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NEW KING JAMES VERSION™

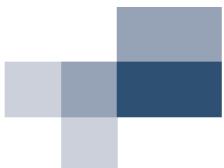
The Wiersbe Study Bible



Be Transformed by the Power of God's Word

Warren W. Wiersbe

GENERAL EDITOR



The Book of
ISAIAH

BOOK OUTLINE

Key theme: The salvation (deliverance) of the Lord

Key verse: Isaiah 1:18

I. Condemnation (1:1—39:8)

- A. Sermons against Judah and Israel (1:1—12:6)
- B. Burdens of judgment against the Gentiles (13:1—23:18)
- C. Songs about future glory (24:1—27:13)
- D. Woes of coming judgment from Assyria (28:1—35:10)
- E. Historical interlude (36:1—39:8)
 - 1. Hezekiah delivered from Assyria (36:1—37:38)
 - 2. Hezekiah deceived by Babylon (38:1—39:8)

II. Consolation (40:1—66:24)

- A. God's greatness (the Father vs. idols) (40:1—48:22)
- B. God's grace (the Son, God's Servant) (49:1—57:21)
- C. God's glory (the Spirit and the kingdom) (58:1—66:24)

BOOK OVERVIEW

Because God's prophets were correct all the time, they didn't have to explain away their mistakes. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass," wrote Moses, "that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken" (Deut. 18:22). "Look to God's instructions and teachings," wrote Isaiah, "If [prophets] do not speak according to this word, it is, because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20). Isaiah was a man who had God's light, and he was not afraid to let it shine.

At a time when empires were rising and falling and his nation was in peril, Isaiah wrote, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (30:15). And when a new generation faced the arduous task of rebuilding a ruined nation, the words of Isaiah the prophet gave them courage: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (40:31).

Isaiah is the prophet we need to hear today as he cries out God's message above the din of world upheaval, "'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!' says your God" (40:1). The English word "comfort" comes from two Latin words that together mean "with strength." When Isaiah says to us, "Be comforted!" it is not a word of pity but of power. God's comfort does not weaken us; it strengthens us. God is not indulging us but empowering us.

As you study Isaiah's book, you will meet not only this outstanding prophet, but also some mighty kings and rulers; and you will witness the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms. You will see God's people chastened and then restored. But above all else, you will see the Lord Jesus Christ, God's "Suffering Servant," as He does the will of God and suffers and dies for the sins of the world.

“BE TRANSFORMED”

Throughout his book, Isaiah presents us with alternatives: Trust the Lord and live, or rebel against the Lord and die. The tough love that God had Isaiah declare to His people is the same kind of tough love that He still lavishes on us. As we read Isaiah’s writings to Israel, we see him explaining the grace and mercy of God and offering God’s forgiveness. Isaiah explains the holiness and wrath of God and warns of His judgment. He promises glory for those who will believe and judgment for those who scoff. He explains the foolishness of trusting human wisdom and earthly resources.

The prophet calls professing people of God back to spiritual reality. In these pages, he warns against hypocrisy and empty worship. He pleads for faith, obedience, a heart that delights in God, and a life that glorifies God. Isaiah’s message rings with “Be comforted by the Lord!” (See 12:1; 40:1, 2; 49:13; 51:3, 19; 52:9; 54:11; 57:18; 61:2; 66:13.) But God cannot comfort rebels! If we are sinning against God and feel comfortable about it, something is radically wrong. That false comfort will lead to false confidence, and that will lead to the chastening hand of God.

But Isaiah also shows us that God doesn’t love from a distance. His love is personal, intimate, and willing to suffer in expressing itself. We meet the “Suffering Servant,” Jesus, in descriptions that God gave Isaiah seven hundred years before the Savior was born. These moving profiles can be found in 42:1–7; 49:1–6; 50:1–11; and 52:13–53:12. God didn’t bring salvation to the world as an afterthought or an alternate strategy; God gave our salvation the kind of forethought and planning only He can exercise. And God sent His Son to pay the costs to make His plan a reality and secure for us an eternal hope.

