions for an orderly march. Isaiah 52:12 states that those who leave mystic Babylon during the Harvest will *not go in haste*: “For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.” In literal Babylon, the prophet’s warning gave the Israelites almost a two-year notice to think about leaving, but even so, the sacrifice of worldly goods was involved. However, for the truly consecrated who do not leave mystic Babylon voluntarily during the Harvest, there will be a forced flight *in haste* at the time of Babylon’s fall. Although the Great Company will be rescued, they will suffer loss. By leaving earlier, they would have had the full favor of God with many compensatory blessings.

The Lord gives the *advance* warning, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of ... her plagues.” He reasons with the Christian: “Do you want to be loyal to *me* or to your family or to some other man or institution? Which do you prefer?” Jesus said that no man could be his disciple if he loved father, mother, etc., more than him. That is the price one should think of when counting the cost of consecration. If your relationship with God would be impaired, you would have to forsake that person and not just obey what he or she told you to do. In regard to forsaking Babylon, those who delay and hesitate to leave the system will experience some suffering.

Q: Does the admonition to “not go out with haste” mean there should be some deliberation about leaving Babylon?

A: Yes, one should consider the cost, but once the decision is made, there should be no dilly-dallying. However, when Babylon is about to fall, one should get out in haste in order to receive any blessing at all. Those who wait will suffer loss.

All of us will die sometime, and for most people death entails suffering and is not pleasant.

Which is better—to die suffering *for God* in the knowledge that you tried to live, serve, and obey Him, which brings peace of heart, soul, and mind, or to die with uncertainty?

Verses 11 and 12 are instructing God's people that to please Him, they should not dilly-dally in leaving Babylon, but they should carefully consider the step they are taking. For those who obey this commandment, God has promised to be both in front and in back of them.

God says, "Come out of her, *my people*." He does not say, "Come out of her, *everybody*." In other words, He is instructing those with a hearing ear to leave. And to even *hear* that call—whether or not it is obeyed—is an honor. For every step of obedience, God takes a step closer to the individual.

Q: Wouldn't the thought of not departing Babylon in haste also include the idea of giving some type of explanation for leaving? Not only would this strengthen the individual, but the explanation might help others in the congregation who might have a hearing ear.

A: That would depend upon the circumstances. Certainly the individual's family and best friends would be informed, but the main responsibility is the individual himself, the principle being "he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

Q: Isn't "Babylon" broader than just Papacy? Wouldn't it include all systems that teach God-dishonoring doctrines?

A: Yes, Babylon is a system of both mother and daughters.

The Book of Revelation is all spiritual regarding Babylon, whereas Isaiah is both natural and spiritual. Isaiah had a partial application back there to the natural Jew and also has a fulfillment pertaining to our day.

Isa. 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Verses 13–15 are a new and separate section—a radical change. After the text said, "Depart ye, depart ye, ... touch no unclean thing," verse 13 begins, "Behold, my servant ..." God's "servant" is Christ, who will "deal prudently, ... be exalted and extolled, and be very high." (The Jews think that they are the suffering "servant.") Proofs that the servant is Jesus will be considered with the next verse.

Isa. 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

"Astonied" means astonished; ie, they were so awestruck that they were frozen (as stone) with amazement.

The rest of verse 14 furnishes clues that an individual is referred to here, not the Jewish nation. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." And this person whom God loves is an obedient servant who will one day be greatly extolled and honored. However, at the time of this vision, the servant was in his period of humiliation.

Jesus' visage (face) was "marred more than any man" at the time of his crucifixion. During

his earthly ministry, multitudes followed him (5,000 men plus women and children on one occasion, 4,000 on another occasion, etc.). The people desired his company then, but not when he was crucified. Prior to his crucifixion it was said of Jesus that he “increased in wisdom and stature, and *in favour with God and man*” (Luke 2:52). Having no food or sleep for 36 hours; being scourged, spit upon, interrogated, buffeted, etc.; and then being nailed naked to the Cross, Jesus was a pitiful sight.

Why does Isaiah say that Jesus’ face would be marred beyond that of any other man and his form more than that of all the other sons of men, especially when many others suffered the death of crucifixion? (1) Because Jesus was a perfect human being in all aspects, the contrast when he hung on the Cross was more noticeable. (2) Events happened suddenly. At the height of his popularity, after the people had hailed him “Hosanna to the highest” and were ready to crown him, he was apprehended at night in the Garden of Gethsemane while he was praying, tried secretly at night, condemned by the priests, and taken to Pilate early in the morning to be executed. When the people saw him carrying the Cross, they asked, “How could this be?” Immediately they began to lose faith in him as the Son of God. In other words, in view of his previous profession to be *the Messiah*, the great Savior of the nation of Israel, his crucifixion, with his body twisted and hanging in such a pitiful state, seemed more dreadful than that of others who did not make such a profession. And how did the people react? They turned on him and mocked him: “If you are the Son of God, show us. Come down from the Cross.” The evidence seemed to contradict Jesus’ profession—until the earthquake, the tearing of the Temple veil, the raising of some sleeping saints, his resurrection, and his ascension.

Psalm 22 recorded *in advance* Jesus’ thoughts while on the Cross. Verse 6 describes his thoughts as he looked down at his body: “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” When a worm is held up, it is naked, twisted, and distorted; it has no arms or legs, no rosy cheeks. When Jesus hung on the Cross, he was completely naked, and his body was twisted out of joint (those who drove in the spikes did not exercise care and consideration for his position). He saw his bones dislocated and sticking out grotesquely. Imagine how the Son of God felt being exposed to such shame! The public could now look upon him in his nakedness, upon the One who had been perfect. He was a worm not only from the standpoint of humiliation but because he had no covering of clothing.

Psalm 22:14 reads: “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” Jesus’ heart burst and this verse is saying he felt the heart attack coming on. His heart was getting weak like wax. Shortly after this experience, he cried out, “It is finished!” When the centurion pierced his side with a sword, both blood and water gushed out, showing that the heart sac had ruptured.

Isa. 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

RSV: “So shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.”

One might ask, “Doesn’t everyone know about Jesus and about his being crucified?” But the answer is no, for hundreds of millions of people do not know either his name or about the

Crucifixion. Heathen religions outnumber the Christian religion by far! Hence many will hear about Jesus for the first time in the Kingdom. Some have heard just a little about him, and others have heard more but have not thought about him. Verse 15 is saying that in the future when movies of the *actual* Crucifixion are shown, the people will be shocked! Then *all will know* what Jesus endured for them and that he is the true Savior. They will be amazed to realize how much love Jesus manifested as well as how much humiliation he suffered. They will be startled to know that Jesus could have come down from the Cross but chose instead to submit to the experience out of his love for God and for the human race. The great ones of earth, those who boast in their accomplishments, are worshipped and revered in the present age. But when the people truly know about Jesus, they will say, "All glory be given to him!"

Individuals who allow others to do homage to them in the present life will be greatly shamed in the future. Blasphemy means to accept to oneself the honors, emoluments, and praise that belong to God or Jesus.

Isa. 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Generally speaking, the nation of Israel did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, it was the apostles who asked, "Who hath believed *our* report?" This chapter is primarily a picture of the last moments of Jesus' life.

Isa. 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

"He [Jesus] shall grow up before him [his Father, God] as a tender plant." *God* sent Jesus into the world. *God* superintended Jesus' whole life, starting with the virgin birth. Jesus was begotten of the Father in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and he grew up, to all appearances, like a normal human child until he reached the stature of manhood, at which time he began to preach.

Notice the word "we": "when *we* shall see him," "that *we* should desire him." This pronoun refers to the apostles.

Verse 2 would seem to indicate that Jesus was not good-looking, that he was not unusual in appearance, but that is not what this verse is saying. Verse 2 is describing *Jesus' crucifixion*. Previously multitudes followed him even into the desert, and just before his crucifixion the people shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. 21:9). However, *all forsook him* at the time of his crucifixion just a little while later.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus had healed the blind, the lame, etc., and raised the dead. Therefore, when he rode into Jerusalem on the white ass in the tradition of a king who was about to take office and then, with authority, chased the money changers out of the Temple, the people thought that surely he was the Messiah. But just five days later, when Jesus hung on the Cross, all their hopes crumbled. It seemed *impossible* that the Son of God could be crucified—hence the people disbelieved him. The Crucifixion occurred at the Feast of Passover, a time when Jews from all over Israel and from other nations were gathered at Jerusalem.

Jesus' humble beginning is briefly referred to: "He shall grow up ... as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." A little plant with potential life was planted in arid soil. Although the tender plant looked green at first, its survival seemed to be doomed without water. When Jesus came at his First Advent, the angels proclaimed, "Peace on earth, good will toward men. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11,14). But where did the shepherds find the babe? In a lowly manger in a cave stable—hardly the place one would expect to find a King! The shepherds testified of the angels' glorious message and proclamation about the child who would be the future Messiah, but to the people he seemed so poor because of his earthly surroundings and humble parents. Even though he himself was unusual, his background seemed incongruous with his being Messiah.

Jesus did not act like a king; he was not proud and haughty. Both the beginning (his humble origin) and the end of his earthly life (his humiliating death on the Cross) seemed to belie his role as Messiah. In between he spoke with authority and healed many of their afflictions, with the result that he grew in popularity. Nevertheless, his humble beginning and humiliating death seemed to negate his claims.

Isa. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

When was Jesus "despised and rejected of men"? When was he a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"? In connection with his trial and crucifixion. Before that, the common people heard him gladly, and sinners and publicans were especially attracted to him because his message offered mercy and forgiveness and an opportunity to come back into harmony with God.

The Gospels do not particularly mention Jesus' sorrows. And there is not one word about his height, his hair or eye color, or whether he was handsome. God purposely avoided describing Jesus because the important thing was the *message*.

"We hid as it were our faces from him." The apostles continue to speak here. During Jesus' earthly ministry, they followed and accompanied him, but at the time of the Crucifixion, *even the apostles* doubted for a time that Jesus truly was the Messiah. For example, the two disciples walking to Emmaus said, "We *trusted* [past tense] that it *had been* he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21).

Even the apostles, Jesus' followers—let alone the Jewish nation—hid their faces from him as he hung naked and all out of joint and twisted (like a worm) on the Cross. "His visage was so marred more than any man" (Isa. 52:14). Psalm 22 prophesied that he would say of his twisted body, "I am a worm, and no[t] man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Jesus was tested to the very core so that *all beings*, heavenly and earthly, will and can say, "WORTHY is the Lamb!" (Rev. 5:11,12).

In the Garden of Gethsemane, all of the disciples fled. Only two, Peter and John, followed him afar off to the high priest's house where the false trial was held. Nevertheless, they were embarrassed and did not try to defend Jesus.

Under the circumstances and with their limited understanding, how could the apostles have esteemed Jesus as the Messiah while he hung on the Cross? Events seemed to be a mockery of his claim.

Isa. 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

What particularly seemed to indicate that Jesus was “smitten of God”? He was crucified outside the city walls as a criminal. The Old Testament tells us that “he that is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God” (Deut. 21:23, Gal. 3:13). The Jews knew that according to the Law, anyone who died by hanging on a tree was accursed of God, and hence the apostles and the Jews thought he was being punished by God. But to die as Adam’s substitute, Jesus had to suffer Adam’s experiences. Since Adam’s sin was brought into the world through a tree, a tree was part of the offset ransom price. Also, just as Adam felt forsaken after he had sinned, so it was necessary for Jesus on the Cross to feel momentarily forsaken and separated from God.

Isa. 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

“With his stripes we are healed.” Jesus took the sinner’s place. He was *wounded, bruised, and chastised* for our iniquities and transgressions so that we could be healed. In the Old Testament, material fruitfulness and health were equated with obedience to God (whereas in the Gospel Age, God deals with the Christian according to spiritual faith and obedience). Jesus was beaten, scourged, spat on, buffeted, bruised, hit with a rod, mocked, etc. He knew that if he resisted and did not die, his purpose in coming here to be man’s Redeemer would fail, so he obediently submitted. But to onlookers, to the people, Jesus appeared to be a sinner receiving punishment. They thought, “He was a wonderful man who healed many people and did a lot of good. We thought he would deliver us from the Roman yoke. It is too bad that he has sinned.” Job was similarly regarded when the multiple calamities came upon him.

Isa. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

When Jesus was apprehended and crucified, the apostles were like sheep without a shepherd. In their confusion they returned to fishing and their previous occupations. The pronouns “we” and “our” in these verses continue to refer particularly to the apostles. The point is that Jesus’ followers, who had initially proclaimed him, later felt he had been cursed of God.

Isa. 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

At his trial Jesus did not open his mouth, but earlier, during his ministry, he defended himself against his accusers. His going “as a lamb to the slaughter” at his crucifixion startled the disciples, for they were accustomed to his turning the tables on those who tried to trap him verbally. This chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 53, is primarily a picture of the last moments of Jesus’ life.

At shearing time, a sheep does not need to be restrained, for it stands still and thus is easy to shear. In Old Testament times, the way of removing wool was to pluck or pull it out. Therefore, the animal suffered the indignity of rough handling by the shearers. Although

the plucking did not necessarily cause the sheep to bleed, the skin became very tender. As a parallel to this type of “shearing,” the mockers pulled out the hairs of Jesus’ face.

Isa. 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

“He was taken from prison and from judgment.” The word “prison” is an incorrect translation, for Jesus was not put in prison in the normal sense of the word. He was apprehended late at night in the Garden of Gethsemane, tried before a kangaroo court, and taken to the house of Caiaphas—all before dawn. Early in the morning, and without any sleep, Jesus was taken to Pilate, subjected to various experiences, and executed on the Cross—all that same “day.” The correct thought in verse 8 is that in connection with the charges laid against him, he was not given a fair trial. Proper judgment was taken away from him; he was robbed of his rights as a person to a fair trial. He was “taken from ... judgment”; that is, he was not given a fair trial but was executed without a valid cause. False judgment was *intentionally* rendered.

“Who shall declare his generation?” Jesus was cut off in the prime of life at 33-1/2 years of age without a wife or children. He was without “generation,” without posterity.

“He was cut off out of the land of the living.” Violence is implied. In the prime of life, Jesus was *abruptly* terminated (“cut off”) in a *violent* death with no posterity to perpetuate his memory.

God now comments: “for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” All of the suffering was permitted to come upon Jesus because it was necessary for him to die, but because he faithfully endured all of the stripes and afflictions, eternal honors will be heaped upon him. The Apostle Paul was beaten with 41 stripes several times, he was in perils of the deep, he was persecuted, he was left for dead from a stoning, etc., but he said, “Our light affliction ... is but for a moment” when compared with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). However, being perfect, Jesus suffered more than any man. Because we are half dead and numb in mind and body, we cannot experience the depth of mental anguish or pain that he suffered. Jesus was keenly aware of all the imperfection around him, but for everything he suffered, he will be compensated with an eternal weight of everlasting glory. He will forever be on the right hand of his Father, and no one will be able to deny his worthiness.

Isa. 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

“He made his grave with the wicked” in that he was crucified with two malefactors (thieves). And “he made his grave ... with the rich” in that he was laid in the new rock-hewn family tomb of the wealthy, honorable counselor Joseph of Arimathea. Hence Jesus was given both a noble death and an ignoble death. His body was laid in a rich man’s sepulcher, and he died between two wicked men. Why do the Old Testament Scriptures call attention to these facts? If any Jew read the Old Testament honestly and had a seeking heart to know, he would have to admit that Jesus was the Messiah, that his life fulfilled the multitude of prophecies.

“Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” The RSV is

better: “*Although* he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.”

Another point of interest: Jesus died for *all*; he died for the rich and he died for the poor. Jesus tasted death for *every man*: for the sinner as well as for the upright (Heb. 2:9). It is true that what a man sows, he shall reap; but no man sows sin that merits eternal torture. In other words, *all* will have an opportunity to receive everlasting life.

While during Jesus’ ministry, publicans and sinners seemed to flock to him, he said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). He did not mean that the scribes and Pharisees were sinless, but that they were proud and did not realize their need to seek forgiveness for sin. Jesus’ making his grave with the rich is symbolic of his commiseration for rich and poor alike.

Isa. 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Isa. 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Catholics and Protestants recognize that Isaiah 53 is speaking about Jesus, and yet verse 11 says he is a “*servant*”; God calls him “my righteous servant.” The apostle Paul said, “There is [but] *one God* [the Father], and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). It is completely foreign to the Bible to try to make Jesus God. If the context is honestly analyzed, Jesus is seen to be the Son of God, and not God the Son. A father is not a son and vice versa; they are two *separate* beings.

In verse 11 God is speaking about Jesus, the reasoning being as follows: “Because Jesus made his grave with the rich and the poor, because he was smitten for the transgression of my people, because he made his soul an offering for sin, thus my righteous servant, who died, shall justify many. And the work he does in the future will prosper in my hand. I will honor and exalt him for his work.” When Jesus was raised from death after having died faithfully on the Cross, the Father exalted him to His right hand. But while on earth, Jesus said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). Church creeds say that Jesus and God are coequal in authority and person, but the Scriptures say otherwise. When Jesus prayed, he looked to the Father. He said, “Of mine own self I can do nothing, but as the Father hath taught me” (John 5:30 paraphrase).

Comment: “LORD” in all capital letters in the Old Testament always refers to Jehovah, to the Father.

Isa. 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus will “divide the spoil [treasures] with the strong [the Church].” His faithful followers will share the seat of government with him. These humble (and often uneducated) people will be kings and priests with him, and thus will hold future positions of honor, authority, and glory. The Scriptures show that God will give honor to Jesus, and Jesus will share that honor with the Church, his Bride.

Isa. 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

This is a difficult verse with a double application, ie, both natural and spiritual. Galatians 4:26,27 furnishes the clue to the *spiritual* application: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." Paul is talking about the Church class of the Gospel Age, and he gives different illustrations from the Old Testament that prefigure the calling of the Gentile Church. He quotes directly Isaiah 54:1 as a fulfillment of the mysterious "Jerusalem, which is above." Revelation 21:2 speaks about the new Jerusalem, the Holy City: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The Scriptures describe the followers of Jesus who are faithful unto death as being kings and priests in the next age. In another picture this company of 144,000 individuals is likened to being the bride of Christ; that is, collectively, they will be married to Christ, and they will reign with him as a queen in the next age.

In addition, the faithful Church class is described as "the holy city," for in the Book of Revelation a "city" represents a religious system or government. Hence the new Jerusalem will be the holy government of the next age. In contrast, the old Jerusalem is an unholy city (ie, the Roman Catholic Church) that sits on many waters (peoples) and is married to the governments of earth. The true Church is not mixed in politics but is separate and distinct, waiting for the future age. Thus there are two cities: the Holy City and the unholy city. The fact that John the Revelator saw a "holy city" and a "new Jerusalem" implies the existence also of an *unholy* city and an *old* Jerusalem. Moreover, he saw the holy city "coming down from God out of heaven," which means this government of the future does not originate down here but is of God. The names of the individuals comprising the true Church are written in heaven, and not by any human being. The symbolic language of the Bible pertaining to the Church class is almost like surrealistic art, for it uses word language to speak of this called class as a city, as a bride, as a mother, and as children of the Sarah Covenant.

Another proof that a "city" in Scripture is a religious government is Hebrews 11:10, "He [Abraham] looked for a *city* which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is *God*." The faithful patriarch looked forward to the future government of Messiah.

Q: Is Isaiah 54:1 a good translation in the King James: "for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife"?

A: The children of the desolate one, the Church class, will be more. In the present age, the Church class are called as an espoused virgin unto Christ; in the next age, they will be the mother having many children. Galatians 4:22–24 reads, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar." Sarah was the wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac, the seed or child of promise. Hagar, the bondwoman, and Sarah, the free woman, each represent a covenant. The children of Sarah, the barren and desolate one, will not only come later than Hagar's, but they will exceed in number the children of Hagar.

“The children of the desolate [one will be more] than the children of the married wife [Hagar].” The word “married” is misleading, for it implies that Sarah was not Abraham’s wife. In Hebrew the word is *baal*, but in a passive sense. Instead of being “lord,” it means “one lorded over,” “one possessed,” or “one owned.” The following symbolism apply:

Abraham = God
Isaac = Jesus

Eliezer = Holy Spirit
Rebekah = the Church

Sarah = Grace Covenant

Abraham (God) sent Eliezer (the Holy Spirit) to look for a bride (Rebekah) for Isaac (Jesus). Eliezer was the oldest servant of Abraham (Gen. 24:2). God is from everlasting to everlasting, and the spirit or power or mind of God existed before Jesus was created. Rebekah was given a promise: “Be thou the mother of thousands of millions” (Gen. 24:60). In other words, she was promised that she would have billions of children.

In the next age Jesus and his bride are also likened to Adam and Eve, being called the Second Adam and the Second Eve, respectively. In other words, the Lord *from heaven*, the *resurrected* Jesus, will be the Second Adam, and the Church *in glory* will be the Second Eve. By dying on the Cross as a substitute for Adam, Jesus purchased planet earth. The promise was that anyone who kept the Law of Moses inviolate would have everlasting life. Therefore, Jesus, through perfect obedience unto death, attained the right to human life here on earth, but he will give these life rights over to Justice to redeem the entire human race. Hence Jesus is a life-giving spirit, a Life-giver. He is like a father, and the Church is like a mother. And in the regeneration the world of mankind will be their children. (To *regenerate* means to give life again.)

The thought of regeneration is corroborated in Psalm 45:16, “Instead of thy fathers shall be *thy children*, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.” This text is saying that the Church will regenerate the Ancient Worthies. Those comprising the bride of Christ are the children of God. Accordingly, Psalm 45:13 likens the Church to God’s daughter: “The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.” God’s “daughter,” the Church, will marry His Son, Jesus. As a product of that marriage, further children will be brought to life—ie, the human race, of whom the Ancient Worthies will be first. Jesus and the Church together (The Christ) will bring back Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., from the tomb. Stated another way, Jesus and the Church in glory, the King and his queen, will have “children,” and the first of these children will be the “fathers” coming forth. Therefore, Psalm 45 shows that the Ancient Worthies cannot be resurrected until after the marriage takes place.

The above reasoning was presented to substantiate the thought that more will be the children of Sarah, the barren one, than the children of Hagar—even though the results have seemed to be the reverse for a long time. In the type Hagar had Ishmael as a son while Sarah was barren—and hence years before Isaac was born.

Another point: The “Isaac seed” will be as “the stars of *heaven*.” Not only will the Church be the mother of the regenerated people of earth, but they will be the mother of all future generations created on other planets. If God created the earth not in vain but to be inhabited, the same is true of other planets in other solar systems. At least some of these planets will be inhabited in the future. Psalm 147:4 tells us that God calls each of the stars by name and knows their number. Thus He named the planets and stars in advance, and our

particular planet He called “earth.” Why? Because physical man was *first made here*; he is of the *earth, earthy*. In time, physical men will inhabit other planets, but those planets will not be called “earth.” “Earth” is the only place where Jesus will ever die, for what happened here is an object lesson for all future yet-unborn generations throughout the universe. When those future generations are considered in conjunction with earth’s regenerated human race, the latter is like a drop in the bucket. In fact, the promise to the Church “Be thou the mother of thousands of millions” is a very conservative statement.

Isaiah 54:1 refers to all “children” to be ultimately born anywhere in the universe. Today we are living in the very earliest *dawn of creation*. When Adam was created, the angels sang for joy, for this man was a new kind of being (Job 38:7). And Eve was the first woman, for there were no females in heaven. Subsequently, “when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them ... the sons of God [angels] saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. 6:1,2). If there were females in heaven, they certainly would have been beautiful, and angels would not have come down here and demeaned themselves by taking on a human form in order to have a human wife. Hence the angels who disobeyed were attracted to a *new thing*: woman.

When earth is viewed from outer space with its vegetation, oceans, lakes, and atmosphere, it glows like a blue-green jewel. Earth has the most beautiful colors of all the planets because it has been made a *habitation* for man. When the angels saw man, they shouted for joy. When they saw woman, there was added joy. But they also rejoiced over the animals. Eden, the fish, the animals—everything about *physical* life on this planet was new to the angels, for they were accustomed to that which is *spiritual*.

Comment: In *Reprint* article 3165 entitled “The New Life in Christ,” the Pastor suggested that there is a *spiritual* counterpart for everything we have in nature here on earth: birds, brooks, trees, mountains, etc. To the angels the *physical* aspect was new.

Reply: Yes, the spiritual, ethereal counterpart is of a different substance than what we see down here. To the angels, man appeared as tiny, little physical darlings. God made the earth with His fingers. Collectively, the nations of earth are like dust on a scale; they are less than nothing in comparison (Isa. 40:15). Earth is a theater for what God intends to do in the future. Events occurring here are recorded for the benefit of future generations so that evil will not arise the second time. Never again will man fall as Adam did. Never again will Satan be permitted to interfere with the inhabitants of a planet. Never again will Jesus have to die to redeem fallen beings. Earth is the beginning of physical creation. The marriage of Jesus and his bride will take place before there are children born elsewhere. The spiritual seed comes after the Hagar or natural seed and will be more numerous in the final analysis.

Job 38:7 does not specifically mention the creation of man. The context pertains to the creation of planet earth, man, woman, the animals, etc.—collectively, *all* were a *new thing*. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38: 4–7).

During the Kingdom there will be *regeneration*, but after the Kingdom there will be

generation—the creation of new beings, both spiritual and physical. Therefore, the multiplication of the spiritual seed, the multiplication of the 144,000, will be virtually limitless.

If verse 1 is given a natural application with the barren, desolate one being natural Israel, then it can be reasoned that there was a time (approximately a 2,000-year period) when the nation was cast off from favor. Their “house” was left unto them desolate (Matt. 23:38) and they are to be reinstated. From this standpoint, natural Israel would be barren and Sarah would have the husband. Thus verse 1 is a confused, difficult Scripture that could never be understood clearly without Paul’s clue in Galatians. Paul’s interpretation is miraculous, beyond human reasoning, and effort is required to understand verse 1.

Isa. 54:2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

Q: In the clause “Enlarge the place of thy tent,” is the “tent” the earth, the temporary dwelling place for the Church in the flesh? In glory the 144,000 will look back at their former abode.

A: Yes. The “tent” will be enlarged in two stages: (1) the earth and (2) the universe, the other solar systems. It is like a husband building a small house for him and his wife. But as time passes, he enlarges the house to prepare for anticipated children.

Q: The Scriptures say that heaven and earth cannot contain God and that He dwells above the heavens. Does this mean that He, Jesus, and the Church will have their abodes *above* all of the solar systems? If so, the “tent,” in the fullest sense, would signify *all* solar systems.

A: Yes, eventually. On a larger scale, God (and The Christ) have a permanent abode above the earth and the heavens. Hence the entire universe and all the solar systems are also like a tent that is located *below* the dwelling place of God and The Christ.

Isa. 54:3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

When Jerusalem is the capital of the world, the Law will go forth from spiritual Zion (the Church), and the word of the Lord (the pronouncement, the commandment of the Law) will go forth from Jerusalem through the Ancient Worthies, as the mouthpieces, to the world of mankind (Isa. 2:3). Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees (paraphrased), “You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom, but you yourselves will be thrust out” (Luke 13:28). People will come from all over (from the north, south, east, and west) to receive instruction from the Ancient Worthies (Matt. 8:11).

A *Reprint* article says that Isaiah 54 may also have a Jewish fulfillment in the Kingdom. Paul’s clue in Galatians proves the spiritual fulfillment is primary, but since the nation of Israel will be prominently involved with the New Covenant of the next age, the Kingdom will be Israelitish.

Isa. 54:4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Verse 4 is an indication of a natural (and hence a double) fulfillment for some of these verses. Verse 1 is primarily spiritual, but there can be a natural application. Verses 2 and 3 are both spiritual and natural. Presented from a Jewish standpoint, verse 3 is saying that the Jews will see the Gentiles come to them. "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." The spiritual Church will regenerate the fathers. The "seed," the regenerated class, will be brought forth from the grave. Verse 4 begins a stronger natural application, but there is still a spiritual fulfillment. In other words, the spiritual application is phasing into the natural application.

"Fear not; for thou ... shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." "Widowhood" is a reference to Israel's leaving the Lord. At one time the nation of Israel was married to the Lord, but they forsook Him and broke their covenant. As a result, they were estranged from God for a long period of time. We are now living in a day when Providence has regathered them and is preparing them for reunion with God in the Kingdom. In the future, when Kingdom blessings come, Israel will be able to forget her widowhood and her being discarded.

Notice the terms "shame of thy youth" and "reproach of thy widowhood." Christians had a shameful experience during the Inquisition period of the Dark Ages. They were regarded as outcasts, heretics, and schismatics because they did not belong to the nominal Church. They suffered "reproach" and "shame" in their *early* life, in their "youth," ie, in the *present* life. The present life is so short compared with eternity that it is like a dream in the night; it is the Church's "youth." In the next life, those of the Little Flock will look back to the period of their trial, testing, and shame in the time of their "youth."

Isa. 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Isa. 54:6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

Isa. 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

"For thy Maker is thine husband." Who is the object of the Maker's affection? Natural Israel. Isaiah is calling God the "husband" of *natural Israel*, and there are no Scriptures in the New Testament stating that Jehovah is the husband of the Church. Instead *Jesus* is the Bridegroom (and hence the future husband) of the Church. Therefore, these particular verses in Isaiah apply only to natural Israel, and not to the Church. Other evidences, in addition to the "husband" relationship, are that although the Church class are disciplined under the ministry of evil, they were never the object of God's wrath; nor did He ever forsake them in the sense indicated in verses 6–8 and elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah.

The "husband" relationship of Jehovah with the nation of Israel is a *collective covenant* relationship, and not an individual intimate husband-wife relationship. God is the husband of natural Israel in an accommodated, modified sense. However, in regard to a seeming conflict, the question might be asked, "Since the Church is supposed to be more important than the natural nation of Israel, how can one who is greater than Jesus be the husband of natural Israel, whereas one who is less than Jehovah is the husband of the Church?" In Isaiah 50:1 the translators were puzzled as to whether or not God was ever a husband to Israel. "Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement,

whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away." Because of the confusion some translators say God divorced the nation of Israel, and others (such as the King James Version) seem to say there was no divorce because God was never married to Israel in the first place. Other verses in the Old Testament establish the correct view. Let us consider texts in the Book of Hosea.

(Hos. 2:19,20) "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD." *God* says that He will, in the future, betroth Himself to the *nation of Israel*. Jehovah, not Jesus, will make the New Covenant with Israel.

(Hos. 2:2) "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts." Now skip to verse 14 of the same chapter, which shows that God's relationship to natural Israel will be changed in the future.

(Hos. 2:14) "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." This verse brings us up to present-day prophecy. God brings Israel into a wilderness condition in order to begin to woo her again, as in days of old, and to draw her to Himself to ultimately betroth her again. He speaks comfortably to her. Isaiah 40:2 gives the instruction "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." And so, during the Harvest period, a message of truth has gone forth from the Scriptures that Israel's double was fulfilled in 1878 and that a time of favor has now come upon her.

The question might then be asked: "If this is a time of favor for Israel, why have severe persecutions occurred since 1878?" These persecutions have been permitted for *disciplinary* purposes, as "hunters" and "fishers," to bring the Jewish people back to their homeland. Ezekiel 20:34-37 shows that in the "wilderness" of their own homeland—ie, before God officially recognizes the nation of Israel as His people again—Jacob's Trouble and a purging process will occur to bring the Holy Remnant into the proper heart condition for covenant relationship with God.

The prophet Hosea says that God was once a husband to Israel, that there followed a long period of time in which He was not a husband to her, that He will draw her back from her punished condition to the homeland (called a "wilderness" because, as a nation, they still do not know God), that He will speak comfortably to her, and that He will ultimately betroth her unto Himself again. Now notice additional Scriptures in Hosea.

(Hos. 1:10) "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

(Hos. 2:16) "And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali." The names in Hosea 2:16 signify a covenant relationship. "Ishi" means "my husband." In other words, in the future, Israel will call Jehovah "Ishi,"

“my husband.” But earlier in the Book of Hosea, the symbolic name Lo-ammi signified “no, no more,” meaning the relationship was broken.

(Hos. 1:8,9) “Now .. she [Hosea’s wife] ... conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.” Later in the Book of Hosea, the “Lo” was dropped and “Ammi” indicated an encouraging prophecy; ie, that what previously had been negative would again be positive. Thus there are Old Testament Scriptures that allegorically liken the nation of Israel to being Jehovah’s wife, to being betrothed to Him.

Comment: Does Jeremiah 3:14 apply? “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”

Reply: Yes, it shows the nation’s coming reinstatement to favor. The sequence is as follows: favor ⇒ divorce ⇒ period of estrangement ⇒ reconciliation ⇒ reestablishment.

Back to Isaiah Chapter 54. If it were not for the Apostle Paul’s saying in Galatians 4:27 that Isaiah 54:1 applies to the Church, we would think the entire prophecy applied only to natural Israel. The following verses are another matter, for the true Church has never been the object of God’s wrath and will never be divorced, and the false Church is to be destroyed, not reinstated. But with natural Israel the fulfillment fits. Natural Israel (1) was divorced and (2) will be reinstated. Only the first verse, therefore, was a puzzle, and Paul says it has a spiritual application. However, verse 1 *also has a natural application*.

Paul says that the barren, desolate one who will sing for joy is Sarah, the Grace Covenant, for the free woman will ultimately have more children than Hagar, the “married wife.” But Hagar’s relationship to her “husband” was quite different than would exist in the married state today. Even though Hagar was recognized as a wife, it was more of a concubine relationship to Abraham, as was Keturah. (Abraham’s three “wives” represent three covenants.) Even after Ishmael was born (and prior to Isaac’s birth), Abraham was still considered “childless” because the son of promise was to come through Sarah. Sarah was the one whom Abraham especially loved. The Apostle Paul says that the two women were allegories, representing two covenants. Hagar, the bondwoman, and her child, Ishmael, and his seed represent natural Israel. Sarah, through whom Isaac, the child of promise, was born, pictures a spiritual covenant. After Sarah’s death, Abraham married Keturah.

The number of male children born to Abraham through these three women is as follows:

Sarah had one male child.

Hagar had one male child.

Keturah had six male children.

The three covenants represented are as follows:

Sarah pictures the Grace Covenant.

Hagar pictures the Old Law Covenant.

Keturah pictures the New Law Covenant.

The *New* Covenant will be made with Israel, the *same nation* that received the *Old* Law Covenant. Notice, Keturah (the New Law Covenant) had more children than either Sarah or Hagar, for Keturah represents natural Israel in the *renewed* relationship. From one

standpoint, natural Israel will have more children than even the Sarah class. Remember, verse 1 has a double application. Sarah, the one who was barren for a long time, will ultimately have more children than Hagar, the one with a husband. In the great future, in the ages to come, the seed of the spiritual class will far outnumber the natural seed. In this age, the spiritual class has always been a minority. In fact, those who have followed God *in any age*, past or present, have always been a minority. But in the future, those who follow God will be the majority. Hosea 1:10 prophesies that Israel, the natural seed, will become as the sand of the sea in the Kingdom. The Gentiles will have to become Israelitish proselytes in order to come in under the New Covenant. Therefore, from the natural standpoint of the *Millennial Age*, the natural seed will outnumber the spiritual class, for the natural seed will embrace the world of mankind. But beyond the Millennium, into the ages of ages, the reverse will be true—The Christ will create life on other planets that will far outnumber the natural seed. Having life within themselves, The Christ, the spiritual seed class, will be able to create other beings on other planets in the distant future.

Both Hagar and Keturah picture natural Israel, Hagar being Israel under the Old Law Covenant and Keturah under the New Law Covenant. The “wife” relationship of Hagar and Keturah to Abraham was not the same as Sarah’s, for Sarah was the special, tender love of Abraham.

The husband relationship of Jesus and the bride in the New Testament is not merely a collective relationship, for Jesus will love *each individual member* of the 144,000 in a special way. In contrast, the relationship of God as a husband to natural Israel is in the *collective* sense only. God’s marriage and remarriage to Israel are collective and not special or individual. God dealt with Israel as a collective whole as His people. True, Jesus will marry the Church as a collective body or unified whole, but he will also know every individual in a specialized sense in that he will give each one a private, personal name unknown to others and each of the 144,000 will have access to him. The Old Testament marriage relationship of God to Israel is modified and qualified. But Jesus’ relationship to his Church will be close, intimate, and personal.

The reason God identifies Himself as the husband of natural Israel is because of a *covenant* relationship. Jesus’ relationship to the Church is not just a covenant relationship but a personal relationship as well. Otherwise, it would mean that the Church had a relationship inferior to Israel’s. Of those who keep his commandments, Jesus said, “The Father loves you, and I love you.” “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

God’s marriage to Israel is a *temporary* relationship intended to give comfort to Israel. On the other hand, Jesus’ marriage to the Church is an *eternal* relationship.

All of the obedient will ultimately be sons of God, but there are levels and *degrees* of affection and intimacy. Certainly the Father has more love for those in the Little Flock than He does for the world of mankind. The “jewel” class have a superior relationship because they are rarer and more beautiful and have been crystallized in righteousness.

From another perspective, not only do the Arabs outnumber the Jews, but from a spiritualized religious standpoint, adherents of the Moslem religion outnumber those of the Christian religion. And nominal Christians far outnumber true Christians. But in the

long-term picture, the Sarah Covenant spiritual seed will be far more productive and fruitful than the natural—even though, at present, the reverse seems to be true.

At the end of the Kingdom, the Ancient Worthies will receive a spiritual resurrection. (However, they will never attain to the degree of honor held by the Little Flock.) Since the Scriptures tell us that the Ancient Worthies will receive a “better resurrection” (Heb. 11:16,35), they would have to receive a heavenly reward ultimately. Otherwise, if the Ancient Worthies come out of the tomb as perfect human beings, what about the obedient of the world of mankind who will walk up the highway of holiness? Will they not also attain to perfection on the human plane? At the end of the Millennium, the Ancient Worthies and the world of mankind would be on the same level. Where would the “better resurrection” be *unless the Ancient Worthies receive a spiritual reward*? Abraham looked for a *heavenly* country and/or city, not an earthly one.

Isa. 54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

Comment: What an interesting contrast! The almost 2,000 years of God’s “wrath” on Israel seem like a *long* time to us, but it is “*little*” compared with Jehovah’s “*everlasting*” kindness and mercy.

Reply: That is true, and that is how the Apostle Paul viewed matters. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). In other words, our afflictions are temporary and light, whereas the glory is eternal and a weight beyond all comparison.

Isa. 54:9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

Another interesting verse! God uses the sign of the covenant with Noah that He will never again destroy all flesh with a flood to show that after Jacob’s Trouble, He will never again be wroth with Israel.

Isa. 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

Verse 10 is similar to verse 9. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee.” This is a Hebrew expression much like the way the Lord uses the sun and the moon in Scripture as symbols of His faithfulness and constancy. In other words, even if the mountains and the hills were to pass away, God’s affection and covenant of peace would not depart.

Deeper thoughts about the mountains and the hills being removed can perhaps be considered on another occasion.

Isa. 54:11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

Verse 11 starts a new thought, and it is similar to verse 1 of this chapter in that it starts with a spiritual application and then glides into a natural application. The spiritual application

would be the emphasis on jewels and a ministry of evil. Of course a ministry of evil has also been preparing natural Israel for their stewardship in the Kingdom as ministers of righteousness. They will be representatives of Jehovah in a general sense with the Ancient Worthies as their spokesmen and head.

Q: How will natural Israel and the Church be comforted?

A: Natural Israel will be comforted when the Kingdom is inaugurated and they are reinstated. In regard to the Church class, let us consider Isaiah Chapter 53, which spoke about Jesus as the “arm of the LORD” (53:1). As a sin offering, he was buffeted, spat upon, and maltreated, but he will ultimately see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied (53:11). In other words, in the long-range viewpoint, the sufferings he endured during his earthly ministry will be viewed as light afflictions. Because of his sensitivity and perfection, he suffered agonies beyond what any other person has ever gone through, but when he sees the Kingdom results and outcome, he will know that all of his experiences were well worth enduring. Jesus submitted to the Crucifixion and related experiences, accepting by faith that God’s way was best: “He ... prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). However, in the Kingdom he will see his past experiences not from the standpoint of faith but from the standpoint of having the divine nature and being satisfied. Verse 11 is leading into similar thoughts in regard to the Church. Isaiah 53 showed Jesus. Now Isaiah 54 and 55 will bring in the experiences of the Church (as well as natural Israel).

Down through history, God has been developing these two classes: natural and spiritual Israel. Natural Israel was schooled through the prophets and the Ancient Worthies under the Old Law Covenant. When the New Covenant is made and the Ancient Worthies are seen as Kingdom representatives, the people of Israel will view the past experiences of the Ancient Worthies in a completely different light. The Ancient Worthies died in hope and in faith, whereas natural Israel, generally speaking, died in perplexity, disobedience, and discouragement. Nevertheless, when the Lord deals with the people in the future, their hearts will melt at His kindness and mercy.

Natural Israel was in Diaspora for much of the 2,000 years that the Church class was being developed. During that time God was honoring the spiritual class, whereas prior to Jesus’s earthly ministry, God honored the nation of Israel in a very special sense. However, even in the Diaspora, natural Israel’s experiences were a schooling and will ultimately be seen to be a blessing. Both natural Israel and the consecrated of the Gospel Age have been tossed to and fro in various Gentile nations.