1 The “vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the ^bdays of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

THE WICKEDNESS OF JUDAH

² “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For the LORD has spoken:

“I have nourished and
brought up children,
And they have rebelled against Me;

³ “The ox knows its owner
And the donkey its master’s crib;
But Israel ^bdoes not know,
My people do not consider.”

⁴ Alas, sinful nation,
A people laden with iniquity,
^aA brood of evildoers,

Children who are corrupters!
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked to anger
The Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away backward.

⁵ “Why should you be stricken again?
You will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faints.

⁶ From the sole of the foot
even to the head,
There is no soundness in it,
But wounds and bruises and
putrefying sores;
They have not been closed or bound up,
Or soothed with ointment.

1:1 ^a Num. 12:6 ^b 2 Chr. 26–32 1:2 ^a Jer. 2:12 1:3 ^a Jer. 8:7 ^b Jer. 9:3, 6 1:4 ^a Matt. 3:7 1:5 ^a Jer. 5:3

1:1–31 This chapter describes a courtroom scene. God convenes the court and states the charges (vv. 2–4). He presents His case and pronounces the nation guilty (vv. 5–15), but He gives the accused opportunity to repent and be forgiven (vv. 16–31). Be sure to notice His strong and negative description of His sinful people.

1:2–4 God said that His people were rebellious children who did not have as much devotion to God as animals do to their masters. The word “rebel” carries with it the idea of breaking a contract. At Sinai, Israel had entered into a solemn covenant with Jehovah (Ex. 19–20), but they had broken the contract by their

unbelief and idolatry. They did not appreciate what God had done for them and were taking their blessings for granted. They had forsaken the Lord, gone backward, and grown corrupt; therefore, they were guilty and deserved judgment.

1:5, 6 From the human point of view the nation was prospering, but from God’s point of view the nation was like a wretched victim who had been beaten from head to foot and left to die. The wounds had become infected and the whole body diseased, and no one was doing anything to help. The false prophets and hypocritical priests of that day would have challenged

- 7 ^aYour country *is* desolate,
Your cities *are* burned with fire;
Strangers devour your land
in your presence;
And *it is* desolate, as overthrown
by strangers.
- 8 So the daughter of Zion is left
^aas a booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,
^bAs a besieged city.
- 9 ^aUnless the LORD of hosts
Had left to us a very small remnant,
We would have become like ^bSodom,
We would have been made
like Gomorrah.
- 10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers ^aof Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our God,
You people of Gomorrah:
- 11 "To what purpose is the multitude
of your ^asacrifices to Me?"
Says the LORD.
"I have had enough of burnt
offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle.
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
Or of lambs or goats.
- 12 "When you come ^ato appear before Me,
Who has required this from your hand,
To trample My courts?
- 13 Bring no more ^afutile sacrifices;
Incense is an abomination to Me.
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and
^bthe calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and
the sacred meeting.
- 14 Your ^aNew Moons and your
^bappointed feasts
My soul hates;

- They are a trouble to Me,
I am weary of bearing *them*.
- 15 ^aWhen you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
^bEven though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.
- 16 "Wash^a yourselves, make
yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings
from before My eyes.
^bCease to do evil,
17 Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;¹
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.
- 18 "Come now, and let us ^areason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
^bThey shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
- 19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
^aFor the mouth of the LORD
has spoken.

THE DEGENERATE CITY

- 21 ^aHow the faithful city has
become a harlot!
It was full of justice;

1:7 ^a Deut. 28:51, 52 1:8 ^a Job 27:18 ^b Jer. 4:17 1:9 ^a Lam. 3:22
^b Gen. 19:24 1:10 ^a Deut. 32:32 1:11 ^a [1 Sam. 15:22] 1:12 ^a Ex. 23:17
1:13 ^a Matt. 15:9 ^b Joel 1:14 1:14 ^a Num. 28:11 ^b Lam. 2:6 1:15 ^a Prov.
1:28 ^b Mic. 3:4 1:16 ^a Jer. 4:14 ^b Rom. 12:9 1:17 ¹ Some ancient
versions read *the oppressed*. 1:18 ^a Is. 43:26 ^b Ps. 51:7 1:20 ^a [Titus
1:2] 1:21 ^a Jer. 2:20

Isaiah's autopsy of the body politic, but the prophet knew that his diagnosis was true. Despite the optimism of Judah's leaders, the nation was morally and spiritually sick, and judgment was inevitable.

1:7–9 These verses picture Judah as a ravaged battlefield, a desert that had once been a garden. In using this image, Isaiah may have been looking ahead to the invasion of Sennacherib, when Judah would be devastated by the Assyrian army with only Jerusalem spared (chs. 36–37). Because the people would not let God manage the land according to His law, God turned them over to foreigners and permitted His people to suffer (Deut. 28:15ff.).

1:10–15 The disgusting fact about this rebellious people is that they were also a religious people. They worshiped at the temple, bringing many sacrifices to the Lord; but their hearts were far from God, and their worship was hypocritical. Sacrifices alone can never please God, for along with the outward observance, God wants inward obedience (1 Sam. 15:22), a contrite heart (Ps. 51:17), and a godly walk (Mic. 6:6–8). Before passing judgment on worshipers in a bygone era, perhaps we should

confess the sins of the worshiping church today. In our churches we ought to consider our investment in the poor and needy over the building of edifices that can debilitate the mission of the church in sharing and demonstrating the gospel of Christ in our world.

1:16–31 Isaiah didn't stop with the diagnosis but also gave the prescription because he wanted Judah to be a righteous people. The word translated "reason" in verse 18 means "to decide a case in court." Here, however, instead of pronouncing judgment, the Judge offered pardon! If the people would cleanse themselves by repenting and turning from sin (vv. 16, 17; see 2 Cor. 7:1), then God would wipe the record clean in response to their faith (Is. 1:18). God had every reason to punish His people for their sins, but in His grace and mercy He offered them His pardon.

1:21–29 Isaiah named murder (v. 21), robbery, bribery, exploiting the helpless (v. 23), and worshiping heathen idols (v. 29) among Israel's sins. Because of their idolatry, the once-faithful wife was now a harlot, and because of their unjust practices, the nation's pure silver had become dross. Tragically, many of the worshipers

- Righteousness lodged in it,
But now ^bmurderers.
- 22^a Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
- 23^a Your princes *are* rebellious,
And ^bcompanions of thieves;
^cEveryone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They ^ddo not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow
come before them.
- 24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the
Mighty One of Israel,
“Ah, ^aI will rid Myself of My
adversaries,
And take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And ^athoroughly purge
away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges ^aas
at the first,
And your counselors as
at the beginning.
Afterward ^byou shall be called the city
of righteousness, the faithful city.”
- 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her penitents with righteousness.
- 28 The ^adestruction of transgressors
and of sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the
LORD shall be consumed.
- 29 For they¹ shall be ashamed
of the terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed
because of the gardens
Which you have chosen.
- 30 For you shall be as a terebinth
whose leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.
- 31 ^aThe strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together,
And no one shall ^bquench *them*.

THE FUTURE HOUSE OF GOD

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

- 2 Now ^ait shall come to pass
^bin the latter days
^cThat the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the
top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
- 3 Many people shall come and say,
^a“Come, and let us go up to the
mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths.”
^bFor out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD
from Jerusalem.
- 4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords
into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword
against nation,
Neither shall they learn war
anymore.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

- 5 O house of Jacob, come and let us ^awalk
In the light of the LORD.
- 6 For You have forsaken Your
people, the house of Jacob,
Because they are filled
^awith eastern ways;
They *are* ^bsoothsayers like
the Philistines,
^cAnd they are pleased with the
children of foreigners.

1:21^b Mic. 3:1–3 1:22^a Jer. 6:28 1:23^a Hos. 9:15 ^b Prov. 29:24 ^c Jer. 22:17 ^d Jer. 5:28 1:24^a Deut. 28:63 1:25^a Mal. 3:3 1:26^a Jer. 33:7–11
^b Zech. 8:3 1:28^a [2 Thess. 1:8, 9] 1:29¹ Following Masoretic Text,
Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read
you. 1:31^a Ezek. 32:21 ^b Mark 9:43 2:2^a Mic. 4:1 ^b Gen. 49:1 ^c Ps.
68:15 2:3^a Jer. 50:5 ^b Luke 24:47 2:5^a Eph. 5:8 2:6^a Num. 23:7
^b Deut. 18:14 ^c Ps. 106:35

in the temple participated in these evil practices and thereby encouraged the decay of the nation. The rulers maintained a religious façade to cover up their crimes, and the people let them do it.