Spiritual versus natural emphasis in Isaiah Chapter 54:

Verse 1 is primarily spiritual.

Verses 2–10 are primarily natural with some spiritual undertones.

Verses 11–17 are primarily spiritual with natural undertones.

Isa. 54:12 **And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.**

The spiritual emphasis of verses 11 and 12 is an allusion to the New Jerusalem with its pearl gates and jewel foundations (Rev. 21:10–21).

Q: Would you elaborate on the use of the particular jewels in verses 11 and 12?

A: That will have to await further understanding. However, the jewels do show that the class to be comforted is being specially, prominently, and distinctively honored. The sapphire foundation reminds us of Exodus 24:10, where Moses and some of the elders of Israel saw a likeness of God on a sapphire throne. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his [its] clearness." Under God's feet were paved blocks of sapphire. How could the foundation of His throne be both "sapphire" and "as ... the body of heaven in its clearness"? Both are blue, the blue of the heavens picturing faithfulness. Thus the fact that God will lay the foundations of the Church with sapphires ("I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires") signifies an *everlasting, permanent* condition.

"I will make thy windows of agates." The agate is a variegated stone with strata or bands of different colors. "Windows of agates" would seem to indicate that the Church class, from the standpoint of their high, prominent position, will be able to look down on the various planes of being under them: cherubim, seraphim, angels, Great Company, mankind.

Guardian angels have access to God; they can go and see Him, whereas the other angels cannot. Jesus said, "In heaven their [guardian] angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). Thus the guardian angel assigned to each of the consecrated is specially honored with a particular right to go into God's presence at any time without violating protocol.

"Carbuncle" means "stone of fire" in Latin. Before Satan sinned, when he was Lucifer, he went up and down among the coals or "stones of fire" as he wished. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezek. 28:14). The scope of his operation was that of an archangel, which means he was above angels. He and the Logos were the two sons of the morning, meaning that the earliest created beings in God's universe were (1) the Logos and (2) Lucifer a short time later (Isa. 14:12). As an archangel, Lucifer could do great things, and his garments glittered with stones. He was handsome, brilliant, and intellectual. In fact, "Lucifer" means light, ie, luminous; he was a glorious being second only to the Logos under the Father. His walking "up and down among the stones of fire" meant that he could go to any plane of being he so desired.

"I will make ... thy gates of carbuncles." Gates picture accessibility, for they are the means of access to a house, fortress, city, etc. Carbuncle gates signify that those of the divine nature will have access to everything below them.

"And all thy borders [are] of pleasant stones." Decorative jewels of many pleasing varieties will enhance or beautify the Little Flock from the standpoint of their future honor and glory.

Isa. 54:13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

All of the Church's children will be taught of God—if *they so desire*. This is also true of the consecrated of the Gospel Age. God promises to instruct and help those who make a covenant of consecration, but the problem is whether or not they *recognize and heed* the instruction. In other words, God guarantees He will take a personal interest in all who

come into His family to help them make their calling and election sure. But the individual *must look* for that instruction.

When we pray for something, we should look for the answer, but we often forget and then are surprised when the answer does come. The instruction is to both *watch* and *pray*.

Isa. 54:14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

Verse 14 starts to glide into an application for natural Israel, although the primary emphasis is still the spiritual application. In the natural picture, verse 14 shows that the Holy Remnant will be a prepared nucleus for the start of the Kingdom. Israel will be threatened with annihilation in Jacob's Trouble, but when the Kingdom is established, such fear, terror, and oppression will "not come near thee." Real security is pictured here.

Of course as regards the Church class, they cannot be harmed as new creatures if their hearts are loyal to the Lord. Beyond the veil there shall be no oppression, fear, or terror.

Isa. 54:15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

Spiritual application: The civil and ecclesiastical powers will unite to suppress the truth and the feet members. The consecrated are not to fear their fear and join their confederacy, which will curtail liberties in an effort to hold back the threatening anarchy. At this time the Church will be severely tried.

Natural application: In Jacob's Trouble the confederate host styled "Gog" will invade Israel.

Neither gathering is approved by the Lord.

Isa. 54:16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

The "smith" is Satan. Just as the blacksmith heats a horseshoe until it is almost white hot, removes it from the fire, hammers and hammers and hammers it into shape, dips it in water, and nails it to the horse's hoof with long nails, so the Church needs corresponding hot, cold, and hammering experiences. God has overruled that Satan is His minister in connection with the ministry of evil. Of course Satan tries to destroy God's work and purpose, but with all of his persecutions and hammerings to denigrate God and His children, he is actually serving to develop the Church and perfect them for their future positions. The ministry of evil perfects the Church. As with Job, God allows testings of the consecrated, even to the core, but within predetermined parameters.

When God created Lucifer, he was perfect until the day iniquity was found in him (Ezek. 28:15). At the time of the Garden of Eden incident, Lucifer fell from his perfection. Since then God has used Satan as his hangman to unwittingly accomplish His purpose, and down through the centuries Satan has tried God's people of both spiritual and natural Israel. Not only has natural Israel been disciplined by the Diaspora, but at the end of the age, Jacob's Trouble will purge natural Israel.

God "created [permitted] the smith [Satan]." In His providence God is so capable that He can

do certain things without infringing upon the moral liberty of the individual(s) involved. In other words, God will set the stage without interfering with either human or angelic free moral agency. Stated another way, He knows in advance how people will react. An example is the Pharaoh of the Exodus, whom God raised up to glorify His name. Verse 16 is saying that Satan will be used as a tool of God. Because God knows how Satan will react under certain conditions, that which God desires to get rid of will be taken care of by this agency. (“I have created the waster to destroy.”) Hence Satan’s extremes will ultimately result in good by developing the Church and natural Israel.

What bearing does verse 16 have on the topic of the chapter? Regarding the natural application, only a Holy Remnant will survive Jacob’s Trouble; the majority will be eliminated in the trouble. The Haman picture illustrates the principle. Haman not only built a gallows to destroy Mordecai and his family but made preparations to have the people rise up and slay every Jew in the empire on a given day. However, Haman’s plan backfired when the king saw through the plot, and Haman himself was hanged on the very gallows he had built for Mordecai. And instead of the Jews being surprised and annihilated, they were prepared and waiting so that the people intent on killing them went right into their own deathtrap. And that is what will happen with Gog and Magog. When Gog goes down to destroy Israel and take a spoil of land and goods, the intent will boomerang and the host of Gog will eventually be defeated. In reality, Satan will be used to destroy his own forces. What at first seems to be damaging will be overruled for good.

Now, regarding the Church, the new creation, how does verse 16 apply? The ministry of evil perfects the Church. The Christian fights “not [merely] against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). All down the age, Satan and the fallen angels have been the enemies of both the Church and the Great Company, being especially involved in the trial of the flesh. In the trial with his eyesight, the Apostle Paul said Satan was like a thorn that buffeted him, but the trial worked for Paul’s good. He was so brilliant that without that thorn in his flesh, he might have become heady and proud. Therefore, what appeared to be a hindrance worked out for good in the long run.

If we consider verse 16 to have a dispensational fulfillment for the Church, the setting would be the end of the age. Just before Gethsemane when Jesus knew he had to die, he said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). The power of Satan was supreme at the time of the Crucifixion—it was Satan’s hour. And so, at the end of the age, the Destroyer will cause the feet members to be put to death. During the hour of power, the night wherein no man can work, the Church, the feet members, will be put to death (John 9:4).

At the end of the age, Satan will be very active in a special way against the Lord’s people. He will work “all power and signs and lying wonders” and “all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth” (2 Thess. 2:9,10). God will allow a certain lie to become a delusion, and Satan is particularly identified with that lie. Satan will exert GREAT ENERGY in connection with the delusion.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:13,14). The

fallen angels will actively stir up the confederacy of the beast, dragon, and false prophet. The “unclean spirits” that come out of their mouths will be doctrines of devils, of which Satan is the prince or chief.

The Second Psalm indicates that the feet members will have experiences similar to those of the Master at the end of his earthly course. And Genesis 3:15 reads, “I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel [the feet members].”

In regard to the end of the age, Satan is energetically preparing the furnace, digging the pit, building the gallows, etc., to destroy the Church, but God promises that the feet members will not be harmed as new creatures.

The Book of Isaiah has been difficult to understand. Christians tend to give the spiritual application only. On the other hand, Jews read the Old Testament and give it only the natural interpretation. Much of Isaiah is both spiritual and natural.

Isa. 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Verses 16 and 17 tell about the experience of the Church on this side of the veil, whereas verse 14 talked earlier about the Church on the other side of the veil, free from trouble and with permanent, everlasting security. Verses 16 and 17 indicate a hard experience is coming, but it will not harm the feet members as new creatures.

“This is the heritage of the *servants* of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” The “servants” can be considered as the feet members (the Church), the Ancient Worthies, or the Holy Remnant; no weapon formed against them will prosper. At that time the Holy Remnant will realize they have been providentially and miraculously spared. Having previously prayed, mourned like doves for the Lord, and gone into the clefts of the rock, they will be a contrite, spared class. The Holy Remnant will be hand-picked in advance, for God foreknows how they will react.

Isa. 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

The setting changes now to a Kingdom setting. An invitation is issued: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Notice that *all people* are invited to drink. The food and drink will not cost anything, yet the people will have to “buy.” In what sense will they “buy” without money? Salvation is not automatic. The people will have to bow the knee and confess that Jesus is Lord—and *obey* the rod-of-iron rule.

What is the distinction between “milk” and “wine”? “Milk” is doctrine for babes, whereas “wine” is doctrine for the mature. Moreover, “wine” is *joyous* doctrine, the *joys* of the truth, as opposed to mere “water.” The first miracle Jesus performed at his First Advent was to change six vessels of water into six vessels of wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1–11). The first work of Jesus at his Second Advent was to change the truth into the joyous Harvest message in Six Volumes. The joyous, coherent plan of God was seen to manifest His wisdom, power, love, and justice.

Q: How did Mary know Jesus could change the water into wine?

A: She did not know, but she realized he could handle the situation. Jesus was now 30 years of age, and since Joseph had evidently died, Jesus had taken over the carpentry trade and was supporting his mother. She knew he had superior wisdom—like a Solomon—to deal with any contingency that might arise.

It is interesting that the changing of water into wine at Cana took place on the “third day,” which pictures the Millennial Age, and Jesus returned at the beginning of the “third day,” ie, 1874.

Q: Why did Jesus say to Mary, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4)?

A: Jesus’ real miracles were to be performed later—in his own time and in his own way. In this sense his hour had “not yet come.” His rebuff to Mary beginning with “Woman” was uttered to counteract the later worship of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Church. In that church system Mary is placed ahead of Jesus; communicants pray to her to get the Son to do something.

Jesus sets the pace and the deeds, not his mother or anyone else. In this sense, his saying “Mine hour is not yet come” is similar to his words “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17). Many in life do a lot of suggesting as to what other people should do. Suggestions can be in order, but this is something we should be very careful about doing.

In the final analysis, Jesus did obey Mary. In thinking over her request, he probably realized the miracle would not be a violation. He was just exercising a proper *natural reserve and caution*. He was watching for God’s providences.

“Without money and without price.” Is there a difference between the two? In this age, there is a “price” for following Jesus: consecration unto sacrifice and *death*. In the Kingdom, consecration will be unto *life*. The people will have to humble their pride and their will, and to acquiesce, but they will not have to count the cost (Luke 14:28). However, while the stones will all be removed, the “little season” will be a severe test (Rev. 20:3). At the end of the Millennium, Satan will tempt the world of mankind with an intensity similar to that coming shortly on the Church. During the Millennium, many will, at least at first, obey out of prudence so that they receive health, happiness, etc., but only those who *fully* love God will pass the test. All who enter the Little Season will have perfect minds and bodies and thus will be capable of perfect obedience. But only if their hearts are right will they pass the severe test. In fact, the holy angels, the Ancient Worthies, and the Church are all subjected to severe testing. In any age, the final test is very crucial and severe. Of course the Church has more of a continual testing, but the rewards are “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Isa. 55:2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

In verses 1 and 2, Isaiah is telling the people, “Listen carefully. Eat that which is good. Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Get strong. Drink milk. And with more maturity, enjoy

the wine." In other words, "Enjoy the truth and build yourselves up during the Kingdom. Get strengthened for the severe test at the end of the Millennial Age." The "wine" being mentioned before the "milk" in verse 1 shows that Isaiah is addressing a mixed class, with some being very young in understanding and others being more mature.

Q: Do you think there will be much emphasis during the Kingdom about the severe test at the end of the Millennium? Of course the people will not know the character of the test, but will they know a test is coming?

A: Yes, they will know a test is to occur, but they will not know exactly when. One reason is that in the Kingdom, there will be no calendar or clock as we have it. Time will be reckoned on a daily basis with just the days of the week: Sunday through Saturday. The people might have to work only two days a week (instead of five), and the work will be done at a different pace and under different conditions, perhaps being adjusted to a person's capability and preference. And even today, the majority of the people around the world do not use the same calendar that we have in the United States.

The point is that in the Kingdom, with a universal clock and a way to reckon time without using years, the world will know that a test is to occur in the Little Season, but they will not know just when the Little Season and/or the test is to begin. Of course *God will know* the time, but not the world.

Another point: when something is a long way off—say, a couple of hundred years away—the thoughts of the people are on more immediate things. Satan will be loosed *towards the close* or *towards the completion* of the Millennium, but when is that? The Bible is purposely vague, and because of the nature of the test, it will come as a surprise. The disobedient will go up to the "camp of the saints" and make a request that manifests their wrong heart condition (Rev. 20:3,7–9). They will want the Kingdom to end so that they can revert to their former wrong, evil practices. Amos 8:4–6 describes this attitude: "When will the new moon [the New Covenant] be gone ... and the sabbath [the Millennium], [so] that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? [So] that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" This Second Death class obey during the Kingdom only out of prudence, knowing that if they disobey, they will be punished. They will be biding their time, waiting for the reign to end, so that they can once again take advantage of their intellectual and shrewd business talents. All whose hearts and wills are not fully in harmony with the Lord will be destroyed. The Lord will require perfect obedience at that time.

Although we cannot obey perfectly in the Gospel Age, our hearts and our wills must be right; we must desire to serve the Lord *fully*. At present we have imperfect minds, imperfect instruction, physical weaknesses, etc., but in the next age, as the people grow and are perfected, as they get clearer and clearer minds and better health, they will be more responsible, and hence will be judged according to their works. If we were judged on that basis now, we would all be failures. In the present age, God judges the intention of our *hearts*. Not even our minds are judged, for the mind is like a muscle of the body; and just as we can have a weak muscle, which is a physical ailment, so we can have all kinds of thoughts we do not desire. However, the *heart* condition—and the will, which is even deeper than the heart—pertains to the depth of our love for God and our desire to serve Him. If we get too liberal in dealing with the flesh and our weaknesses, our reins (our wills)

will become contaminated and eventually, if unchecked, result in incorrigibility. Although the mind should be distinguished from the motive or the will, it is part of the body and it affects the will. Thus if we feed on or harbor thoughts for any length of time that are not conducive to righteousness, the heart will be adversely affected. The longer we are in a room with smoke, the more the smoke permeates our clothing.

Isa. 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

“Incline your ear, ... hear, and your soul shall live.” This instruction and promise pertain to the Kingdom, the time when the truth will be offered to all without money and without price, the New Covenant being applicable (Isa. 55:1). God “will make an everlasting covenant [the New Covenant] with you [Israel], even the sure mercies of David.”

Isa. 55:4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

God has given Jesus to be a “witness to the people,” a “leader,” and a “commander.” In what sense? Why is “witness” mentioned first? Jesus became the “faithful and true *witness*” after his crucifixion, when he fulfilled his earthly ministry and was faithful unto death (Rev. 3:14). The term also refers to his former life and ministry. The next two attributes (“leader” and “commander”) are sequential. Since Jesus was a faithful and true witness, God will make him a leader and a commander in the Kingdom.

Isa. 55:5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

“Behold, you [Israel] shall call nations [plural] that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall *run* to you” (RSV). The Gentiles will be anxious to come in under the New Covenant with Israel to get the blessings (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 8:23).

Note: The word “nation” or “nations,” which can be either singular or plural here in verse 5, can also be translated “people,” referring to the Gentiles. The term “a people” can be thought of as those living in a nation or having a racial quality or something that distinguishes them, and the term is plural in itself. In addition, “people” can be thought of as various individuals of different backgrounds and nationalities or nations.

“For he [God] hath glorified thee [Israel].” God will glorify Israel in connection with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant in Jacob’s Trouble, the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies, and so forth.

The Church is referred to in the beginning of the verse: “Behold, thou [natural Israel] shalt call a nation [the Church] that thou knowest not.” The Apostle Peter calls the Church “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an *holy nation*” (1 Pet. 2:9). In other words, natural Israel will recognize the Church; Israel will call a “nation” of which they have not been aware. At present they do not realize there is to be a higher nation composed of many peoples called a “holy nation,” the Church. On the other hand, “nations [the Gentiles] that knew not thee [natural Israel] shall *run unto thee* because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee [Israel].” When God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentiles will realize that God is with the nation of

Israel. Therefore, two pictures are here. On the one hand, Israel will recognize the Church as superior, and on the other hand, the Gentile nations will recognize that Israel is superior to them. This same theme of the joys of the Kingdom and the pleasure Israel will have when restored will be repeated and repeated from now on in the Book of Isaiah, just as Jacob's Trouble was a major theme earlier in the book.

Isa. 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Verses 1–5 apply to the Kingdom. Verses 6 and 7 are a new thought, applying to those who have a hearing ear during the Gospel Age. At present we are *invited* to seek the Lord; in the next age it will be *mandatory* to seek Him and to obey.

Verses 6 and 7 are a parenthetical insert referring to the Church. The rest of the chapter refers to the world and to Israel (except for part of verse 5).

Isa. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

God "will have mercy upon him [the wicked];... for he [God] will abundantly pardon."

Q: Is there a distinction between the word "pardon" and the word "forgive"? Why does verse 7 say "abundantly pardon" when certain acts require retribution?

A: In the Gospel Age, when a person repents and consecrates, recognizing Jesus as his Savior, some sins against light are beyond redemption. In other words, restitution cannot be made because of the very nature of the previous sin, and therefore, a measure of retribution is needed somewhere along the line in our experiences in the present life. But where a sin is attributable to Adamic weakness, the Lord abundantly forgives; that is, He wipes the slate clean. Acts 3:19–21 prophetically mentions that our sins will be blotted out at the time of restitution. (It is one thing to have our sins covered and another to have them blotted out.) The entire blotting out of our sin will take place at our change to the new nature. However, in the present life we must make amends for what we can. In the Kingdom, when the world of mankind comes forth from the tomb and is on trial for life, some sins committed in the present life will receive retribution.

This is a big subject—sin, retribution, forgiveness, repentance, etc.—but generally speaking, God forgets those things in our past which it is impossible for us to redeem or restore. He realizes our heart condition and deals with us accordingly, and He would not have called us and let us know the message of truth if we could not fulfill our consecration vow *if rightly exercised*. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father ... draw him" (John 6:44). When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). In other words, "You could not have said that, Peter, if the Father had not revealed it to you." Whether we appreciate the fact or not, it is a miracle for us to know the truth. And just the fact we hear the truth means that God is drawing us and giving us the opportunity of the calling of this age. Consequently, we see that verses 6 and 7 can apply to us in connection with submitting ourselves to the Lord. He will have mercy on us and abundantly pardon us.

Jesus said that some of our sins are due to our own faults. It is one thing to suffer for our

own faults and shortcomings, and it is another thing to suffer for righteousness' sake through no fault of our own. Of the two types of suffering for the Christian, suffering for righteousness' sake is the higher level. "Blessed [happy] are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10). The Father disciplines us as a child (1) for wrongdoing and (2) for right doing. Sins of a willful or partially willful nature must receive some kind of retribution ("stripes"), whereas sins due to heredity and Adamic weakness can be freely forgiven (Luke 12:47,48).

Isa. 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa. 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isa. 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

Isa. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

This chapter of Isaiah emphasizes mercy. Verses 8–13 apply to the world of mankind in the Kingdom, and particularly to the nation of Israel, who will be greatly refreshed. Verse 10 is saying that as rain and snow descend or fall and do not return thither but permeate and seep into the ground and bring forth verdure, growth, and eventually food for man and beast to partake of, so God's Word is the same. Why is this subject introduced here? God said in verse 9, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my thoughts are higher than man's thoughts." Then He connected this thought with His Word.

Comment: God makes a lot of promises and statements, many of which we cannot understand. As time goes by and we learn more about His character, we should, hopefully, have a deeper appreciation.

Reply: Even with general and current truth and prophecy, the Lord's thoughts are higher than ours. And dispensationally speaking, God's thoughts embrace large periods of time. Since we live in a short span of time, we observe Him in our own little time slot. Thus we cannot appreciate His stately stepplings down through the corridor of the ages. We do not see His large majestic steps down through history accomplishing His purpose except as we develop in the understanding of His Word. In order to understand a little, we must be taught of Him from His Word and have His mind.

Comment: According to a *Reprint* article, verses 8–11 were included because verses 1–5 are too wonderful for the majority of the world to believe. Yet because God's ways are so much higher than man's, these promises should be believed. It is as if God is saying, "Believe in my benevolence. These thing *will come to pass.*"

Reply: Yes, verses 1–5 are restitution promises. People think of God's mercy only in terms of the present period, but there are different ages and dispensations. People do not appreciate God's stately stepplings down through the ages and the long span of time. The world's call of opportunity will occur in the next age. The call to be of the Bride of Christ in

the present age is an invitation, in which a person voluntarily gives his heart to the Lord. In the Kingdom, consecration will be mandatory. Generally speaking, Christians have failed to see the opportunity of salvation for the world of mankind in the next age. They quote the text “Now is the day of salvation,” but they do not realize that now is the day of the GREAT salvation of the HIGH CALLING (2 Cor. 6:2). The implication of those Christians is that if one does not obey now, in the present age, all is lost. But God has other purposes with regard to mankind in the future—benevolent purposes with a day of opportunity for all.

Whatever God has promised *will happen*, no matter how long the fulfillment takes. The same is true of a planted seed. After the planting comes a long period of waiting before the first indication of potential fruit bearing.

God’s ways being higher than man’s ways are probably what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). Verses 30–32 are also pertinent: “For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [the Jews’] unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. [And then Paul added:] O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Thus there is an emphasis on mercy in both Romans 11 and Isaiah 55. Romans 11:29 reads, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”; that is, God has said the time would come when He would again have mercy on Israel. In Romans 11:27, Paul is talking about natural Israel: “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Paul is saying that although natural Israel was once broken off because through their unbelief as a nation, they did not accept the Messiah and the Gentiles came into the Abrahamic tree of promise, He has purposed that at a future date He will forgive Israel and reinstate the nation. At that time both classes will have been previously humbled as well as exalted. This dual experience will give them a greater appreciation of God’s love and mercy. Similarly, a sick person who has been restored to health has more appreciation for that health than the person who has never been sick.

Isa. 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Isa. 55:13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Verses 12 and 13 apply to the world in the Kingdom, and especially to restored, forgiven Israel. During the Gospel Age, Gentiles have accepted Christ in much greater numbers than Jews. In the next dispensation, however, the ratio will be reversed. The New Covenant will be made with the house of Israel, so Gentiles will have to become proselytes to the Jewish faith with Jesus as the Lawgiver. Consequently, Paul was astounded at how God will deal with both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 11:33). There is a period of exaltation of the Jews, and there is a period of humbling. The same is true in regard to Gentiles. Thus each should realize the need for forgiveness. In the next age, then, when under the New Covenant the Jews are again in the ascendancy, they will be more merciful in their attitude toward the

Gentiles. The wisdom of God is shown in permitting the humbling and the humiliation experiences to come on both Jews and Gentiles. If those who are exalted were previously humbled, they are more apt to be better agents of the Kingdom.

Verse 12 mentions symbolic “mountains,” “hills,” and “trees of the field,” as follows:

Mountains = the larger and greater Gentile kingdoms of the present age.

Hills = the smaller Gentile kingdoms of the present age.

Trees of the field = prominent individuals and leaders.

In other words, when the New Covenant is in operation, all Gentile nations, both great and small, will rejoice in the forthcoming blessings. In their great happiness and celebration, the Gentile nations and their leaders will hail and honor Israel. Figuratively, the Gentiles will be in the front of the procession, singing and clapping their hands in joy as they introduce that which is behind: Israel. As a contingent, the symbolic mountains, hills, and trees will go out ahead of Israel in peace and joy, clapping their hands and cheering for that nation.

From an opposite standpoint, during the Civil War there was a period of sorrow when Lincoln’s body was transported back to Illinois by train. People lined up along the tracks to mourn him and to express their sorrow and tears. Imagine instead a victory parade. At the approach of the party, the mountains, hills, and trees would exult with joy. And so, when the Gentiles see the blessings of the Kingdom on Israel a little while after Jacob’s Trouble, they will joyously acclaim that nation. Anti-Semitism will cease.

“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” Isaiah is saying that there will be a *complete change* in the *hearts* of society. Evergreens and pines refresh and purify the air. People who have a thornlike or briarlike disposition are usually fault finders and hypercritical, with nothing constructive to offer. Grace, love, and comfort are lacking. But in the Kingdom, when the hearts of the people are converted, then the briars and the thorns will become constructive in their influence and have a purifying effect in their rigidity. The destructive effect of the thorns and briars will cease, and fir (everlasting life) and myrtle trees will flourish. This change in men’s hearts will be reflected beautifully in the Third Temple, for myrtle and cedar trees will be there.

Isaiah is gradually introducing a generalized picture of the Gentile nations in the Kingdom. Then he will concentrate on natural Israel.

The thorn and briar analogy can be stated another way. All mankind are fallen. Those who become Christians must still fight hereditary and environmental weaknesses and problems of the past, but with the instruction of God’s Word, their lives are changed considerably. The point is that when the “briars” and “thorns” of mankind are changed in the Kingdom, these tendencies will be redirected along constructive lines.

There is a relationship between the thorn and the fir tree, and between the briar and the myrtle tree. The rigidity of the thorn will change for good. However, to not be able to recognize evil is just as bad as being a destructive thorn without mercy or consideration for others. The one who is all soft is too forgiving, too merciful, and has no qualifications for repentance. One might as well be a Universal Salvationist and say that all will be saved, including Satan. The desirable and true perspective is in between the two extremes: having a combination or blending of sternness and love. In fact, that is Paul’s reasoning or philosophy in Romans 11:22. “Behold therefore the *goodness and severity* of God.” *Both*

qualities are needed: goodness (mercy) and severity.

Some individuals are more merciful than God, but to be more forgiving and more loving than God is a *false concept* of love. On the other hand, some are too severe; they are lacking in mercy and forgiveness. God has the perfect blend of both qualifications: the hardness of the diamond and the softness and compassion of the sard stone. “And he [God] that sat [on the throne] was to look upon like a jasper [diamond] and a sardine stone” (Rev. 4:3). The diamond shows God’s severity, glory, and brilliance of office. (“No man hath seen God at any time” because no one can look upon Him and live—John 1:18.) The sard, the stone for engraving, shows His compassion. (“For thus saith the high and lofty One ... I dwell in the high and holy place, [and] with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones”—Isa. 57:15.) The blending of these qualities is shown in the aspect of the “thorn” becoming a “fir tree” and the briar becoming a myrtle tree. A fir tree is not soft (it has rigidity), but neither does it have the degree of hardness of a thorn. One can walk through fir or myrtle trees, brushing against them, without getting injured. That is not true of thorn and briar bushes. Thus the ideal is the *balanced* condition of severity and goodness, of justice and love. Because we are all warped in one direction or the other, the Holy Spirit is required to try to rectify this weakness in our characters and balance us with love and justice.

Paul was impressed with the perfect combination of these two qualities in God’s character. Thus he marveled at the depth of God’s wisdom—it is beyond comprehension! Isaiah Chapter 55 is likewise talking about the goodness and the severity of God; His ways are higher than our ways. Ultimately, when the fruitage of His plan is accomplished, there will be great rejoicing.

Q: Is verse 13 literal as well as figurative?

A: It will be literal in connection with the Third Temple, but it is also figurative along with verse 12 about the mountains and the hills singing and the trees clapping their hands.

“It shall be to the LORD for a name [memorial—RSV], for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” The fulfillment of this part of verse 13 will be at the *end* of the Kingdom. While initially the nations will be made to know that Israel has been delivered and there is a change of government, it will take time for the full blessing and fruitage of that age to be realized. *After* the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, when they were on the *far* side, they sang the hallelujah chorus. Thus those who attain unto the age *beyond* the Millennium will look back and rejoice in God’s plan and realize His wisdom, justice, love, and power. At that time His attributes will be fully manifested to society as a whole.

Isa. 56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Isa. 56:2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

This advice would be proper in any age. The Lord is near to one who opens his heart to spiritual things. Blessed is the man who acts upon God’s will.

And “blessed is the man ... that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.” This message had a partial fulfillment in Isaiah’s day. The Lord was pleased with and blessed any Jew who tried

to obey His Law and keep the sabbath holy. These two verses should really be part of the previous chapter, as the context is the same. Therefore, the tense should be future and the primary fulfillment is during the Kingdom Age. The mention of the sabbath proves that it will be observed under the New Covenant in the next age.

God's face and character are hidden in His Word. Of course many people who superficially read the Bible completely misunderstand His character. They falsely conclude that God is very cruel, wrathful, and angry and that Jesus is very kind.

Isa. 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

Some definitions are needed:

The "son of the stranger" ("foreigner" in the RSV) would be a Gentile proselyte. Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith in the Jewish Age got the blessings and natural promises then due to natural Israel. A "eunuch" (used in the favorable sense here) is a Christian, one who is in a covenant or personal relationship with Jesus during the Gospel Age.

Why would the Gentile proselyte ("son of the stranger") say, "The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people"? Why would the Christian ("eunuch") say, "Behold, I am a dry tree"? Whether in the Jewish Age or in the Gospel Age, both of these categories are criticized by the nominal mass, be it natural or spiritual Israel. These right-hearted ones realize they are missing out on blessings of fellowship. (This same lesson is taught in Song of Solomon 1:6, "My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards.") The faithful minority element are not accepted by the nominal mass.

There are several other kinds of "eunuch." A literal eunuch is surgically deprived of the ability to have children. In olden days, prized male slaves were sometimes castrated to prevent any physical or sexual desire in their close contact with the household. Another kind of "eunuch" is one who takes a vow never to marry in order to serve the Lord wholly and completely.

As used here, the term "eunuch" refers to the true Christian, who does not seem to get a compensatory blessing in the present life. In other words, while Christians do get blessings in the present life in connection with consecration, the greatest blessings, the real reward, will occur in the next life. Present blessings are only a foretaste of blessings to come. It is a narrow way at present, yet it is interspersed with some sweet experiences.

"Eunuchs" in the false Church are those who have taken vows not to marry and then devoted their lives to the nominal system. Those priests or nuns who subsequently see the hypocrisy of the system or who regret their vows are in a dilemma. In regard to their vows, they ask, "What have I done?" However, Martin Luther and others realized that they could leave the institution and still serve the Lord. Down through the Gospel Age, when the wheat and tares were growing together, the Lord did not particularly call Christians to take a stand and come out of the nominal system. But now we are in the Harvest, and it is time to come out of Babylon.

Isa. 56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

Isa. 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

God is saying to the “eunuch” class, to true Christians, that He knows about them and that they will be better to Him than sons and daughters and that He will give them an “everlasting name.” When a person dies childless, his lineage and name cease, and he is quickly forgotten. But if faithful, those who are eunuchs for the Lord’s sake will have a perpetual name and a relationship closer to Him than that of sons and daughters. The Scriptures elsewhere show that those of the Little Flock will be fruitful in the next age.

Cornelius was the first Gentile convert to the Jewish faith at the change of dispensations from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. Prior to the Lord’s recognition of him, his prayers ascended up as a memorial (Acts 10:1–4). During those three and a half years, Cornelius may have sensed that his prayers were being stored up rather than being specially answered. Some Christians have testified that after having a very close relationship with the Lord for a number of years, they experienced a period when they felt their prayers were not being answered. It was as if their prayers were bouncing off the wall and not being heard. Those rightly exercised were driven to try to serve the Lord better and better, and as a result, the close relationship was restored. Cornelius may have experienced a similar feeling but not because of wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the period of waiting was a great test of his faith. And so the “son of the stranger” should not say, “The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people.” Neither should the “eunuch” say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” Both should exercise faith and persist in seeking the blessing. They should not be dismayed or discouraged if the nominal mass shuns them, for they *will be rewarded*.

Isa. 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

Back to verses 1 and 2. These verses can have a past and a present application and they are designed to be instructional, but they definitely have a *future* application as well. The setting of this prophecy pertains to those who join themselves to the Lord in the Kingdom Age in a special sense.

In verses 3–7, there are *two classes* of “sons of the stranger” or “foreigners” (RSV). One is the *particular* calling of the *present* age; the other is the *general* calling of the *next* age. Notice the word “also” at the beginning of verse 6.

In regard to the high calling of the Gospel Age, true spiritual “eunuchs” are those who obey by separating themselves unto the Lord in a personal relationship with Him. But there are even two kinds of true Christian “eunuchs”; all must consecrate, but some go further and refrain from marriage for the Kingdom of Heaven’s sake, as did the Apostle Paul (Matt. 19:12).

Isa. 56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

In the Kingdom Age, “sons of the stranger,” Gentiles, will consecrate. Notice what verses 6

and 7 say about them in regard to the Third Temple. God says (RSV), “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, every one who keeps the sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my *house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*” God’s “house of prayer” is the Third Temple, which will be built in Jerusalem.

Isaiah is speaking of the Kingdom Age and the honor that will come back to Israel when they are reconciled to God at that time. But inserted in this prophecy, which pertains to the Millennial Age and shows the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, there is a message pertaining to the Church. Now the context reverts back to the Kingdom Age and to those God will bring to His “holy mountain” in Jerusalem. He will make them joyful in His “house of prayer,” the Third Temple.

When Jesus cast out the money changers from Herod’s Temple, he said, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13). Although Isaiah 56:7 is a prophecy of the Third Temple in the next age, Jesus quoted this prophecy to give a lesson of holiness to those living at the First Advent. In other words, lessons about the Third Temple can pertain to us now, in the present life. Jesus was saying that in harmony with the prophecy of the future, the temple, which was built as a sanctuary to honor the Lord, should not have been made into a den of thieves. (The first temple was Solomon’s. The second temple, Zerubbabel’s, was enlarged by Herod and thus is called Herod’s Temple. The Third Temple is Ezekiel’s.)

In the last chapter, Isaiah generalized about mountains and hills (verse 12), but now he is getting more specific with details. The worldwide condition will have a particular, specialized application to Jerusalem. There, at that focal point, will be the example for all peoples to follow; from there will go forth instruction and guidance.

Verse 7 is definitely future; there is no past application. Notice, a *literal* “house” or temple will be built in Jerusalem with *literal* sacrifices. In other words, the New Law Covenant will be very similar to the Old Law Covenant with a temple, sabbaths, a law, etc. At no time in the past was a temple in Israel a “house of prayer for *all* people”; this is a Kingdom setting.

Isa. 56:8 The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

In the future after Jacob’s Trouble, God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The *two* regatherings in our day are clearly referred to here. “Yet will I gather others to him [*after* Jacob’s Trouble], beside those that are gathered unto him [*before* Jacob’s Trouble].” The Revised Standard Version reads, “Thus says the Lord GOD,... I will gather *yet others* to him [Israel] *besides those already gathered.*” After Jacob’s Trouble, all surviving Jews in other parts of the world will be brought back to Israel by the “sons of the stranger” (the Gentiles).

Isa. 56:9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

Isa. 56:10 His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

God’s blind “watchmen” would be His professed spiritual watchmen, the watchmen over

nominal spiritual Israel. “Dumb dogs” are the D.D.’s—the Doctors of Divinity, those who “doctor” divinity and are not true teachers. The Lord uses sarcasm here. Ostensibly they are the teachers and the watchmen, but in reality they are the opposite.

Why is verse 10 preceded with “All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest”? “Beasts” of the field and forest will come in and devour because the watchmen are blind and do not properly “bark” (warn the flock) in regard to prophetic truths. The watchmen are not alert; they are not acquainted with God’s (*prophetic*) Word. Just as the purpose of a dog’s bark is to warn, so these professed teachers have a responsibility to warn the flock. They have no interest in doing so, however. Instead they are “sleeping, lying down, [and] loving to slumber [prophetically].” They preach smooth, easy, soft things with an emphasis on love, and they neglect admonitions. The King James margin says they are “dreaming” or “talking in their sleep.” In other words, they are like bags of wind; their talk has no real substance; it lacks coherent instructional value. Notice that verse 10 says “they *cannot* bark.” Why? Because they do not have prophetic understanding.

Isa. 56:11 Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

The watchmen are not only blind and dumb, but they are greedy (“strong of appetite” in the King James margin).

Isa. 56:12 Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

The key phrase in revealing what is wanting in these watchmen is their attitude that “tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” They think that everything is rosy and beautiful and that conditions will continue on with tomorrow being even better than today. With such an attitude, they see no reason to warn. However, it is not that they cannot understand but that they are not interested in understanding; hence they incur responsibility. The watchmen of Christendom do not see the dangers of tomorrow, the dangers of the beasts of the field coming into the flock to devour. But the Scriptures say that “perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1). As in Noah’s day, conditions will get increasingly worse. The Book of Jude warns that at the very end of the age, the true Church itself will be infiltrated (Jude 4). Another way of saying the same thing is that all will be deceived except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). Tomorrow will not be like today but will be quite different.

Q: Don’t the “beasts” apply to the nominal Church?

A: Yes, the “beasts” will first enter the nominal system, but the spirit of nominalism is always a danger to the true Church. Subsequently the beasts will infiltrate the true Church but in a somewhat softer guise that is not as recognizable. The Book of Jude emphasizes what happens in the true Church, but first it occurs in the nominal system. And what is happening in nominalism today? Standards are dropping. Women and homosexuals are being ordained as ministers. The consecrated must beware.

Q: And what are these “beasts” in the field?

A: A worldly, unconverted element. First, they will commingle with the nominally

converted. Later they will mix in with the truly converted.

Comment: As an example of how conditions are getting worse, there is a *Reprint* article not written by Pastor Russell on 2 Timothy 3:1–5 with the list of adjectives describing the perilous times: “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” The author of the article felt that the rendering was much too strong; hence he gave alternate English words to soften the translation. His point was that people with these characteristics would not be considered godly by any. But we observe these very changes in the nominal system.

Comment: Many in the Bible Student movement are too liberal.

Reply: The function of a shepherd is not merely to provide food and water but to protect, warn, and admonish as well. It is along this line that shepherds today are particularly negligent. And why? Because as soon as a shepherd takes a different view, he encounters opposition, estrangement, loss of friends, and perhaps loss of eldership. Any elders who pursue the popular, easy course and are nice and social will continue to be elected, generally speaking, because they do nothing to offend. But neither do such shepherds do anything that is especially commendable.

Comment: Some elders do warn severely, but their warnings are improper and not justified. This shows the responsibility of the teacher.

Reply: Yes, it can work both ways, and the elder who warns suffers either way, ie, whether the warnings are correct or whether they are unjustified. Those in the truth movement who warn and admonish are less popular, for such action costs them votes. On the other hand, elders who do not speak out risk nothing and, consequently, do not suffer. Instead of following the instruction of God’s Word, they follow the “wise” middle policy of the natural man, proceeding according to the pulse of those with whom they associate, being neither too serious nor too light.

Comment: Along the lines of improper warnings, we expect that the ministers of the nominal system will strongly warn against “sects” who do not believe in the Trinity, so they will speak out later, but on the wrong issue.

Reply: When the ministers have access to the media and the cooperation of the government, they will be following the popular side of the issue. Therefore, when they bark under that circumstance, it will be because they have the backing of the people. At that time, many who have reservations will acquiesce to unjust measures restricting freedom, reasoning that such curtailment of liberty is the lesser of two evils. The lesson to us is that when the trouble increases, we must not assent to things we do not heartily approve of.

The current discussion is applicable to the next chapter as well.

The ministers say, “Come ..., I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink.” “Wine” and “strong drink” are false doctrine, not only the “wine of fornication” but the “wine” of pleasant and smooth things. Wine that is first light and occasional can become

addictive. One who habitually drinks wine tends to want more and more and stronger and stronger wine. In regard to eldership, the Bible says that an elder should not be “given to wine” (1 Tim. 3:3). That does not mean he cannot take a drink under any circumstance, but he must not be “given” to it. The requirement is not quite as restrictive with a deacon. A deacon should not be given to “much wine”; he should be watchful but can be more social (1 Tim. 3:8). That which is legitimate and proper under certain circumstances can, through frequent use, lead to abuse.

True “wine” would be the pleasing doctrines of Scripture. In other words, “wine” is not necessarily inherently wrong, but “strong drink” is. As was demonstrated at the marriage at Cana, the practice was to serve the good wine first, for the taste buds were more sensitive in the beginning. When the wine supply was exhausted and Jesus changed the six pots of water into wine, the host was asked why the better wine was being served last. The point is that as multiple drinks are served, the quality of the wine being offered deteriorates and gets stronger. (Incidentally, if all drinking of wine were wrong, our Lord would not have converted the water into wine. Wine is not being advocated, but for a marriage or another such occasion of joy, wine in moderation is permissible. Each individual is then responsible for controlling himself.)