2:1–5 The prophet looked ahead to the time when God's righteous kingdom would be established and the temple would become the center for the worldwide worship of the Lord. In Isaiah's day, the Jews were adopting the false gods of the Gentiles, but the day would come when the Gentiles would abandon their idols and worship the true God of Israel. The nations would also lay down their weapons and stop warring. These promises must not be simply applied to the church, for they describe a

literal kingdom of righteousness and peace. The Jewish temple will be rebuilt, and the Word of God will go forth from Jerusalem to govern the nations of the world.

2:6–3:26 The “day of the LORD” (also called the “day of judgment”) is that period of time when God will send judgment to the nations and purify Israel in preparation for the coming of their King to reign in Jerusalem. The day of the Lord is described by John (Rev. 6–19), by the prophets (Is. 13:6ff.; Ezek. 30; Joel 1:15; 2:1ff.; Zeph. 1:7ff.; Zech. 14:1ff.), and by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). It will be a time of terrible suffering: The environment will be devastated, and millions of people will die.

- 7 ^aTheir land is also full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
- 8 ^aTheir land is also full of idols;
They worship the work of
their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.
- 9 People bow down,
And each man humbles himself;
Therefore do not forgive them.
- 10 ^aEnter into the rock, and
hide in the dust,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man
shall be ^ahumbled,
The haughtiness of men
shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be
exalted ^bin that day.
- 12 For the day of the LORD of hosts
Shall come upon everything
proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up—
And it shall be brought low—
- 13 Upon all ^athe cedars of Lebanon
that are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan;
- 14 ^aUpon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills *that
are* lifted up;
- 15 Upon every high tower,
And upon every fortified wall;
- 16 ^aUpon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all the beautiful sloops.
- 17 The loftiness of man shall
be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men
shall be brought low;
The LORD alone will be
exalted in that day,
- 18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish.
- 19 They shall go into the
^aholes of the rocks,
And into the caves of the earth,
^bFrom the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises ^cto shake
the earth mightily.

2:7 ^a Deut. 17:16 2:8 ^a Jer. 2:28 2:10 ^a Rev. 6:15, 16 2:11 ^a Prov. 16:5
^b Hos. 2:16 2:13 ^a Zech. 11:1, 2 2:14 ^a Is. 30:25 2:16 ^a 1 Kin. 10:22
2:19 ^a Hos. 10:8 ^b [2 Thess. 1:9] ^c Hag. 2:6, 7

Lessons About the “Day of Judgment”

Is. 2:6

Isaiah’s prophetic words of judgment on the people of Israel had both a short-term and long-term fulfillment. They were soon fulfilled in the fall of the nation, but they await their eventual fulfillment in God’s timing over all of history.

(1) *Why will God judge His people?* Because of their idolatry, covetousness, pride, and exploiting of the poor (2:6–22). Instead of holding to the truth of God’s Word, they were “filled with eastern ways” (v. 6), like many religious seekers today. The growth of Eastern religions in the modern Western world is a phenomenon that is both frightening and challenging. Even nonreligious people are practicing Eastern forms of meditation and relaxation, following techniques that are being taught in university classes and business seminars.

The prosperity of the nation made leaders proud and covetous. Instead of trusting the Lord, they trusted their wealth and war equipment, not realizing that neither would deliver them in the coming judgment day. The leaders were exploiting the poor, crushing them like grain in a mill (3:13–15). God will not allow His people to be proud and self-confident but will humble them and cut them down like trees in the forest. “And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (2:11, 17) when men and women flee from His wrath and discover the worthlessness of their idols and the consequences of their sins (2:19–22).

(2) *How will God judge His people?* By taking away from them everything they were trusting, including food and water, leaders and soldiers, and judges and prophets (3:1–15). The entire support system of the nation would disintegrate, and no remedy would be available. Nobody would want to hold office except women and children. (In Judah’s male-dominated society, this would be a humiliating calamity.) The national leaders in Isaiah’s day were charting a course that was out of the will of God and would ultimately bring disaster, but the righteous remnant would be protected by God (3:10–12).

- 20 In that day a man will cast
away his idols of silver
And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for
himself to worship,
To the moles and bats,
21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake
the earth mightily.

- 22 ^aSever yourselves from such a man,
Whose ^bbreath *is* in his nostrils;
For of what account is he?

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

- 3** For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
^aTakes away from Jerusalem
and from Judah
^bThe stock and the store,
The whole supply of bread and
the whole supply of water;
2 ^aThe mighty man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;
3 The captain of fifty and the
honorable man,
The counselor and the skillful artisan,
And the expert enchanter.
4 “I will give ^achildren *to be* their princes,
And babes shall rule over them.
5 The people will be oppressed,
Every one by another and every
one by his neighbor;
The child will be insolent
toward the elder,
And the base toward the honorable.”
6 When a man takes hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying*,
“You have clothing;
You be our ruler,
And *let* these ruins *be* under
your power,”ⁱ
7 In that day he will protest, saying,
“I cannot cure *your* ills,
For in my house *is* neither
food nor clothing;
Do not make me a ruler of the people.”

- 8 For “Jerusalem stumbled,
And Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings
Are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory.
9 The look on their countenance
witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as “Sodom;
They do not hide *it*.
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil
upon themselves.
10 “Say to the righteous “*that it*
shall be well with them,
^bFor they shall eat the fruit
of their doings.
11 Woe to the wicked! “*It shall*
be ill with him,
For the reward of his hands
shall be given him.
12 *As for* My people, children
are their oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O My people! “Those who lead
you cause *you* to err,
And destroy the way of your paths.”

OPPRESSION AND LUXURY CONDEMNED

- 13 The LORD stands up “to plead,
And stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the elders of His people
And His princes:
“For you have eaten up ^athe vineyard;
The plunder of the poor
is in your houses.
15 What do you mean by
“crushing My people
And grinding the faces of the poor?”
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.
16 Moreover the LORD says:
“Because the daughters of
Zion are haughty,
And walk with outstretched necks

2:22 ^a Jer. 17:5 ^b Job 27:3 3:1 ^a Jer. 37:21 ^b Lev. 26:26 3:2 ^a 2 Kin. 24:14 3:4 ^a Eccl. 10:16 3:6 ⁱ Literally *hand* 3:8 ^a Mic. 3:12 3:9 ^a Gen. 13:13 3:10 ^a [Eccl. 8:12] ^b Ps. 128:2 3:11 ^a [Ps. 11:6] 3:12 ^a Is. 9:16 3:13 ^a Mic. 6:2 3:14 ^a Matt. 21:33 3:15 ^a Mic. 3:2, 3

3:13 God is longsuffering as He watches people viciously exploit one another and selfishly ravage His creation. But a day is coming when unbelieving sinners will be punished and God's people will share in the glories of His kingdom.

3:16—4:1 After denouncing the men in leadership, the prophet zeroed in on the proud women who were profiting from their husbands' crimes. The prophet

Amos had a similar message for the women in the northern kingdom (Amos 4:1–3). Everything would be different for these women when the judgment of God came to the land. In that day, nobody would notice their expensive clothes, their jewelry and perfumes, and their elaborate coiffures. They would be prisoners of war, led by a rope, like cattle going to the slaughter. Sooner or later, the justice of God will catch up with every person.

- And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing as they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,
17 Therefore the Lord will strike with ^aa scab
The crown of the head of the
daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will ^buncover
their secret parts.”
- 18 In that day the Lord will take
away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves,
and the ^acrescents;
19 The pendants, the bracelets,
and the veils;
20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments,
and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,
21 and the rings;
The nose jewels,
22 the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses,
23 and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans,
and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

- Instead of a sweet smell there
will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope;
Instead of well-set hair, ^abaldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a
girding of sackcloth;
And branding instead of beauty.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.
- 26 ^aHer gates shall lament and mourn,
And she *being* desolate ^bshall
sit on the ground.