Q: Then would wine be considered “strong drink” if it is abused?

A: Yes, the danger is that it loosens the tongue and inebriates. In the case of ministers, their senses become numbed by their false doctrine so that they cannot bark.

Isa. 57:1 The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

“The righteous perisheth.” The Church (ie, the feet members) will die at the end of the age. Verses 1 and 2 belong to the context of the previous chapter about the professed spiritual watchmen having a good time, drinking strong drink, being blind, and failing to bark. The faithful class who do warn will perish.

“And no man layeth it to heart.” The world will not be cognizant of what is happening.

Isaiah 56:9 through 57:2 reminds us of Belshazzar’s Feast, a type of the coming church-state hour of power in the midst of peril. Even while Babylon was being besieged, the leaders were confident in their false sense of security. Moreover, King Belshazzar and his lords used the gold and silver vessels of the Temple to drink wine and praise their false gods. The leaders of nominal spiritual Israel are intoxicated with false doctrine. Especially at the end of the age, they will misuse divine truths (the gold and silver Temple vessels). Daniel (the feet members) was clothed with new garments (the divine nature) and elevated in office (glorified). In other words, “the righteous” who are said to perish in Isaiah 57:1 are pictured by Daniel in the type of Belshazzar’s Feast. The class who interpret the handwriting on the wall will suffer and die. Their flesh will be destroyed, but they will receive a change of nature and be glorified with Christ. In the Gideon picture, the vessels (the flesh) were destroyed.

In another picture, when the three Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace, the cords that bound them were burned, but their garments were not even singed. This incident illustrates that the feet members will die according to the flesh but be delivered as new creatures.

Notice that in the type of Belshazzar's Feast, Daniel was clothed *before* the city of Babylon fell (Dan. 5:29–31). The king was slain that very night, but Daniel was elevated *before* the king's death. During Babylon's hour of power, the righteous will die—the feet members will finish their course *before* the Time of Trouble begins. They will be “taken away from the evil to come.”

Depending on the picture in the Old Testament, the king of Babylon represents either Papacy or the anarchistic, radical element. In other words, in pictures where Babylon destroys Israel, Babylon represents the anarchistic enemy who will destroy nominal spiritual Israel, the clerical element. However, in settings where Babylon alone is pictured, it almost always represents Papacy.

To emphasize the point again: Isaiah 57:1 is a very strong verse to show that the feet members will go off the earthly scene *before the Time of Trouble*. They will be found “worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

Isa. 57:2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

This verse is very interesting. Based on verse 1, the “beds” have to be *beyond the veil*. And that is also true of Psalm 149:5, “Let the saints be joyful *in glory*: let them sing aloud upon their *beds*.” “The righteous” will be “taken away from the evil to come” and “enter into peace” beyond the veil, into the permanent “rest” referred to by the Apostle Paul. “There remaineth therefore a rest [in heaven] to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). The words of a hymn are, “Here o’er the earth as a stranger I roam, Here is no rest, here is no rest;... Soon shall the faithful forever be blest, There, there is rest, there is rest.”

The future rest is not a rest of slumber but a rest from trouble, sickness, imperfection, and sin, for the righteous will be “walking in uprightness [*actual* righteousness and perfection].” In the present life we try to please the Lord as best we can, but weaknesses of the flesh in our fallen humanity keep us from perfection in thought, word, and deed. The victorious Church beyond the veil with their actual white robes of righteousness are described as the “called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

The Pastor explained that Psalm 149 applies to the present life because of the sword in the saints' hands, but our Lord *in glory* is pictured with a sword in his hand and in his mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:16; 19:15,21). “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen,... To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints” (Psa. 149:6,7,9). Therefore, having a sword in the hand is not a proof that the time setting is in the present life. This “judgment” honor, which all the saints will have, pertains to Babylon's destruction yet future after the true Church is complete.

There are two kinds of rest and two kinds of bed. There is a rest this side of the veil and a rest on the other side. The creedal bed is on this side of the veil, and Solomon's bed is beyond the veil (Song 3:7).

Revelation 19:14 takes place beyond the veil when the Church is complete: “And the armies which were *in heaven* followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white

and clean." The plural word "armies" means troops in heaven, not two different armies (not an army down here and an army above). Also, the context of Revelation 19:14 is *after* the destruction of Babylon because Jesus' vesture is dipped in blood. Jesus is *returning from* having trodden the winepress. The "fine linen, white and clean" robes are the actual robes of righteousness, not the imputed robes of the present life.

Q: Why do the pronouns change in verse 2? "*He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds.*"

A: The "righteous" feet members will be so few in number that each will feel like the only one. The perspective is that each of the feet members will be on his own at that time; each one will act *individually*, with one here and one there comprising the class. The completed company, the entire Church, will "rest in their beds" beyond the veil. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). They will rest from their labors, but their works will follow with them; ie, they will remain active. In other words, the rest beyond the veil is one of heart; being free from trials and imperfections, they will continue to work and be active but *without fatigue*.

The sleeping saints were raised from death in 1878. However, they are not doing Harvest work, for the Lord has been attending to the development of Christians all down the age and does not need their assistance. They are active being educated in "school rooms," as it were, as to what their activities, duties, and responsibilities will be when the Kingdom is established and the general resurrection takes place. Therefore, only the 300 or so feet members of the 144,000 will require an accelerated education when they get beyond the veil.

Comment: The saints who have already been raised must be thrilled, for they are almost a completed company. As another saint dies and is raised instantly, there would be great rejoicing.

Reply: Yes, they will all go into the wedding together, so they are waiting for the last few members. In the meantime, they are being instructed by both Jesus and the already raised saints.

Comment: The saints who die during the Harvest period will not need as much education in some respects because they have more knowledge of history, technology, etc.

Reply: Yes, and that applies to the unconsecrated as well. Regarding the world's coming forth from the tomb, the dead will be raised in reverse order, Adam being the last and those who have lived in the present century being the first. The generation that lives through the Time of Trouble will be judged first, then the generation who just died, then the next generation going backwards in time, etc.

"They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." The phrasing indicates that this class enter into peace and rest (death) and yet *immediately* walk (alive) in their uprightness. They will be changed instantly, in a moment, and not lie in the tomb asleep and oblivious in their sleep, as have others down through the age.

Psalm 105:17–19 reads: "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word

came: the word of the LORD tried him." The feet members of the Joseph class will be imprisoned, and the Word of the Lord will try them until the time of their faithfulness *unto death*. There are other pictures of imprisonment and subsequent deliverance as new creatures: Daniel was shut up in the lions' den. John the Baptist was put in prison. The three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace.

Psalm 105 continues on in verses 20 and 21: "The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance." Just as Pharaoh freed Joseph from prison, so the feet members will be freed by their change to glory beyond the veil. And after freeing Joseph, Pharaoh elevated him to the throne of Egypt. Pharaoh made Joseph the "lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance." Jesus and the Church (The Christ) are to be made ruler "to bind his princes at his pleasure; and [to] teach his senators wisdom" (Psa. 105:22). Psalm 149:6–9 is speaking about this same binding and instructing work. With two-edged swords in their hands, The Christ will bind kings with chains and nobles with fetters of iron, executing vengeance and judgment upon the heathen.

Isa. 57:3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

Isa. 57:4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

Notice the term "sons [plural] of the sorceress." And consider the last part of the verse: "the seed of the adulterer and the whore." The "adulterer" is masculine; the "whore," feminine. In the Book of Revelation, the "kings of the earth" (the powers that be, the "fathers," as it were) commit fornication with the "mother of harlots," the "whore," the Roman Catholic Church (Rev. 17:1–5). The children born of this relationship are the members of the false Church. "Sons" result from this union between the adulterer and the whore.

Notice that *sorcery* is involved: "sons of the sorceress." As time goes on, divinations and enchantments will be introduced into the nominal Church as signs. Even now to a certain extent, some religious groups are being deceived by signs. *Glossalalia* is one example; in addition, healings, visions, sounds, music, and/or noises are being sought more and more. Not only in the Pentecostal churches but in the more conservative denominations as well, the charismatic mode of thinking is gaining popularity. This type of thinking will become more and more prevalent as the end of the age approaches. Isaiah 19:3 tells that increasingly the religious element will seek for enchantments and be guided by them. "They shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards." What will happen? The children of this sorcery—namely, those who are the product of the male adulterer and the female adulteress classes—will be deceived by these signs and wonders and utter very bold pronouncements and boastful claims accordingly.

There is a saying: "Seeing is believing." To those not informed and forewarned by Scripture, the miraculous nature of these occult signs and wonders will be proof of their veracity. These "children of transgression" will make "a wide mouth" and "draw out the tongue" against the feet members, against "the righteous [class who] perisheth" (verse 1). Isaiah is not saying that the righteous class will simply die of natural causes, such as a heart attack, but that they will die *violently* by the product of this false teaching. Out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet will go forth frog-like spirits, doctrines of demons, "spirits of devils" (of whom Satan is the chief) to gather together the people to

Armageddon and cause the death of the feet members. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13,14).

"Against whom do ye sport yourselves?" The "sons of the sorceress" will "sport" themselves against the feet members. Prior to and during the Crucifixion, the people mocked Jesus, and that will be the experience of the feet members too. For example, a blindfold was put over his eyes, and he was told to "prophesy" as to who smote him. This was a mockery of the many prophecies he uttered during his public ministry. On the Cross he was taunted, "You can heal others, but you can't even heal yourself." "If you are truly the Son of God, why don't you come down from that Cross?" At the end of the age, those who have the courage to stand up will be tested to the utmost.

Isa. 57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks?

The "sons of the sorceress" enflame themselves "with idols under every green tree, slaying the children [true Christians] in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks." Particularly as regards the end of the age, the sons of the sorceress will slay the "righteous," the feet members (verse 1).

In olden times the people murdered infants and young, innocent children and even ate them. It was real cannibalism. Although infants are sinners in the sense that all are born and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5), they are not accountable for sin on a personalized basis. The feet members are called "children" because from the public standpoint, the true Church class are naive, childish, foolish, and immature in worldly wisdom and in their thinking and philosophy. Notice that the "seed [children or product] of the adulteress and the whore" sacrifice true Christian "children" to their "idols," ie, in the name of Christianity.

The "valley" is sometimes likened to the *lowland* condition of the present life. In contrast, we aspire to the "*highland*," to a loftier condition beyond the veil. The Church is spoken of as growing in Sharon, the plain, the lowland: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" (Song 2:1). The feet members are the "children in the valleys," a very humble class—hence "nobodies" in the eyes of the world.

Isa. 57:6 Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

The blood of the innocent, the righteous, will be poured out as a "drink offering." The wicked will sacrifice the "children" (feet members) to their idols in the name of Christianity—that is, according to *their* concept of Christianity. But the situation will be reversed, as indicated by the clause "Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion." The persecutors will have to drink the cup themselves. Like pebbles in the brook that have been worn down and made smooth by the rushing water, so when the next age comes, they will be humbled and put in a lowly condition. In fact, the more active one is in causing the persecution, the more mortified and ashamed he will be in the Kingdom. With abasement and shame being directly proportional to the injustices that are practiced, the

instigators of persecution against the feet members will suffer a great deal in the next age.

“Even to them [the feet members] hast thou [the wicked, the persecutors] poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering.” The feet members will be presented as a meal offering, a sacrifice, unto the false idols (gods) according to a false concept of Christianity. In other words, the persecution will be done in the name of the Lord, to His praise and honor. Daniel’s enemies caused a religious edict to be enacted that would trap him; it stipulated that for one month anyone who prayed to any other god than the god of the realm was to be cast into the lions’ den. Daniel habitually prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem, and he continued to do so (Dan. 6:4–7). His disregard of the decree was reported to the king, who recognized the duplicity against Daniel. However, he could not rescind the decree because of the law of the Medes and the Persians. As a result, Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den. The connection with the lesson here in Isaiah 57 is that the religious decree against Daniel was ostensibly to honor the god of the realm, and King Darius was considered to be the representative or son of that god, ie, a god in the flesh. Not only Darius but most of the ancient kings regarded themselves to be of the seed of divinity. Each Pharaoh of Egypt felt he was a child of Ra (a son of this god).

Isa. 57:7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

This “bed” is in the present life. The nominal Church takes *future* promises and looks for their fulfillment in the *present* life. Papacy believes that its period of earthly domination from 799 to 1799 was the 1,000-year reign of Christ. The period from 1799 to the near future Papacy considers to be the Little Season of Satan’s rule through Protestantism. Papacy further believes that the Protestants coming back into the papal fold will mark the return of the Kingdom of Christ. Thus Papacy is looking for its concept of the “lofty and high mountain” (the ideal situation from the perspective of Roman Catholicism) to occur down here on earth. Papacy wants peace on this side of the veil and in advance of the proper fulfillment.

“Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.” This portion of verse 7 is a further confirmation of the premise that the persecutors will think they are honoring and pleasing God when they put the feet members to death. And that was Papacy’s attitude in the Dark Ages too. John 16:2 reads, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” There will be a revival of the same type of persecution and thinking during the coming hour of power.

Papacy will make a wide mouth and stick out the tongue, that is, ridicule, the righteous class (verse 4). As these days draw nearer and nearer, all the bad traits of the human nature will come to the fore more and more, and God’s people will have to become more and more docile in the way that Jesus “opened not his mouth ... [but was] as a sheep before her shearers is dumb” (Isa. 53:7). The Church class will have to submit fully to such indignities. The bold public witness will precede imprisonment. Similarly Jesus chased out the money changers and preached boldly until he was apprehended. Once he was seized, he submitted, knowing the time for his Crucifixion had come. He did not want to postpone drinking the Lord’s cup. As with Jesus, so with the feet members—the popular season will immediately precede the unpopular experience.

The Catholic Church does not expect a physical or personal return of Christ. Rather, they interpret the return from a pragmatic standpoint, feeling that when the whole world

becomes Christianized under one Church (the Roman Catholic Church), that will be the Kingdom.

Q: But wouldn't Catholics be deceived if Satan materialized to appear like Jesus?

A: A clarification is needed. If Satan appears as a supernatural being, he will not especially look like Jesus because he does not want to honor the Son. But just as he has been very successful in making himself an angel of light, so he will come in the guise of a wise counselor of superior intelligence from outer space. If some people assume he is the returned Jesus, Satan will allow the liberty of such thinking for a while. Many (both the religious and the nonreligious) will be deceived for a while by the appearance of a supernatural being with supernatural power and wisdom to help mankind out of their dilemma.

Q: Will the feet members still be here when Satan materializes?

A: Yes, but they will be gone when the fallen angels come in like a flood, inundating the earth, as in Noah's day. When the Flood started, Noah and his family were already in the Ark. A handful of celestial beings is one thing, but the whole realm of unrepentant angels cascading down is another.

Isa. 57:8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.

Generally speaking, this 57th chapter of Isaiah is addressed to the religious systems (mystic Babylon) based upon what natural Israel did, for natural Israel was also nominally in covenant relationship with God and is a type of the nominal Church.

Isa. 57:9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

RSV: "You journeyed to Molech with oil and multiplied your perfumes; you sent your envoys far off, and sent down even to Sheol." "Molech" means "king."

"And thou wentest to the king ... and didst send thy messengers far off." The nominal religious element courted the favor of the civil element (governments). While in covenant relationship with God, natural Israel courted favor with Egypt, Babylon, or Syria and in connection with that relationship incorporated some of the religious practices of these other nations. In other words, contrary to God's will, Israel tried to emulate her neighbors in various ways. For instance, when King Ahaz saw a beautiful altar in Damascus to a heathen god, he admired its workmanship to such an extent that he had Urijah the priest make a copy (2 Kings 16:10-16) for use in the Temple court. In addition, Ahaz moved the brazen altar, the true altar, to a secondary position and moved the unauthorized altar into the primary position.

The Lord's architecture is not ornate like the pagan architecture. Its simplicity, sound construction, and graceful design are conducive to wholesome lessons. On the other hand, the sculpture and artwork of heathen religions are so ornate that they distract and focus attention on the craftsmanship and elaborate ceremonies.

Verses 8 and 9 are referring to figurative harlotry in the type (the mixing of heathen religions with the true) and spiritual harlotry in the antitype (the mixing of the civil and religious elements). Israel is likened to a woman who plays the harlot. Not satisfied at home, she went to far-off nations where she was attracted to the heathen religions. "Perfumes" and "ointment" indicate that Israel tried to make herself more appealing by giving offerings and valuables to "the king."

"Thou ... didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell." Hell (*sheol*) is the *hidden* state. When potatoes were "helled" (1611 English), they were covered or buried in a mound of earth. When a roof was covered or thatched with straw, that was "helling" a house. The text here is referring to religious practices of other nations that were adopted by the Israelites. In Egypt the Satanic worship of Osiris involved occult mysteries and communication with fallen spirits. It was a secret, debased form of worship associated with the underworld, bloodletting, immorality, and the sacrifice of humans. In Phoenicia and Canaan human sacrifice was practiced with Molech worship. Both thoughts are brought in here: the worship of Osiris, the god of the underworld, and the worship of Molech, which included child sacrifice.

When God instituted animal sacrifices, the animal was slain kosher style and hence died a painless death. If all the meat we eat were obtained kosher style, the animals would not suffer any pain. When the jugular vein was cut, the resulting rapid loss of blood weakened the animal and killed it in a few seconds. The animals that died as sacrifices under the Jewish religion were pictures of the need for Messiah, a perfect man, having to die in the future to cancel sin. However, Satan twisted the animal sacrifices to mean *child* sacrifices. In some instances, the king even set the example for the nation by offering his own son. Whereas *dead* animals were put on the altar under the Law, *live* children were sacrificed in the heathen religions. The image or statue of the Molech fire god had a hollow interior that served as a furnace. Molech had its hands out to receive a live child. Then the arms pulled the child to its breast and the furnace. Meanwhile a band played to drown out the sound of a child's screams. The child was roasted and then eaten in a barbaric-like communion.

Another example of Satan's perverse twisting of the truth is the drinking of blood. When Jesus instituted the Memorial, he served bread and wine to represent his body and blood, respectively. He meant that he was going to die shortly in Adam's stead and that his death would secure for the world of mankind the hope of life in the future. There was nothing barbaric about these symbols. Jesus was simply saying, "By partaking of the bread, you are appropriating to yourself my merit and you are also participating in the privileges of the Memorial. By partaking of the wine, which represents my blood and death, you are signifying your willingness to participate in my death." And what did Satan do? By copying the animal sacrifices and anticipating the institution of the Memorial, he incorporated into heathen religions the drinking of *actual* blood and the eating of *actual* human flesh. Satan always tries to outdo God, and the more sensational way of Satan is more appealing to debased and depraved humanity. Fallen humanity is more attracted by Satan's methods than by God's because to follow God and Jesus, one must go against the stream.

Israel succumbed to these heathen practices. "Cannibalism" comes from "Canaan" worship, the worship of a fire god and eating human flesh. Cannibalism comes from the ancient religion of the Canaanites, who were Molech worshippers. Molech was a Canaanite-Phoenician cultist religion.

This was sadistic worship (sadism is getting joy out of the suffering of another individual). Molech worship was sadistic. Similarly today, many criminals show no remorse for their violent crimes. In fact, rapists and murderers find delight in the victim's struggle to get away; they get satisfaction in overpowering the individual.

Many of the old-time translators knew about the cannibalism in the Old Testament, but they felt it was so shocking that they covered over or camouflaged this sin with nice words. It would have been better to render an accurate translation to show that Israel's punishments were justified and that they as a people need forgiveness.

Isa. 57:10 **Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.**

Verse 10 is saying: Although at first the Israelites were captivated by the new and different heathen religious practices, in the final analysis there was no real hope based on sound logic (no expiation of sin or hope of a true resurrection). Yet the Israelites were reluctant to admit as a people that they had erred and strayed from the right path.

Followers of the heathen religions worshipped gruesome, wrathful, fearsome gods who needed to be appeased and bribed with sacrifices—Satan's methods. These religions brought no hope, mercy, or truth, and those who practiced them were brought low in character, both mentally and morally.

Isa. 57:11 **And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?**

Israel was not afraid of God because they failed to understand His principles and methods in holding His peace and not interfering with the evil. The same condition prevailed prior to the Flood when Satan sinned and some of the angels materialized and took human women as wives. Each day for 120 years the evil and violence increased, but God did not interfere. However, He was talking to Noah and, through Noah's preaching of righteousness, to those who had an ear to hear. Only Noah's family (eight people) resisted the evil. The permission of evil has been a test down through the ages to see who loves God. When Moses went up into Mount Sinai to commune with God, the Israelites were tested. They thought Moses would return shortly, but one day after another passed for a period of 40 days and 40 nights. Even though God had just done some mighty acts on their behalf, the Israelites did not have a sufficiency of faith and trust. They should have reasoned that God had some purpose in delaying Moses' return. Instead they concluded Moses was dead and they built the golden calf.

Q: Why did Aaron agree to the building of the calf?

A: It was a stalling tactic on his part to ask all the women to donate their gold jewelry. Later Aaron was reprimanded, for what he did was wrong, but he was not severely punished because he thought the delaying technique was the right thing to do. Moreover, he did not think the women would freely give up their jewelry. Perhaps this all began to take place after about 30 days of the 40 had expired, for it took time to melt the jewelry, make a mold for the calf, etc. Meanwhile, Aaron hoped Moses would return. When he did come down from the mount, the people were in the height of their festivity.

Saul was similarly tested with a waiting period, but he failed that test and disobeyed when he took the initiative and did the sacrificing. The point is that *time* has been a test in both Old and New Testament times.

Comment: The Church of the third and fourth centuries also failed the test of waiting. Instead of waiting for Jesus' return, they tried to set up the Kingdom on earth prematurely under Papacy.

Reply: Yes, and Papacy's exaltation to power is the antitype for the golden calf incident. As time went on, professing Christians lost faith in a Second Advent and the personal return of Christ, so they instituted the Roman Catholic religion. Knowledge and patience are strong tests. Without the knowledge of God's principles and methods, it is harder to wait.

God asked, "Have not I held my peace even of old, and thou [Israel] fearest me not?" By disobedience in not waiting, Israel manifested their lack of reverential fear of God. When retribution is swift and sudden, people pay attention and are fearful. Delayed justice is another matter. Hardened criminals may get away with their evil acts in the present life, but God is taking note of all their violent crimes. In the Kingdom they will receive retribution and they will have to retrace *every* willfully wrong step in order to get life. One who builds an evil character now will have more trouble in the Kingdom. The principle applies to all people: what (character) a man sows, he will reap. A person who willfully associates with evil now is less likely to appreciate the opportunity for reform in the Kingdom.

Isa. 57:12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

This sarcasm indicates that the great majority of the people take the wrong path. Because so few truly endeavor to please the Lord, the whole nominal mass are sarcastically being told that their professions of righteousness will not profit them.

Isa. 57:13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

When the nominal mass cry, they will not be heard or delivered. When the Little Flock is complete, the Lord's message to even the Great Company will be "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye *workers of iniquity* [lawlessness]" (Luke 13:27). The Great Company are still virgins but foolish ones who allow their flesh to overcome them so that they do not properly obey the Lord (Matt. 25:1–13). Hence it is necessary for them to go into the Time of Trouble, sharing their portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 8:12; 24:51). If their repentance is sincere and they wash their robes white "in the blood of the Lamb," they will at least receive eternal life as a rescued class (Rev. 7:14). Thus three classes are being discussed in these New Testament Scriptures: (1) wise virgins, (2) foolish virgins, and (3) hypocrites. Special attention is focused on the first two classes at the end of the age because they have covenanted to do the Lord's will.

"The wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them." In other words, the Time of Trouble will destroy all of "thy companies," all of the false idols and religious practices and earthly organizations. Some people are actually consecrated to a society, denomination, or movement; they think that doing the good works of that organization is a form of

protection to them, whereas it is actually an idol that comes between them and the Lord. Because their faith is thus resting not in the Lord but on an improper basis—be it an individual or an organization—they will be proportionately disappointed in the Time of Trouble. Jesus likened this type of faith to building a house on sand instead of on rock (Matt. 7:26).

On the other hand, those who put their trust in God will possess the land: “He that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.” Among the true Church, possessing the land would be possessing the Kingdom. Of the 12 spies, only Joshua and Caleb brought back a favorable report. Accordingly, of the original adult Israelites who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan, and the great majority (approximately 2 million) perished during the 40 years in the Sinai wilderness. Similarly, only a small percentage of nominal believers will actually enter and possess the spiritual Kingdom. In other words, the account of Joshua and Caleb is a picture of how few of the “high calling” class will become part of the 144,000.

Of course the picture of the Israelites entering Canaan can be considered from two different time periods: (1) faithful Christians in the Gospel Age obtaining their inheritance in the spiritual or heavenly Canaan and (2) the obedient of mankind in the age beyond the Millennium getting eternal life in the earthly Canaan. Of the latter class, who will enter the ages of ages, Jesus said, “They ... neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35,36). Such will enter the eighth Creative Day.

Chapter 57 of Isaiah is written in such nebulous, diffused language that the meaning is hard to pinpoint mathematically in this type of study because it is based on previous knowledge of earlier chapters of Isaiah, the writings of other prophets, and history as recorded in Kings and Chronicles. A wealth of information is being hinted at in these few short verses.

Only those who trust the Lord will enter the Promised Land and inherit His “holy mountain” (heaven for the Little Flock of the Gospel Age and earth for the obedient of mankind in the Kingdom Age). In the final analysis, the same principles of obedience apply to all who get life in both ages. The difference is that in this present age of faith and quietness, one must read about God in Scripture to know about Him, whereas in Old Testament times, there were visible demonstrations and audible messages, and God will deal similarly in the next age.

Isa. 57:14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

A reference to the Kingdom, this verse reminds us of (1) the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age (Isa. 35:8,9) and (2) John the Baptist’s ministry announcing the coming of Messiah at the beginning of the Gospel Age. As we continue on in Isaiah, this double picture will become a more generalized picture of just the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Verse 15 tells what God’s real interest is: “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Just as many frequently quote John 3:16 in the New

Testament about God's love ("God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"), so many quote this verse in the Old Testament about the GREAT, HIGH, and LOFTY ONE, whose name is HOLY, dwelling with and helping the humble and contrite little ones. Yet the world is so dull of understanding that they curse God and use His name in vain. If they knew about the great God and the office He occupies, terror would strike their hearts, but He is quiet and hides Himself in this age because to manifest His indignation with such people (as He did in Old Testament times) would destroy the age of faith. During the Gospel Age, He is looking for those who believe through the Word of truth.

There is a saying, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Foolish humans do things the reverent, obedient holy angels would NEVER think of doing. In fact, it is horrifying for them to see the brazenness of man when God's name and actions and office are so HOLY. The holy angels fully appreciate God's character, but it is not perceived down here by mankind in general. The Lord is interested in the lowly, humble, contrite class who put their faith and trust in Him. He is looking for the mourners in Zion—for those who mourn because of their own imperfect state and the imperfect state that surrounds them and who yearn for a changed climate and condition where they can serve God in peace. But during the present age, Christians need trials and struggles in order to develop a Christlike character.

God inhabits eternity in that He is immortal; He will never die.

Isa. 57:16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

Why will God "not contend for ever"? If God judged mankind based on their actual deeds, *no one* would get life, for there is "none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Hence in this age He makes allowances and judges His children according to their efforts and the desires of their hearts to know and do His will. By the deeds of the Law, none can be justified. The same principle applies to the Kingdom. Jesus, the Mediator, will instruct the people, furnish wholesome counsel, and give them a period of time to correct their ways. In both ages God's purpose is to reach the class who realize they are sinners, for these are the contrite ones. All have erred, but not all are contrite.

Prior to the Flood, God indicated He would not be quiet forever. "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man ... yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). In verse 16 God says, "Neither will I be always wroth." He does not always manifest that wrath, but He takes cognizance of what is happening.

Isa. 57:17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

Isa. 57:18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

Isa. 57:19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

Isa. 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

"For the iniquity of his [natural Israel's] covetousness was I wroth." The nation of Israel is

being collectively addressed as an individual. God is giving this “man” an opportunity to confess, repent, and be forgiven for having rejected His Son, for example. Notice, however, that despite this opportunity, there is a class that remains wicked in both the present age and the next age: “the [incorrigibly] wicked are like the troubled sea, ... whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

The Lord, the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, says in one breath, “I dwell with the lowly and contrite of heart; I observe their ways and see that they have gone astray, but I will cure and heal such.” Then, right away, He adds, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea.” In other words, whether this collective “man” is regarded as the Jewish nation (composed of many people) or as nominal spiritual Israel (also composed of many individuals), and even though God gives this nominal whole an opportunity of reform, there is an incorrigibly wicked element that will not get everlasting life.

When God says, “I ... will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners,” the “mourners” are those who fight against sin and evil in their own bodies in both ages. Realizing they are not happy with their sinful circumstance, the Lord will be merciful to such. Those with this mournful frame of mind, be it now or in the Kingdom, will be healed, comforted, and restored. But the wicked are another matter; they prefer the evil and do not struggle against it.

Comment: The wording in verse 20 about the wicked being like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, sounds like Jude 13, which describes a Second Death class in the true Church as “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.”

Chapter 57 of Isaiah treats principles of the divine character and God’s method of dealing with His people in the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial ages.

Verses 18 and 19 (RSV): “I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and requite him with comfort, creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the LORD; and I will heal him.” At the time of Jesus’ birth, the angelic host announced, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men ... for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11,14). Their message, called the gospel of glad tidings, is the opportunity of life for all mankind—the high calling of the present age for the Christian and everlasting life in the Kingdom for Israel and the world. The receiving of eternal life on any plane will be “*peace*.”

The gospel went “near” (first to Israel) in the beginning of the Gospel Age and “far” (subsequently to Gentiles throughout the world). In the Kingdom it will go first to Israel, to the natural Jew, and then to all mankind. This chapter is a *double* message for the Church and the world. If God judged strictly, no one would get life, but His intent is to save, reclaim, and restore the lowly and contrite of heart, the “poor in spirit.”

Isa. 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

In other words, it is not God’s intent to save the incorrigible, but He will save those who struggle against sin.

Isa. 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Why did God tell Isaiah to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet”? He

wanted Isaiah to unashamedly proclaim a loud public message. In many of the Hebrew singsong chants, the cantor uses a different intonation in his voice to indicate the significance of the message. A “voice like a trumpet” would be a sound from the throat signifying a solemn public message. Isaiah was to cry aloud to the nation of Israel in regard to their sins.

Isa. 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Isa. 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

What was Israel’s sin? They were *ceremonially* obedient to God, going regularly to the Temple according to the Law, but they were insincere. They even feigned interest by asking about the ordinances of the Law, but they were not in the right heart attitude to receive instruction. Moreover, the people took “delight in approaching God”; that is, they delighted in being seen in their ostensible obedience.

The fast in verse 3 would be the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:29,31 reads: “And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: ... It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.” The affliction of souls was peculiar to the Day of Atonement. Many higher critics accredit the latter half of Isaiah to having been written after the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were in Babylonian exile—a much later date. But this verse is proof to the contrary, for Isaiah was castigating the people in regard to a *present* condition. Their insincerity and sins the rest of the year nullified their going into the Temple on the Day of Atonement and afflicting their souls and fasting in a very solemn manner. The remainder of the year, as verses 1 and 2 show, they went in and out of the Temple but perfunctorily and ritualistically. Hence God could not accept their praise, worship, and fasting on that one solemn day of the year, the Day of Atonement. God is saying through the prophet, “I cannot accept this one day of fasting, for it is not representative of your attitude throughout the year.”

Q: Is “afflicting the soul” another definition of fasting?

A: Yes, and it also means contrition of heart and a mental review of the past. No work was to be done on the solemn Day of Atonement, and most people did not eat once they left home and began to walk to the Temple services and for the rest of the day. The solemnity and lack of food and work, as well as the walk, gave the people more opportunity to examine themselves. When Israel went through this ritual, they wondered why God did not answer their prayers and why they did not get material blessings.

Q: Is there a parallel to the present day in Israel? Many Jews, especially from this country, who have moved to Israel are experiencing a harder life over there. Wouldn’t they wonder why, if God is supposed to be blessing them, the material increase is so slow in coming? Living there requires certain sacrifices, and that is why some whose hearts are not really in Israel have moved back to this country.

A: To a certain extent, there is a parallel to our day regarding Israel. However, this condition has existed all down the age with both Jew and Gentile.

Isa. 58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

“Ye fast for strife and debate.” The people fasted, but they ended up with strife and debate. Some even smote with the fist of lawlessness. In other words, the contrition, fasting, and confession were superficial. Immediately after fasting for forgiveness, they returned to strife, debate, mischief, etc. They used the Temple as an excuse for forgiveness, whereas actually they were planning what mischief they would do next.

They prayed loudly, thinking their prayers would then be heard in heaven. But for all they thought they had done, they did not receive a compensatory reward. These verses describe well the attitude of both natural and nominal spiritual Israel all down the age.

Comment: During the World Wars, both sides prayed for victory in their churches. Would that be a parallel to verse 4, “Behold, ye fast for strife and debate.”

Reply: The principle is the same with that inconsistency. How could the Lord answer the prayers of both sides? And certainly there were righteous individuals on both sides and unrighteous ones.

Isa. 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

The Lord was asking, “Have I appointed just one day for fasting out of the entire year?” Fasting was supposed to be a *condition of heart*, a *habit* of thoughts and deeds *throughout the year*, and not just one act of penance.

Isa. 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Isa. 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Verses 6 and 7 explain what kind of “fast” the Lord desired of natural Israel. The nation was expected to do natural things to get natural rewards. Obedience brought material prosperity. Disobedience brought loss and suffering. The bands were to be loosed, the heavy burdens lifted, the yoke broken, etc., along natural lines for those who were trying to get out of their sorrowful state.

For spiritual Israel, the Lord expects comfort, fellowship, and help to be given to those who are poor in spirit and depressed. “The hungry” are to be fed with the bread of truth (1 Cor. 5:8). “The naked” are to be clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Jesus criticized the scribes and the Pharisees for weighing the tithe and the cumin, for exacting burdens of the people, for emphasizing just the negative, and for having no message of forgiveness, restitution, and hope of recovery for those who felt oppressed and were hungering for truth and righteousness (Matt. 23:23). In the spiritual sense, those who are burdened and

sorrowful are the ones whose consciences are grieved and tenderized, whereas people who take pleasure in sin do not feel heavily burdened. When the current is going downstream and one drifts with it, the way is easy and pleasurable. But to go up the river against the current takes effort and struggle. And so it is with the taskmaster of sin. The farther one goes downstream, the more retracing will have to be done. The steps of recovery become proportionately more difficult. Help will be needed.

Comment: The “fast” that the Lord appreciates is the giving of oneself to help others.

Reply: Yes, an eye and an ear should remain open to see where help can be rendered to others.

Isa. 58:8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.

Isa. 58:9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Isa. 58:10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

Isa. 58:11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Isa. 58:12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

At the end of the age, Israel will come to this heart condition through providences. God will thoroughly purge the nation in Jacob’s Trouble and wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion (Isa. 4:2–4). The spirit of burning will be in Jerusalem.

“Take away from the midst of thee ... the putting forth of the finger” (verse 9). The RSV reads: “If you take away from the midst of you ... the pointing of the finger, ... then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noon day.” “Pointing the finger” would be accusing others and judging them in an unjust sense.

“The glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward” (verse 8). This is a reference to the cloud at the time of the Exodus. Just as the cloud moved behind the Israelites to protect them from the pursuing Egyptians and there was a mighty deliverance of the Israelites in the days of Moses, so God will work a mighty deliverance in the future for that same nation and people. One difference is that when these providences occur in the future, the Lord will select for rescue those Jews who are in the proper heart attitude. At the time of the Exodus, the cloud reflected light forward for the Israelites and darkness backward upon the Egyptians. In the future the light will rise out of obscurity on the *hand-picked* Holy Remnant.

Verse 12, referring to the establishment of the Kingdom, is a reminder of Acts 15:16, “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I

will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." These conditions will be brought about as a result of the Lord's chastising the Jews in Jacob's Trouble and bringing those who are willing to the right heart condition. The Holy Remnant will get the blessing of building "the old waste places," raising up "the foundations of many generations," and being called, "The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

In earlier verses, the daily sacrifices and especially the Day of Atonement were emphasized, followed in succeeding verses by a moral lesson. Beginning with verse 13, the series will start over with the emphasis this time on the daily sabbath. With chapter divisions being arbitrary, from Isaiah Chapter 58 on, allusions will be made to the sabbath day, the sabbath year, the Jubilee, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Of all the holy days in the past, the Feast of Tabernacles will be the most prominent for the world in the next age. Under the Law the males were required to go to the Temple in Jerusalem for Passover, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement, but only the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory in the Kingdom.

Originally, all male Jews had to go to Jerusalem for the three feasts. But as time went on, the Temple was destroyed, captivity occurred, etc. When, therefore, for various reasons Jews could not return to Jerusalem, they were to observe the feasts in local synagogues with special services of commemoration—and thus transcend the distance to Jerusalem in spirit. Any true Jew did the best he could under given circumstances.

Isa. 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Isa. 58:14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The moral lesson in verses 13 and 14 ties in with the questions raised by the house of Jacob back in verse 3: "Wherefore have we fasted ... and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" In other words, "We have fasted and humbled ourselves. Why doesn't God hear our prayer?" God is saying that He would fulfill His promise, but they went back on their word.

The sabbath was a wonderful arrangement. If, as required, all work had ceased, the sabbath would have been like a vacation day of rest and meditation each week. Instead of reasoning that observing the sabbath interfered with earning money, they should have reasoned: "If all of us observe the sabbath, we can joyfully relax, worship the Lord, and have our minds on higher spiritual matters." Back there people worked long days, from sunup to sundown. Consequently, the opportunity to visit neighbors and fellowship should have been appreciated as a joyous occasion—partly social but in an atmosphere conducive to worship and meditation.

Q: Wouldn't fasting for the new creature be primarily the daily laying down of our lives?

A: Yes, if the Atonement Day is considered to be the whole Gospel Age. The Atonement Day can be viewed as the day itself (picturing the Gospel Age) or as the work of atonement that follows (in the Kingdom). Since each of us lives for only a portion of the antitypical Day of Atonement, the significance would be that our entire life from the time of

consecration until death is a time of soberly and earnestly trying to fulfill the will of the Lord. Under the Law, the Jews did this in pantomime for just one day each year as a picture. Similarly the 24-hour sabbath day is a picture of a “day” of a thousand years.

The entire walk of a consecrated person is a solemn “fast.” Although the Christian deprives himself of certain pleasures and opportunities in the present life in order to be separate from the world and to do God’s will, yet that antitypical “fast” day should be one of pleasure on a higher plane. It should be a delight to do the Lord’s will. In fact, in whatever age, one’s pleasure should be in the Lord and “not [in] doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” The thought of social fellowship is included.

Isa. 59:1 Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

A person with a short hand has limited power, but God’s hand or power is not limited. He can do what He wants—He can save!

Isa. 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Imagine the prophet Isaiah calling out to the people and enunciating these words! “Your iniquities have separated you from God. He does not hear you and He has hidden His face from you because of your sins.”

Isa. 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

What is the distinction between the hands being defiled with blood and the fingers with iniquity? Obviously, “hands” and “fingers” are used in the unfavorable sense here. The “hand” is a symbol of power, hence an *open* act of violence or wrong. “Fingers” are a more limited application of power in the doing of evil, hence a more nefarious or *subtle* way of conniving and finagling.

If in the favorable sense, Jesus said that his miracles at the First Advent were done with the finger of God (Luke 11:20), imagine what he will do with his hand and arm in the Kingdom! He will exercise much stronger power.

Isa. 59:4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth.” The criticism was in wanting to win regardless of or in violation of justice. It would be like hiring a lawyer to win at the expense of someone else or to escape what is justly owed to another. Justice is so perverted today that many feel it is impossible to obtain.

“They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” Mischief begins in the mind and results in iniquity. A major violation, such as robbery of a neighbor, should be reported to the authorities, and we should be a witness for the neighbor in such a case even if we are threatened by the perpetrator.

In business much compromising occurs. For example, for the self-employed there are subtle

ways of trying to get out of paying taxes. Sometimes payoffs are required in order to obtain a certain kind of license. Such problems face a Christian who has his own business. The mind is apt to rationalize: "Everyone else does it."

Under the Law a Jew was obligated to report a crime or injustice lest he incur the same penalty as the one committing the wrong. The parallel for the consecrated would be the duty to call attention to certain faults among the brotherhood. Christians are not obligated to be the policemen of the world, but they are obligated to follow the same spirit with spiritual Israel as the natural Jew had to do with his own people. Thus there is more responsibility among the consecrated than among the world.

Isa. 59:5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

In former days without refrigeration, fertilized eggs could contain a foul dead chick embryo. Therefore, eggs were "candled" to make sure they were unfertilized. But with the great volume of eggs to be monitored, fertilized eggs could enter the market and the buyer had to carefully check each egg before using it. Verse 5 is talking about eggs that should be a good food. Here, however, the person was deceived into eating an egg that looked all right, but it was, in fact, a viper's egg that contained a viper. As a result, when the egg was eaten, the person died. In other words, the deadly, poisonous egg was intentionally misrepresented as being good to eat. This verse is talking about those who intentionally practice *deception* to harm their fellowman with the motive of getting more money for themselves.