- 4** And ^ain that day seven women shall
take hold of one man, saying,
“We will ^beat our own food and
wear our own apparel;

Only let us be called by your name,
To take away ‘our reproach.”

THE RENEWAL OF ZION

- 2 In that day ^athe Branch of the LORD
shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth *shall*
be excellent and appealing
For those of Israel who have escaped.

³And it shall come to pass that *he who is*
left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem ^awill
be called holy—everyone who is ^brecord-
ed among the living in Jerusalem. ⁴When
^athe Lord has washed away the filth of the
daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of
Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of
judgment and by the spirit of burning, ⁵then
the LORD will create above every dwelling
place of Mount Zion, and above her assem-
blies, ^aa cloud and smoke by day and ^bthe
shining of a flaming fire by night. For over
all the glory there *will be* a covering. ⁶And
there will be a tabernacle for shade in the
daytime from the heat, ^afor a place of ref-
uge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

GOD'S DISAPPOINTING VINEYARD

- 5** Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved
^aregarding His vineyard:

- My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.
2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also made a winepress in it;
^aSo He expected *it* to bring
forth *good* grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

3:17 ^a Deut. 28:27 ^b Jer. 13:22 3:18 ^a Judg. 8:21, 26 3:24 ^a Is. 22:12
3:26 ^a Jer. 14:2 ^b Lam. 2:10 4:1 ^a Is. 2:11, 17 ^b 2 Thess. 3:12 ^c Luke 1:25
4:2 ^a [Jer. 23:5] 4:3 ^a Is. 60:21 ^b Phil. 4:3 4:4 ^a Mal. 3:2, 3 4:5 ^a Ex.
13:21, 22 ^b Zech. 2:5 4:6 ^a Is. 25:4 5:1 ^a Matt. 21:33 5:2 ^a Deut. 32:6

4:1 So many men would be killed there wouldn't be enough husbands to go around. One of the “unintended consequences” of godless living is societal chaos. Disastrous wars can remove a healthy balance of males from society. We also have contemporary examples of nations seeking to control population growth through selective childbirth and abortion only to discover that the majority of rejected (killed) pregnancies are little girls, eventually causing the same kind of societal imbalances. Sin destroys lives, but it also destroys nations.
4:2–6 The prophet looked beyond the day of the Lord to that time when the kingdom would be established on earth. “Branch of the LORD” is a messianic title for Jesus Christ, who would come as a “shoot” from the seeming dead stump of David's dynasty (11:1; 53:2; see Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).
4:4 God will cleanse His people (see Zech. 12:10—13:1),

restore the fruitfulness of the land, and dwell with them as He did when He led them through the wilderness (Is. 4:5, 6; see Ex. 13:21, 22). Not just the temple, but every dwelling will be blessed by the presence of the Lord! Unlike in Isaiah's day, “in that day” (Is. 4:1) the people will be holy (set apart), and the land will be beautiful and glorious.
5:1–30 The prophet became a troubadour and sang a folk song to the Lord (“my Well-beloved”). Perhaps the people who had ignored his sermons would listen to his song. He sang about his own people (v. 7) and pointed out how good God had been to them. God gave them a holy law and a wonderful land, but they had broken the law and had defiled the land with their sins and had failed to produce fruit for God's glory. God had done for them all that He could do. Now all that remained for God to do was bring judgment on the fruitless vineyard and make it a waste.

- 3 “And now, O inhabitants of
Jerusalem and men of Judah,
^aJudge, please, between Me
and My vineyard.
- 4 What more could have been
done to My vineyard
That I have not done in ^ait?
Why then, when I expected *it* to
bring forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?
- 5 And now, please let Me tell you
what I will do to My vineyard:
^aI will take away its hedge, and
it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it
shall be trampled down.
- 6 I will lay it ^awaste;
It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up
briers and ^bthorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it.”
- 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of
hosts *is* the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are
His pleasant plant.
He looked for justice, but
behold, oppression;
For righteousness, but
behold, a cry *for help*.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON EXCESSES

- 8 Woe to those who join ^ahouse to house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place
Where they may dwell alone
in the midst of the land!
- 9 “In my hearing the LORD
of hosts *said*,
“Truly, many houses shall be desolate,
Great and beautiful ones,
without inhabitant.
- 10 For ten acres of vineyard
shall yield one ^abath,
And a homer of seed shall
yield one ephah.”