Dishonest people also "weave the spider's web," meaning they sell inferior garments that are likened to a spider's web. For example, inferior cloth or material may be misrepresented as 100 percent virgin wool. The "web" looks beautiful, but being ethereal, it rents easily. Sooner or later all will be accountable for their deceptive practices, for scheming to make a profit at the expense of others.

Under the Law Covenant, sacrifices had to be offered for sins of *ignorance*. All of the cataloged sins in the Book of Leviticus are sins against knowledge. The lesson is that a person is responsible for what he does. A fully willful sin got many stripes or death depending upon the nature of the infraction. Only sins of ignorance were forgiven—but even then, *only after* the proper steps of forgiveness were taken. The point is that all are guilty before God according to the flesh except for those who have come into Christ, who knows the heart condition and the responsibilities of the consecrated.

We should ask forgiveness for specific sins we are aware of and then a general forgiveness for what we do ignorantly and are unaware of. Our faith is in the Lord to determine the degree of responsibility. He knows how to measure, for as the Scriptures say, "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). Restitution should be made to the extent that is possible, but of course some things cannot be restored because of the nature of the misdeed. As a general rule, private sins require private repentance, and public sins require public repentance and retraction.

Isa. 59:6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

Isa. 59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

Isa. 59:8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

Verses 6–8 refer to those who habitually *practice* evil and deceit and are unconcerned. They *work iniquity*, not with one act but with a *series* of evil actions. “The act of violence is in their hands” in the sense that, if deemed advisable in their eyes, they will go to even more extremes. The class described here delight in evil; it is their way of life.

The Law should have been a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ because not only did the Law make them aware of the subtleties of sin, but it provided no mercy. Constantly the Law pointed out sins and shortcomings, so the conscientious person would have been looking for a way out. Righteousness through faith would be the only hope because by the deeds of the Law no man is justified (Rom. 3:20).

Isa. 59:9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

Isa. 59:10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

Isa. 59:11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

Referring to the nation of Israel *as a whole*, verses 4–8 use the pronouns “they” and “them” and emphasize that *none* call for justice. Verses 9–11 use the pronouns “we” and “us,” and emphasize that a *righteous element* within the nation of Israel desire justice even though they are not receiving it; that is, these verses express the experience of the Holy Remnant during Jacob’s Trouble—their words, thoughts, and heart attitude. (Compare verse 4 with verse 11.) They will be perplexed and confused as they face another “holocaust” from the invading Gog host.

The Holy Remnant will “mourn sore like doves” and “roar ... like bears.” In other words, in the hard experience of Jacob’s Trouble, the individuals comprising the Holy Remnant class will respond or react differently to the anguish *according to temperament*.

Coming chapters of Isaiah will show other aspects of the Holy Remnant. Initially, they are like zombies in shock. Here salvation is far from them. They are looking for judgment; they are groping for some escape, but there is none. But as time goes on, they will begin to realize Divine Providence is favoring them.

Isa. 59:12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

Isa. 59:13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

Isa. 59:14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

In Jacob’s Trouble when the Holy Remnant are looking for an escape, a way of hope, but do

not discern any and are in a sorrowful condition, a beneficial change will come over them. This “righteous” class will recognize that the experience, the trouble, has come upon them because of their transgressions and iniquities; that is, they will be *repentant* and recognize that they have done wrong. They will be further depressed, however, in that while they recognize their sins, they will think it is too late. While they will say, “We have departed away from our God,” they will feel there is no hope of recovery because *Gog is being victorious*. All around them, the Holy Remnant will see violations of justice and the overwhelming authority of those who are attacking them (“judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter”). The enemy will make great gains at first. Another element will also be overwhelming them at this time, as we will find out later.

Isa. 59:15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

Isa. 59:16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Verse 16 says that God “*wondered* that there was no intercessor.” The word “wondered” might seem strange, but there is an explanation, as follows. God knows all things before they happen, and of course Jesus knows what events will occur in Jacob’s Trouble. In regard to us, we have faith in God’s prophecies and *know* they will be fulfilled, yet we marvel at certain ones. Jesus marveled during his earthly ministry (Matt. 8:10; Mark 6:6). Certain things are astounding. For instance, suppose someone is being brutally murdered in a public place and the 40 or 50 people watching do not interfere because of fear of losing their own lives. Even though we know this is the general attitude of the public, we would marvel that not one person had the courage to stop the brutality or that at least two did not think to act together. And so the Lord Himself marvels at times, even though He knows the situation.

Verse 15 indicates that those who try to do good will be evilly treated: “he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.” The standard is so low that the person who stands up for right will become a target or a “prey.” In the company of evil, in group association with evil (such as in a street gang), the difficulty of standing up for what is right becomes very apparent.

Of course the context here in Isaiah is Jacob’s Trouble and the heart attitude and state of confusion of the Holy Remnant at that time. Zechariah 14:2 says that Jerusalem will be captured, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Will anyone try to save the screaming victims in that experience in Jerusalem? No! None will help. The other Jews will try to hide or run away to save their own skins. When the enemy is numerous, no one will stand up. Even the Holy Remnant will be like zombies, like “dead men,” confused and groping like the blind (verse 10). Conditions will appear bleak and hopeless.

Q: Is verse 15 saying that those who try to do right will be scorned by the unrighteous majority all around them?

A: The right-hearted Jews will observe that “truth is fallen in the street” (verse 14). They will mourn like doves and be appalled as they see the persecution and evil taking place, but after a while they will realize that they themselves are being spared, that they are marked

for deliverance. Verse 15 is describing conditions before that realization takes place.

Q: Doesn't the commandment say that we should lay down our lives for our brethren?

A: Yes, but in the right way. For instance, there are certain circumstances, such as when a person is doing wrong, where love dies on behalf of that party. When Jesus died for the world of mankind, he also died for the Church, for the hope of the Kingdom, etc. In marriage a man is to regard his wife as his own flesh. He should be willing to die for his wife, but he should also consider self. We are to love others *as* we love self, *not more* than self. For example, we must work out our own salvation. In doing that, we try to help others, but we would not sacrifice our own salvation, normally speaking. A little discrimination must be used lest we forfeit the high calling under a misguided effort of trying to help others. In other words, we should not sacrifice ourselves as new creatures in the interest of others to the neglect of our own salvation. And certainly we should not allow ourselves to go into Second Death in an effort to "love" and help others improperly.

In this context here in Isaiah (verses 15 and 16a) about the Holy Remnant and Jacob's Trouble, the Lord has not yet intervened, manifesting His interest in saving them. The enemy is unchecked and violence is everywhere. Then the last half of verse 16 reads: "his arm brought salvation unto him." As God's "arm," Jesus will be the instrument of salvation. Although the Church will also be identified with this mission, the preeminence is given to Jesus, as seen in verse 17.

Q: "It displeased him that there was no judgment." Is verse 15 saying that God will be displeased when the Holy Remnant is scorned and despised?

A: Yes. Shock and momentary paralysis will be the initial reaction of the Holy Remnant when they see atrocities being committed, but it would be abnormal not to react eventually. Consequently, they will next yearn for deliverance, but there is no one to help (no human help), for no one will stand forth as a leader and intercede. Hence God will use His "arm" Jesus (and the Church). The Church will intercede and stop the trouble by pouring upon the enemy great cataclysms and phenomena of nature.

After the trouble and destruction and the evil and chaos are stopped, the next step will be *reconstruction* through the resurrected Ancient Worthies. (They will be raised at the peak of the Time of Trouble.) The Ancient Worthies will receive instruction—perhaps they will hear a voice in the inner ear as they did in Old Testament times.

Q: Will the Ancient Worthies be raised with perfect characters?

A: They will be perfect physically and mentally, and they will have perfect characters from the standpoint of moral fiber but not from the standpoint of maturity of understanding. When raised, they will have faithful characters but not be fully enlightened as to their office or duties. Even Jesus, as the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). In the present life the Church receives a schooling for their future office, but the Ancient Worthies were not so instructed.

Isa. 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

Jesus will gird himself *as a warrior* (not a priest) to go forth and fight for Israel. He will put on a breastplate of righteousness, a helmet of salvation, garments of vengeance, and a cloak of zeal. Verse 17 is another way of saying that Jesus will establish the Kingdom *with power and authority* during Jacob's Trouble. During the Gospel Age, God has been relatively quiet because to manifest Himself too clearly to the world would defeat the call of faith. He has purposely refrained from rewarding the good and destroying the evil. But when the present age is finished and God has accomplished His purpose, Jesus will change his role from that of Aaron to that of Melchisedec.

In the days of the Romans when a serious conflict was imminent, the generals confidently and courageously put on a cloak of authority over their other garments to signify they were ready for battle. Their zeal transferred to the soldiers under their command. And so Jesus' cloak of zeal signifies his determination to deliver the Holy Remnant.

Isa. 59:18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

According to their deeds, God will punish the enemies of Israel (Gog), for in reality they are *His* adversaries.

"To the islands he will repay recompence." God will recompense the republics of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish (Ezek. 38:13). Basically speaking, the interest of the United States in Israel is a self-interest, not a real love for the Jew. The United States wants to keep Israel strong because of the nation's strategic location and the oil in the Middle East.

Sheba (the United States), Dedan (France), and Tarshish (England) will have forces on the scene in Israel as observers or onlookers. In effect then, all nations from both East and West will be represented in one capacity or another in the drama in Israel at the end of the age. Of course the Western nations will not be aggressive participants in the warfare against Israel like the forces of Gog. Western observers will already be in Israel before anarchy breaks out worldwide, and they will remain there during Jacob's Trouble.

Q: Since the prophecies indicate oil will be found in Asher, will the desire for oil be one of the motivations for Gog's going down into Israel to take a spoil?

A: There is no Scripture to indicate oil will be found before the Kingdom is established. The two prophecies about oil being found in Asher are Genesis 49:20, "Asher ... shall yield royal dainties" and Deuteronomy 33:24, "Let him [Asher] dip his foot in oil." Gog will pillage Israel for a "great spoil" of food, cattle, and goods and for their strategic location but not for oil (Ezek. 38:11-13).

Q: Wouldn't all nations be gathered against Israel at the time of Gog and Magog?

A: No, Gog and its confederate armies will be gathered *against* Israel, but not the representative forces of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish.

Q: Then how does the Revelation 16:14,16 picture apply about all nations being gathered to Armageddon?

A: Armageddon is a condition, not a place. As used prophetically, the Valley of Jehoshaphat is also a condition (Joel 3:2,12).

Q: How is Armageddon related to Jacob's Trouble?

A: They are different pictures. Armageddon of Revelation 16 is a spiritual picture, the emphasis being on a *worldwide* condition. Armageddon will start first, and Jacob's Trouble will occur in Israel at the end or climax of Armageddon.

Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish will not be in Israel for the purpose of destroying and taking a spoil. In fact, initially they would like to preserve Israel, but when the Western world, the home governments they represent, collapse in anarchy, their thoughts will be on self-preservation. In other words, when Jacob's Trouble occurs and the other nations are in anarchy, then every man will be for himself. At that time some of the individuals comprising Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish will pillage Israel just like Gog and Magog. Those individuals will be held accountable. Hence God will recompense not only Israel's adversaries and enemies (Gog, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah) but also those of the "isles" who then try to spoil Israel.

Isa. 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

This verse identifies the context of Isaiah 59 as being Jacob's Trouble. It is the time when "the enemy shall come in like a flood."

"From the west, and ... from the rising of the sun" is another way of saying "from west to east," ie, the entire Western and Eastern world. In other words, there will be a *worldwide* recognition of God.

Q: Is "the enemy [that] shall come in like a flood" a reference to Gog?

A: The enemy will be Gog plus materialized fallen angels, as can be proven by New Testament Scriptures.

"The spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him [the enemy]" in Jacob's Trouble. In battles of old, a "standard," a pole with an emblem, was used to signify or identify the forces. The standard would mark the emperor's forces, for example, the best fighters of the opposing forces. And so when the enemy comes in like a flood and dominates the situation, all of a sudden the standard of Jehovah will be raised up. At that point the tide of the battle will radically change in the Lord's favor. Daniel 12:1 is talking about the same time and setting: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel]."

How will the "spirit of the LORD" lift up the standard? God will speak with authority: "The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). When the enemy comes against Israel, God's *fury* will come up in His face, meaning His anger will no longer be contained. Although, generally speaking, the Lord has purposely hidden Himself down through the ages, He has been cognizant of the injustices and wrongs. But during the Gog invasion of Israel, God will intervene and say, "ENOUGH!" The forces of Gog will then *know He is mad* (Ezek. 38:18). *His fury, His judgments, will be seen!*

After Gog has been doing mischief and violence to Israel for a while, God will *suddenly* lift

up a standard and manifest His anger by going forth to fight for His people as in the days of old. The “spirit” (POWER) of God will lift up a standard—similar to the way He parted the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus with “the blast” of his nostrils (Exod. 15:8). In other words, the blast or *revelment of His power and authority* opened the Red Sea. And the revelment of God’s power in the future will be SUDDEN. The Kingdom will not quietly phase in—it will be established with *great power and great glory*.

Isa. 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

A little while after the Church is complete, “the Redeemer [The Christ] shall come to Zion [natural Israel] ... [to rescue] them [the Holy Remnant] that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” Verse 20 is a powerful proof text to show that the Holy Remnant will be a repentant, contrite class. Over and over again the Book of Isaiah shows that the nation of Israel will be purged so that only the “*holy*” Jew will be delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble.

Isa. 59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

“This is my [new] covenant with them, saith the LORD.” God will establish His New Covenant with the righteous element in Israel. “*My spirit* that is upon thee [the righteous element], and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart ... saith the LORD.” This sounds like Zechariah 12:10, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit of grace and of supplications*: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and ... mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.”

“My spirit ... shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed ... from henceforth and for ever,” saith the Lord God. Joel 2:28,29 is a similar prophecy: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your [Israel’s] sons and your [Israel’s] daughters shall prophesy, your [Israel’s] old men shall dream dreams, your [Israel’s] young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” God will put His spirit primarily in the mouth of the Ancient Worthies. The words of authority and instruction will be given predominantly through the Ancient Worthies. Men will again “dream dreams,” as did Joseph and Daniel in the Old Testament. And just as God communicated through the Logos, Gabriel, and other angels, so a lot of communication and decision making in the Kingdom will be done in a miraculous fashion, but this time through the glorified Church. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3). In other words, it will be commonly recognized that communication with God is coming through Jerusalem and Israel and that the New Covenant has been made with that nation.

Isa. 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

Isa. 60:2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

“The glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” The glory of God will rise upon the Holy Remnant of Israel at the end of Jacob’s Trouble.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come.” When the light comes on Israel, the earth will still be in darkness and the people in gross darkness. The directive “arise, shine” shows that a *definite or fixed time* is coming in God’s plan when He will establish His Kingdom in power and great glory.

In the past, the glory cloud of the Lord over the Tabernacle in the wilderness was an evidence of God’s presence on behalf of the nation of Israel. As surrounding nations confronted Israel, they noted the distinctiveness of this cloud, which led and sheltered the nation from sandstorms, excessive heat, and cloudbursts—as if the God of nature were protecting Israel in the desert. Therefore, this future arising and shining on Israel suggests that a time will come at the end of the Gospel Age when God will *visibly manifest* His favor to deliver the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble (Ezekiel 38 and 39).

The interesting point is that when God intervenes to rescue and deliver Israel, the other nations will all be in anarchy. “Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”

Isa. 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Christians have applied the language in verse 3 to the Church and its leadership role in the next age. But this verse should not be considered alone, for it is part of a continuous context about God’s redemption of Jacob and the introduction or establishment of the Kingdom.

“Kings [shall come] to the brightness of thy rising.” When the Kingdom is inaugurated, the “*brightness*” of Israel’s rising will be *rapidly apparent*. The establishment of the Kingdom will not be a gradual process requiring 30 or 40 years but will happen speedily and with *great power and glory*.

Q: Is the clause “the Gentiles shall come to thy light” another way of saying, “And many people shall ... say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3)?

A: Yes, and another parallel Scripture is Zechariah 8:23, “Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” There are many other such Scriptures, including some still coming in Isaiah.

Isa. 60:4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Natural Israel is told to “lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all ... thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” This text is describing Israel’s sons and daughters who will go back to Israel *after* Jacob’s Trouble. In other words, there are to be two regatherings of Jews to Israel: (1) The first regathering has been taking place since 1878. This mixed group of Jews, who have been returning to Israel for various motives, will go

under the rod and be purged in Jacob's Trouble (Ezek. 20:37). (2) After the Kingdom is established, all surviving Jews elsewhere in the world will be shipped back to Israel. Verse 4 is describing this second regathering. When the Gentiles realize that the God of Israel, the true God, has distinctly manifested His recognition of the Jews as His people and that the word of the law is to go forth from Jerusalem, they will make sure that every Jew gets back to his homeland.

Only by selective divine intervention will any Jew survive not only Jacob's Trouble in Israel but also the great Time of Trouble in Gentile lands. Individual Jews will be hand-picked for miraculous survival, whereas with regard to the world of mankind, generally speaking, the promise is simply to "seek righteousness, seek meekness: it *may be* ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph. 2:3).

Notice the particular wording in verse 4: "thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." The RSV is better for the last part of this verse: "your daughters shall be carried in the arms." The thought is not that the sons will be coming from far away and the daughters are already resident in Israel but that all Jews, male and female, who survive the trouble will be sent back to Israel in the second regathering.

Isa. 60:5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

The Revised Standard Version reads: "Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you." The "abundance of the sea," the anarchistic masses, who are the Gentiles in this setting, will be "turned" or "converted" to Israel. In the Time of Trouble God's light will arise on Israel *first*; that is, *before* it arises on the rest of the earth. It will be like a spotlight in a theater shining out of darkness on a particular actor on the stage. The world's attention will thus be focused on the drama occurring in Israel at the time of Jacob's Trouble and God's deliverance of the Holy Remnant. It will be seen that God is establishing His Kingdom in Israel.

Darkness (anarchy) will be covering the whole earth and thick darkness the people at the time when the light, the glory of Jehovah, arises on Israel (Isa. 60:1). Like the wild, choppy, unstable sea, the world will be troubled and wild in anarchy when God brings a calm to Israel. Soon the stabilizing influence of peace will spread to the other nations and becalm them, but the calm will *first* occur in Israel. At that time the Lord will say, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa. 46:10).

Isa. 60:6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD.

"The multitude of camels shall cover thee [natural Israel], the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come." Camels and dromedaries were the mode of travel in Isaiah's day—the ships of the desert, as it were. Hence the prophet used these animals prophetically to symbolize the future means of conveyance that would exist in our day.

Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, and Nebaioth (verse 7) are all related to Ishmael. (This is not

the Sheba in Ethiopia.) Nebaioth was Ishmael's first son; Kedar was the second son. Nebaioth, Kedar, and Sheba were from the East, beyond Edom. About the fourth century BC, the Nabateans settled in Petra.

Sheba will "bring gold and incense." This is a reminder of the First Advent when the three wise men brought gifts. Traveling on camels from afar, from a country and people not indigenous to Israel, they paid homage to and recognized that Messiah had been born in Israel. A parallel will exist in the beginning of the Kingdom. When the light of God's favor arises on Israel, there will be a Gentile response. People will come from afar to Israel, to the place whence the word of the Lord will emanate, to pay homage and respect to earth's King.

Isa. 60:7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

When the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth are gathered together, they will minister unto Israel as sacrifices for God's "altar." Even today when bedouins and their sheiks travel by camel, very often their goats and sheep accompany them. And in antitype they will come with goods to give homage to the Kingdom and its new rulership.

"I [God] will glorify the house of my glory [the literal Third Temple described by the prophet Ezekiel]." "Sheba ... shall bring gold and incense ... [to] show forth the praises of the LORD [in this future Temple]." Instead of gold and incense, those of Kedar and Nebaioth will bring animals to offer on God's altar in the Third Temple. In other words, the people and nations will show deference to Israel according to ability. For the nations the deference will be shown by the giving of their products. And each person in the Kingdom will have to show obeisance according to individual capability. The sacrifices set forth in the early chapters of Leviticus picture that less will be expected from those who first come forth from the tomb than later on when they have had time for development. At first just a handful of flour, which contains no blood, or a dove will be acceptable. When fully developed, the people will be expected to offer symbolic bullocks (Psa. 51:19).

Q: Why will literal animal sacrifices be needed in the Kingdom?

A: Why is the Memorial observed now? This service is a *remembrance that hearkens back* to Jesus's sacrifice on Calvary, to what he did for us in the past. Of the future temple Ezekiel 43:18 reads: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon." Earlier verses give cubit dimensions for the lowest and middle settles. With such measurements, the Third Temple is just as literal as Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness.

With our more luxurious standard of living here in America, we do not realize that for thousands of years people lived the same primitive way without modern technology and methods—and still do in Third World countries today. In Old Testament times the people of Israel offered sacrifices to God, but they did not realize that the shedding of blood in those animal sacrifices pictured the necessity for a coming Redeemer to die on behalf of their sin. As centuries rolled by, the sacrifices became distorted and new types of services were invented. And animal sacrifices are advocated by certain heathen religions in other nations, but these lack meaning and are also distortions. In the Kingdom there will be a *true* literal picture as well as its symbolic counterpart. The Old Testament sacrifices show forth the *coming* Messiah; the Kingdom sacrifices will *point back* to Messiah. The sacrifices

described in the latter chapters of the Book of Ezekiel have not been performed up to the present time, for they belong to the New Covenant of the future and would contradict the Mosaic Law still in effect for the Jew.

Notice again the wording here in Isaiah: “they shall come up with acceptance on mine *altar*, and I will glorify the *house* of my glory.” These words are part of sacred Scripture. In the study of the Tabernacle, the more accurately one understands the literal structure with measurements, furniture, curtains, priestly garments, etc., the more detail one sees in the antitype. Put succinctly, we must understand the *literal type* in order to understand the *symbolic antitype*. And that should be our motive for studying the type: to better understand the antitype. The principle is the same for studying the future Temple of Ezekiel. The more we understand about what the *literal* structure will look like, the better we will understand the symbolic lessons. The motive is not to worship the stones and the beauty of the structure itself, but to realize what they represent and to memorialize what has happened in the past. The temporary Tabernacle class will become a permanent Temple class, a spiritual house of glory. The literal Third Temple pictures not only Jesus but the work of the Church in glory.

Many people think that that which is natural is not spiritual, but anything that enlightens us in God’s Word is spiritual. A question was asked of the Pastor, “With the *Sixth Volume* being so beautiful and so spiritual, why was the first chapter devoted to *physical* creation?” The Pastor’s reply was that Chapter 1 is the most spiritual chapter in the entire book. Not only is God’s Word truth, but “man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (John 17:17; Matt. 4:4). The chapters on Ezekiel’s Temple are part of God’s Word. Hence there is value in studying the pictures that are recorded in the Bible, including the animal sacrifices. Many who are repulsed by the thought of literal animal sacrifices think nothing of having chicken or steak for dinner. People tend to follow their emotions and thus they improperly judge certain matters without realizing they are casting a reflection on Almighty God. Remember, it is *God*, not the devil, who instituted the animal sacrifices for lessons and pictures.

Isa. 60:8 Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

The context for this question is significant. Doves and pigeons are birds with a *homing* instinct. Those in the Kingdom who have a dovelike instinct and sympathy and a desire to obey will be attracted like a magnet to Jerusalem for instruction. Then who or what “are these that fly as a cloud” and as birds? The reference is to airplanes. A camel or dromedary would be an automobile or a ship; the bird, an airplane. Hence *all modes* of transportation will be used. Any nation refusing to go representatively to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles will receive no rain (Zech. 14:16,17). In some manner *all nations* will have to pay homage representatively to the King of kings. The tiny, insignificant nation of Israel—just a speck on the world map—will be the focal point of the Kingdom, God’s headquarters, with traffic from all nations going there for instruction.

Comment: The last verse of this chapter in Isaiah verifies that thought: “A *little* one shall become a *thousand*, and a *small* one a *strong* nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.”

Reply: Yes, that is the spirit or theme of the chapter. And verse 22 also shows that at the due time, the Kingdom will come FAST. God “will *hasten* it in *his* time.” Christians have been waiting for centuries for that Kingdom, but when the last events begin to coalesce, the

prophecies will be fulfilled very rapidly. When the stage is set for the final drama and series of events, then that which seems slow in coming will *burst* upon the earth.

In the Kingdom, people with the right heart desire will want to make pilgrimages to Israel. Even now those who go there from a Biblical standpoint are not just curiosity seekers. In this day of faith and limited understanding, many have saved and sacrificed just to see the Holy Land. Imagine the desire in the Kingdom when the people will understand with clarity! They will make the trip with great thankfulness and appreciation. Over the years Catholics have gone to Rome, Moslems to Mecca, the ancients to Mount Ararat, others to Mount Sinai, etc. Pilgrimages are natural impulses and the zeal is good, for even when it is misdirected, the potential is important. In the Kingdom, the right-hearted will *greatly* desire to go to Jerusalem.

Isa. 60:9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

The “isles,” representing republics, are identified with the far-away “ships of Tarshish,” ie, England and the Western world. How do the “isles” wait for God? In the sense that the whole creation groans, unknowingly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19,22). England and the Western world wait ignorantly for God, for His Kingdom. When the Kingdom is established, the people from these nations will desire to pay homage to Israel and its God. They will send back to Israel with gifts of silver and gold the “sons” of Israel, the surviving Jews, within their borders.

The word “first” is significant. Not only will the Gentiles be converted unto Israel and give Israel wealth (verse 5), but from afar they will send Israel’s sons and daughters back to the homeland (verse 4). Now verse 9 adds the detail that England and the Western world will be *first* to ship back surviving Jews when they see that God “hath glorified thee [Israel].” These verses are describing the second regathering.

Isa. 60:10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

The “sons of strangers” will build up Israel’s walls, and their kings will minister unto Israel. Gentiles will cooperate and help as they can. Why will there be “walls” in the Kingdom? What will be the situation? Jerusalem will be reduced to a “heap” in Jacob’s Trouble; it will be leveled “as a plain” by the earthquake and lifted up (Jer. 30:18; Zech. 14:10). The rubble will have to be cleared away so that God’s buildings can be constructed. The Book of Ezekiel furnishes the exact dimensions of the city as it will be rebuilt and even names the gates. In addition, the Third Temple will be built according to specific measurements with the appointment of overseers such as Bezaleel and Aholiab. In fact, the measurements of the Temple are so specific that probably only Jews will work on this structure. Gentiles will voluntarily help in other areas of reconstruction.

Proof that this verse refers to natural Israel and not to the Church is the Lord’s statement: “In my wrath I [God] smote thee [Israel].” Not because of what the nation is today but “for the *fathers’* sakes,” God will pour grace and truth on Israel (Rom. 11:28), and the Gentiles will be happy with the Kingdom arrangement when it comes.

Isa. 60:11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

Figuratively the “gates” of Jerusalem “shall be open continually” in the sense that enthusiastic worship and the desire to do obeisance will not be stifled. God especially appreciates the spontaneity of reverence or a gift to Him. Hence He will encourage freewill offerings and a desire for cleansing day and night.

“Thy gates shall be open continually; ... that men may bring unto thee [Israel] the forces [wealth] of the Gentiles, and that their kings [leaders] may be brought.” In other words, during the Kingdom both the common people and those who have special abilities and natural prowess in fields such as music and art will be desirous of serving God and attaining salvation.

The “gates” in Revelation 21:12,13 are spiritual. There the “gate-angels” are the Ancient Worthies, who will teach and instruct the world of mankind under the tutelage of The Christ in glory.

Isa. 60:12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The nation and kingdom that will not serve Israel will “perish” and “be utterly wasted” in the sense of being brought down to the dust, ie, being *humbled*. All nations will have to serve God from the least to the greatest, from the most remote to the nearest (Jer. 31:34). They will be brought down to their knees by judgments if necessary, by the iron rod of Christ’s rule (Rev. 2:27).

Isa. 60:13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

The “glory of Lebanon”—the fir, pine, and box tree—will be used to “beautify the place of my [God’s] *sanctuary*,” ie, the Third Temple. Isaiah is saying that these trees will be selected for building the Third Temple. Similarly Hiram of Tyre supplied building materials for Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 5:1–10).

“The place of my [God’s] feet,” the Temple, will be made “glorious.” It will be God’s residence in a particular sense. In the Tabernacle arrangement, a cloud covered the entire nation of Israel, but a foot or column descended from the mother cloud and rested on the Tabernacle to signify God’s presence with the nation. The *shekinah* light was inside that pillar cloud, but it could only be seen in the Most Holy.

Isa. 60:14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Verses 1–13, previously considered, apply to natural Israel in the beginning of the Kingdom. Only the first three verses could be considered to have a spiritual application, but even then, the primary application would be natural. Verses 14 through the end of the chapter also apply to natural Israel. Verse 16 contains a clue for interpretation: “the mighty One of *Jacob* [natural Israel].” Earlier verse 10 also contained a clue: “in my wrath I smote

thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee." In His wrath God has smitten and will smite natural or fleshly Israel. God chastens and disciplines His spiritual sons of the Gospel Age, but we would not say He smites them in wrath.

"The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee." In the Kingdom, the Gentiles, who previously afflicted Israel, will go to Jerusalem, to "The city of the LORD," to pay homage. The nation that refuses to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles will receive no rain (Zech 14:16,17). Recognition must be shown that Jerusalem is the capital of the world, that the seat of Messiah's government emanates from that city. The Law will go forth from spiritual Zion, but the declaration of that Law will be uttered from Jerusalem, primarily through the Ancient Worthies, the earthly mouthpieces.

"They that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." In the Kingdom, Israel's former enemies will have to recognize the wrongs they committed against the Jews and to acknowledge that the nation is now the Israel of God. To "bow themselves down at the soles" of Israel's feet signifies *extreme homage*.

At the introduction or inauguration of the Kingdom, when Gog and Magog come down to wipe out Israel and God fights for Israel as He did in ancient times, magnifying His glory by His deliverance of the Holy Remnant in the sight of all nations, the Gentiles will see that the Holy One of *Israel* is indeed the true God. The glory of the manifestation of God's deliverance of Israel will be so great that it will have a corresponding favorable reaction on the Gentiles who are alive at that time, causing them to reverence the natural Jew. Zechariah 12:8 shows there will be a distinction between the Ancient Worthies and the Holy Remnant. "In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem [the Holy Remnant]; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David [the Ancient Worthies] shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them." The "inhabitants of Jerusalem," the common people, the Holy Remnant, will be individually strengthened as David was to fight Goliath. The "house of David," the ruling element, the Ancient Worthies, who will come forth from the tomb at "midnight" (Psa. 119:62), are to be "as [almost like] God" because of their stature. In other words, they will be very highly appreciated as the earthly representatives of God. And the Holy Remnant, the ordinary surviving Jews, will be esteemed and honored as if each were David. The principle is stated in verse 22 in regard to the tiny nation of Israel, which shall become a great nation: "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."

The same principle also applies to the Church. During the Gospel Age, God has been calling a very insignificant people, the poor of this world, not many wise, rich, or noble. The *Little Flock*, with her Head, will govern the world in the Kingdom. Spiritually speaking, therefore, out of a little one God will make a great royal nation or priesthood.

Isa. 60:15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

Isa. 60:16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

The Holy Remnant will be the recipients of "milk" (nutriments and nourishment) from other nations; ie, they will get support from the Gentiles. Following a purging with tremendous miraculous experiences, the Jews who survive the trouble will be a meek and

contrite class.

As Jews are resurrected, they will come forth in the country of their previous residence. Since in many cases this location will be a nation other than Israel, the Gentiles in that nation will ship those Jews back to Israel with gifts. Therefore, the Gentiles will ship back to Israel all Jews who are living in alien lands—not only the surviving remnant but also Jews raised from the grave. With money, gifts, goods, and transportation being furnished by the Gentiles, the return of the Jews to their homeland is a reminder of the Exodus when the Egyptians gave gifts and hastened the departure of the Israelites.

The time setting for these Jews to return to Israel with gifts and wealth would have to be the *second* regathering because most Jews now returning are taking their *own* capital and support has come from *Zionist* organizations, not Gentile nations.

Isa. 60:17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

The following minerals will be upgraded:

- Brass becomes gold.
- Iron becomes silver.
- Wood becomes brass.
- Stones become iron.

This is a picture of the Gentiles helping to build up Israel by giving *abundantly*—by giving *over and above* what would be just and reasonable. Instead of giving exactly what is needed (for example, brass), the Gentiles will give more and on a higher scale (gold). In other words, wanting to cooperate speedily with the Kingdom, the Gentiles will give Israel *generous, voluntary, freewill, and luxurious* gifts. This hearty response on the part of the Gentiles shows the POWER with which the Kingdom will be established. It will be a real eye-opener. All of the living will KNOW!

In the Kingdom, Israel will have “officers [of] peace” and “exactors [of] righteousness.” What is the difference between these two categories? In Israel’s future position of influence and power, why will there be peace officers and exactors of righteousness? How would they function? In the resurrection all people (Jews and Gentiles) will come forth from the grave with the same characters they had in the present life, the principle being “As a tree falleth, so shall it lie” (Eccl. 11:3). All kinds of characters will come forth: hardened criminals, the meek, the proud, etc. The meek and humble class and/or the poor and hungry will need to be lifted up. To such, who are the majority of mankind, the Kingdom will be very refreshing. On the other hand, thieves, crooks, murderers, and the proud will need to receive many stripes. Because they will resist the Kingdom arrangement at first, they will have to be punished and penalized under the rod-of-iron rule. Their characters will have to be corrected, molded, and changed. However, any stripes will be administered along the lines of *true justice*, and not out of vengeance or spite. While the line and the plummet will be used in judging in that day (Isa. 28:17), one class will need correction more than the other. The point is that the *same Ancient Worthies* will be viewed differently by each class. The meek class will regard them as “officers [or ambassadors of] peace.” To the dishonest and proud class, these same rulers will appear to be “exactors [of] righteousness.” In other words, when the Kingdom is established and the same rules, regulations, and standard apply to everyone, the meek will welcome that standard, but those who are hardened in wrongdoing will find it onerous.

Just as the trees (resources) of Lebanon will be used to beautify the Lord's literal sanctuary (verse 13), so the minerals of verse 17 will be used to help Israel reconstruct the cities (especially Jerusalem) and the Temple.

Isa. 60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

There will be no more violence or destruction in Israel in the Kingdom. Moreover, "thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." The *Jews themselves* will call their walls "Salvation" and their gates "Praise." With hearts overflowing in full appreciation for the goodness of the Lord, they will be a truly transformed, changed people.

What is the difference between the walls and the gates? Why should the walls be called "Salvation" and the gates "Praise"? A wall is a barrier of protection that keeps out the enemy, but it is also a barrier of security, comfort, and protection to the inhabitant within. The Jews will call the walls "Salvation" because of the realization that God is protecting and helping them and because of His promise to never again let them be uprooted and plucked out of their land.

A gate is the means of access or entry. Only those who are in the proper heart attitude will be able to enter the gate, the Kingdom arrangement. Many Psalms speak of gates and express this principle of a right heart condition being necessary for entry into security. Isaiah 35:9 states this same principle regarding God's custodial care and authority in the Kingdom: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

Isa. 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Verse 19 is one picture of the sun and moon, and verse 20 is a second picture. The two pictures seem to be in opposition to one another, for in the first picture the sun and moon do not shine and in the second one they shine all the time. However, both verses contain the thought that God will be Israel's everlasting light.

"The sun shall be no more Israel's light by day; nor the moon by night, because God will be their everlasting light" (paraphrase). This verse is figurative language, for it does not mean there will be no literal sunlight or moonlight in the Kingdom. The point is that in the Kingdom and beyond, into the ages of ages, the true source of light will be the Father Himself. The "Father of lights" will be their light and glory both day and night (James 1:17). In other words, the figurative light of the Father will so greatly exceed and overflow the literal light of the sun and moon in both importance and brightness that it is the Father's light that will be looked to and sought. While we appreciate the beauties of nature (mountains, lakes, sunsets, etc.), the Author of that beauty, the Author of creation, far outshines what He has created.

Today some people of principle with a reverential attitude have nature as their God. These are usually noble-minded people who think about the beauties of nature, but the level of their perception and appreciation is at a much lower level than in the Kingdom when God is recognized as the true light. This lower thinking will then pale into relative insignificance. Instead of worshipping the things created, the objects of His work, they will

worship the Creator Himself.

And God will be an everlasting light to Israel in the Kingdom in another sense. Even though Jesus will be the Father's representative, the full credit goes to God, for it is *His* plan, *His* purpose. Jesus will be God's minister to make sure the work is properly done.

Isa. 60:20 Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

"Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." Here the "sun" is a symbol of healing, favor, blessing, and the fullness of God's countenance. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with *healing* in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:2). "The LORD make his *face* shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up [the light of] his *countenance* upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:25,26). Therefore, the sun not going down and the moon continuing its light means that when fully effective, the light of God's favor will last throughout eternity.

With the "moon" being a symbol of the Law Covenant, the "moon" in this context would be the New (Law) Covenant. This verse indicates that once the New Covenant goes into operation, it will never cease. The entire Kingdom will be needed for the Mediator, The Christ, to bring together God and man, the two alienated parties, but once they are in covenant relationship (or at-one-ment) with each other following the test at the end of the Millennial Age, that relationship will exist forever and the people will never die anymore. It will be a perpetual covenant of natural everlasting life.

In other words, the "sunlight" will increase throughout the Kingdom, gradually getting brighter and brighter. In the beginning of the Kingdom, there will be a certain degree of light, but at the end of that day, the light will be sevenfold (Isa. 30:26). The sunlight will be very brilliant at the end of the Kingdom. For those who live through and beyond the Millennial Age, the sun and moon will never set, figuratively speaking. However, although the sun will never set, some could, as individuals, slide out of the way and go into Second Death, thus not being able to appreciate the light on into perpetuity.

Comment: It is interesting that the beginning of this very chapter speaks about darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the people during the period of anarchy. The chapter then leads us up to this beautiful picture of resplendent light at the end of the Kingdom.

Isa. 60:21 Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Although this statement would be true of all who pass the test during the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3;7-9), the time setting and application are much earlier. "Thy people [*Israel's* people, ie, the *purged Holy Remnant*] shall be all righteous [at the *inauguration* of the Kingdom]." The New Covenant will be made with Israel ("to the Jew first" is the principle), but the Gentiles will be blessed under that covenant by becoming identified with Israel (Rom. 1:16). In other words, what happens first to Israel will eventually happen to mankind. The Jews will be particularly honored at the inauguration of the Kingdom.

"They shall [be] ... the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified."

Natural Israel will be the “branch” of God’s planting and the “work” of His hands at that time, just as the Church in glory is God’s workmanship of the present age (Eph. 2:10). Israel’s being called “the branch of my planting” should not surprise us, for elsewhere in the Scriptures, Israel is likened to a vine, a vineyard, a fig tree, and a stick.

Isa. 60:22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

Not merely will that which is little become great, but God *will hasten the coming of the Kingdom* in its due time. For years many of the Lord’s people have longed for the establishment of the Kingdom and have died without seeing the fruition of their hopes, but as we approach the very end of the age, the unfolding of events will become increasingly rapid. It is like water going down a drain. When the water is almost gone, it *rushes* into the drain. In other words, as we come to the focal point or terminal end of the age, events will *rapidly accelerate*.

“In his time” is rendered better in the Revised Standard Version as “in its time”: “I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.” When the due time for the Kingdom comes, God will make a *short work* of the events to take place. The long time in coming is contrasted with the arrival of the event. “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and *hasteth greatly*, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly” (Zeph. 1:14). “Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty” (Isa. 13:6).

Isa. 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Isa. 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

Isa. 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Jesus quoted part of this prophecy while in a synagogue in Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). Notwithstanding these nice, gracious words, some of the Jews were ready to murder Jesus, thinking he was being too presumptuous.

At the First Advent Jesus omitted the last half of Isaiah 61:2 about the day of God’s vengeance. He was directing his comments and comforting message at that time, and ever since, to his followers, to the Church. But this prophecy will continue—it also extends to the world of mankind in the future as they come out of the prison house of death.

Jehovah anointed Jesus to utter these words at the First Advent, and they were directed to those who realized they needed a physician. Nothing in this prophecy indicates it is for the proud, the noble, or the rich. The message pertains to those who are of a poor and contrite

spirit—regardless of their goods or earthly connections. Various descriptions are used for those in the right heart condition: “meek,” “brokenhearted,” “captives,” “them that are bound,” “all that mourn.” Jesus’ message was an uplifting, exhilarating prophecy for those who recognized they were being oppressed with sin and sickness (physically, mentally, and morally) and who were looking for rescue. To this right-hearted class, Jesus’ words were the balm of Gilead.

Starting with Macedonia, the gospel message of truth went westward during the present age, and as it spread, it especially blessed the meek and humble class. Thus it is a blessing just to live in a country where the gospel is promulgated.

“The acceptable year of the LORD” is the Gospel Age, and those who are faithful will become “oaks of righteousness” (RSV). Later this message will extend to the world. Those who hear at that time and are faithful will be blessed but on a lower plane than the Church, ie, on the plane of human restitution. In other words, it is an “acceptable year of the LORD” to those who have a hearing ear now, but those who do not hear in the present age are guaranteed to hear in the Kingdom.

Isa. 61:4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Isa. 61:5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Verses 1–3 apply primarily to the Church, and secondarily to natural Israel and the world. Verses 4–9 apply to natural Israel.