- 11 ^aWoe to those who rise early
in the morning,
That they may follow
intoxicating drink;
Who continue until night, *till*
wine inflames them!
- 12 ^aThe harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But ^bthey do not regard the
work of the LORD,
Nor consider the operation
of His hands.
- 13 ^aTherefore my people have
gone into captivity,
Because *they have* no
^bknowledge;
Their honorable men *are*
famished,
And their multitude dried
up with thirst.
- 14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged
itself
And opened its mouth
beyond measure;
Their glory and their multitude
and their pomp,
And he who is jubilant, shall
descend into it.
- 15 People shall be brought down,
^aEach man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty
shall be humbled.
- 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be
^aexalted in judgment,
And God who is holy shall be
hallowed in righteousness.
- 17 Then the lambs shall feed
in their pasture,
And in the waste places of ^athe
fat ones strangers shall eat.

5:3 ^a [Rom. 3:4] 5:4 ^a 2 Chr. 36:15, 16 5:5 ^a Ps. 80:12; 89:40, 41
5:6 ^a 2 Chr. 36:19–21 ^b Is. 7:19–25 5:8 ^a Mic. 2:2 5:9 ^a Is. 22:14
5:10 ^a Ezek. 45:11 5:11 ^a Prov. 23:29, 30 5:12 ^a Amos 6:5 ^b Job
34:27 5:13 ^a 2 Kin. 24:14–16 ^b Hos. 4:6 5:15 ^a Is. 2:9, 11 5:16 ^a Is.
2:11 5:17 ^a Is. 10:16

5:4 What were the “wild grapes” that the nation produced instead of the “good grapes” that God sought for? In the six statements of woe that follow (“what woe to those,” see vv. 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22), Isaiah named the sins that brought judgment on the land. These woes parallel the intensity of Jesus’ words to those who should have known better in his own day (see Matt. 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). Sin sometimes succeeds for a season, but sorrow is the inevitable long-term result.

5:8–10 In disobedience to the law (Lev. 25:23–28; 1 Kin. 21:1–3), the rich had defrauded the poor and seized the land. These wealthy exploiters had built large mansions and developed extensive farms, but God warned them that their houses would be empty and their

harvests meager. Imagine ten acres of grapevines yielding only six gallons of wine and ten bushels of seed producing only one basket of grain.

5:11–17 In the Old Testament, God did not require avoiding alcohol altogether, but He did warn against drunkenness (Prov. 20:1; 23:29–31; Hab. 2:15). The New Testament repeats this warning (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph. 5:18). Isaiah described people so addicted to alcohol that they would begin their revelries as soon as they woke up in the morning, and they would continue their drinking till late at night. They enjoyed banquets and music and got involved in drunken mobs (Is. 5:14). But when judgment comes, these people will hunger and thirst and become food for the grave.

- 18 Woe to those who draw iniquity
with cords of vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
19 ^aThat say, "Let Him make speed
and hasten His work,
That we may see it;
And let the counsel of the Holy One
of Israel draw near and come,
That we may know it."
- 20 Woe to those who call evil
good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light,
and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet,
and sweet for bitter!
- 21 Woe to *those who are* ^awise
in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!
- 22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing
intoxicating drink,
23 Who ^ajustify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from
the righteous man!
- 24 Therefore, ^aas the fire
devours the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So ^btheir root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the
law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the
Holy One of Israel.
- 25 ^aTherefore the anger of the LORD is
aroused against His people;
He has stretched out His
hand against them
And stricken them,

And ^bthe hills trembled.
Their carcasses *were* as refuse
in the midst of the streets.