The “waste cities” are located in Israel. Several clues indicate that the time setting of these verses is the Kingdom. For one thing, the ruins of ancient Biblical cities will be rebuilt. While spoken of as “cities” in the Bible, these numerous little hamlets and villages were actually clusters or clans of large families within the tribal divisions. The fact that these small villages will be reinhabited means that instead of large concentrations of people in cities as we know them today, the Kingdom will be a more rural arrangement with flocks of sheep and goats and with plowmen and vinedressers. The economy will be basically agricultural. In other words, during the Kingdom man will have to provide his own food. Not until after the Kingdom will man again be allowed to eat of the trees of Eden, the *grove of life*, and thus have sustained everlasting life. In the everlasting ages beyond Jesus’ reign and the Millennium, the world will return to a Garden of Eden condition with its fruitage.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve ate primarily of the fruit of trees, and not especially of the ground, even though in an earlier Creative Day God created the seed to bear its kind. God told Adam, “If you eat of the variety of fruit in this garden, you will be sustained to live forever.” Following their disobedience, Adam and Eve were barred from Eden, for if they could eat of those trees they would live forever *in spite of their sin*. The implication is that with access to those trees, they would not need to grow crops in the ground such as potatoes, carrots, etc.

“Strangers shall ... feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and ... vinedressers.” The thought is that “strangers” and “sons of the alien”—that is, *Gentiles*—will render *voluntary service*, and not that they will be delegated to a servile role. They *will want* to feed Israel’s flocks, plow the land, and dress the vines.

Isa. 61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

“Ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD.” Who are these Israelite “Priests”? The Book of Ezekiel gives the dimensions of a literal Third Temple and also tells about the future Zadok priesthood, who will officiate in that Temple. In Israel’s past, a priest had to be a son of Aaron, but in order to be a priest in the Third Temple, one will have to be a son of Zadok as well. Stated another way, the future priests will have to be of the Zadok lineage or branch of the Aaronic priesthood (Ezek. 44:15; 48:11). Zadok was a priest in David’s day at the time when Nathan was a prophet (1 Kings 1:32). Of the two contemporary high priests, Zadok is the one who remained faithful to David and to the Lord, while Abiathar went over to Adonijah’s side.

While the Zadok line will perform the priestly services in the future Temple, the Ancient Worthies will serve in a civil capacity. One at a time, they will sit in the gate in the office of “prince” (Ezek. 44:3). In other words, the “prince” is an office like the presidency, and the Ancient Worthies will take turns during the Kingdom Age being the representative Prince in the Third Temple. Psalm 45:16 describes the Kingdom role of the Ancient Worthies as “princes [plural] in all the earth” in that they will be distributed throughout the earth with regional jurisdictions while one “Prince” at a time presides in Jerusalem. Both the office of Prince and the various regional or geographic jurisdictions will be rotational, so that the Ancient Worthies will have the privilege of returning to their own homeland as well as of serving in various countries.

Comment: Such a rotational arrangement will be a great blessing for the people throughout the world in that over the years they will have close contact with many Ancient Worthies.

Reply: Yes, and the Ancient Worthies will benefit too from the rotation.

The indication seems to be that David will be the first Prince in the Kingdom. One reason for this conclusion is that Zadok lived in David’s day. Of course Zadok himself will be the first high priest.

“Zadok” means priest, and it is interesting that the title “Melchizedek” (also spelled “Melchisedec”) means prince or king (*melek*) and priest (*zedek*). (See Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 5:6.) The Book of Ezekiel provides for both a priesthood and a prince in connection with the Third Temple, and the Temple itself pictures the order of the Melchizedek priesthood (instead of the old Aaronic or Levitical priesthood).

The emphasis on “ye” and “you” in verse 6 (“ye shall be named,” “men shall call you,” “ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles”) shows that in addition to the Jewish priesthood of the Kingdom, most of the Ancient Worthies will be Israelites. In the 1,656 years prior to the Flood, which is more than one fourth of the history of the human race up to the present day, there are only four Ancient Worthies we can be sure of: Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Shem. On the other hand, the Jewish Age produced the major and minor prophets, Jacob, Joseph, the judges, etc. Although not all of the names of the Ancient Worthies are known to us by any means, this listing gives some idea of the proportion of individuals who made the grade prior to and during the Jewish Age. The fallen angels are one factor that adversely influenced the number of Ancient Worthies being developed in the years before the Flood.

Not only did the fallen angels materialize, but their activities resulted in a mixture of human and angelic seed and a prevalence of violence and lust in the earth, so that conditions did not favor the development of a righteous class.

Comment: Since the fallen angels were most disobedient during the 120 years just prior to the Flood, that leaves about 1,400 years for development. With mankind being in a more perfect condition during that time (ie, not as fallen), it is surprising there were not more Ancient Worthies, although of course earth's population was much smaller.

Reply: There may have been other Ancient Worthies prior to the Flood, but we can name only four with certainty. It is likely, however, that the majority of those mentioned in the fifth chapter of Genesis were faithful. Methuselah, who lived 969 years, died of natural causes the very year (or even the very day) the Flood came (Gen. 5:27). Hence he could have been an Ancient Worthy.

In summary, perhaps 90 to 95 percent of the 144,000 Ancient Worthies will be Jews. From Jacob onward, all would be Jewish up to John the Baptist. Even adding Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, the number of non-Israelite Ancient Worthies is small. Rahab and Ruth are proselyte exceptions.

While the clause "ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD" refers to the Zadok priesthood, the following clause, "men shall call you the Ministers of our God," is speaking about the Ancient Worthies. (The word "Ministers" means "Servants.") The role of the priests will be more ceremonial. Zadok and his sons will be in the Temple performing the religious services that are specified in the latter chapters of Ezekiel, whereas the ministers (servants), the Ancient Worthies, will do the governing work throughout the earth. In other words, down here on earth in the Kingdom, civil and religious offices will be kept separate. It is The Christ in the heavenly realm who will coordinate the activities of religion and government. Even in Old Testament times, kings and priests were separate individuals in almost all cases. For example, the Levites had no inheritance in the land.

Similarly, the Christian tries to stay out of politics, for Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). That does not mean we could not vote if legislation were passed make voting mandatory. In such a case we would be merely obeying the law of the land. The exception would be the end of the age, for then conscience would be involved. At that time when meetings are forbidden, the government would be tampering with the vitals of Christian life.

Isa. 61:7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

"For your shame ye shall have double." For their past shame, Israel will have an overflowing of blessing in the Kingdom. "Double" means that Israel had their cup of sorrow, anguish, punishment, trial, and persecution in the past, and now their cup will be filled with blessing, joy, and exuberance in the Kingdom. "They shall rejoice in their portion" when they are so honored in the future. "In their land they shall possess the double: [and] everlasting joy."

Israel's period of shame lasted for 1,845 years. If the double were an exact mathematical correspondency here, the period of honor and blessing would have to extend into the ages

beyond the Kingdom because less than a thousand years remain of the Millennium. Therefore, according to the context of verse 7, the word “double” (Hebrew *mishneh*) is not a chronological double but is used as a similar portion in a generalized sense.

Isa. 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

“For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering.” In the Kingdom the practices of the present and past ages will not be tolerated. Judgment will be fair and there will be no more blemished offerings. Malachi 1:8 tells that in the past the Israelites brought sick and lame animals for the tithe or for offerings to the Lord and retained the healthy animals for themselves. In noting this practice, God said that in His sight it was like offering dead dogs to Him (Isa. 66:3). God will have patience with the Adamic weaknesses of mankind in the Kingdom, but where there is responsibility, He will reward obedience and punish disobedience.

“I will make an everlasting covenant with them.” God will make the New Covenant with the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31).

Isa. 61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

In what sense will Israel’s “seed ... be known among the Gentiles”? The Ancient Worthies will be known and distributed throughout the earth as ambassadors. Of course the office of the Prince, the headquarters of the Ancient Worthies, will remain in Jerusalem, for the word of the Lord will go forth from there (Isa. 2:3), but the representation of that government will be through the dispersed Ancient Worthies.

In the heavenly phase or executive branch of the Kingdom, the commandment of the Law will go forth from Zion, the Church in glory, who will be *both kings and priests* (in contrast to the *separate* functions down here of the Prince and the Zadok priesthood). That Law will go down to Jerusalem, to the earthly phase of the Kingdom, to the Prince, the nominal head, the mouthpiece of the Church. The Church will communicate their wishes and instructions to the Prince, who will, in turn, properly discharge the message to those down here on earth who can do the work.

“Their offspring ... [shall be known] among the people.” There are two ways of viewing the word “offspring.” A later chapter of Isaiah will furnish more information on this subject, and at that time a fuller explanation will be given. For now the following will suffice. Consider Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as grandfather, father, and son, respectively. Isaac and Jacob are the offspring of the seed Abraham. When the three come forth from the tomb, the people will see not only the patriarch Abraham but his descendants. This verse is one clue, therefore, that the Ancient Worthies will *rotate* geographic assignments. And one reason for the rotation is to prevent the Prince from being honored too preeminently over the other Ancient Worthies. For example, if David were the Prince for the duration of the Kingdom, the people would think about him more than about Jesus. Thus the highest focal point and honor will go to Jesus. He is *the Head* of the Kingdom, and although all will look up to The Christ, Jesus will be singularly at the top of the Pyramid. The office of Prince is merely a means by which the invisible Christ will exercise his authority and influence on the earth.

Isa. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

Notice the change in pronouns to “I,” “my,” and “me” in this verse. These pronouns tie in with verses 1–3, the reference being to Jesus first and then to The Christ. Jesus read part of verses 1–3 in the Nazareth synagogue, ending with “This day is this scripture [*beginning* to be] fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). In other words, the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1–3 started at that time.

By Jesus’ quoting verses 1–3, we know that preaching the “good tidings unto the meek,” binding “up the brokenhearted,” proclaiming “the acceptable year,” etc., are the privilege of Jesus Christ. But verse 10 now adds an important detail, which *proves* that verses 1–3 apply to the Bride as well as to the Bridegroom. “He [Jehovah] hath covered me with the [actual] robe of righteousness.”

We can think of The Christ as an individual, as a man. Paul wrote, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac [an individual] was, are the children [plural] of promise” (Gal. 4:28). Paul is saying that Isaac pictures The Christ, Head and body. The next question is, How does a person wear a robe? It covers the shoulders, *not the head*, and continues on down over his body. Jesus did not need to be clothed with righteousness because he was already righteous, but the Church, being children of Adam and hence sinners according to birth, need and receive at consecration an imputed robe of righteousness from Jesus. From this standpoint, The Christ can be said to be clothed with the robe of righteousness, and the pronouns “I,” “my,” and “me” in verse 10 refer to The Christ. “He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a *bridegroom* decketh himself with ornaments, and as a *bride* adorneth herself with her jewels.”

God “hath clothed me with the garments [plural] of salvation.” One garment of salvation, the *imputed* robe of Christ’s righteousness, is given in the present life. This loaned robe is a foretaste of the joy to come to those who are faithful. A second garment of salvation, the *actual* robe will be given at the marriage to the more-than-overcomers.

These verses are basically a picture of the future, but the garments have a start in the *present* life. From the finished standpoint, when the Little Flock are beyond the veil, they will each have actual white robes and crowns and be bedecked with jewels. All who make this grade will have displayed an exceptional degree of dedication and enthusiasm in the *present* life. And they will have esteemed the privilege of being with Jesus so highly that they are faithful unto death. They will all have the attitude “This one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13).

Isa. 61:11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Why is this last verse included? To show that just as surely as a person puts seed in the ground and in time a plant springs or comes forth according to the laws of nature, “so GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.” God planted seed thoughts or prophecies in the Old Testament. He sowed light for the righteous (Psa. 97:1). Now, way down here at the end of the age, we can see that seed starting to come forth. God

expects results and so can we. The principle is stated in Isaiah 9:7, "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." In other words, certain events were prophesied and Jehovah *guarantees* the results, the fulfillment. The Lord of hosts has put His stamp of approval on these events and they *will be performed*. Isaiah 55:10,11 uses the same type of logic: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it *shall accomplish* that which I please, and it *shall prosper* in the thing whereto I sent it." As the rain causes the earth to bud, so shall God's Word accomplish His purpose and bear fruitage; it shall not return unto Him void. God used easy-to-understand language by coming down to the level of the ordinary Jew who was given to agriculture.

Isa. 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

The caption for this chapter in some Bibles is "God's Promises of Salvation for Zion." In this context "Zion" is the Church and "Jerusalem" is natural Israel. The terms are used together and the definitions are the same in Isaiah 2:3, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Sometimes in Scripture when two names are used together, one following the other in the same verse, the usage is for the purpose of repetition and the meaning is the same but not here.)

God will not hold His peace or rest until the righteousness of Zion (the Church) goes forth as brightness and the salvation of Jerusalem (natural Israel) as a burning lamp or torch. With natural Israel, this statement is particularly true as regards the Holy Remnant, of which the remaining chapters of Isaiah will provide still more information.

A modern-day illustration of a torch is the one on the Statue of Liberty. While the torch does not literally burn, it burns symbolically. The French people gave the Statue of Liberty to the United States to show their appreciation for the American Revolution and the uprising of the people against the tyranny of England and for breaking the yoke of Colonialism. With the Declaration of Independence being signed in 1776, the French Revolution followed the American Revolution, and it covered the ten years from 1789 to 1799. The *Second Volume* explains that the American Revolution triggered the French Revolution, although the latter was the breaking of tyranny on a larger scale. The domination of the nobility and the clergy was overthrown in France, which was the stronghold of conservatism in Europe.

Just as the torch on the Statue of Liberty is a beacon of liberty, enlightenment, and leadership, so God will lift up a similar ensign in Israel for all nations to behold when He miraculously delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. The victory will herald the new age. (We are already in that age in a chronological sense, but when the Kingdom is established, the world will know in a practical sense that the new age has come.)

Isa. 62:2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

Verse 2 is saying that both the Church and natural Israel will be called by a "new name." Verse 4 gives Israel's new name as "Hephzibah" and the name of the land as "Beulah." The group name for the Church will be "Jehovah-tsidkenu," ie, "The LORD our

righteousness[es]" (Jer. 33:16). Elsewhere Jesus is given the title "The righteousness of Jehovah." The name for the Church is in the feminine; that for Jesus is in the masculine. God will not rest until the "righteousness" of The Christ goes forth (verse 1). The Christ, the great Deliverer in glory, shall come forth and deliver natural Israel.

Isa. 62:3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

The Church will be "a crown of glory" and "a royal diadem" in God's hand. In a secondary sense, after the Ancient Worthies are raised, the Kingdom is in operation, Jerusalem is rebuilt, the Third Temple is complete, and benefits are made manifest to the people (such as coming forth from the tomb, healings, peace, and joy), the world will look to Jerusalem as the center of blessing. Israel and Jerusalem will be emblematic of the Kingdom. Ezekiel Chapter 48 describes how the new *earthly* Jerusalem, the future capital of the world, will be built. With the headquarters for the Ancient Worthies being the Third Temple in Jerusalem, the eyes of the world will be focused on that land and city. In harmony with the wonderful message to go forth from Jerusalem, God will overrule so that beautiful architecture adorns the city. Israel will flourish and blossom like a rose.

Isa. 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

The "Forsaken" and "Desolate" one would be *natural* Israel. While the Church, *spiritual* Israel, are forsaken too in a sense, especially during the Dark Ages, most of their trials are permitted as part of the ministry of evil that develops them, and some trials are for wrongdoing. The reverse is true of natural Israel: most of the suffering experiences of natural Israel were punishments for sinning against their covenant with God, and some experiences were educational in nature. Of the Church, the Apostle Peter said, "If ye suffer for *righteousness'* sake, happy are ye" (1 Pet. 3:4).

Verse 4 refers primarily to natural Israel. "Hephzibah," the future name for the people, means "My delight is in her." "Beulah," the future name for the land, means "married"; in other words, "thy land shall be married."

Isa. 62:5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Notice the figurative language in verse 5. "As a *young* man [one who is more enthusiastic, exuberant, enamored, etc.] marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee." This thought harmonizes with verse 1, where God said, "For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until their salvation goes forth as a lamp." It is as if God is impatient for this day to come. He will wait for the set date and time according to His plan, but He longs for and looks forward to the time when His own name will be vindicated, let alone the names of Jesus, the Church, and natural Israel. This is comparable to a man who sets a date for a marriage and waits and waits on pins and needles for the event, anticipating it with joy, knowing it will bring a period of *rest and peace*. God is using a human illustration to show that He has emotion.

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." The Holy Spirit guided the wording here to apply to both the Church and natural Israel. As a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so (1) *Jesus* will rejoice over the Church and (2) *God* will

rejoice over natural Israel. Jesus can be considered as the God of the Church in the sense that David said in Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” In other words, David recognized Jesus as his Lord, and so does the Church. Jesus will marry the Church, her Lord, and both will reverence the Heavenly Father, their “LORD.”

With natural Israel the illustration is different. The marriage of the New Covenant will be between God and the nation of Israel. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” (Jer. 31:31). As discussed in an earlier lesson, all things being equal, the marriage between God and Israel would be higher than the marriage between Jesus and the Church. But other details in Scripture clarify the marriages. With regard to the marriage of Jesus and the Church, God planned that Jesus would have not only a *collective* Bride with a *collective* name but a *personal and distinctly separate* relationship with each member of the Bride class and a *personal* name known only to that individual and Jesus (compare Rev. 3:12 and Rev. 2:17). It is the *personal, individual relationship* between Jesus and each of the 144,000 saints that makes this the higher marriage. And of course those comprising The Christ will have the divine nature. On the other hand, the marriage between God and the nation of Israel will be a more limited contract. Not only will it be a contract of human restitution, but it will be a *collective* marriage only—and thus a lower relationship than between Jesus and the Bride.

Some translators try to evade the thought of God marrying Israel because they think of the nation as being permanently cast off and rejected. Henceforth when the Bible speaks about Israel, these translators apply the term to the Church; they look at the prophecies from the spiritual standpoint only. However, the Harvest message has shown from Romans 11 that after the Church is complete, all Israel will be saved and restored to the relationship lost during the Diaspora.

Q: How will the relationship between God and natural Israel be manifested?

A: By the miraculous deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble, by Jerusalem being the capital of the world, by the Third Temple being built there, by the majority of Ancient Worthies being Jews, by the judgment work and headquarters of the Ancient Worthies being in Israel, by temporal rewards and prosperity, etc.

Q: In the beginning of verse 5, who is the “thee”? “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry *thee*.” As the Jews come forth from the grave, will they marry their own land?

A: Under the Old Law Covenant, the Israelites knew that they were pleasing God by their temporal blessings. In other words, *earthly* reward showed their obedience. When the Holy Remnant is rescued at the end of the age, they will be the nucleus of the Kingdom with the Ancient Worthies as the princes. Thus both the nation and the Ancient Worthies will be honored. The Holy Remnant will be seen as a remarkably changed people. And the prosperity along natural lines, the blessings that attend them, will be an evidence of God’s pleasure. Just as under the Old Covenant God said, “If you do so-and-so, I will do such-and-such,” so it will be under the New Covenant. In other words, earthly rewards will show God’s favor to Israel, the Ancient Worthies, and the Holy Remnant.

The way verse 5 is worded, it could be interpreted as Israel’s sons marrying the land as well

as God marrying the sons in a collective sense. “As a young man marrieth a virgin [singular], so shall thy sons [plural] marry thee [the land].” As God collectively marries the nation of Israel, so shall Israel’s sons marry the land. Thus two pictures are coordinated here, one following right after the other. (1) God marries the nation of Israel. (2) The Jews marry the land of Israel.

The Old Law Covenant was like a marriage contract. Under the covenant there were stipulations and laws to which the nation said, “I do,” agreeing to “cherish, honor, and obey,” as it were. In a marriage, however, the rules are unwritten. The bottom line of the contract is signed with a verbal “I do,” and lo and behold, as the years pass, problems arise. Only in certain unbearable circumstances would there be a legitimate Scriptural reason for ending a marriage.

The standard marriage vow is a simple contract. For Christians to embellish their marriage vows with extra clauses and conditions, as is often done today, more condemnation is heaped on the husband and wife if the conditions are broken. It is better to keep the vows simple.

Isa. 62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,

Verse 6 is a break in thought.

Comment: There seems to be a connection between the “watchmen” here and those in the Song of Solomon (5:7). After the Church is beyond the veil, the Great Company will give a persistent message to Israel that will be rejected initially.

Reply: The “watchmen” in Israel will not be receptive at first. Having missed out on the marriage, the Great Company will appreciate—but too late—what they have lost. In their appreciation, they will go about the city telling of their beloved friend, the wonderful Bridegroom, as they try to reestablish the relationship. When the watchmen ask whom they are looking for, the Great Company class will respond by describing the Master in such glowing terms that after a while the watchmen will begin to get interested.

Once again there is a double application. There are “watchmen” in the Church and there are “watchmen” in natural Israel. The seven messengers are watchmen to the Church in a special sense. God raised up these individuals with a charge concerning the Church.

Q: Wouldn’t all of the consecrated be considered “watchmen” and the elders particularly?

A: It is the same principle with the term “shepherd.” The Great Shepherd is Jehovah. Next in line is Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Next come bishops (elders) as under-shepherds. At the lowest level, each Christian is a watchman in the sense of being a steward.

Q: What is the time setting for verse 6? Is this a future picture?

A: We will go into that aspect now. The thoughts presented thus far were just introductory to show that there are different types of “watchmen.”

The fulfillment of verse 6 is between now and the establishment of the Kingdom. The watchmen will not “hold their peace day nor night”—they will not be silent—until the

Kingdom is established (see verse 7).

Comment: Verse 1 informs us that God is not holding His peace. Then verse 6 gives an extra admonition to the watchmen to keep crying out the message “Thy Kingdom come.”

Reply: That is right, for why cry out for peace when the Kingdom is here? God will not hold His peace until the Kingdom is established, and neither should we.

As with some Bibles and translations, a paragraph break is indicated at verse 6. A new thought starts here.

Comment: Verse 7 says that the watchmen are not to hold their peace until God makes Jerusalem “a praise in the earth,” which would be the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Notice that the watchmen feel the urgency of the message. (The watchmen theme occurs several times in Isaiah, although not always with the word “watchmen.”) The Pastor could have been a millionaire through the chain store concept, but he sacrificed this talent and prospect for the sake of the truth message. Throughout his lifetime he felt the responsibility of being a steward and declaring the Second Presence and other Harvest doctrines. The previous six messengers likewise felt the responsibility and urgency of their stewardships: Paul, John, Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, and Luther. Consider the many trials, hardships, and persecutions Paul endured because he felt the urgency of preaching the gospel. None of the seven messengers could rest day or night.

There are also “watchmen” in natural Israel. Leaders of the Zionist movement, such as Theodore Hertzl, have felt this urgency. Based on the Hebrew Scriptures and their love for God, Hertzl and others dedicated their lives to aiding Israel. Though God turned His back on the natural Jew for a long time during the Diaspora, He nevertheless kept alive the flickering flame of hope in their darkest hour.

This 62nd chapter of Isaiah is beautiful with the dual relationship of the Church and natural Israel. In the future it will be put to music along with Chapter 61. Although the natural class existed first, the two classes have been contemporaneous down through the Gospel Age, but now we are coming to the end of the age, which is the focal point of Isaiah in his ending chapters.

Isa. 62:7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

The watchmen hold not their peace day nor night (verse 6). In other words, they are persistent. And they are to give God no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Isa. 62:8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:

Jehovah has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength that natural Israel’s grain will no more be taken by enemies when the Kingdom is established. While previously there was a dual natural and spiritual application in this chapter, the picture is changing more and more now to just the natural application.

In the past, Israel was invaded and plundered, and their land was appropriated by conquering enemies. Their food, their daily bread, was taken and they had to fight for survival down through the age. However, when the Kingdom is set up, Israel will be at rest. The people will grow grain and plant vineyards, and they will eat the fruit and drink the wine that is produced by their own labor.

God's "right hand" and the "arm of his strength" are Jesus. God "hath sworn" by taking an oath that His covenant will be fulfilled, and He will accomplish this through Jesus. Not only Jesus' coming at the First Advent and his dying as a sacrifice for sin for the Church and the world but also his resurrection are a confirmation that God's plan *will be fulfilled*. It is as if God is raising His right hand and swearing an oath. Paul said (paraphrase), "Now that Jesus has humbled himself by dying on the Cross, God will not stop His plan" (Phil. 2:8–11). If God has gone so far as to let His own Son die, we can be sure the entire plan and His Word will be fulfilled. The death of Jesus on the Cross is the most powerful affirmation of God's intention. In this sense God has sworn by His "right hand," ie, by Jesus. In other words, this is a figurative illustration of how God swore or confirmed His oath—not merely with His *written* Word but also with the *living* Word (the Logos). What a *powerful* illustration! Both are the Word of God, and God has sworn through both. The Bible is the *written Word of God*, and Jesus is the *living Word of God*. There could not be a more powerful confirmation of God's intention. (Incidentally, Jesus did not forfeit his title "The Word." He is still the Logos, the mouthpiece of God, but he is also the mighty glorified Christ as well.)

Isa. 62:9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

"They that have gathered it shall eat it." This prophecy is a reminder of the promise that every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and eat the fruit that he produces. "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4). Israel's labor shall benefit *her*. These are earthly promises.

"They that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness." For "holiness," the Revised Standard Version has "sanctuary," ie, the Third Temple. Once we are alerted to see them, there are many, many Scriptural references to the literal Temple of the future. The fruits of Israel's labor shall be drunk "in the [outer and inner] courts of my [God's] sanctuary."

Isa. 62:10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

This verse pertains to the introduction of the Kingdom. But what "gates"? City gates? Temple gates? And what "highway"? First, a little history must be considered.

(Psa. 24:7–10) "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah." Groups of singers (called courses) were appointed for service at different times of the year in the Temple. This Psalm is intended for a choral group in the future. Some of the singers will ask a question, and other singers will give a response,

another question follows, then a response, etc.

Here in Psalm 24 the statement is made: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Then the question is asked: "Who is this King of glory?"

The response: "The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle...."

The question is repeated: "Who is this King of glory?"

Response: "The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."

What is the significance of the "head" of the gates? How could it be lifted up? In ancient times the cities were well fortified, and at night the gate to the wall was closed so that no enemies could enter and capture the city by surprise. There was only a small entrance on the side to allow individuals to enter one at a time. In some parts of the world, additional security was provided by constructing moats in front of the gates and drawbridges, which were pulled up at night. During the day when the gate was open and the drawbridge was down, watchmen were stationed on the wall. Other gates were pulled up cantilever fashion like a sliding door.

In Psalm 24 the command is given, "Lift up the gates; let the King of glory in." The people ask, "Who is this famous King? Why should we let him in?" The response is that the King of glory is *Jehovah*. Of course this is hypothetical, for nothing could deter God. The Psalm is written this way to show enthusiasm. When the people hear about God's Kingdom and what it will mean for the human race as the "desire of all nations," they will want Jehovah to "enter" and take control. They will desire His presence and favor. The setting of this Psalm is the hypothetical city of Jerusalem, and it is time for God to establish His Kingdom in that location.

Q: What is the "head" of the gate?

A: It is the contraption that lifts up the gate.

(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." This figurative highway will be for the Holy Remnant to return to Israel from "Assyria" (now Syria and Iraq). The Jewish people in these lands today are like prisoners in that they cannot leave to return to Israel. But when the Kingdom is established, the surviving Jews in Syria, Iraq, and other lands will be released to return to the homeland.

Q: Why won't these countries allow the Jews to go back to Israel?

A: There are several reasons. For one thing, many of the technicians and intelligentsia are Jews, and if these people leave, who will replace them? Another reason is that the Moslems and/or Arabs equate giving permission to encouraging the Jewish faith, which they do not recognize. But when the time comes, not only will the surviving Jews be permitted to leave, but they will be expedited back on a "highway"; ie, the Lord will figuratively clear the way for passage. There will be no bureaucratic red tape, such as visas, to delay their return.

(Isa. 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.” Egypt and Assyria are traditional long-time enemies of Israel. In the Kingdom there will be communication (“a highway”) between Egypt and Assyria, but in between them is Israel. This verse is saying that en route to each other’s country, the Egyptians and the Assyrians will stop to worship the Lord in Jerusalem (“Israel [shall] be the third with Egypt and with Assyria”). While this is a figurative highway in the sense that there will be communication, it is also a *literal* highway.

(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.” Again this is a Kingdom setting, and again the highway is figurative. It is the time when great healing will take place: the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will walk, and the dumb will sing and speak. This “highway” is for the “unclean,” but the unclean cannot take their filthy habits with them. The highway is designed for their blessing and improvement.

(Isa. 40:3) “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” John the Baptist preached righteousness and repentance from sin to prepare the hearts of the Jews to receive Messiah. Those Jews who repented and felt their need for reform were in the proper heart condition to be blessed when Jesus appeared. Hence many of John’s disciples forsook him and went over to Jesus. In humility John encouraged this transfer of allegiance, for he said he was not even worthy to tie the shoelace of Messiah.

Back to verse 10: The setting for this dramatic figurative language is the beginning of the Kingdom. “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.” The way is being prepared for the people who are going to Jerusalem, for the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). For the Feast of Tabernacles all nations will be required to send a representative delegation to Jerusalem to show their obeisance and fealty to the Lord of hosts in connection with His Kingdom, the penalty for disobedience being the withholding of rain (Zech. 14:16–19).

“Cast up, cast up the highway.” Who will do this? The people will go through the gates, but the building of the highway is another matter. Roads in ancient times were made with stones. For example, when the Romans besieged Masada, they used stones in a deep valley to make a road that led up to the top of Masada. They heaped up those stones to make a roadbed on which they drew a siege tower on a sled with men armed with bows and arrows behind it. On that hard rock bed they slid their fortress to the top of Masada, and from the tower on that sled, they looked down on the defenders inside Masada and eventually captured it. The Jews inside committed suicide rather than be captured by the Romans. But the point is that a road was made from the field stones that lay about in the countryside. Thus whenever a highway, an important road, was made in ancient times that was needed for year-round use for military or other purposes, the base was constructed of stones, for a dirt road would have turned to mud during rainy seasons and become impassable.

Comment: The Hebrew word for “cast up” is *salal*, and it does mean “to heap up.”

Reply: Yes, the thought is to cast up *heavy* stones one on top of another, to heave them up to build a stone roadbed.

The purpose of this “highway” is to have a year-round road as an easy means of

communication between the other nations and Israel. Now we get the picture. When the Kingdom is established, a foreman or traffic cop will yell, “Lift up the gates! Lift up the gates! Go through! Hurry through the gates!” He will want the congestion cleared so that the people can get into Jerusalem to receive blessings. His yelling to others to “gather out the stones” means that improvements and repairs will be made to the highway as needed. And who is this collective managerial one issuing the instructions? The Ancient Worthies. In Revelation 21:12 the Ancient Worthies are called the “angels” at the gates. They will direct traffic, as it were, giving instructions for the people to go through the gates and enter Jerusalem. Now we can see that there will be a “highway” to Assyria and to Egypt.

Q: What about the instruction to “gather out the stones?” Isn’t that a separate work?

A: Yes, the clause “cast up the highway” means to build the highway, to construct and repair it, so that the traffic will move smoothly. The command to “gather out the stones” means to remove any impediments. In other words, verse 10 is giving *enthusiastic* instructions for directing the people through the gates.

(Isa. 49:11) “I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.” With Jerusalem being the future capital of the world, a *worldwide* network of communications will be needed with Jerusalem as the hub. Directional signals and signs will point to Jerusalem, as it were. For instance, in this country our destination might be New York City. On a highway, long in advance of that destination, we see signs such as “New York City, 239 miles” as an assurance that we are headed in the right direction. In the Kingdom, the entire system of society will be oriented toward Jerusalem. In other words, Jerusalem will be the broadcast or *communication center of the world*—the television center, the radio center, etc.—for the word of the Lord will go forth from *Jerusalem*.

The thought is not that society will be “modernized” like today because much that we have at present is superficial and not really beautiful or practical. With mankind living more quietly and knowing they can live forever, they will think and act differently and lead a more natural or rural life with every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree (Mic. 4:4).

Verse 10 is telling enthusiastically that the people will be assisted into the Kingdom, but something will be needed in addition to the assistance: *obedience*. Isaiah 26:2 expresses the thought: “Open ye the gates, that the *righteous* nation which *keepeth* the truth may enter in.” And Isaiah 35:8 says, “And an highway shall be there ... called The way of *holiness*; the unclean shall not pass over it; but [yet, nevertheless] it shall be for those [for the unclean].” In other words, the purpose of Messiah’s Kingdom is to cure all mankind of their mental, moral, and physical diseases, but in order to be cured, they must *respond, cooperate, and obey*. Unto Jesus every knee must bow and tongue confess that he is Lord (Phil 2:10,11). He will rule with an iron rod (Rev. 2:27). Those who refuse to listen to the voice of that prophet will be cut off (Acts 3:23). All people will have the *opportunity* for everlasting life, but they will have to obey wholeheartedly in order to actually attain that life and happiness. The condition for entering the gates is that *inwardly* the people will have to be prepared to accept and *obey* Jesus.

That is what John the Baptist did at the First Advent. He was trying to prepare not so much the road itself but the hearts of the people to accept Messiah. Thus two works will be going on simultaneously. God takes care of the *outward* preparation—Jesus’ death on behalf of mankind, the establishment of the Kingdom with the Ancient Worthies, a worldwide

communications network, and every assistance—but the people will have to repent; ie, each individual must do an *inward* work.

“Lift up a standard for the people.” A high standard of holiness will be required in the Kingdom. “Thine ears shall hear a word *behind* thee, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it*” (Isa. 30:21).

There is a distinction between the followers of Jesus in the Gospel Age and the people in the Kingdom Age. In this age the Lord goes *in front of* his people like a shepherd before his sheep. He said, “My sheep hear my voice, ... and they *follow* me” (John 10:27). In this age, we are *invited*, not commanded, to follow Jesus. We are told to sit down and count the cost, and to be a faithful follower of Jesus, we must love him *more than self* or any family member (Luke 14:28; Matt. 10:37). In the Kingdom, however, consecration will be *mandatory*, not voluntary, and the people will hear Jesus’ voice *behind* them. The New (Law) Covenant will be the standard with the same principles of love for God and neighbor as under the (Old) Law Covenant (Jer. 31:31).

Isa. 62:11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

The “daughter of Zion” in this verse is natural Israel. When the Kingdom is established in Israel, God will proclaim to the end of (or throughout) the earth, “Behold, [natural] Israel’s salvation cometh; behold, my reward is with me, and my work is before me” (paraphrase). In the Kingdom the Ancient Worthies will receive their reward from God. In Luke 13:28 Jesus said to some in his day, “You will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom. The people will go to them for instruction and not to the scribes and Pharisees, not to the clergy.” The Ancient Worthies will be raised perfect to be the mouthpieces on the human plane to give instruction to the world of mankind, so they will be rewarded in the sense that they will have an office. God’s work will be before Him from the standpoint that the work will be accomplished through Jesus in the Kingdom.

Isa. 62:12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

The nations will call the Holy Remnant “The holy people, The redeemed [rescued] of the LORD.” It is true that all mankind are to be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but the redemption of verse 12 refers to the rescue of the Holy Remnant from Jacob’s Trouble. The Jewish people have been forsaken and persecuted in the past, but when the Kingdom is established, they will be called “Sought out, A city not forsaken.” The nations will seek out the Jew; they will “take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Following Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentiles will appreciate and want to associate with those Jews who are left as a remnant.

Isa. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

In vision the Prophet Isaiah sees a traveler approaching. As recorded by Isaiah, this scene will be dramatized in the Kingdom so that mankind can look back and see what has happened. Jesus is the glorious personage “travelling in the greatness of his strength.” He is

the “I” who speaks “in righteousness, mighty to save.” The time setting is the end of the age, shortly before the establishment of the Kingdom.

The glorious personage is seen coming from Bozrah, the capital of Edom in Isaiah’s day. (Edom is literally southeast of the Dead Sea.) Isaiah used terminology familiar to people in his day. Some Bible scholars think Petra (Sela) is the site of ancient Bozrah. To repeat, the glorious personage is seen coming back from Bozrah, the most noted city of Edom.

Why is Jesus described as being “glorious in his apparel”? To show his return as a *victorious* general bedecked in *honor, power, and authority*. Similarly, when Roman generals returned to Rome after many years, it was often an occasion for a great celebration to honor or elevate them.

Presumably, based on other pictures, Jesus is riding on a horse. The question is raised: “Who is this [hero] that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?” There is *excitement* in this picture. Jesus *himself* answers, “It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save” (RSV).

Isa. 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

Isa. 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

The tense is better for verse 3 in the Revised Standard Version: “I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.”

Now we are getting a closer inspection and there is a question, a puzzlement, an incongruity. While Jesus is bedecked in *glorious* apparel, he is besmirched with *blood*. The next logical question is “Why are your garments stained with blood?” The answer: because Jesus was in the winepress.

In a winepress the grapes are placed in a large vat. People then get into the vat to trample and crush the grapes with their bare feet. Of course the juice splatters before it drains off. Because of the heat of the day and to allow freedom of movement, the people wear minimal clothing (only a loincloth for the men) while crushing the grapes in the wine vat. They work for hours, getting more and more covered with the red juice.

In this vision, just as a man treading a literal winepress gets the “blood” of the grapes on him, so the apparel of Jesus was stained with blood. But what part of his garments were stained? Just the lower extremity. The upper portion of his garments remained clean and glorious. Thus the apparel was both soiled and glorious. Jesus’ garments got stained at the winepress in Bozrah, and now he is returning *gloriously and victoriously* in greatness of strength. He is *coming back* from having already trodden the winepress.

Edom was the large plot of land given to Esau by the Lord as a reward and a perpetual inheritance. Esau, Jacob’s brother, sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage, ie, for that which was temporal. Thus Jacob got the double portion of the firstborn (the spiritual

blessing) that had originally been given to Abraham. In other words, the promise of being the blesser passed from Abraham to Isaac, and it would have gone to Esau if he had not sold it to Jacob. However, although Esau forfeited his spiritual birthright, he got material gain; he became rich in natural things. This history in the Book of Genesis is a necessary background for understanding the antitype.

In connection with the Abrahamic Promise, the chief portion was being the *blesser*. The lower portion was being the *blessed*, the *recipient* of material things. To have the privilege of dispensing blessings and happiness to others was the higher blessing, the implication being not only that the blesser is in a superior position but that he would receive “material” blessings as well. The degree of loyalty to God, His truth, and righteousness will determine who makes the Little Flock.

What Esau forfeited has a counterpart in history. Other names for Edom are Idumea and Dumah. “Edom” means “red”—and so does the word “Adam.” In fact, “Edom” can also be translated Adam. (“DM” is the name and it means red; the vowels can vary.) And who was Adam? As the first man, he was in a position of honor. He was made lord of the earth and given dominion over the cattle, fish, birds, etc. But what happened to him? Through disobedience he forfeited his lordship, his glorious position, just as Esau did—and for a message of pottage, as it were, for eating forbidden fruit. (Evidently Adam thought he could not bear to live without his helpmate Eve.)

There is another type with regard to Edom, in addition to the one with Adam. Edom pictures the nominal Church. Originally, the nominal Church was a golden cup in the hand of the Lord; it was pure, as symbolized by a “white horse” (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 6:1,2). But the color changed to red when tares came in after the apostles fell asleep (Rev. 6:3,4). While seeds of error could be seen in the early Church, the apostles identified the hypocritical individuals who were responsible and did not allow their error to spread. Therefore, although the mystery of iniquity was already there in the early Christian Church, it was latent and did not affect the doctrine (2 Thess. 2:7).

The early Church had the promises of reigning over the earth and of being kings and priests, but what happened? Instead of waiting, some tried to claim or obtain Kingdom honors ahead of God’s due time. In trying to grasp these honors, they mixed into politics and earthly rulership. But not until the true Church is *complete and in heaven* will the true reign of Christ begin. At that time God will reveal the names of those who comprise the Little Flock. Thus the Church, which started out pure, became contaminated and adulterated both in doctrine and with the world. The “redness” of sin is identified with Adam, Esau, and the nominal Church; that is, all three started out pure but did not remain that way. Ruddy, hairy Esau (or Edom) pictures the nominal Church, which sold its birthright and tried to establish Christ’s Kingdom prematurely in his absence and prior to his return at the Second Advent.

In summary, the garments of this personage who comes back from Edom are blood-stained as a result of treading the winepress. Some additional pictures will now be considered.

(Rev. 14:18–20) “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the

great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." The 1,600 furlongs are symbolic to represent the measure of blood guilt. Notice, also, the mention of a wine press, into which grapes are cast and trodden. The Revised Standard Version correctly translates "a horse's [*singular*] bridle." The King James should have "bridle" (singular).

Notice that the vat in Revelation 14:19 is called the "*great winepress of the wrath of God.*" With the winepress symbolizing trouble, the "*great winepress*" would be the great Time of (*international*) Trouble. When the grapes of the vine of the earth are trodden, the juice will come out so profusely that the level will rise higher and higher. Imagine treading the grapes on a horse in this scene! As the level of the liquid kept rising, it covered the stirrups first and then the saddle, so that the horse was wading in blood, as it were. But the juice or blood continued to rise even further—up to the horse's bridle. Bridles are used to control direction and to stop or restrain a horse.

In Scripture both good things and bad things pile up or accumulate. An example of good accumulation is the prayers of the saints; these prayers rise on incense into the presence of God, who answers them in His own way (Rev. 8:3). Another example is Cornelius, whose prayers were stockpiled until AD 36, when it was time for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. Meanwhile, he was already consecrated to God and his prayers kept accumulating—until they could be answered.

An example of bad accumulation is the restraining of wrath until finally the anger explodes. And the person may then say, in trying to explain the wrath, "I had it up to here," and point to his or her chin. Another example is the iniquity of the Amorites, which was not punished until it accumulated up to a certain point. At the end of the age with Gog and Magog, the Lord 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" (Ezek. 38:18). The implication is that prior to this necessary wrath, God has been suppressing it. For a long time God has held His peace, but the time will come when the restraint is loosed. The "*great winepress of the wrath of God*" ties in with Jesus' treading of the winepress in *anger* in Isaiah 63:3.

With the winepress of Revelation 14:18–20, so much blood accumulated that when it was let loose, it rose up to the horse's bridle—and this occurred in 1914. (The 1,600 furlongs indicate a 1,600-year time period from 314 to 1914.) At that time Babylon's judgment became set and irrevocable. What has happened beyond that time is just superfluity, for the full guilt was reached in 1914, when the lease of the Gentiles expired.

(Rev. 19:11,13–16) "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.... 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." This text has several things in common with previously quoted Scriptures: a white horse, the treading of the winepress, blood on the garments, wrath, and Jesus as the rider. The apparel is glorious

and honorable, as shown by the name on the vesture: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The name of the rider of the horse is "The Word of God," ie, the Logos, Jesus.

As revealed by the context, another factor common to Isaiah 63 and Revelation 14 and 19 is that Jesus does the treading *alone*. Although complete, the Church does not help Jesus in this work. However, the Church will share in the destruction of Satan at the end of the Millennium. "And the God of peace shall bruise [destroy] Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). But with regard to mystic Babylon, the false systems that claim to represent Christ, only Jesus, the Lamb of Revelation 17:14, will cause their downfall and destruction. In Revelation 19:14 those of the Church or Little Flock are described as an army who follow him, but they do not participate. Their robes are "white and clean," not spattered with blood. They will have the honor of being nearby but not of doing the work with him. Revelation 18:20 proves the Church is looking on or witnessing the destruction, while God accomplishes the work through Jesus on their behalf: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

Q: Doesn't the Church participate with Jesus in smiting the image and in dashing the nations together as a potter's vessel (Rev. 2:26,27; Dan. 2:34,35)?

A: The Church will be associated with Jesus in connection with the Time of Trouble in the sense that they will share in dashing the nations to pieces and in delivering Israel out of Jacob's Trouble, but Jesus alone will personally bind Satan and destroy Satan's *spiritual*-control house in earth's atmosphere.

And what about the spiritual institutions down here, the beast and the false prophet? The false Church is called the "mother of harlots" (Rev. 17:5), but the true Church is a virgin and not a "mother" until her marriage to Christ. The false Church believes that the wedding has already taken place and that they are the mother of daughters. Papacy not only boasts of being the mother Church and calls the Protestant systems *fratelli separati*, her separated brethren, but believes all will unite with her in "the one Church of God." The point is that there are two aspects of Satan's control: the spiritual aspect above and the earthly aspect down here. Satan is in the institution of Papacy in the sense that he is controlling it from the spiritual aspect.

Jesus is going to bind Satan and then destroy his house (Rev. 20:2; Matt. 12:29). Of this future work, Isaiah said prophetically of Jesus, "I have trodden the winepress *alone*." We sing a hymn with similar words "He trod the winepress alone," but that hymn pertains to Jesus' ministry, which ended in blood at Calvary. And it is true of that time that none of the people were with him. Jesus' Calvary experience is related to the end-of-the-age picture in the following sense.

Satan, the prince of the power of the air, was the mastermind. His hour of power came when Jesus allowed himself to be taken in the Garden of Gethsemane and crucified on Calvary (Eph. 2:2). Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

The next level below Satan was the scribes and the Pharisees, who were in the professed "church" of Jesus' day. As they were plotting to put Jesus to death, Judas entered the scene—a happening no doubt considered to be providential by the clergy. The people were swayed by the leadership. Of the clergy, the "*chief* priests" were mostly to blame, for some of

the lesser priests believed in Jesus but kept quiet because of fear. Their silence allowed Jesus to be crucified.

The Church will share in the destruction of the nations, but not in the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. The false religious systems will be dealt with first. They will be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). Later the dragon will be dealt with.

When the image is smitten (the clay, iron, gold, silver, etc.), the organizational structure will be destroyed (Dan. 2:34,35). People will be involved in this destruction until the fourth world empire or beast is slain. When that beast dies, the inference is that the previous three beasts will die too. Although Babylon was destroyed as a universal empire, it lived on as a people or nation (Dan. 7:12). Media-Persia succeeded Babylon as an empire. Greece was the third world empire. Although destroyed as an empire, Greece exists as a nation today. And Rome still exists. Today we are in the “toes” of the Roman Empire period. Soon it will be replaced by the stone of Messiah, the fifth world empire, Christ’s Kingdom. We know that many people will die at that time because whenever one world empire succeeded another, there was bloodshed. The institutions will be destroyed but not all of the people. The nations of earth will become the Kingdom of Messiah. For quite a while, until certain changes occur such as one language being spoken throughout the earth, the people will maintain their identity from the standpoint of residence and national characteristics.

The responsibility of who will die in the trouble rests with Jesus. While the Lord is not dealing with the world of mankind on an individual basis in this age, their names have been recorded. When they walk up the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age, they will have to make amends for certain acts not repented of in the present life. In other words, some rectification of past injustices will be required, but mercy will be extended in that each individual will have the opportunity to make good, and everlasting life will be the reward for those whose heart condition is right.

But the determination of death in the coming Time of Trouble is another matter. The advice is to “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3). Certain individuals will be “marked” for death at that time, although others will die as well. Messiah will determine the screening process.

In summary, the Church, reigning with Christ, will participate in breaking or smashing the civil and religious institutions down here and the deliverance of natural Israel, ie, the Holy Remnant. But Jesus alone will personally bind the Adversary. Satan’s associates in the spiritual realm, the other fallen angels, are another picture.

Q: Then when verse 3 says, “of the people there was none with me,” does that mean the people not with Jesus will be those here on the earth?

A: First, consider conditions during Jesus’ earthly ministry. In the Garden of Gethsemane and at the time of the Crucifixion, Jesus trod the winepress alone. All of his disciples forsook him and fled when he was apprehended. Although Peter and John were more courageous and followed at a distance, Peter denied the Master three times. In this experience Satan manipulated Jesus’ death through the clerical element. Pilate (representing the civil element) wanted to release Jesus, but when the clergy threatened to

inform the emperor that an insurrection had occurred, Pilate got frightened, washed his hands, and allowed Jesus to be crucified. The point is that although the institutions down here condemned Jesus, it was the Adversary who was particularly involved. Therefore, in the coming trouble, it is *Satan's* house or institution that is to be particularly destroyed by Jesus. The part we see is Papacy. We see the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, but we do not see Satan, who is behind Papacy, the civil element, and federated Protestantism. Out of the mouth of these three will come the doctrine of *demons* (Rev. 16:13,14). The same message, the same unclean frog-like spirits, will be uttered by all three. Satan is the prince of the demons in the higher spiritual house. Invisible to us, he is the one motivating and goading to action the earthly institutions. In other words, Satan is behind the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, who will all speak doctrines of *demons*, and the demons are part of Satan's house, which Jesus will handle *personally*. This is a very complex picture. When history is seen in retrospect, the clarity of the details, which are difficult to apprehend at present, will be shocking.

To understand the issue of life and death in the next age, we should consider that under the Levitical arrangement, any matter that was too difficult for the priests to handle was taken to Moses. Only as a secondary lesson did the people go to the priests in connection with ceremonial cleansing. When it comes to the issue of life itself in the Kingdom, Isaiah tells us that Jesus (not the Church) will do the judging, although he may use representatives to judge the simpler matters. And Jesus will judge not according to the sight of his eyes or the hearing of his ears. The Little Flock will be instructed how to judge and will be given certain rules and regulations within which they can operate, but the determination of life itself, which is very precious, versus Second Death, which is scary, will have to be screened by Jesus, and he will act not according to his own will but according to the *Father's* will on these matters. It is the Lamb's book of life, not the Church's.

Q: Did the first "winepress" experience happen at the time of Jesus' crucifixion?

A: That was his own winepress experience. As the head, he was injured, and now he wants to take the chief responsibility with regard to the destruction of the systems in the great Time of Trouble.

Comment: Then the picture is twofold.

Reply: Yes. When great injustices have been committed, one who is in a leadership role (ie, Jesus) would like the satisfaction of personally taking care of the more horrendous aspects of the injustices. The mopping-up detail is another matter, a relatively secondary matter.

Q: Will it be merely the institutions that are destroyed in the Time of Trouble and then the dealing with individuals will take place in the Kingdom?

A: Some individuals will be dealt with even during the trouble and the destruction of the institutions. For instance, consider a person who is elected to serve as pope. He sits in an office that purports to be the vicar or substitute for Christ, but Jesus said, "There is only one Master. I am your Master, and all of you are brethren." These words were spoken to the apostles, and the pope is not even an apostle. Jesus was saying, "All you apostles are brethren, and I am the head of the Church." The title "pope" is *papa* in Latin, meaning "father of fathers," and the pope claims to reign in Christ's stead. How presumptuous! At his coronation the pope sits on a throne and allows the cardinals to kiss his toe. In the

meantime, the Scripture is read, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 2:12). Now the point is this: the system being destroyed is one thing, but the degree of responsibility that attaches to the individuals in leadership positions in the false systems is another matter. For example, at the top is the pope, and under him are the cardinals.

Comment: Isaiah 63:3 says that Jesus will tread the winepress alone, but under his direction is the Lord's great army (Joel 2:11).

Reply: There are other pictures, such as Jezebel. When Jehu called to the eunuchs, they threw Jezebel out the window and the dogs ate her. This picture shows that the downfall of Papacy will occur partly from *within* its own ranks and partly from *without*. The "dogs" represent a radical, ungodly element outside of the system.

Q: Are they all part of the Lord's great army?

A: Yes, the Lord's great army includes all of these elements that contribute to the downfall of Papacy.

Q: What about Revelation 2:26, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"?

A: That refers to the smiting of the image, the destruction of the arrangement down here. The glorified Church will superintend. The destruction of the Vatican (its records, statuary, etc.) is one subject, but the *personal guilt of individuals in the system*, the blood aspect, is a separate subject that will be handled by Messiah.

Comment: Psalm 149 harmonizes with Revelation 2:26. "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa. 149:7-9). Punishments will be executed upon individuals and "kings" will be bound; ie, individuals within the systems.

Reply: It is like the puppeteer with his puppets. The puppet operator up above (Satan) motivates the puppets below (the systems). The destruction of the puppets is one thing, but dealing with the manipulator of the strings is another matter. Certain beings *in the heavens* motivate and manipulate the puppets down here, and in addition, certain personalities *down here* manipulate others down here. However, the institution is one thing, and the blood guilt of the individuals is another. For example, when Jesus was crucified, the people said, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." In other words, they accepted the responsibility. With regard to the world of mankind, 1 Timothy 5:24 tells that some men's sins go beforehand to judgment and some men's sins follow after. The thought is that even though God is not dealing with the world of mankind now, certain individuals or leaders are particularly culpable, and some are dealt with in the present age. That responsibility is Jesus', as shown by the blood on his garments. It is he (and not the Church) who will take care of *personalized* judgment, whereas the institutions are another matter. Some in heaven and some down here in leadership roles merit judgment, although basically Satan and the demon powers are obsessing the minds and thoughts of mankind along various lines.

The winepress feature is the Time of Trouble, in which the grapes of wrath, which have

been stored, will eventually be pressed. "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:18,19). A singular horse will do the treading of the grapes (Rev. 14:20). The juice of the grapes, which stains Jesus' garments in the picture, is likened to blood. Jesus will tread the winepress alone; he will make the decisions. As he is the Head of the body now, so he will be the Head of the body then. The Church will be given positions of glory and power, but their role will be somewhat limited and the decisions they make will be on a lower level. They will be on the level of a mother nursing a child or like the priest who estimated the value and cost of righting a wrong. But the "blood," the very issues of life, is more precious and more important. Jesus will deal with the individuals whose sins particularly need retribution, and the Church will deal with institutions and governments. The Church will be the "mother," but God will be the life-giver and the life-taker-away. In the final analysis, He will make the decisions regarding Second Death. However, Jesus has so much the mind of God that he will know the Father's decisions.

Satan has a large degree of responsibility because he is the archenemy of God. He is the most influential one. However, the fallen angels under Satan also bear responsibility. And on down the line, each one of us has a responsibility. We are judged a lot on how we think, deal, and act toward other people and on the degree to which we influence them. Our thoughts, words, and deeds should be according to God's Word and will. We are held accountable. Hence James 3:1 says, "My brethren, be not many masters [teachers—RSV], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." To exercise an influence on the minds of other people (ie, to teach them) and to influence decision-making incur responsibility. In other words, the degree of responsibility for sin is according to enlightenment and the spirit of discernment. Also, one is proportionately responsible according to the degree of willful ignorance.

Before proceeding to verse 4, we will briefly review two pertinent pictures:

1. Revelation 14:18–20 describes the treading of the winepress. The vine of the earth is sickled and cast into the winepress.
2. Revelation 19:11–13 shows Jesus riding a white horse and returning from the battle as a conqueror with blood-stained clothing. Just as in Isaiah 63:3, the blood is only on Jesus' garments. In contradistinction, the Church follow him on white horses and are wearing unblemished, gleaming white robes (Rev. 19:14). In other words, Jesus is accepting the responsibility for the work that has just been accomplished in regard to blood.

Isa. 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

We will now consider Isaiah 34:6–8 from the standpoint of differences and similarities with Isaiah 63:1–4. "The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion."

Isaiah 63 tells that Jesus treads the winepress alone. Although the contents of the winepress are not specially discussed, grapes would be involved because of the word “wine.” In Revelation 14, the “vine of the earth” again implies grapes in a vineyard. Grapes of wrath are thrown into the wine vat for retribution. The implication is that down through the pages of history, God has been taking note of some who have unjustly opposed His cause.

Isaiah 34 does not mention a winepress at all and talks about the sword of Jehovah, whereas Isaiah 63 describes Jesus as the one coming from Bozrah. However, in regard to the sword of Isaiah 34, we know that Jesus will be God’s representative in the Day of Vengeance.

Notice the similar language or key expressions of Isaiah 34 and Isaiah 63, which are figurative pictures. The drama and atmosphere of both scenes portray God’s indignation and indicate a time period (“the *year* of recompences for the controversy of Zion” versus “the *year* of my redeemed is come”). Both scenes are somehow related to retribution, recompenses, and the Day of God’s Vengeance.

What is the “controversy of Zion”? Saints who were persecuted and killed unjustly all down the age (and especially during the Inquisition) appeared to be forgotten. Nobody seemed to answer their prayers. Revelation 6:9–11 shows them figuratively crying, “How long, O Lord, ... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?” But they were told to wait until the end of the age. “It was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Romans 12:19 tells us, “Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Many Christians unjustly experience slander, misrepresentation, persecutions, and deaths that are offensive in God’s sight, and to all outward appearances they are defeated. But God is saying, “I am taking note of what is happening. You be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. Remember, *I will repay; vengeance is mine.*” We must *wait* for God’s vengeance.

Q: How will the Lord settle the account with deceased individuals?

A: At the end of the age in 1878, the sleeping saints were resurrected. Prior to that, all down the age, they slept in the grave and the Lord kept noting the injustices committed against them. Consider the Dark Ages when poor hapless victims remained faithful while persecutors tortured them in an effort to make them recant and denounce their faith. In dark dungeons many died horrific deaths unnoticed by the public. But while the blood guilt accumulated, Jesus carefully noted the perpetrators and persecutors who were particularly responsible, as opposed to those who may have acted in ignorance and blind faith, thinking that verily they were doing God a service (John 16:2). In other words, some were willfully guilty, and others were sincerely misinformed. In due time Jesus will personally repay according to the degree of personal guilt of each persecutor.

Isaiah 34:6 says that the sword of Jehovah will be filled with (ie, be responsible for) the blood of lambs and goats and the fat of rams’ kidneys. Instead of just saying the blood of grapes and the winepress, this picture begins to break down into classes those who will be involved.

Q: Are you relating this to *individual* vengeance from the standpoint that all the blood from

righteous Abel unto Zacharias was required of the generation living at the time of the First Advent (Matt. 23:35)? The parallel picture would be that all the righteous blood shed from Zacharias unto the end of the age will be required of the generation living at the end of the age.

A: There is retributory justice. Suppose someone committed an atrocious act in the Jewish Age. While the sins were carried out on the progeny because of the disobedience of the parent, yet in the final analysis the individual (the parent) who actually committed the sin will be held responsible in the Kingdom. That one will not escape retribution because of the fact that his children suffered. Although a certain degree of responsibility attaches to associates and progeny, the individual himself (for example, Nero) is culpable.

Q: But how does such an example from the past fit into this context of the one coming from Bozrah with dyed garments? This is a specific time period yet future but prior to the Kingdom. The time setting is not when the resurrection takes place with individuals on the scene who were guilty of gross sins in the past.

A: As Jesus developed and perfected the Church down through the age without the other saints helping, so he will finish the Church at the end of the age. Not only is he the Author and Finisher of the Church in a generalized way, but he has been trimming the candlesticks in a *personalized* way all along. Regardless of the agencies Jesus uses, he is involved in the particular judgment regarding what is to be done and how it will be accomplished. Generally speaking, a lieutenant who knows what his superior officer's directives are will carry them out except when he sees that they involve a degree of responsibility. Then he may be fearful to make the decision. While this has been true of God's people down through history, the same type of judgment is taking place with regard to those who have persecuted God's people. The responsibility that is being noted is particularly in Jesus' hand. It is the principle of "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." Some of those responsible for the death of many true Christians lived a relatively happy life and died in luxury and honor. But their sins have been stored up, and they will receive stripes in the Kingdom for the responsibility they incurred in sinning against light. But that is only part of the picture.

Now comes the end of the age and a *current* generation is to be dealt with. Many evil decisions are being made behind closed doors not only in government but also in religious circles and secretly by individuals and groups. The Bible tells us that conditions will get worse and worse, so that at the end of the age, there will be little or no justice. God knows all the details behind the scenes while at most we get just little inklings. When it comes to judgment on the current generation at the end of the age, the Lord knows where the responsibility lies. Even though we are alive at this time, we do not know the various degrees of responsibility. Much of our information comes from television, and that reporting can be very biased. Sometimes information that is withheld would have presented matters in an entirely different light if it had been revealed. The point is that the Bozrah picture, with Jesus treading the winepress alone, pertains only to *individual* responsibility.

Jesus knows the degree of punishment of all people down through history. Some men's sins go beforehand to judgment and some follow after. With the sins that come beforehand, Jesus has been responsible in many cases. For instance, suppose that in the present age a person viciously kills someone and then cuts the body into pieces. Would the Lord just forgive the killer in the Kingdom and say he was deranged? No. However,

suppose someone comes around and cuts the killer's body in pieces in the present age. Retribution in that respect might be entirely satisfied before the Kingdom is established. But when retribution does not occur in the present age, as is usually the case, the person's sins are noted by the Lord and stored up for the Kingdom so that the nature of the punishment and the degree of responsibility, whether past or present, will be requited. The prevailing thought—and an erroneous one—is that in the resurrection all will be forgiven *carte blanche*.

Now let us suppose that an institution viewed more favorably were to collapse. Individuals who devoted money, time, and service to that organization would be affected for a while by its demise and experience sorrow, but in time they would find interest elsewhere. Thus the collapse of an institution would not be real punishment for those affected. The same is true regarding a close relative who dies. We can be very grief-stricken, but a few years later we recover and adapt to our condition. Therefore, the fall of an institution does not really affect the individual very much. The collapse of Papacy is one thing. Those in the Vatican would be affected, but most Catholics are in parishes throughout the world. In proportion as one were in a lower echelon, he would be less affected. All would mourn over having to adjust to new circumstances, but in varying degrees. What individuals do *personally* while in such an arrangement may be very favorable or very unfavorable. The *personalized* aspect is the distinction. The collapse of the system and its leaders is one thing, and the individuals are another matter.

Now another point. When various ones come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom, they are going to be judged, and the Lord knows the *degree* of responsibility; ie, he knows to what extent past sins were Adamic, willful, or a mixture of the two, and he will render judgment accordingly. But from that point on, the Church will deal with that individual—not according to what happened in the present age but from the resurrection on. In that sense the Church will be the “mother” of the Kingdom. The Church's role will be like helping a released prisoner to rebuild his life.

Thus there is a distinction in the judgment of sin based on when it occurred. Normally we just generalize about everyone receiving forgiveness in the Kingdom, but such generalizations can incur the indignation of Christians in the nominal system—and to a certain extent they are justified. Ezekiel tells us that the prophet who speaks in the Lord's name has to be careful that he does not just preach smooth things. Why? Because such preaching favors and hardens the sinner in his sin and he is not awakened to the realization of his guilt. The sinner tends to rationalize, “I will do what I want now and wait until the Kingdom comes to change my ways.” But the Apostle Paul preached the whole gospel. When he spoke of judgment and the Kingdom, people feared, and it was not that he preached hellfire. Rather, from Paul's powerful logic and by the extension of his reasoning, they realized they would have to answer for their sins if he were right.

Q: Please tie in these comments with the context of Jesus' coming back from Bozrah. Is the retributive aspect also involved, such as the sins that are put on the scapegoat?

A: First, we will consider the winepress picture, which is an important feature of the great Time of Trouble. The winepress is a constriction of providence with the result that judgment comes to pass. And even now we begin to see the stage being set, for people are waking up to some extent. In this constricting period there is to be the collapse of the nominal system, which has been falsely representing Christ's cause down through history.

The vine of the earth being cast into the winepress and the systems falling are one thing, but the degree of responsibility of the people within the systems is a separate matter. Both thoughts are involved.

Isaiah 34:6 mentions lambs and goats. In the scapegoat picture of the end of the age, which will take place after the Church is complete beyond the veil, the Great Company (represented by the scapegoat) will be led by the hand of a fit man (the Adversary) out into the wilderness for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (Lev. 16:21; 1 Cor. 5:5). The blood from the slaughter of the lambs in Isaiah 34:6 and the scapegoat's being sent out into the wilderness in Leviticus 16:21 indicate that the Great Company will die through hard experiences in the Time of Trouble as "tribulation" saints. Although they lose the crown, the chief prize, God in His mercy will save them, but first they must finish their course here on earth.

Q: Because Jesus is seen coming from Edom in Isaiah 63:1 and because the goats and the lambs are slaughtered in Isaiah 34:6, could we say that these are pictures of *Christendom's* collapse?

A: Yes, that is correct. Isaiah 63, the Bozrah picture, refers to the collapse of the religious systems and their organizational aspect. This text does not refer to the smiting of the image, which incorporates other features. The image will be smitten by the stone (by The Christ, Head and body). And the smiting of the nations is quite different from dealing with individuals, which will come later.

The *Fourth Volume* states that the goats represent tares, but based on other Scriptures, the goats may be more comprehensive than just tares. In the Tabernacle illustration, there are two goats, the live goat (Little Flock) and the scapegoat (Great Company). Both classes are pictured by a goat, not because they are in disfavor with God but because when they were called to follow Christ, they had a goatlike disposition to overcome. In life, as they learn the Lord's will, they have to constantly change their thinking and mode of life, and their joys and pleasures are translated into different avenues. According to the flesh they could not get life, but God notes their faith, works, obedience, etc., and rewards them not because of the perfection of their deeds but because of their heart condition and the robe of Christ's righteousness.

In the illustration of Isaiah 34:6, the lambs represent undeveloped, immature Christians, ie, the Great Company. When the door is shut, they will be outside weeping, and they will suffer their portion with the hypocrites. The point is that *many* categories of people will suffer in the Time of Trouble, but there are simplified pictures such as wheat and tares, Lord's goat and scapegoat, and lambs and goats. A tare is one thing, but the "goats" of Isaiah 34:6 could include those who have a goatlike disposition and the *degree* of the goatlike disposition is what affects one's destiny. Some Christians oppose certain thoughts, not because they have so much knowledge but because they are listening to their own will and reasoning and not the Lord's. Proportionate responsibility will be incurred.

The principle is the same with the scribes and the Pharisees. Of those who were involved in putting Jesus to death, the chief priests who paid Roman soldiers a large sum of money to say that Jesus' body had been stolen by his disciples are in a *dangerous* position, for they *sinned against light willfully* (Matt. 28:11–15). They knew an earthquake had occurred on the morning of the resurrection and rolled the stone away, they knew the guards had seen an

angel, and they knew the soldiers were eyewitnesses. These chief priests incurred much more responsibility and guilt than other members of the Sanhedrin who were not in the inner circle. Others who participated in crying "Crucify him!" are also guilty but to a lesser degree than those who paid the hush money. Scribes and Pharisees who believed remained quiet initially because of fear of their fellow Jews. An example is Joseph of Arimathea. Earlier he was silent, but when Jesus was crucified, when the chips were down, he boldly requested Jesus' body from Pilate. Some people are weak and cowardly by nature, but God's influence can change those who are like wax into steel *if their heart condition is right*.

All down the line with the human race, there are various degrees of responsibility. Jesus has been keeping records of needed punishment and retribution and upon which individuals. He will deal with the upper echelons of responsibility, and the Church will deal with the lower echelons. And for that matter, the Lord's Great Army will be involved in the lowest level.

Today many do not think of the Lord ever being angry. We are living in a day when ancient history is being neglected, hidden, and whitewashed. Fifty years ago first-hand accounts and testimonies could be obtained at libraries of those who were persecuted for their religious convictions. Now the emphasis is on current history, from the First World War through today. In the schools ancient history is passé, and medieval history is used only in a general sense as an index finger to show that the same symptoms exist at present. Instead of going back to the original disease, the source, they want to study current symptoms. Thus schools pervert history, and the people want to forget the past and deal with the here-and-now.

We are living in a time when prisoners are coddled and often given better treatment and attention than the victims. Justice is turned upside down. The abolition of the death penalty is contrary to God's Word. The villain is given the hero's role. People are regarded as heroes simply because of physical prowess, mental capability, etc., and not for their characters. And children are brought up with too much mercy, the rod being spared.

The Church in glory will be involved in the fall of institutions. They will be identified with the stone smiting the image on its clay and iron feet. The Isaiah 34:6 picture shows more detail: lambs, goats, and kidneys of rams. "Goats" are more inclusive than just tares in the nominal system. For instance, the term includes some who will prove to be incorrigible in the next age. Although the incorrigible are the exception rather than the general rule, they should be mentioned.

The same is true of public discourses on love. It is said the Scriptures tell us to have brotherly love and be united, but the exceptions are very rarely mentioned. In fact, when the exceptions are mentioned, the speaker is often criticized. However, the Bible gives exceptions, and the true or whole gospel includes the exceptions as well as the general rule. Otherwise, a slanted gospel is being presented. "Love" is followed even by the world, but that love is not *God's* love based on obedience to His commandments. In order to know both *God's love* and His *indignation*, we must know His *Word*. Love is the doing of God's will, not our will. We are to obey God's Word and not follow cliché utterances and sweep things under the rug.

Q: Would we say, then, that the tares represent all in the nominal systems who are not Spirit-begotten?

A: And what is the “nominal system”? The nominal system professes to be identified with God’s Kingdom. The Great Company class also profess to be representatives of God. As “virgins,” they are on a higher level than the tares, but because they are *foolish* virgins, they will have to suffer a portion of judgment with the hypocrites. However, distinctions should be made between the Great Company and the hypocrites. Each class will be dealt with *according to responsibility*. The tribulation will bring the Great Company to their senses, helping them to wash their robes through a recognition of their wrongs, so that they can be saved or rescued. As for the tares or hypocrites, the tribulation may or may not bring them to their senses.

Q: We like to make a distinction between the nominal Church and brethren associated with present truth, but didn’t the Pastor say that, given enough time, the spirit of nominalism would enter our very midst?

A: Yes, especially as we get closer and closer to the very end of the age. The Scriptures say not only that all will be deceived except the Very Elect but that the antitypical John class will decrease this side of the veil and the body of Christ, the Little Flock, will increase beyond the veil. Therefore, any problems in the Church down through history will be compounded at the end of the age with fewer and fewer of the Very Elect remaining in the flesh. Stated another way, if the foolish virgin class becomes a greater and greater majority among the consecrated as we get to the end of the age, we should be more and more *careful* lest wrong *majority* thinking, explanations, and decisions influence us. God’s Word must be the standard.

The Apostle Peter said, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness*, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ...?” (2 Pet. 3:11,12). It is not that we are or can be perfect, but we can *try* to be. We must make a *serious, sincere effort* to please the Lord to the extent of our capability.

“For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” The nominal Church orchestrated religious persecutions many, many years ago. Today people reason, “How can you be angry about something that happened so long ago?” But Isaiah 63:4 shows that responsibility for the religious persecutions against God and His true people is not forgotten with the passage of time. God holds these persecutions in store in the cumulative sense. Because we realize that we ourselves are sinners, we want to think of past history from the merciful standpoint only.

The Lord’s Prayer says, “Forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass against us]” (Matt. 6:12). In this very prayer we are asking God for His forgiveness, but we cannot forgive those who trespass against *others*, only those who trespass against *us*. This principle of forgiveness applies to us, but not if it violates the laws God laid down for us. For instance, the following words are attributed to Jesus on the Cross, but they are not in Scripture: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This spurious verse sounds very nice, but such an utterance would not harmonize with Jesus’ own teaching. And what was that teaching? “If your brother trespasses against you, *rebuke* him; and *if he repents* and asks your forgiveness, then you are to forgive him” (Luke 17:3 paraphrase). To grant blanket forgiveness to those who manipulated Jesus’ crucifixion is not the true picture; it may sound good, but it contradicts principle.

Consider the incident of the harlot of whom Jesus supposedly said, “Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone” (John 8:7 paraphrase). That incident in John 7:53–8:11, which is not in the earliest manuscripts, teaches a wrong principle, for the woman was actually caught in the act of adultery; it was not circumstantial evidence. Other Scriptures, such as the account in Numbers 25, counteract this wrong principle. For example, consider the Midianite woman and Zimri, the Israelite man, who sinned in the sight of all Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. Because of their fornication, Phinehas was commended for killing them both with a javelin or spear. In fact, his act stayed the plague and stopped the Lord’s anger.

To take the statement of John 8:7 as a principle (“Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone”) would end all arguments, for everyone is a sinner. Accordingly, not one of us could ever “cast a stone” at any time, but the Scriptures show there are cases where we are responsible for “casting a stone.” To the extent that these cases are ignored, we are not being faithful to God’s Word.

Comment: If the statement “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” were authentic, then the Heavenly Father acted contrary to Jesus’ prayer request when He brought retribution on Israel in the trouble of AD 69–70.

Reply: The people said, “[Let] his blood be on us and on our children” (Matt. 27:25).

Comment: A person who *knowingly* does wrong will be beaten with many stripes, whereas a person who *unknowingly* does wrong will be beaten with few stripes. In other words, the *degree of responsibility* is the determining factor in the number of stripes received.

Reply: Revelation 18:20 says, “Rejoice over her ... ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” The saints are to *rejoice* over the fall of mystic Babylon, over their own vindication, and over the satisfaction for wrong that was done.

Q: How do we harmonize Stephen’s statement “Lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60)?

A: First, Stephen was not an apostle. The text simply records his attitude at that time. It would be a different matter if God, Jesus, or an apostle (especially after Pentecost) had made the statement. For others, we must analyze the statement, the speaker, the occasion, and the context and then use judgment because the Bible has recorded some statements that contradict principle. For instance, on one occasion when Jesus spoke of the persecution that awaited him, Peter rebuked him and the Master said, “Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men” (Mark 8:33). But this incident occurred before Peter was anointed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Comment: To counteract Stephen’s words, we can point to the Apostle Paul, who suffered for his past acts of persecution against Christians. He received retribution.

Reply: Along another line, when Thomas said, “My Lord and my God,” that too was prior to Pentecost, so his statement cannot be given apostolic sanction (John 20:28). At that time the apostles were not fully instructed in the ways of the new dispensation.

In summary, the glorified Church is or is not involved in the coming judgment depending

on which picture or circumstance is being discussed. With the binding of Satan, for example, the Church will not be involved. Jesus will bind him personally, but the Church will be instrumental with his destruction at the end of the Millennium. They will share in “bruising” him (Rom. 16:20).

Comment: Only the hard-to-decide cases were taken to Moses.

Reply: Yes, “lieutenants” can carry out decrees within the limitations of their orders. When the degree of responsibility approaches a determination of Second Death, only the highest level makes such a decision, but others share in being agents with lower levels of responsibility and judgment.

Comment: When Miriam was struck with leprosy as a punishment, Moses besought the Lord on her behalf (Num. 12:1–15), but God replied, “If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.” In other words, she had to remain outside the camp for seven days as a punishment, and that was the Heavenly Father’s decision.

Reply: Yes, God used the illustration that if a man spits in another person’s face, shouldn’t something be done? Since Miriam spit in God’s face and Moses’ face, as it were, she had to suffer some embarrassment and punishment.

Comment: When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and found the Israelites sinning with the golden calf, God was going to destroy the people, but Moses intervened on their behalf (Exodus 32). It would appear that God changed His mind, for He did not destroy the people. Nevertheless, they were punished.

Reply: For one thing, Moses was a picture of Christ, and he came down here to die for mankind. The purpose of his dying was to grant an opportunity of salvation to every person who has ever lived. Included in the “second” opportunity that the world will have in the Kingdom will be the *knowledge* of Jesus, his sacrifice, and the way of salvation. In the present age the Spirit-begotten can incur the penalty of Second Death because they have been fully enlightened to know Jesus is the Savior. And this is the very truth that is guaranteed to all in due time: to know that Jesus is the true Savior (1 Tim. 2:3,4). One who acts upon that knowledge has had the opportunity for life. Consider Judas, who died before Pentecost. He had enough knowledge of Jesus—his miracles and teachings—to incur the penalty of Second Death. It is the knowledge of Jesus that brings responsibility. Therefore, those who are related to truth in the present age, those who *truly know about Jesus and believe, even though they may not be Spirit-begotten*, can go into Second Death if they grievously sin against this knowledge.

Comment: In the incident of the golden calf, Moses said in Exodus 32:26,27, “Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his *brother, ... companion, and ... neighbour.*”

Reply: Yes, because of the great sin and disobedience, the Israelites were told by God, through Moses, to kill at random brother, companion, and neighbor. (If we had been Israelites at that time, would we have obeyed?) Those who showed their loyalty to God by

obeying were overwhelmingly Levites, and their obedience meant that they killed some members of their own families and tribe. Probably, in addition, a much smaller percentage of Israelites from other tribes obeyed the command and thus passed the test. However, the Levites responded to such a degree and at such great cost to themselves that they were commended as a tribe and the Lord chose them to replace the firstborn.

This incident reveals the Lord's principles, and God is a God of *love*. All will get the opportunity for life sooner or later, but His principles must be understood and obeyed. Those who would be of the Little Flock must prove so loyal to God now, in the present life, that if the Church in glory during the Kingdom were so instructed, they would put to death even members of their own family—son, daughter, mother, etc. The Little Flock will feel that God's judgment and love are so far superior to their own that they will respond with unquestioning obedience. They will comply simply because God so commanded. Consider Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac.

Normally when we first consecrate, we do not see the degree of obedience that is required for membership in the Little Flock. But as we meditate on God's Word and try to obey Him, we grow and get stronger. With the requirements so high, it is no wonder that 2,000 years have been required to find the 144,000. Since all die anyway, the time factor is immaterial from the standpoint of justice whether a person dies one day or 50 years earlier. Furthermore, we know, generally speaking, that God will raise all from death and give them an opportunity for life.

Comment: We did not cover the "fat of the kidneys of rams" in Isaiah 34:6.

Reply: Just as with the true sacrifices of the Tabernacle arrangement, the inner parts of the animals represented the inner desirable affections, motivations, and directions of the will, so there is an unacceptable sacrifice of zeal for evil. In the proper sense Jesus said, "The zeal of thine house has consumed me," and he overthrew the tables of the money changers (John 2:17 paraphrase). He was put to death because of his zeal. As a sin offering, Jesus was very pleasing to God and his sacrifice cost a lot. To manifest such zeal in God's professed house took great courage, for Jesus knew his actions would be regarded as sacrilegious.

Now, with regard to the Time of Trouble, it is misdirected zeal, purpose, intent, and motivation for doing evil that will receive judgment. This type of zeal is more serious, for it pertains to the evil motivations and intent of the *heart* rather than just to the outward exterior.

Comment: In other words, those who are not properly motivated will be part of the slaughter.

Reply: Yes, and notice that the slaughter is identified with the "fat of the kidneys of *rams*," not of lambs, for these individuals are matured and *hardened* in sin. The lambs of Isaiah 34:6 represent the Great Company as an undeveloped class.

Q: Would the lambs be connected with the scapegoat picture?

A: Isaiah 34:6 presents the Great Company from a different standpoint—their sharing the portion of the hypocrites but *without being hypocrites*. Other individuals will not only share the portion of the hypocrites but be even more responsible and guilty than the hypocrites.

However, the Great Company are not hypocrites; they are *true* virgins but unwise ones.

Q: Is the explanation like the priest in the type who laid the sins of the people upon the head of the scapegoat?

A: Yes, to the extent that the Great Company will have *a share* in the expiation. Some erroneously think that the Great Company will cover all such sins, ie, that the Church dies for Adamic sin and the Great Company dies for all other sins. However, the Scriptures indicate otherwise—the Great Company dies for only *part* of the sins of the people. In addition, the Great Company will experience retribution for some of their own sins.

Isa. 63:5 **And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.**

Jehovah is responsible for committing anyone to Second Death. However, Jesus, as the highest one under Him and the one most educated in the ways of the Father, is trusted with judgment. John 5:22 tells us that all judgment has been given to the Son. In this chapter, Isaiah 63, the one seen coming from Bozrah with dyed garments is Jesus, “It is I who speak in righteousness.” In verse 2 the question is asked, “Why is your apparel red?” The answer is given in verse 3, “Because I have trodden the winepress. When I trampled the people in my anger, their blood stained my garments.” Verse 4 indicates the time period, the day, when this action is to occur: “the day of vengeance,” “the year of my redeemed.” It is the same principle as saying, “The iniquity of the Amorites has come to the full” (Gen. 15:16). Now in verse 5 Jesus says, “I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore *mine own arm* brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.” JESUS’ POWER, his “OWN arm,” will bring salvation. Jesus, not the Church, will tread the people in his anger. However, when the picture is extended on into the Kingdom, we know from other Scriptures that Jesus will gently treat those who are sheeplike and laden with young lambs, but he will use an iron rod on those who have ramlike dispositions and are recalcitrant.

The destruction of Sodom is a good illustration. Out of the thousands in that city, only three individuals were saved: Lot and his two daughters. Yet because Lot was not aggressive for righteousness like Abraham, because he was not of the same caliber or strength of character as Abraham, who was the friend of God, Lot had to be rescued. God judges an individual not by results but by his character, for how many converts did Noah make? Only seven. Imagine a man of Noah’s stature and character preaching righteousness for 120 years and converting only his own small immediate family! Thus faithfulness is not measured by results. Numbers do not mean that much.

Therefore, verse 5 is saying that when Jesus looks down from heaven and sees the hopeless conditions on earth, he knows that only divine intervention can help the human race out of the quagmire of sin, injustice, and distress. Conditions are beyond human repair and need superhuman help. The verse is not saying that no one sorrows over the conditions, for many good people mourn the evil, but what can they do? Not much. As Jesus thus views conditions, he is getting stirred up, and when the due time comes, he will ACT. He will straighten out matters with his own strength.

The “arm” of Isaiah 53:1 is a different context: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” In that setting, *Jehovah’s* “arm” would be Jesus.

Comment: Verse 2 is interesting because it emphasizes *Jesus' anger*. So often God is pictured as the God of vengeance and Jesus is portrayed as gentle and loving.

Reply: Yes, Jesus will *tread* the people in *his anger* and *trample* them in *his fury*. As a rule, we are more sympathetic to those who are dying from hunger or natural calamity because we see people in their need and we are emotional in judgment, but injustices that are practiced are even worse. Only as we grow in the understanding of God's Word does His thinking become more our thinking. Injustices stir up divine anger more than just poverty.

When Jesus was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane at night, all of his disciples momentarily forsook him and fled, but out of the twelve, Peter and John followed him afar off. Even though they did not intervene, they manifested courage under a circumstance that surprised them. Although earlier they professed a belief that Jesus was the Messiah, their lack of understanding as to the reason for his death caused them to doubt and to consider him just a prophet until his resurrection (Luke 24:21). Nevertheless, from the standpoint of righteous indignation, some risked their lives. The women followed and tried to offer comfort (Luke 23:28). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus boldly begged for Jesus' body, risking expulsion from the Sanhedrin. Courage was born out of danger. A lesson for us is that we should raise our standard of reasoning and judgment to the highest possible level. The higher the level, the greater will be our chances of not wavering and lowering the standard.

Isa. 63:6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

The Revised Standard Version correctly uses past tense for the setting of this picture: "I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." Jesus is *returning* from the wine press, *having already trodden* the winepress (verse 3).

Isa. 63:7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Verse 7 through the end of the chapter pertains mostly to the nation of Israel, either directly or indirectly, although verse 7 will require further discussion when we get to verses 15 and 16. Verses 7–9 emphasize God's loving kindness, mercy, and pity in contrast to verses 1–6, which portrayed a scene of wrath.

Who is speaking? Who is the "I"? In verses 1 and 3–6, Jesus is speaking. He says, "I have trodden the winepress alone." If there were no paragraph break or break in thought with verse 7, Jesus would presumably still be the speaker, or the speaker could be the prophet Isaiah. However, the break in thought seems to indicate that the Great Company is speaking. This premise will be substantiated when verses 15 and 16 are discussed.

Isa. 63:8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

God, who "was their [Israel's] Saviour," said, "Surely they are my people, children that will

not lie [will not deal falsely—RSV].” God led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, across the Red Sea, and through the Wilderness of Sinai for 40 years; hence He was “their Saviour.”

The name Jacob means “supplanter” because when the twins were born, Jacob prophetically reached out and grabbed the heel of Esau, who preceded him. And that is what happened. Eventually Esau sold his spiritual birthright for a meal. In time Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, which means “prince of God” or “prince with God.” Of course Jacob was an individual, so originally “Israel” referred to a person, but later Israel came to represent his offspring or seed, hence the nation of people. And usually in Scripture the word “Israel” does refer to the nation.

Is it true that the Israelites did not “lie”? Following the Exodus, the Israelites rebelled and forsook God a number of times, one of the first being the making of the golden calf. Therefore, this statement about not lying must be considered from a *prophetic* standpoint, and the incident with Balaam illustrates this point, for the Lord found no fault with the Israelites, even though they forsook Him (Num. 22–24). Three times King Balak asked the prophet Balaam to curse Israel, but God overruled the situation so that the prophet went into a trance and ended up blessing Israel.

The way to harmonize Israel’s disobedience with the statement in verse 8 that there was no perverseness in the nation is to say that God was viewing things from a *future prophetic* standpoint. Balaam quoted the Genesis 49:9,10 prophecy that out of the tribe of Judah would come the Messiah: “Judah is a lion’s whelp: ... The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” One day Jesus would be not merely the slain Lamb but the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In other words, since potentially the great heir would arise out of Israel, it would be inappropriate to put a blanket curse on that nation. Until Messiah came, Israel had favor, even though there were punishments. A curse could not be put on Israel while they were still under the 70 weeks of favor (“the sceptre shall not depart from Judah”).

Isa. 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

The phrase “the angel of his presence,” which refers to the cloud that covered the Tabernacle for 40 years, is a clue connecting these verses with natural Israel. Starting with verse 8, much of this chapter is reminiscing about how God delivered the nation of Israel in the past. The purpose of this review is to point out a lesson; namely, what God did back there is only a picture of a much greater deliverance on a much higher plane yet to be fulfilled. Throughout Scripture the term “Israel” has a variety of meanings (nominal Church, true Church, the literal nation, etc.), but ultimately, at the end of the Kingdom, “Israel” will represent all who have cooperated and obtained salvation, hence the *fully saved*, the *fully redeemed*, on both the earthly and the spiritual plane. During the Kingdom the whole world of mankind will come forth from the grave and be given an opportunity for everlasting life, but not all will get life in the final analysis.

The Passover is referred to in this chapter, but there were two “passovers” of Israel from Egypt: (1) initially the firstborn and (2) subsequently the rest of the nation in the Red Sea. Thus the Passover picture, when seen in its fullness, includes more than just the night when the blood was put on the door and the lamb was eaten. The deliverance of the nation

in the Red Sea was also a passing over, and at that time the pursuing Egyptians died. The delivered Israelites on the far side of the Red Sea, whom Moses led in a victory song, represent those of the world of mankind who will get life at the end of the Kingdom. The victory song back there is a type of the grand hallelujah chorus at the end of the Millennial Age, when *all who are saved* will rejoice. When death is ultimately swallowed up in victory, there will be a great celebration both in heaven and on earth (1 Cor. 15:54).

The pursuing Egyptians who lost their lives in the Red Sea represent those of the world of mankind in the Kingdom who will not get life, those who will go into Second Death. And the firstborn Egyptians who died earlier during the Passover night at the hands of the destroying angel represent those of the consecrated of the present or Gospel Age who do not obey God and thus go into Second Death. So again, when God says of Israel in verse 8, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie," He is speaking of the ultimately redeemed nation. As "their Saviour," God does not purpose to save every individual but only those who prove loyal to Him at heart whether in this age or the next.

When God's plan for earth is complete, it will be a victory. Notice that in each of the first six Creative Days, God accomplished His purpose (Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25). But we are living in the last or Seventh Creative Day, a period of 7,000 years. When that day and God's purpose for it are accomplished, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

Now we will consider verses 8 and 9 in the original picture. For instance, in the golden calf experience, the especially disobedient died, but the nation continued on. There were other occasions of disobedience and murmuring, and what happened? More died, yet the nation lived on, manifesting God's *patience* as He continued to deal with them. In the Kingdom God will manifest that same patience with the world of mankind when He grants everyone a fair trial and an opportunity for life.

Of course, except for Joshua and Caleb, the entire generation that was of a certain age died in the Wilderness because of disobedience, but how long did that take? *Forty years*. Even though the whole nation perished and only their children entered the Promised Land, God did deal with the disobedient for a long time, nevertheless. Thus God is merciful and patient, as reflected in verse 7: "I will mention the *lovingkindnesses* [plural] of the LORD ... and the *great goodness* toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his *mercies*, and according to the *multitude of his lovingkindnesses*." Israel sinned many times in the Wilderness, including on ten notable occasions, but He gave them ample opportunity before they died.

Isa. 63:10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

This verse shows that eventually the generation of Israelites in the Wilderness had to die except for Joshua and Caleb. Many people consider the God of the Old Testament to be a God of anger because not only do they fail to realize that His wrath was justified but they fail to see the mercy aspect.

Isa. 63:11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy spirit within him?

Isa. 63:12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the

water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

Isa. 63:13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

Verses 11–13 also refer to the Exodus, but from a slightly different standpoint than verses 8–10. When the Jewish people observe the Passover today, they correctly look back at what Moses did as a historical event of the past, but that was *only the beginning*. As great as that miracle was, it is only a small dramatization of a *much greater deliverance* to take place in the near future. The question is asked, “Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock?” The shepherd of the Exodus was Moses, but the Shepherd of the future will be Jesus. The former was a deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt; the future will be a deliverance throughout the Kingdom of the world of mankind from bondage to sin and death. Jesus taught us to pray thus: “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10).

Why are these questions asked about God, about the One who performed such a mighty miracle for the Israelites in the past through Moses, His instrument or representative? When will these questions be raised, and by whom? When Christendom fails, these questions will go through the minds of the Holy Remnant. They will wonder, “Where is Jehovah?” At present Israel is putting its trust in the United States, the United Nations, and to a lesser extent England and France, but in the trouble of Armageddon, when the Western governments fail, they will inquire, “Where is our God, who did such wondrous miracles in the past?” They will begin to truly look to God when their very survival is at stake.

The Holy Remnant will ask, “Where is the God who led us through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, so that we did not stumble?” In rocky terrain like Sinai, a horse can travel uphill much easier than it can go downhill. The horse is not adapted like the goat for that type of terrain, and the slippage is greater going downhill. Out of deference to his horse, a rider will often dismount and lead the horse down, giving the animal more liberty of movement and less weight to carry. Incidentally, in severe and dangerous mountain climbing, people often lose their lives on the way down.

In other words, the questions being asked in verses 11–13 are referring back to when God led the 2 million Israelites through the treacherous desert terrain of Sinai, called the “howling wilderness” (Deut. 32:10), and miraculously fed and clothed them. At that time they were unified and well organized like *one* animal, like a horse, under God’s instruction and guidance through Moses. The nation will again be guided and led in the future, and during the time setting of this verse, the Holy Remnant will be asking these questions. During Jacob’s Trouble they will look back on the great event of the Exodus and hope—almost against hope—that there might be a reoccurrence of God’s great deliverance.

Isa. 63:14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

Not only does a horse need to be led through treacherous terrain down into a valley, but when it arrives, it needs liberty, pasturage, and rest. After troubled waters, as it were, comes peaceful pasturage. We are reminded of Psalms 23 and 46.

Isa. 63:15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

Isa. 63:16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

The translators properly indicated a break in thought with verse 15. At first, verse 16 might seem to cause a problem, for how could the verse reflect the thoughts of the Holy Remnant when Israel does not know them: "Israel acknowledge[s] us not." Verses 15 and 16 harmonize with the time setting when they are seen to be *prophetic thoughts of the Great Company*.

We will compare verses 15 and 16 with the picture in Song 5:2–9 of the "sister" who is too comfortable in bed to get up and answer the door when the Master knocks. Being a little piqued at the intrusion on her rest, she remains in bed, being indifferent and making various excuses until it is too late. When she finally arises, the Master is gone, but she can smell his fragrance on the handles of the door lock. Then she starts to search for him and asks, "Have you seen my Beloved? Where has he gone?" When the watchmen of the city find her, they first beat and wound her and take away her veil, but subsequently they become interested and ask, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women ... that thou dost so charge us?" Sometimes when people smite another and inflict injustices, they finally come to their senses and realize they were opposing the wrong person. That is the case in Song 5. First, the watchmen abuse the Great Company, but then they get interested in her "Beloved." The Great Company responds with a glowing description of Jesus.

Song 5 is the text the Pastor had in mind when he thought the Great Company class would have a message for the Holy Remnant after the Church is complete beyond the veil and after mystic Babylon has fallen. The message will be directed to the whole nation of Israel, but only the Holy Remnant will respond favorably.

Jesus said to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father" (Matt. 3:9). In other words, "Just because you are naturalized Jews of the seed of Abraham does not mean you will inherit the promises to the Jew *carte blanche*. In addition, you need to have the faith of Abraham." The Great Company are a class who not only are not children of Abraham according to the flesh but who, as Christians, are not recognized by the nation of Israel. Therefore, at first the watchmen of Israel will rebuff and smite the Great Company, the class who are looking for their Master, but then the Holy Remnant will have a change of heart and become interested. A rapport will develop between the spiritual Great Company class and a remnant of natural Israel. In this experience the Great Company will be looking for their own imminent deliverance, and the Holy Remnant will take up the refrain. That refrain is enunciated in verses 17–19.

Back to verse 7. The Great Company is speaking in that verse. They will recount the loving kindnesses of Jehovah and then give a message to Israel. When the Great Company realizes the Church is complete beyond the veil and they remain down here, they will be greatly disappointed and weep and gnash their teeth. In time, however, they will be rightly exercised and rejoice that they still have an opportunity to go to the marriage supper. In their zeal they will praise God and give a message to Israel (ie, the Elisha class will give their smiting message). In other words, this picture is related to the picture of Habakkuk 3:17,18. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off

from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*"

Isa. 63:17 O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Isa. 63:18 The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

Isa. 63:19 We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

Verses 17–19 are separate but related to verses 15 and 16. As the Holy Remnant begins to get interested and to respond to the Great Company message, their thoughts are prophetically given in verses 17–19.

"They were not called by thy name." This clause in verse 19 proves that verses 17–19 pertain to natural Israel—and specifically to the Holy Remnant. God said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). They were God's chosen people, a chosen nation. No other one nation has ever been adopted by God. The exception would be the royal nation of the consecrated, which is *international* in scope; it is a people *out of all nations* and not just one race of people or one nation. The Church of God is composed of Italians, Americans, Poles, etc., who have a *common faith*. Therefore, to repeat: verse 19 is saying that of all the nations of earth, only one was ever adopted by God, namely, Israel.

"The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary." The Holy Remnant speaks in verse 18: "We had that blessing for only a short time, and then we were put out for a long Diaspora of almost 2,000 years." Their initial attitude is given in verse 17: "O LORD, *why have you made us err* from your ways, and *hardened our heart* from thy fear?" But they will overcome this attitude; they will gradually soften and improve.

To a large extent, we are a product of our birth, environment, and teaching. To understand God's ways and methods, we must unlearn a lot of things. We begin as babes in Christ, but just like a natural parent with his child, God knows we will respond, develop, and grow. A natural parent can see obedience in a child up to the level of development, but the parent knows the child is immature and has much to learn. The principle is the same with the Holy Remnant. As time goes on, they will become more and more acquainted with what God expects of them, and they will be very much like Daniel when in his prayer he acknowledged the error of the nation. Eventually the Holy Remnant will see that as a nation, Israel did err. The next chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 64, will be their petition; that is, the Holy Remnant will petition God for deliverance from Jacob's Trouble. They will beseech Him to come down and deliver them from the national extremity that is threatening to utterly exterminate them as a people.

Isa. 64:1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

Verse 1 starts with "Oh": "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens ..." In other words, the mood or setting of this expression is one of anticipation or longing for the coming of the

Lord in a dramatic fashion. At first it might seem strange for anyone to want such calamities to occur, so in order for us to appreciate this verse, we will consider a little historical background.

(Exod. 19:9–11,16–18) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.... And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.... And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”

(Deut. 4:10–12) “Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.”

(Deut. 5:4,5) “The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;).”

(Deut. 33:2,3) “And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.”

These citations pertain to Israel’s presence at Mount Sinai about two months after they had left Egypt. God disclosed to Moses His intent to make a public announcement to the nation three days later, and He informed Moses what the people should do to prepare. On the third day when the people were gathered on the plain before the mount and God appeared to them, “mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke” and “the whole mount quaked greatly.” Flames and fire accompanied the earthquake as well as lightning and thunder. The resultant ash from the earthquake created a thick cloud, causing great darkness. Mount Sinai was belching out flames and fire way up high into “the midst of heaven.” In addition to the rumbling of the shaking earth and the loud thunder, there was the sound of a trumpet, which began like a ram’s horn, a shofar, and then got steadily louder and louder and louder until the people, trembling, could not stand the sound any longer and begged Moses to intercede. Fearing they would all perish, they wanted God to speak with Moses and then have Moses relay the message to them.

One reason God gave this demonstration of awesome power in connection with the inauguration of the Law Covenant was so that the Israelites would “hear my words” and “learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth.” The following additional

citations furnish other reasons.

(Hab. 3:3,10) “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.... The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.”

(Mic. 1:4,5) “And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?”

(Nah. 1:5,6) “The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.”

(Psalm 114) “When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. The [Red] sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back [when the Israelites entered the Promised Land under Joshua]. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs [the earthquake at Mount Sinai was so great when the Law Covenant was given that it could be visibly seen]. [Then David repeated a description of the events.] What ailed thee, O thou [Red] sea, that thou fleddest? [ie, what troubled you, O Red Sea, that caused you to flee?] thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.” Psalm 114 is a flashback to dramatic events in Israel’s history.

Now why did God want Israel to witness such dramatic demonstrations?

Comment: Because of their transgressions, He wanted them to be aware of His glory, majesty, presence, and *fury*.

The Lord spoke from heaven in a “voice” of such powerful dimensions because He wanted to show that the very elements of the world are at His beck and call. Without actually seeing His similitude or face, the Israelites saw the majestic appearance of God, as it were, by hearing only His voice.

Another reason for the dramatic demonstrations was to make the Jews aware of their own unfit condition—to make them realize their iniquities and sins and their need for God and His forgiveness and grace. Still another reason for the drama was to apprise the nation that Moses was God’s mouthpiece and to impress that fact on their memories forever.

A paraphrase of Isaiah 64:1 would be “O that you would come down from heaven as you did in the past!” In spirit, Isaiah was looking for God’s intervention in earth’s affairs to establish His Kingdom. Moreover, Isaiah was saying, in effect, that he desired to see God’s name and character vindicated. For thousands of years God’s name has been maligned and misrepresented, so His people should desire not only that His love be manifested but

especially that His holy name be vindicated.

What a God of all patience! He has been quiet and hiding Himself and only dealing with humble, little people who study His Word. It is a wonder that He did not explode and just wipe out the entire planet because of transgressions and rebellion. The first needed lesson will be the manifestation of His POWER and MAJESTY. Then, subsequently, when He speaks in a quiet voice through Jesus, the people will be in a better heart condition to realize their own undone condition and to listen to Him. They will marvel that the great Almighty God, whose power and majesty they had just witnessed, is now speaking kindly to the world and dealing with them in a merciful manner.

Isa. 64:2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

God will manifest His great power and authority in Israel during Jacob's Trouble to overwhelmingly defeat the forces of Gog. At that time the world's attention will be focused on the Middle East. Even though there will be signs and wonders all over the world, they will particularly occur, and on a *much grander scale*, in Israel. Jerusalem, the capital of that tiny nation, will be the pulpit of God's authority. From there He will speak.

What does the term "as when the melting fire burneth" signify? The heat will be so intense that the rocks will become molten. Even today there is evidence that this happened during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. An earthquake caused the normal relatively horizontal strata of the rocks to ripple and rupture into almost vertical strata. The intense heat of the earthquake broke the crust of the earth, and as the lava flowed out, it scorched the rocks on the surface.

Why will God cause such phenomena to occur? so that the nations will "tremble" at His presence. The Kingdom will not glide in peacefully but will be inaugurated in Israel with force and drama.

Isa. 64:3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

For the following reasons, God did "terrible [awesome] things" at Mount Sinai when the Law, the Ten Commandments, were given:

1. To manifest the majesty of God.
2. To have the people realize their sinful condition.
3. To demonstrate that Moses was the mediator between God and man in the Wilderness of Sinai.
4. To show that the true God is a living and invisible God, as opposed to the visible graven images of Egypt. In other words, the God of Israel is too awesome to be seen face to face. He is a "consuming fire"; heaven and earth cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27; Heb. 12:29).

The Israelites were thus reassured and sustained. They had left Egypt for a desert wilderness where they would serve Jehovah, the ever-living God, and He presented Himself to them

in this manner. Those who were properly exercised carried this memory of God's visitation in their hearts for the rest of their lives. Those with the wrong heart condition did not retain the memory. Despite such mighty demonstrations of power, the nation as a whole did not receive the experience "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4:2).

Keep in mind that Chapter 64, which is not to be spiritualized, expresses the thoughts of the Holy Remnant at the time of Jacob's Trouble. In this future setting, the Holy Remnant will beseech God to deliver them out of Jacob's Trouble through a reenactment of miraculous demonstrations of the past. The pronouns "we," "us," and "our" in this chapter all refer to the Holy Remnant. In answer to their prayers, God will deal with His people as He did in days of old, and He will manifest Himself as *Israel's* God.

Isa. 64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

The Apostle Paul quoted this text in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of [the natural] man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:10 adds, "But God hath revealed them unto us [in a fragmentary fashion in advance of the world] by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." God has in reservation a wonderful plan for the Kingdom Age, in which all mankind will have the opportunity for salvation. Until that time the world at large is completely in the dark.

In other words, as Paul often did, he quoted an Old Testament Scripture out of context in the New Testament. The real fulfillment of Isaiah 64:4 is *future*, but he gave this verse a partial *current* fulfillment during the Gospel Age by applying it to the Christian in principle. The Holy Spirit does enlighten us and tell us about some of God's purposes in the future.

Now put yourself in the setting of Isaiah 64:1–4. The first three verses give the sentiments of a prayer of the Holy Remnant for a very dramatic representation of God coming down and making His presence known to the people here on earth. Then comes verse 4, saying that men have not heard or seen what God has prepared for those who wait for Him. Back in Moses' day with the demonstrations at Mount Sinai, several things occurred: God spoke to the nation of Israel, as it were; Moses received instructions for the Tabernacle; and the Law Covenant was given, backed up by many ordinances, ceremonies, and sacrifices on various aspects of life. All of a sudden these *tremendous happenings and revelations* occurred at Sinai, only tiny samples of which had been done previously. Moreover, within a year Israel had a glorious Tabernacle. The series of events was like a person being taken from the jungle and brought into a very advanced civilization that is hard to comprehend. In summary, the introduction at Mount Sinai was a shock. And that is what the Holy Remnant is praying for here: "O, that you would come down as you did at Mount Sinai!" God's coming down resulted in a *great blessing* to Israel, and it will again in the future when He delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble. Stated in a little different way, the Holy Remnant is reviewing past examples of the character and capabilities of God and saying, "Oh, that He would do the same thing again and that we would get the desired blessing as promised in His Word!"

The whole world is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting (ignorantly) for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19). The human race is searching for happiness, health, joy, and peace, but what they really want—and do not know it—is God's Kingdom.

The prophet Haggai (2:7) says, “The desire of all nations shall come,” yet the people do not know specifically what that desire is because they are not looking for the Lord. At present this desire could be described as a subconscious yearning. And when that desire or Kingdom comes, the world will be greatly and pleasantly surprised.

Q: At Mount Sinai, God manifested His presence, and the Law and plans for the Tabernacle were given. Since we know there will be a parallel at the end of the age, could we say that in addition to the manifestation of His glory and the New (Law) Covenant, there will be a *literal* Third Temple?

A: Yes, God had a literal Tabernacle in the past, and there will be a literal Temple in the future. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple have a deep spiritual significance, and the literal structures add to this understanding. Past and future parallels are as follows:

At Mount Sinai

God’s presence and majesty
Old Law Covenant
Tabernacle

At Mount of Olives in Jerusalem

God’s presence and majesty
New Law Covenant
Ezekiel’s Temple

Isa. 64:5 **Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.**

Isaiah is saying that all have sinned. Put yourself in the place of the Jews who are spared as part of the Holy Remnant in Jacob’s Trouble. They will realize they are survivors because of God’s favor toward them as *individuals* while He was manifesting His great power against the forces of evil. They will be aware of the history of their people and know that God is being merciful to them now, in this current experience, because of their repentant, contrite heart attitude. At the same time they will be sympathetic toward those Jews who die in Jacob’s Trouble and hope for their recovery out of death and a future opportunity.

In other words, the Holy Remnant will realize that God does favor those who obey Him. In the past God said through Moses, “If you do such-and-such, I will do so-and-so.” When the nation tried to obey God, they received visual and material benefits; eg, they were victorious in battle, they had many children, and the land was fruitful. With the eye of faith, Christians patiently look for the same types of benefits to be reserved for them in *heaven*. With natural Israel, temporal benefits were more or less immediate; with spiritual Israel the heavenly benefits are future.

The Holy Remnant will realize that the reason Israel had so many problems down through history is their own fault and that if, as a nation, they had prayed, fasted, and obeyed, then many of their troubles would have been eliminated. They will know that God loves those who serve Him, and their desire for themselves and for others will be to serve Him from that day forward into the illimitable future, to continue on as God’s people with His blessing.

Isa. 64:6 **But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**

“All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” The Holy Remnant continues to speak here. Other Scriptures, such as Isaiah 4:2–4, show that at this time they will be a purged, purified,

repentant, chastened people. They will see him “whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him” as one mourns for the loss of an only son (Zech. 12:10–14). Many Scriptures indicate the changed condition of these Jews when they realize that Jesus truly is the prophesied Messiah. They will be stricken to the heart much like Joseph’s brethren. They maligned and mistreated Joseph, but when he became prime minister and revealed his identity to them, they were very fearful at first.

Isa. 64:7 **And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.**

This verse is saying the Holy Remnant will be such a *small* portion of the people that it will be as if the whole nation is unrepentant and does not recognize God or call on His name.

Comment: The Holy Remnant will have the same attitude that Daniel had when he apologized for the sins of the people and personally felt the burden of their iniquities.

Reply: Yes, in his prayer he took their guilt upon himself, and yet he was one of the most outstanding Old Testament examples of obedience.

The effect of the manifestations of God’s great power in Jacob’s Trouble will be very wholesome on the Holy Remnant when they realize they were personally selected to survive the severe judgment. The world will see these survivors as a changed people.

Isa. 64:8 **But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.**

The Holy Remnant continue to speak here. The world of mankind will take up this refrain a little later, for God appears first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. And we too as Christians try to be submissive in God’s hands so that He can mold us like a potter. Depending on how we react to and obey His providences, we will, hopefully, become vessels of glory and beauty in the future. In summary, throughout eternity all who get life on any plane in any age must have a heart attitude of consecration and submission to the Lord to do and obey His will. The hard stone of the heart will be turned to soft clay in responsiveness and submission to the Lord, and yet be firm for Him in other matters. Stated another way, those who get life will be hard like a diamond in obedience to God and soft like clay in submission to His will. Thus there is to be a mixture of hardness and softness. This mixture is illustrated in Revelation 4:2,3 in regard to the One (God) who sat on the throne. In His character the sard stone of love and compassion is blended perfectly with the diamond (called the “jasper”) of justice and purity.

Q: Would the Jews back in Isaiah’s day and Old Testament times have understood and benefited from these prophetic end-of-the-age messages to any extent?

A: They caught the drift of better days to come, but they did not fully understand. They realized a coming Messiah was promised and a time of future blessing, but they did not comprehend the call of the Church, even though certain verses hinted of such. For example, Jude 14 mentions that Enoch prophesied of the Lord’s coming “with ten thousands of his saints.” And Daniel 7:18,22 prophesied about judgment being given to the saints of the most High and their taking and possessing the Kingdom forever and ever. Therefore, in Old Testament times the people were given little glimpses of blessings to

come that they could long for without having much understanding.

Isa. 64:9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

Even though Joseph had shown kindness to his brothers on several occasions, when they realized that the prime minister of Egypt was Joseph, the brother they had put into the pit and sold into slavery, they were fearful at first, but he pacified them by saying, "It was God's will that I have this experience. You may have meant it for evil, but God overruled it for good so that I would be made prime minister of Egypt." And what will the Holy Remnant realize? That the nation crucified Jesus, one of their own brethren. Thus, even though the Holy Remnant will realize God's kindness in delivering them, they will be in awe and experience some trepidation initially. They will entreat Him, "Do not be angry with us too long for our iniquity in crucifying your Son."

Isa. 64:10 Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

Isa. 64:11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

Isa. 64:12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

Jerusalem today is not the city it once was. The Old City is occupied by Arab merchants and Gentile organizations and churches. In the Temple area, the Dome of the Rock sits on the site where the Third Temple will be built. When the Kingdom is established, not only will the "holy cities" of Israel (Jerusalem, the cities of refuge, etc.) and the Temple of the past be rebuilt, but their judges (the type of government) will be restored as at the first. To the Jew who longs now for holy conditions in Israel and the proper observance of feast days, present conditions are frustrating and a "wilderness." Moreover, many areas of Israel still need development and thus could be considered a "desolation." Therefore, from the standpoint of the Holy Remnant's expectation for Israel based on Bible prophecies and their disappointment with current conditions, they could view the nation as a desolation and a wilderness.

Comment: Wouldn't verse 10 express the feelings of the Holy Remnant when they see Jerusalem reduced to rubble on its heaps in Jacob's Trouble (Psa. 79:1)? Their feelings of longing will be intensified when they see their capital, *Jerusalem*, their most holy city, devastated.

Reply: Yes. We were just trying to take the viewpoint of Isaiah 4:2-4, for many Jews do not believe that their own Hebrew Scriptures are the infallible Word of God but view them from a purely scholastic sense. For those who have a lot of faith, vision, and trust in the Lord, it is helpful to mathematically analyze certain topics such as chronology, but the Bible must be approached from the standpoint of its being the infallible Word of God in order to get the proper blessing.

Q: If verses 10 and 11 refer to Jacob's Trouble, how would the clause "Our holy and our beautiful house ... is burned up with fire" be fulfilled at that time?

A: Suppose you are a sincere, thinking 90-year-old Jew who is about to die and all around is

trouble, especially economic and political. When you contrast the current trouble with your Jewish heritage under the Law, the prophets, and God's blessings, you would be very concerned that God is not fighting for His people as in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3), that there is no leader like Moses, and that there is no Temple because of the Dome of the Rock. Then comes Jacob's Trouble, which increases the trouble. The Holy Remnant will realize that Jacob's Trouble is a visitation of judgment from the Lord because they have sinned. Even in times of great catastrophe the Arabs say, "Allah did it. Allah be praised!" Therefore, when the Dome of the Rock is destroyed by an earthquake, a natural disaster, the Arabs will accept what the great God Allah has permitted. With the Jews and the Arabs both being Semitic and hence kinsmen, this philosophy pervades underneath.

Remember how Chapter 64 starts. Prophetically, the Holy Remnant will long for God to manifest His presence as in the past: "Oh that thou wouldst ..." The entire chapter gives the thoughts of a Jew here at the end of the age reviewing the history of God's people from the past up to the present. In the meantime, the Jewish people departed from God and seemed to lose His favor, and now the Holy Remnant are wondering what is happening. The penitent Holy Remnant will be brought safely through Jacob's Trouble. Thus the perspective is not that the Temple is being burned at that time. Rather, the Holy Remnant will be thinking of past calamities. When Jerusalem is destroyed in Jacob's Trouble, houses are rifled, women are ravished, and others are penned up in the Old City to seemingly be dealt with next, then certain things will happen. In other words, the setting of this chapter and the sentiments expressed will occur after Jerusalem is taken but before God comes down and rends the heavens (verse 1) to deliver the Holy Remnant. This chapter describes the in-between experience of the Holy Remnant yearning for deliverance.

Isa. 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

The Revised Standard Version is better: "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation that did not call on my name."

God is speaking to natural Israel, to a nation that did NOT call on His name when He figuratively kept calling to them and was ready to assist them: "Behold me." "Here am I."

Isa. 65:2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

All day long God spread out both of His hands to rebellious Israel. As they willfully and noisily walked in their own way, He was trying to hush them, as it were, and attract—even *demand*—their attention, but the people ignored Him.

Isa. 65:3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

Israel provoked God by sacrificing in gardens; ie, they not only worshipped heathen gods but usually did so in a conspicuous or prominent place such as high on a mountain.

Israel also provoked God by burning incense on brick altars. Very often the incense and cakes were offered to Ashtoreth, the "queen of heaven." This ancient mother god corresponds with Isis of Egypt and Mary of the Catholic religion. In fact, many lands have a

version of a mother god. The Israelites baked cakes to her as a meal offering.

The “gardens” were actually groves. In Isaiah’s day individuals or families made a grove or garden on their property for statuary or images to serve as their own little “church” for worshipping heathen gods. Wealthier people built altars or images in groves in high places (on mountains). Examples of a comparable custom today would be to place a statue in a garden or on the front lawn or to pray before a crucifix in a bedroom.

Not only is incense not used much in this country, but the pungent odor is often repugnant to people today. However, incense is still used in the Middle East and Asia. Burning incense and having a place for prayer are not wrong in and of themselves, but to use these to worship one other than God is wrong. Under the Tabernacle arrangement, incense was burned in the Holy. The criticism here is against a manufactured type of worship—against *man-made* gardens and bricks. The Israelites were utilizing man-made gimmicks, whereas the Old Testament said to use *natural* field stones. Under the Law, the Israelites were prohibited from using tools on the stones comprising an altar. Bricks were forbidden because they came from man-made molds.

Isa. 65:4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

Why did the Israelites sit in tombs and among graves and lodge in monuments? They wanted to communicate with the dead, and they thought that being in close proximity would facilitate the communication. They used occult methods (necromancy, spiritism, etc.) to communicate with the spirit world instead of asking God what *His* will was. This is another example of *human* inventiveness and manufacture, which in antitype would be man’s attempt to justify himself.

The Israelites ate “swine’s flesh” (pork) contrary to their Law. Actually pork is one of the most nutritious meats, and Christians can eat pork because they are not under the Law Covenant. For the Jew, however, pork is ceremonially unclean. Incidentally, heathen religions often considered the pig, especially the suckling pig, to be a sacred animal and offered it for sacrifice.

“Broth of abominable things is in their vessels.” In Egypt, Indonesia, and elsewhere is the whirling dervish religion. At the height of the whirling dervish dances, some are enabled by occult power to eat live scorpions; this act supposedly demonstrates their holiness. Insects are frequently eaten in the Middle East and they are highly nutritious. Under the Law many kinds of insects could be eaten and others were considered ceremonially unclean. John the Baptist ate locusts, a form of grasshopper that is quite nutritious. Here in verse 4 God is criticizing the Israelites for eating a broth, soup, or stew that contained ceremonially unclean things. No doubt they added these items to increase the nutrition of the soup, but they were disobeying God’s Law. The point is that the Israelites did what they wanted regardless of God’s instruction. Whatever they liked, they ate. When God stretched out His hands to reason with them, they ignored Him and His Law.

Isa. 65:5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Especially the religious element, the scribes and the Pharisees, had the attitude of being “holier than thou.” This element took an opposite view from the common people, the

publicans and sinners, who were careless and ignored God's instruction, eating what they pleased. Instead the scribes and Pharisees bent over backwards to obey outwardly and added burdens (traditions) to the Law. For instance, they taught that certain rituals or ceremonies had to be followed before eating. Jesus criticized their attitude, saying, "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things.... Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.... Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:8,9,13). On another occasion, the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why do you eat with sinners?" They ate only with their own kind at a separate table, considering themselves to be too holy to eat with ordinary people. They had an inordinate view of this subject. To illustrate, consider the following Scripture:

"And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments" (Ezek. 44:19). When the priests go from the Inner Court of the future Third Temple to the Outer Court, they are told to change their clothing because the Lord does not want them to sanctify the people. The religious element exaggerated such instructions to mean they should *never* fraternize or communicate with the common people. What the instruction actually means is that *in matters of religious worship*, they were to be separate, but in public, in the world, they could mix. This principle is true for the Christian too. The Church is in the world, but the world should not be in the Church. The Apostle Paul said, "I wrote unto you ... not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:9,10). In other words, if this principle is carried too far, if the Christian tries to avoid *all* fornication, refusing to sit at a table or work with unconsecrated fornicators, drunkards, etc., he will have to leave the world. However, if anyone who is called a brother practices such sin, he should not be fraternized with.

Instead of getting the proper lesson, the scribes and Pharisees thought they were a separate and sanctimonious class. Jesus called them hypocrites and blind guides who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel (Matt. 23:23,24). They were very particular about certain matters (they measured out the tithes and the cumin), but on other matters of the Law (judgment, mercy, and faith), they were way off-base. The problem was that they were not properly instructed by the Word of the Lord. They obeyed the traditions of men (the Talmud, etc.) more than the instructions of God.

"These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." The smell of smoke is acrid and unpleasant, and if thick, the smoke adversely affects breathing. In fact, in many fires it is the smoke that kills people, the lack of oxygen, rather than the fire itself. Verse 5 is saying that Israel's wrong practices, their iniquities, were a continual smoke in Jehovah's nostrils. The Israelites' burning of incense to false gods, as it were, highly displeased God continually. It is true that none of us are righteous, for we are all born in sin and "shapen in iniquity," and no one can stand before God in his own righteousness (Rom. 3:10; Psa. 51:5). However, if we try to obey God, it will be infrequent that we displease Him. To be "a fire that burneth all the day" means that the Israelites continually displeased God; they did not try to obey but constantly practiced sin.

Isa. 65:6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

“Behold, it is written before me.” This can be understood from two standpoints. While “it is written” in the sense that God says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay,” it is also written in the sense that He does not lightly consider such infractions by His professed people, even though the infractions are seemingly done with impunity (Rom. 12:19). God takes note of their deeds—deeds of kindness and justice as well as deeds of cruelty and injustice. A record is being kept, and all are accountable for their deeds according to their degree of understanding. Accordingly, all will be rewarded or punished *in due time*. See the following Scriptures: Psa. 10:14; 56:8; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Eccl. 12:14; 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 34:21,22; Jer. 32:19; Zech. 4:10; Rom. 2:5,6; 1 Tim. 5:24,25; Heb. 4:13.

Isa. 65:7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

Notice how the iniquities of their “fathers” are brought into this context. Isaiah was saying to the people of his day, “You, as well as your fathers, are guilty of these iniquities.” In other words, the sins had been accumulating throughout the generations—their sins and the sins of their fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, etc. Individually, all are accountable. Although it may appear that God is indifferent to sin, He does not wink the eye in the final analysis. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). However, in His mercy He has provided for all to have an opportunity in the Kingdom to mend their ways.

“Therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.” Like verse 6, this verse indicates that a personal record is being kept of everyone’s deeds, individual by individual and generation by generation.

Incense being burned “upon the mountains” refers to the larger gardens, the more public shrines, as opposed to the smaller individual or family gardens and groves down in the valleys.

Isa. 65:8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

Why did God say, “Destroy not the cluster because of the new wine in it”? God could have permanently cast off the entire nation of Israel (the “cluster”), but because of the relatively few outstanding Jews (the Holy Remnant), He will save the nation. It is like seeing a vine that does not bring forth the abundance of fruit desired, but because of a few choice grapes here and there for new wine, the entire vine is not destroyed. And so in the near future, God will rescue Israel because of the Holy Remnant that is in it.

Isa. 65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

In this context God’s “elect” would be natural Israel, the Holy Remnant. Eventually the seed will include all who come in under the New Covenant.

Comment: Romans 11:28 uses the word “election” in referring to natural Israel: “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the *election*, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”

Reply: Yes, the Romans text shows there is justification for applying “elect” to natural Israel here in Isaiah.

“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains.” Jacob refers to the ten-tribe kingdom and Judah to the two-tribe kingdom. In other words, the future blessing and promise will come to the *entire* nation of Israel. While the ten-tribe kingdom deflected first, was cast off earlier, and had more obnoxious kings than the two-tribe kingdom, the Anglo-Israelites believe that only the ten tribes will be restored to favor. In fact, however, the Bible shows that not only will God restore favor to the two tribes as well as the ten tribes, but He will “save the tents of Judah first.” “The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah” (Zech. 12:7).

The word “seed,” as used in this context, will be discussed under Isaiah 65:23.

Isa. 65:10 **And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.**

The land of Israel is divided topographically with Sharon being the plain portion, the lower, flat, broad expanse. The plain of Sharon will become “a fold of flocks.” This natural or pastoral picture shows that in the Kingdom, Israel will be a place of herds and flocks. Today in Israel the Arabs and the bedouin have flocks and herds but not the Jews. Life will be more natural and pastoral in the Kingdom than it is today.

Q: “Sharon” is a general term referring to a topographical division of Israel, but isn’t the “valley of Achor” a more specific name?

A: The valley of Achor would be the area of Achor (“Acre” today), and the Hebrew word means “hope.”

Q: Why will so many animals be needed in the Kingdom?

A: Meat will be eaten in the Kingdom until the human race reaches perfection at the end of the Millennium. Animals will also be needed for milk and cheese.

Comment: In addition, animals will be used as sacrifices in the Third Temple services. If people come representatively from other nations to the Temple, they will not be able to bring animals with them.

Reply: Yes, Ezekiel Chapters 40–47 tell about the building of the Temple and the reinstatement of animal sacrifices on a limited scale.

Isa. 65:11 **But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.**

Isa. 65:12 **Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.**

What is the thought behind “troop” and “number”? The Revised Standard reads, “But you

who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword ... because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in." Two Syrian gods were called Fortune and Destiny. In mythology, obeisance was given to a particular god or gods (Fortune and Destiny in this case) according to the blessing desired. With the Hebrew word "gad" literally meaning "troop," God was using sarcasm in a play on words with the names of the two Syrian gods.

Isa. 65:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

Isa. 65:14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

Isa. 65:15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

Q: Do these verses indicate a distinction when God saves the Holy Remnant—that some Jews will receive favor and some will not?

A: No, these verses refer to the Diaspora. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus illustrated a reversal of circumstances: Israel (the Rich Man) lost the blessing, abundance, and favor, and the Gentiles (the beggar or Lazarus) gained the blessing. The parable prophetically showed the wide gulf that would exist between the two down through the Dark Ages and the persecuting, purgatorial experiences the Jews would have at the hands of Gentiles in Europe. Strangely enough, in the very nations where the Jews were persecuted and made the scapegoat, the "servants" rejoiced and sang "for joy of heart." These "servants" were God's people, Christians, but there are two kinds of Christians: the true and the merely nominal. True Christians had true joy and holiness and did not participate in the persecution, whereas nominal Christians, anti-Semitic in attitude, did the persecuting. What an odd turn of events! Jesus was a Jew and God's name had been on Israel, but now came this strange reversal. Those who had previously had God's favor and wonderful opportunities lost them and experienced nothing but frustration and agony, whereas the former outcasts got the joy of the gospel. (Of course false Christians, who regarded the Jews as Christ killers got a false joy. They took the stigma of the actual individuals involved in the Crucifixion and applied it indiscriminately to all Jews.) In summary, verses 13–15 are contrasting the sad experiences of the cast-off Jews experiencing Diaspora in the so-called Christian lands and the happy experiences of "Christians."

Isa. 65:16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

While the Jews received persecution down through the Gospel Age, that is not to be their eternal destiny. A change of thought begins here, and it is definitely stated in verse 17.

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth." Why is the phrase "God of truth" mentioned twice? Many people in parts of the world other than "Christian" lands associate the wrong deeds of natural Israel and Christendom with the God of Israel, and

thus condemn both. For example, at the 1846 Evangelical Alliance, representatives of countries like China and Japan pointed out how beautiful the gospel message was but that those who espoused the teachings of Jesus did not live and act accordingly. Moslem leaders have also scorned Christianity and its history, and Khomeini in particular singled out the pope for denunciation. Thus many of these other nations have cursed not only the so-called Christian nations but also Israel and Israel's religion, Judaism. But now verse 16 indicates a change taking place where one day the world will see that the God of Israel is indeed the *true* God, the God of truth. A better day is coming when the wrongs of the past will be rectified.

Isa. 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

The “*new heavens*” and “*new earth*” refer to the coming Kingdom, which is the time of Jesus' reign, the resurrection of the dead, etc. Specifically, the “*new heavens*” represent the new powers of control, both civil and spiritual. The “*new earth*” would be those under the new rulership, those being governed underneath the new control of Messiah's Kingdom.

Comment: The last part of this verse is interesting. “The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” From the standpoint of the troubles mankind has experienced—troubles that have been overwhelming at times—the whole 6,000 years of the history of the human race are really but a tiny dot on the stream of time.

Reply: Yes, as the world looks back, its past history will seem like a nightmare, but even that nightmare will be forgotten.

Isa. 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

“*Jerusalem*” can refer to the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the invisible power of The Christ, who will reign over the earth. It can also refer to literal Jerusalem, from which the “*word of the Lord*” will go forth to other nations (Rev. 21:2; Isa. 2:3).

Isa. 65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

The primary emphasis of verse 19 is down here in the Kingdom. As the new Jerusalem comes down and establishes control, it will correspond with the earthly Jerusalem. This verse reminds us of some of the promises to the obedient inhabitants of the earth in the Kingdom and beyond, into the ages of ages: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa. 30:5).

Isa. 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

In the Kingdom, in the “*new heavens*” and “*new earth*” era, there will “be no more thence an infant of days.” An “*infant of days*” is an infant who lives only a few days and then dies. In ancient times, the infant mortality rate was much higher than today. And while the

longevity rate of today, the average length of life, is considered to be so high, one factor is that the infant mortality rate is lower—that is, *more* people live longer today—but there have been centenarians all down through history, not just today. Therefore, in the Kingdom, infants and babies will not die but will continue to live until they meet up with the responsibilities of that time.

Neither will there be in the Kingdom “an old man that hath not filled his days.” Older people often say, “If only I could live my life over again,” meaning that in their senior years, their sense of values and their perspective have radically changed from those of their youth and even middle-age years. When they are old and ready for the grave, they are aware of many missed opportunities earlier in life. And some express regret that they did not respond more promptly to the Lord’s leadings and to the instruction in His Word. Hence millions of people who lived to an old age still had not “filled” their days. In other words, they died dissatisfied because they felt their life was more or less a failure.

The autumn of the year with bright, colorful leaves is usually the best time of the year, and yet a sadness is attached to it, because it presages winter. The autumnal years of life are much the same. There is a tinge of sorrow and yet beauty. And so the Bible refers to the “hoary head” as being a person of wisdom because, generally speaking, even if one did not respond properly to all of life’s experiences, he nevertheless knows more than youth. “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 16:31).

In the Kingdom, in this time of the new heavens and the new earth, “there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days.” What is the slant of the thinking in this verse? It is true that there will be a radical change from present conditions, but what is meant by the expression “the child shall die an hundred years old”? This verse is not talking about the many billions in the Kingdom who will get everlasting life but about those who do *not* make the grade, about the *failures*. The point is that those who are failures in the next age will have *no excuse*. Now infants can die a few days old never having done either good or evil and never having received the knowledge that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. But in the next age, that child will come forth from the grave and be given a full opportunity to make good and get life. In fact, that child will live to be a hundred years of age, and then, if disobedient after such a long period of time, that individual will be cut off in permanent or Second Death. On the other hand, the old man who sowed his oats and did not obey God but wishes at the end of his life that he had lived differently will get a fresh opportunity when he is awakened out of death in the Kingdom. And then, if after a hundred years under that circumstance, a person still does not properly exercise himself, he will be cut off. In other words, *no one*, young or old, will have an excuse for not making good in the Kingdom. There will be neither an infant of days nor an older person who has not had a full, fair opportunity to get life.

Verse 20 is saying that the child, the “infant of days” who died shortly after birth, will live to be a hundred years old. The person who lived to old age in the present life will also be given a hundred years of opportunity in the Kingdom. Hopefully, the great bulk of mankind will inherit everlasting life, but many will prove to be incorrigible and not make the grade because they actually prefer the evil.

To repeat: verse 20 is written from the perspective of those who *fail to get life in the Kingdom*. The child or “infant of days” who does not make the grade will die at age 100, being “accursed,” as it were. And the old man or “sinner” who fills out his days in the Kingdom

but does not make the grade will also die as the “accursed.” In other words, there will be no excuse in the Kingdom, for all will know the Lord, from the least of the people unto the greatest of them (Jer. 31:34). There will be no need to tell one another, for the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

Normally, verse 20 is said to mean that when a person is 100 years old, he will be like a child with the healthy flesh of youth. Although the Book of Job teaches this thought in regard to the Kingdom, verse 20 does not. “His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth” (Job 33:25). The people of that day will have the complexion of a child: fair-skinned, delicate, and pure. They will eventually be the very essence of health as they prosper under the righteous government of the Kingdom. But verse 20 is discussing the *period of opportunity*.

Moreover, verse 20 is speaking only in *general* terms, for it does not mean that everyone has to get a full 100 years in order to merit Second Death. Generally speaking, everyone will be afforded this opportunity to make progress, but other Scriptures indicate that three types of sinners will be resuscitated in the Kingdom and then go into Second Death. The three types are as follows:

1. The totally incorrigible and stubborn who refuse to obey Christ will be cut off shortly after coming out of the grave. They will refuse to hear the voice of that prophet or to make any progress (Acts 3:23). First, however, they will at least hear and have the opportunity of salvation, for all must come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).
2. Those who do listen but who make little progress in their 100 years of opportunity will be cut off at that point. Their lack of progress and growth will be the evidence that they are not worthy of continued life.
3. Those who obey only out of prudence will be cut off at the end of the Millennium when the Little Season reveals their wrong heart condition. Although they obey outwardly, in their hearts they will want to return to former crooked ways and take advantage of others. “Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?” (Amos 8:4–6). In the present age, this type of person is shrewd and gets money through malpractices. When the Kingdom is inaugurated, Christ is reigning, and the iron-rod rule is enforced, this class will comply because it is prudent to do so, but they will be longing to return to their former way of life. Those people today who charge exorbitant fees (doctors, lawyers, etc.) are really refined, educated robbers, even though they smile outwardly and appear to be nice. They live a life of pleasure, comfort, and ease and are highly respected, but in the Kingdom they will have to tow the line. Many such individuals will want the New Covenant (the “new moon”) and Christ’s reign to end and God to give over the earth to mankind as He formerly did to Adam. They will know that Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that when he has accomplished this, he will turn the Kingdom over to the Father so that “God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). They will know that the Kingdom is a time for the rehabilitation, development, and testing of the human race and that ultimately the strict supervision will be removed and mankind will live forever. They will want the New Covenant to expire, the Mediator to

withdraw, the Millennium and the Seventh Creative Day to end, and the ages of ages to begin so that they can sell “the needy for a pair of shoes.” Having little or no regard for people and looking upon them as mere commodities, this class will want to be kings like Adam and continue to prey on their fellow human beings. They will make the shekel (the price) great but the ephah (the quantity or measurement) small. They will want everlasting life so that they can again work their shrewdness and make excessive profits. It will be difficult for those of this class to reform their ways in the Kingdom and to actually get everlasting life. Although those of this class who do not reform will be deceived in the final searching test of the Little Season and go into Second Death, they will live more than the hundred years.

Isa. 65:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

Verse 21 is saying that life in the Kingdom will be more rural. The people will build their own houses and plant their own vineyards. In other words, they will have to work for their temporal needs, but life will be radically different from today in that what each person can grow from the earth will be his to keep. Oppressive taxation will be a thing of the past. Today we live an artificial type of life. Instead of walking, we ride; skyscrapers block the sun; etc. Relatively few observe nature.

Isa. 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

In the present age, one builds and another often inhabits. Reasons why people lose their homes include poverty, foreclosure, fire, war, sickness, and death. In the Kingdom people will be able to retain what they create and do. Whatever efforts are put forth to satisfy temporal needs will endure. When a person is not capable of a particular task, others will be happy to help. Happiness, ease, and comfort will abound.

“For as the days of a tree are the days of my people.” What is the analogy here? Some trees, such as the redwoods of California, live for thousands of years without decaying. The cedars of Lebanon were comparable to the redwoods. Imagine counting the annual rings on such trees and actually being able to point to a ring that grew during the time of Nero or other notable events of history! The analogy is that just as these trees theoretically live forever, so will the obedient world of mankind in the Kingdom and beyond. Olive trees are another example. If not damaged by fire or some other force, they can easily live for more than a thousand years.

Q: Would the root system of a tree be part of the analogy? The longer a tree lives, the deeper the roots grow and the more water and sustenance they take in. The bigger and taller the tree, the more beautiful it is and the more shade it provides. Moreover, a tree is self-sufficient.

A: Yes, the text would support those thoughts. For instance, trees are intentionally planted to draw water. The thicker the vegetation, the more abundant the rainfall. It would seem that more trees would drink up more water, but in fact, it is the opposite, for trees attract rain and water. Trees that are in a proper locale tend to be self-sufficient.

“And mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Trees are associated with

everlasting life. The days of a tree are like the days of God's "elect," who will ultimately make good and live forever here on the earth. The saved world of mankind will be the "Israel of God" in the fullest sense of the word. Kingdom blessings will start with natural Israel under the New Covenant, but as the Gentiles subsequently come in under that covenant, they will receive the same benefits and rewards.

Isa. 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

"They are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their *offspring* with them." Contrary to what many believe, this verse proves there will be marriage and some child-bearing in the Kingdom. The age *beyond the Millennium* is when these activities will cease.

The people (and their children, their "offspring") who get life in the Kingdom will be "the [earthly] seed [of Abraham] of the blessed of the LORD [Jehovah]." Their number will be as the "sand of the sea[shore]" (Gen. 22:17; 32:12). Becoming part of the earthly seed of the blessed of God will follow the principle "to the Jew first," then to the Gentile.

Q: Would the Lord's "blessed" be The Christ? Jesus, the second Adam, will be the age-lasting Father and the Church, the second Eve, will be the mother of all who come forth from the grave, as well as of new children born during the Kingdom.

A: Yes, as "the blessed" of God, it will be Jesus and the Church who will regenerate the human race. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus spoke of the "regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, [and the Church] ... also." The Christ will be both father and mother to the world of mankind. Even the Ancient Worthies will be considered children of the *blessor* seed.

The promise to Abraham teaches restitution, and it is usually quoted from that standpoint (Gen. 12:2,3; 18:8; 22:15–18). However, the Apostle Paul applies the promise differently to show there is a higher blessing than receiving. The higher blessing is to be the *blessor*. Paul's use of the term "children of promise [and faith]" in Galatians 4:28 shows that the blessed of the Abrahamic promise are the channel through which the blessings will go to others. In the highest sense of the word, Jesus and the Church will be that channel of blessing to others. Stated another way, the *blessor* (those dispensing the blessings, the channel of blessing—the Church) will be more honored than the *blessed* (those receiving the blessings—the world).

From a natural standpoint, the progeny of Abraham will be blessed. Take Adam for an illustration. The entire human race comes from Adam. We might think the Abrahamic promise means that not only will Adam be blessed but all of his seed. But the trouble is that the seed will come forth *before* Adam does. Most of the early Church were Jews. At Pentecost alone 8,000 Jews became Christians. Those Jews who made their calling and election sure will be the progenitors in the Kingdom. Hence the *blessors* will precede the *blessed*. The order is reversed.

This chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 65, has a natural setting primarily and a spiritual application secondarily. The "seed" of verse 23 and God's "elect" of verse 22 are the same; they will be the children of The Christ. When the earthly application is considered, the "blessed" are the natural seed of Israel and those of the world of mankind who come underneath the New

Covenant—and their progeny, if any. When the spiritual application is considered, the Church will be the blessing, and the seed would be those who are blessed of the blessing.

“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal. 3:8,9). As stated previously, Paul’s reasoning is quite different than the normal explanation. Notice that God justifies the heathen through *faith*. But when—in this age or the next age? The Gospel Age, the present age, is the age of *faith*. In the Kingdom, the world of mankind will be justified by *works* (Rev. 20:12). Therefore, Paul applied this Scripture about Abraham to the present age. When the promise is read, “In thee shall all nations be blessed,” we generally think of how the world of mankind will benefit, and although that lesson is part of the Genesis text, Paul’s reasoning is otherwise. Paul is emphasizing that the gospel preached to Abraham will be accomplished “in thee,” ie, in the blessing, in the channel, in the *Church*. The promise given to Abraham was not only that the nations would be blessed but that there would be a *channel* of blessing, which is the higher blessing.

The same word translated “blessed” is used variously in Scripture; sometimes it means “channel” and sometimes “recipient.” The context determines the meaning. The apostle Paul is reasoning that the “*thee*” of the phrase “in *thee*” refers to the channel. The promise was made to Abraham that “in *thee* [in the channel, in the Church] shall all nations be blessed.” The *real good news* is to be *with Christ*, to attain the spiritual hope of the high calling, for restitution does not even begin to compare with the spiritual hope. The “kingdom” means the Little Flock, the royal nation of kings and priests, not restitution. Restitution is part of the good news, but it is not the primary emphasis. Stated another way, the “gospel” is not restitution.

We should not feed on earthly restitution. Our desire should be to see *Jesus*, and not our father, mother, brother, etc. We should be living and dying for *him*. Hence it is essential for our hopes to be trained on the spiritual aspect, and we need to have clarity of purpose and vision in that regard. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 Paul admonishes us to *run* so that we might obtain the prize. Hope for the high calling and love for God and Jesus have to be cultivated through the Word, for they are foreign to our nature. We are more responsive to other sensations. We are told that “every man that hath *this hope* in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). In the New Testament, those Scriptures that pertain to the high calling of the Church *far outnumber* Scriptures about restitution. The New Testament is mostly instruction for the Church, not for the world.

Isa. 65:24 **And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.**

Christians often quote this verse in connection with prayer life: “Before they call, I [God] will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I [God] will hear.” Sometimes the answer to prayer comes not only the very next day but while we are still on our knees. And there are times when the answer is delayed, as with the importunate widow (Luke 18:2–5). In fact, the answer can be delayed for weeks, even years. Sometimes the answer is no. The principle underlying the answer to prayer is that God knows best how and when to respond.

Although these are valuable lessons for the Christian, when verse 24 is considered in context, it shows that there will be prayer in the Kingdom Age. In Matthew 21:13 Jesus said, “It is written, My house *shall be called* the house of prayer.” Truly the Third Temple will be a

“house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7). While the Kingdom will be an age of sight and works, as opposed to the age of faith now, prayer will always be in order.

John 4:19–24 about the woman of Samaria also refers to prayer in the Kingdom. She said to Jesus, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” In the Old Testament, Jews were supposed to pray in the direction of the Temple mount in Jerusalem. While the Temple was still standing, Jews who wanted to make a special petition to the Lord went to Jerusalem, offered a sacrifice, and prayed in the Temple. This method is what God instructed the Jew to follow, but now, in the present age, Christians do not have to obey the outward form of praying toward Jerusalem and the Temple mount. The important requirement is to worship God in spirit and in truth. But what was Jesus telling the woman about the Kingdom?

Comment: The Samaritans felt that a certain mountain should be the center of their worship, but Jesus was saying that the time would come when neither the city of Jerusalem nor the mountain would be essential to prayer. He said, “The hour *cometh*, and *now is*,” meaning in the future, in the Kingdom Age, and also now, during the Gospel Age.

Reply: As Christians in the Gospel Age, we see that God wants us to worship Him with the *right heart condition*. We should want to know and please *Him*. In the Kingdom and especially beyond in the ages of ages, the Temple in Jerusalem will retain its symbolic value, but in prayer no particular direction will predominate. Prayer will be important in the Kingdom.

Q: Will there also be testimony meetings in the Kingdom? They would be very helpful in the towns and hamlets.

A: Yes, in the style of a town meeting. There will also be films that replay history as it actually occurred.

Isa. 65:25 **The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.**

Notice the relationship of the paired animals. Although the wolf and the lamb are enemies currently, and so are the lion and the bullock, that will not be true in the future. In the Kingdom, these traditional enemies will be compatible and “feed together.” In other words, there will be peace among the animals as well as among humans.

“Dust shall be the serpent’s meat.” This portion of verse 25 tells us that there will be snakes in the Kingdom. One reason is that they will be a constant symbolic reminder of lessons learned about Satan. In fact, all of the animals and insects have an educational value. At present many snakes eat rodents and live prey, but in the Kingdom they will be so adapted as to obtain their nutrition from the earth itself, from dust and dirt, like the earthworm. Verse 25 is informing us that a radical change will take place. Not only will the animals live together peaceably, but their diet will change to vegetarian. This verse, plus Isaiah 11:8, indicates that snakes and vipers will lose their venom. “The sucking child shall play on the

hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den."

Verse 25 also shows that there will be an animal kingdom throughout eternity for man's pleasure. The animals will not receive a resurrection, but whether or not they will live indefinitely beyond the Kingdom we do not know.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." Since there will be death during the Kingdom, how do we harmonize this statement? What this means is that the *animals* will not hurt or destroy in the Kingdom, but God will have the prerogative of putting incorrigible *individuals* to death; that is, they will go into a permanent sleep called Second Death.

Originally, when Adam called the animals to him in the Garden of Eden and named them, there was peace between all of the animals and man. But following Adam's sin and his expulsion from the Garden, the animals became fearful and distrustful of mankind except for the domesticated ones.

Isa. 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Usually just the first half of this verse is quoted, but we should understand the statement in harmony with the context. Here the earth is called God's "footstool." (In some contexts Jerusalem or the Temple is said to be the place of Jehovah's feet, His footstool.) But why is this subject introduced? Who is being addressed? We know God is speaking to natural Israel because of the reference to "the house," ie, Solomon's Temple. This structure was built according to God's instructions, yet He asks here, "Where is the house that ye build unto me?" In this context where God is speaking in a somewhat sarcastic vein to the Jew concerning the house that was constructed to *Him* according to *His* instructions, why does He allude to the heaven and the earth?

Q: Would God be trying to counteract boastfulness? He did not want the Israelites to think too highly of themselves but wanted them to realize He was superior in every sense.

A: That is part of the answer. While God may have identified the Temple as His footstool, house, or sanctuary—the place of His residence—elsewhere in the Old Testament, it was only a tiny picture of something much larger, and the problem was that the Israelites were idolizing the picture. God wanted them to draw a higher analogy and liken the heaven as His house and the earth as His footstool. The highest concept to which their natural human minds could rise was heaven, but actually even the heaven is not big enough and high enough, for the heavens *cannot contain God*. Therefore, the Lord was not finding fault with the Temple and Jerusalem but with their narrow perspective of viewing them.

Isa. 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

"For all those things hath mine hand made [the heavens and the earth],... saith the LORD." God spanned the heavens and meted them out with His own *hand*. "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel,... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my *hands*, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:11,12). "Mine *hand* also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right *hand* hath spanned the

heavens" (Isa. 48:13). God originally created the heavens with His fingers, as it were, but as great as the result seems to tiny man, it is only a small demonstration of God's greatness. Even though the heavens are so great that man cannot grasp their vastness and the power that made them, yet man can go higher than the heavens with the aid of God's spirit.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit." This GREAT ONE, the One who made the heavens and the earth, condescends to look upon those who are humble and of a poor and contrite heart. How does this thought fit into the picture of the Temple, heaven, a throne, a footstool, etc.? God is particularly interested in the individual who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and such individuals were sincere worshippers in the Temple arrangement.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that ... trembleth at my word." God is a God of love, yet He deals with those who tremble at His Word. In what sense should the Israelites (and we) "tremble" at Holy Writ? They should have such *respect* for God's Word, let alone for God Himself, that they would fear to disobey the Word. Those who properly "fear" would be very careful not to distort, misinterpret, erroneously teach, add to, or take away from that Word. Indeed teachers have a special responsibility.

Isa. 66:3 He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

At first glance, verse 3 would seem to oppose the practice of animal sacrifices, but in the context are animals never ordained to be offered. Moreover, there are a lot of italic (supplied) words. If the italic words are removed, the verse would read: "He that killeth an ox, he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, swine's blood; he that burneth incense, he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations." God instituted the offering of oxen (or steers) and lambs but not of dogs and swine. What is the allusion here? What did Israel do? The nation actually sacrificed some of these unauthorized offerings. For instance, Solomon's heathen wives brought their religions to Israel and had shrines and altars erected in the Jerusalem environs to honor their false gods. As the centuries passed, the people tried to follow the Lord's instructions of offering lambs and steers, but at the same time they practiced heathen rites, some of which were the gory Canaanite ritual of drinking swine's blood, the sacrifice of dogs to idols, the burning of children alive to honor the god Molech and then eating them (cannibalism), and the offering of incense and baked cakes to Ashtoreth, a female goddess, the queen of heaven. In other words, as a result of intermarriage with heathen women, the Israelites mixed false religious practices with the true religion of Jehovah. The mixture displeased the Lord and constituted disobedience. Isaiah described this disobedience by saying, "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations." Because of the heathen practices, even the lambs that were offered in the Temple *according to God's instructions* were unacceptable to Him.

Isa. 66:4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

When God called, "none did answer"; when He spoke, "they did not hear." Isaiah is saying

to the Israelites, “When God sent prophets, you ignored them because you did not tremble at His Word.” Stated another way, they did not obey and worship God in spirit and in truth.

(Psa. 40:6–8) “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Since many statements in God’s Word seem to indicate that He was displeased with offerings and many other statements show the opposite—that He was pleased—this subject must be viewed from the proper perspective. The context here prophetically records Jesus’ prayer at the time of his baptism in Jordan, but we must give further consideration to earlier phrases: “I waited patiently for the LORD” (verse 1); “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay” (verse 2); “And he hath put a new song in my mouth” (verse 3); and “Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust” (verse 4). Then comes verse 6: “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.” There are several lessons, as follows:

The Law was the means to an end, but it was not the end in itself, for *Christ* is the end of the Law to him who believes. In other words, the Law was a schoolmaster pointing forward to Christ. Jews living in Old Testament times and performing offerings and rituals might have questioned why certain animals had to be offered, but some points should have been obvious. For instance, not all of the animal being offered was necessarily put on the altar. Sometimes a portion went on the altar for the Lord, a portion was given to the priest who made the offering, a portion was given to the priesthood, and a portion was returned to the offerer. In other words, the offering was distributed so that many received blessings. Also, before being offered, the animals were first slain kosher-style (painlessly) and the blood had to be drained. Two strict prohibitions were that neither the blood of the animal nor the excess fat (such as the caul above the liver) could be consumed by the offerer. The fat and certain organs were burned on the altar. As the fat simmered and vaporized on the altar, it was considered an offering to God—God’s food, as it were.

A valuable lesson was taught by the fact that animals could not be offered unless they were slain and the blood was treated in a special way. What is that lesson? that *without the shedding of blood there can be no remission or cancellation of sin*. The frequent application of blood to the horns of the altar taught that the efficacy of that altar as being a satisfaction for sin lay in the *blood* of the animal. Stated another way, the life is in the blood. Blood in the veins is life, but blood outside the veins pictures death, an expended life. In viewing these sacrifices, the Jews should have thought or realized, “The fact that God is pleased with these sacrifices means there is more to them than the superficial level we comprehend.” They should have realized that the heathen sacrifices and practices were not equivalent to those instituted by God. Moreover, they should have realized that it was proper for the priesthood, who were serving God in a special way and had no inheritance in the land, to get a tithe.

The Jews should have drawn the lesson from Abraham’s willingness to offer Isaac and the last-minute providential substitution of a ram caught in the thicket. With this incident being a prominent part of Israel’s history, the thoughtful person would have said, “These animals somehow represent that an individual, a Redeemer, has to be slain.”

When Jesus said in Psalm 40:6, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire,” he was saying in effect, “I am the *real offering*. I am the one to be sacrificed for the propitiation of sin.” He

was not belittling the sacrifices but was saying that they were only a picture, a means to an end, and that he himself was the offering pointed to in the Law. Unfortunately, many Christians and nominal believers think that the ordinances of the Old Testament were bloody and barbaric, which is not the case at all.

Isa. 66:5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Notice the break in thought here in the King James Version. The primary connotation of this sudden intrusion by the Holy Spirit into the main body of the text is along natural lines. God is pleased with the minority of Jews who tremble at His Word (verse 2) and thus suffer the hatred and temporary end-time abuse of their fellow Jews.

But the natural connotation does not mitigate against or by any means rule out a secondary continued application along spiritual lines. Compare the following two Scriptures: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). "He [Jesus] shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:10).

Isa. 66:6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

It would seem that this verse is not intended to be understood in either a figurative or a symbolic fashion but, rather, in a literal sense, for its meaning is suited to be grasped by the natural man—both Jew and Gentile. The background of verse 6 is described in greater detail in verses 15–18, and the climactic fulfillment is reached in verse 19. In other words, verse 19 refers to a *particular sign* God has set or determined in order to clearly and unequivocally convince all individuals on hand at the scene of action in the environs of "the city" of Jerusalem of the meaning and purpose of the representative gathering of all nations to that locale. What is that purpose? They are to witness (1) the defeat and destruction of the host of Gog and (2) the purging of natural Israel, leaving behind a Holy Remnant (Isa. 4:2–4).

Although three voices are noted in verse 6, in reality all of the voices are somewhat synonymous in occurrence, and all share a common causal factor. The voice of noise from the city refers to the tumult and outcries appertaining to Jacob's Trouble, which will be centered in Jerusalem, and particularly to the various climactic judgments to be inflicted upon the host of Gog as well as the purging of Israel itself by the Lord (Isa. 4:4). The "voice from the temple" and the "voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies" should probably be considered in a literal sense to mean that God's voice will thunder a rebuke from heaven above the Temple mount. Accompanied by a large visual manifestation of Christ's crucifixion suffering on Golgotha Hill in AD 33, God's voice will perhaps say, "This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him" (Zech. 12:10).

Isa. 66:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

Isa. 66:8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Isa. 66:9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

These three verses are better rendered in the Revised Standard Version:

"Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son [Hebrew zakar, a male]" (verse 7).

"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land [Israel] be born in one day? Shall a nation [also Israel] be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her [other] sons" (verse 8).

"Shall I bring to the birth [the Head] and not cause to bring forth [later the body]? says the Lord; shall I, who cause to bring forth [the Head and the body], shut the womb? says your God" (verse 9).

The son or male child refers to The Christ (Head and body members). The last members of the male-child class will be delivered before Zion's labor; ie, before Jacob's Trouble yet future. Other Scriptures show that this salvation will occur not only prior to Israel's final holocaust (and subsequent rebirth to everlasting peace) but also prior to Babylon's (nominal spiritual Israel's) fall.

Zion, the *nation of Israel*, is the woman to whom the promises, both natural and spiritual, were originally made. Christ was a Jew, and so were the apostles and a majority of the fellowship prior to AD 69. Gentiles became joint-heirs of the spiritual promise because there were not enough Israelites with the faith of Abraham to fill up the predetermined 144,000 membership in the body of Christ.

That Zion can, and often does, refer to *spiritual* Israel is not called into question. But numerous other Scriptures use the term "Zion" to designate *natural* Israel, such as Psalm 78:68; Isaiah 4:3,4; 64:10; Jeremiah 26:18; and Zechariah 1:17. That is also the case here in Isaiah 66. Verse 10 of this same chapter tells that after Israel's future miraculous deliverance, all nations will be enjoined to "rejoice ... with Jerusalem, and be glad with *her* [not only with Jerusalem but with the woman, Israel], all ye that love *her*." Verse 12 adds, "I will extend peace to *her* like a river." Finally, verse 20 reads, "And they [the Gentiles] shall bring all *your brethren* for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations ... to ... *Jerusalem*."

Isaiah 66 furnishes an order of events: (1) The male child (the Head, and then later the body members) is born. (2) The woman travails and other children are born, the birth sequence being (a) the Great Company, (b) the Ancient Worthies, and (c) regenerated Israel itself (the Holy Remnant) (Jer. 30:6b; Ezek. 37:9-14; Isa. 48:17,20).

The woman of Isaiah 66:7,8 cannot be nominal spiritual Zion, that is, Christendom, for several reasons: (1) The woman does not die in childbirth. In fact, she not only survives but is seen in succeeding verses to be honored and glorified. (2) The woman is on the scene *before* the birth of the male child. Neither the true Church nor the false Church (spiritual Zion) could have conceived the Savior, for he preceded the Church and is the forerunner and Head of the body members (Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 1:22; 4:15). (3) It is difficult to see how Jesus (the Head of the male child class) could have proceeded forth from the nominal gospel Church or that he was the product of the Jewish rabbinical school of Sadducees or

Pharisees, to which he in no sense belonged (Matt. 9:16,17; John 1:11) and from which he kept himself separate and distinct. However, the promises to the nation of Israel were another matter.

Isa. 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

Verses 10–24 apply to natural Israel. Verse 10 is saying that those of mankind who love Jerusalem will rejoice and be glad with her. Although the consecrated, those who are looking forward to the fulfillment of prophecy, can rejoice now in an anticipatory sense, knowing that the time of blessing is near at hand, verse 10 applies to the Kingdom. Not only will the Gentiles love Jerusalem, but they will mourn for her when they truly recognize the role of Jesus, *a Jew!* In other words, just as the Holy Remnant will have a national heartfelt mourning when they are shocked into the realization that Jesus, a Jew, has been their true Messiah for 2,000 years and yet the nation obstinately rejected and crucified him, so the Gentiles will mourn when they learn that God's favor is with Israel. Just as the Jews rejected Christ, so many Gentile nations rejected and violently persecuted the Jew. It will be a very humbling experience for the Gentiles to realize that the Kingdom blessings will come through Israel.

The point to emphasize is that *all people* will be humbled. In their grief, humiliation, and shame, both Jews and Gentiles will have a new perspective in their dealings with each other. Later they will rejoice to see God's mercy in retrieving both into His love and favor.

Isa. 66:11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

“That ye [Gentiles] may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her [Israel's] consolations.” Israel will supply “milk,” nourishment, for the Gentiles as a mother does for her child. Thus in order for the Gentile nations to get blessings in the Kingdom under the New Covenant, they will have to recognize and identify themselves with Israel. Israel will dandle or bounce the Gentiles on her knees like an infant, as it were, and comfort them (verse 13).

Isa. 66:12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

Isa. 66:13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Isa. 66:14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

When Israel sees the Gentiles coming to her and receiving blessings, she will rejoice. Israel will rejoice to be a channel of blessing. She will rejoice as a mother to see her children prosper.

“Your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.” The “heart,” the seat of affection and emotions, is contrasted with the “bones,” the skeletal framework, ie, Israel's *organizational* structure. When the repentant Holy Remnant see their forgiveness and

realize how greatly the Lord has blessed them, their hearts will rejoice both individually and nationally. The vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37) shows Israel coming back to life figuratively from the Diaspora in their national resurrection and literally from the dead in the general resurrection.

To “flourish like an herb” means that just as grass consists of little individual stems and it seeds itself and spreads out, so the blessings to Israel will be both collective and individual. Not only will the blessings extend to the Holy Remnant, who survive Jacob’s Trouble and are alive, but when the Jews are brought forth from the tomb after the Kingdom is in operation, that tiny nation will multiply and spread and flourish.

There is a contrast here. At the same time that Jehovah manifests favor toward Israel, He will have “indignation toward his [Israel’s] enemies.” “The LORD shall be [made] known [in a favorable sense] toward his servants, and [He will manifest] his indignation toward his enemies.” When the brothers who had maltreated Joseph realized that he was the Prime Minister of Egypt, they feared for their lives. Similarly, when the Holy Remnant first recognize that Jesus is the true Messiah, they will tremble. This reaction will induce a *thorough* reformation and will be a good groundwork for both Jew and Gentile. Following the fear that Joseph’s brothers experienced, he told them not to be afraid and blessed them, for God had meant the experience for good. God providentially overruled Joseph’s being cast in the pit and sold to the Midianites so that Joseph would ultimately be the Prime Minister of Egypt. And despite the Crucifixion, which was a cruel and excruciating death, Jesus will forgive and realizes his experience schooled and disciplined him for the office of Messiah. He became a more sympathetic High Priest.

Isa. 66:15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Isa. 66:16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

“For, behold” and “For by” indicate that verses 15 and 16 are an explanation of verse 14, telling how God will manifest His wrath against Israel’s enemies. “The LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” After Gog defeats Israel and all seems lost, God will defend and fight for Israel as in times of old.

“By fire and ... sword will the LORD plead with all flesh [with all who gather against Israel at the time of Jacob’s Trouble but primarily on the powers that come from the north].” What is the distinction between “fire” and the “sword”? Two types of destruction normally occur in warfare: (1) human lives are lost through the use of armaments and munitions, that is, by the “sword”; and (2) property and goods are destroyed by “fire.” It is one thing for fatalities to occur when a bomb is dropped, but the destruction of property through fire, defoliation, salting of fields, etc., is another matter.

God will fight with great powers, dramatic displays, and visible manifestations of nature: disease, plague, hail, overflowing rain, earthquake, etc. His “chariots [will be] like a whirlwind.” So great will the depth of the invasion be that the enemy will seem to approach and then cover the land like an ominous storm cloud. “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Ezek. 38:9). The terminology of likening God’s chariots to a

whirlwind shows the fear and consternation that will be instilled in the enemy host when God begins to make manifest His judgments. Jehovah will come with fire and whirlwind chariots, He will render anger with fury, and He will rebuke with flames of fire.

“The slain of the LORD shall be *many*.” If seven months will be required to bury the dead and seven years to melt down the armaments, we get some idea of the extensiveness and intensity of the trouble in Israel (Ezek. 39:9,12).

Isa. 66:17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

Those who “sanctify themselves” are Jews who will be on the scene in Jacob’s Trouble but who will not be part of the Holy Remnant. When certain events transpire and they realize at the last minute that God is going to help Israel, they will try to change their allegiance and become religious, but the Lord will not be fooled. Many Scriptures in the Old Testament show that at the end of the age God will weed out from among the Israelites those who are not in the proper condition of heart to be of the nucleus of His Kingdom. For them to try to change sides and feign allegiance at the very last minute when the visible signs of His power are being made manifest will not work.

This element who try to sanctify and purify themselves behind a tree in the midst of gardens is an allusion to Adam’s and Eve’s hiding behind a tree in the Garden of Eden after committing sin. They heard the voice of the Logos crying out, “Adam! Adam!” When Adam responded, “Here am I,” the voice asked, “What are you doing over there behind the tree?” Adam replied, “I heard your voice and I was afraid. We are naked.” The comparison here is to the class of unfaithful Jews who have figuratively eaten “swine’s flesh [forbidden pork], and the abomination, and the mouse” and have felt superior and justified in their disobedience. Many Jews in Israel today are atheists.

Q: Why is the “mouse” mentioned?

A: The thought is presented from God’s standpoint. To unfaithful Jews, pork is delicious and they can eat pork just like the Gentiles, but from God’s standpoint eating pork is like eating rodents. (Verse 3 of this very chapter of Isaiah expresses the same principle in mentioning a dog: “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck.”) The mouse is contrasted with pork. Pork is a very nutritious meat if properly raised and cooked, but for typical reasons it was forbidden under the Law. In prohibiting the eating of pork, the Lord was emphasizing the habits and characteristics of swine. He did not want the Israelites to be identified and associated with that type of disposition in their spiritual partaking. In eating pork, this unfaithful class of Jews departs from the mode of worship that the Lord instituted for them. Their disobedience is regarded as if they are eating a mouse.

Isaiah 65:2–5 also expresses the same principle: “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.” This class feel thoroughly justified in what they are doing and superior in their worship.

They do not realize that while God identified Himself with Israel in the prior age (Amos 3:2), that is a past historical association and their habits today are not endorsed. God will save the nation of Israel for the *fathers'* sakes (Rom. 11:28). When God reestablishes favor to Israel at the end of this age, it will be to a Holy Remnant, not to the nation at large. As with the Gentiles, the brunt of the coming trouble will fall particularly on the heads of the rich, the oppressors, and the wicked. Although they will have an opportunity to get life in the resurrection, all of these—Jew and Gentile—will be consumed when God delivers the hand-picked Holy Remnant. The Jews should not depart from the Law Covenant unless they accept Christ.

Isa. 66:18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

God knows the works and thoughts of the unfaithful Jews. He will gather all nations to Israel at the end of the age. They will come and they will see His *glory* when He delivers the Holy Remnant. Ezekiel 38:23 reads, "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD." Then shall they all know that *God is God!*

Isa. 66:19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

God will set a sign among the Gentile nations on the scene in Israel and send the survivors back to their homelands to give eyewitness accounts and to declare God's glory. These nations—Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, and Javan—sound like some of the nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38. God's determination to gather all nations to Jerusalem to battle (Zech. 14:2; Zeph. 3:8,9) will redound to His praise, honor, and glory. Thus will His name be vindicated and His people, Israel, be identified.

Tarshish, Javan, and Tubal were sons of Japheth, and Lud was a son of Shem (Gen. 10:2,4,22). Pul is not mentioned in Genesis 10, and no sons of Ham are mentioned in Isaiah 66. Europe, Russia, Turkey, and all of the Gentiles nations, generally speaking, are represented by these names, but predominantly Europe (the sons of Japheth). Gentile observers of God's miraculous deliverance of Israel out of Jacob's Trouble will go back to their homelands with eyewitness accounts.

Tubal is identified with Russia. Tarshish is used in prophecy for various locations: Rome, England, Spain, Greece, and portions of the Far East (hence Tarshish is a symbol of scattered, far-off peoples). On the subject of the Lord's Great Army and events at the end of the age, *Volume 4* mentions the faint possibility of Javan representing China. The question is whether the far-off isles not hearing of God's fame or seeing His glory refers to just His deliverance of the Holy Remnant at the end of the age or whether, generally speaking, it refers to both the end of the age and God's dealing with the Jew down through history. If this text refers to the whole history of Israel, then Javan may apply to the Eastern Hemisphere and not the Western.

The purpose of God's gathering all nations to Jerusalem to battle is to show them His glory, to vindicate His name, and to manifest Israel as the nation through which God will deal and send blessings.

The explanation of verse 6 in this chapter gave a suggestion as to what God's "sign" among the nations might be.

Isa. 66:20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

After God delivers Israel out of Jacob's Trouble, the Gentiles will send back all surviving Jews to their homeland with gifts and goods. This reaction will be similar to what the Egyptians did following the tenth plague when they sent the Israelites out of Egypt in haste (and with gifts). The people remonstrated with the still hard-hearted Pharaoh, telling him to act prudently lest all of the Egyptians die, not just the firstborn. In the future the Jews will be sent back on "horses" (in individual vehicles), "in litters" (even if they are sick or elderly), and "swift beasts" (airplanes?). In other words, whatever means of travel a nation has at that time will be used to return the Jews to Israel.

"As the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD." The Gentiles will do this voluntarily, as a freewill offering, because they will want to—and not perfunctorily, not because they are compelled to or simply because they are afraid. The Gentiles will want to cooperate.

Isa. 66:21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

Of the Holy Remnant and the Jewish race—of the surviving Jews already in Israel as well as of those who are shipped back—God will select priests and Levites to serve in His Temple. The Book of Ezekiel tells that the priests who serve in the Third Temple will be of the Zadok line of the Levites.

Isa. 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

As the new spiritual and social order of the Kingdom shall remain, so will Israel always be the capital of the world (although the emphasis may be different after the Millennium). In other words, the necessity for going up to Jerusalem each year will probably diminish, for as Jesus said, the time will come when it will no longer be necessary to pray either on Jacob's mountain or in Jerusalem (John 4:20–24). The saved world of mankind will worship God in spirit and in truth wherever they are.

Isa. 66:23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

From new moon to new moon (from month to month), and from sabbath to sabbath, *all* shall worship God. This verse sounds somewhat like Zechariah 14:16–19, which says that upon those nations who do not representatively go up to Jerusalem annually to worship God in the Third Temple on the Feast of Tabernacles, there will be no rain. During the Kingdom the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory.

Isa. 66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

And what will visitors to Jerusalem in the Kingdom see after attending the Third Temple services? After the services, they will exit the Temple and see a *huge cemetery* that extends for miles and contains the “carcasses of the men that ... transgressed” against God as part of the Gog invasion of the Holy Land. Of those who die at the time God delivers the Holy Remnant, the account says, “Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.” The thought is that this cemetery or graveyard of the future will be a *perpetual memorial* of what God did to deliver the Jews out of Jacob’s Trouble and to destroy Israel’s enemies. Documentary films of the actual occurrence will perpetuate certain memorable historical events such as this one, the Crucifixion, Jesus’ resurrection, etc.

The bones of the Gog force will be taken to this cemetery site and buried. The name of the valley in which this cemetery will be located is to be called the Valley of Hamongog. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place ... of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: ... and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog” (Ezek. 39:11). The earthquake that lifts up Mount Zion for the Temple site will also create this valley for a “city of the dead.” The name of that cemetery or city will be Hamonah (Ezek. 39:16). The names Hamongog and Hamonah are related to Hamon, the inveterate enemy of the Jew in the Book of Esther. Like Auschwitz today, this cemetery of the future will keep alive or memorialize throughout eternity the drama of Jacob’s Trouble and God’s *mighty miracles*—both the defeat of the multitude of Israel’s enemies and the deliverance of His people. Praise be to the Great God of Israel!