^cFor all this His anger is not
turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 26 ^aHe will lift up a banner to the
nations from afar,
And will ^bwhistle to them from
^cthe end of the earth;
Surely ^dthey shall come
with speed, swiftly.
- 27 No one will be weary or
stumble among them,
No one will slumber or sleep;
Nor ^awill the belt on their
loins be loosed,
Nor the strap of their
sandals be broken;
- 28 ^aWhose arrows *are* sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hooves will seem
like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind.
- 29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion,
They will roar like young lions;
Yes, they will roar
And lay hold of the prey;
They will carry *it* away safely,
And no one will deliver.
- 30 In that day they will roar against them
Like the roaring of the sea.
And if *one* ^alooks to the land,
Behold, darkness *and* sorrow;
And the light is darkened
by the clouds.

5:19 ^a Jer. 17:15 5:21 ^a Rom. 1:22; 12:16 5:23 ^a Prov. 17:15 5:24 ^a Ex. 15:7
^b Job 18:16 5:25 ^a 2 Kin. 22:13, 17 ^b Jer. 4:24 ^c Is. 9:12, 17 5:26 ^a Is.
11:10, 12 ^b Is. 7:18 ^c Mal. 1:11 ^d Joel 2:7 5:27 ^a Dan. 5:6 5:28 ^a Jer.
5:16 5:30 ^a Is. 8:22

5:18, 19 Isaiah described people who, though bound by sin, speak frequently of the Lord and His warnings. "They even mock God." The title "Holy One of Israel" (v. 19) is used twenty-five times in Isaiah, but these sinners had no respect for that name. They were no different than today's skeptical scoffers who speak lightly of the Lord and think they will get away with it.

5:20 Moral standards were destroyed by new definitions of sin (see Amos 5:7), people using God's vocabulary but not His dictionary. Like today's doublespeak, this kind of language made it easy to deceive people and avoid a guilty conscience. In today's world, increased taxes are "revenue enhancements," and poor people are "fiscal underachievers." Medical malpractice is not the cause of a patient's death; it's a "diagnostic misadventure of high magnitude."

5:21 Instead of listening to God, the leaders consulted with one another and made decisions based on their own wisdom. "Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22; see 1 Cor. 1:18–25). "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:7).

5:22–25 The judges who were supposed to enforce the law used their authority to free the guilty and punish the innocent. They were more interested in cocktail parties than fair trials and in making money (bribes) than promoting justice. Isaiah warned these corrupt politicians that the fire of God's wrath was coming and would burn them up. They were like cut flowers and had no roots—beautiful for a time, but destined to die and turn to dust.

5:25 The phrase in this verse about God's anger is repeated in 9:12, 17, and 21, and in 10:4. His hand was raised in judgment and would not come down until He had completed His work. God would summon the Assyrian army from afar and use it to chasten His people (5:26–30). The northern kingdom of Israel would be destroyed, and Judah, the southern kingdom, would be devastated but eventually delivered, only to go in captivity to Babylon a century later. God was serious about the nation's sins. If they would not repent and accept His offer of pardon (1:18), then all He could do was send judgment.

ISAIAH CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

6 In the year that ^aKing Uzziah died, I ^bsaw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ²Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, ^awith two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one cried to another and said:

^a“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
^bThe whole earth is full of His glory!”

⁴And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵So I said:

“Woe is me, for I am undone!
 Because I *am* a man of ^aunclean lips,
 And I dwell in the midst of a
 people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King,
 The LORD of hosts.”

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from ^athe altar. ⁷And he ^a“touched my mouth *with it*, and said:

“Behold, this has touched
 your lips;
 Your iniquity is taken away,
 And your sin purged.”

⁸Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,
 And who will go for ^aUs?”

Then I said, “Here *am* I! Send me.”

6:1 ^a 2 Kin. 15:7 ^b John 12:41 6:2 ^a Ezek. 1:11 6:3 ^a Rev. 4:8 ^b Num. 14:21 6:5 ^a Ex. 6:12, 30 6:6 ^a Rev. 8:3 6:7 ^a Jer. 1:9 6:8 ^a Gen. 1:26

6:6 Only here are the seraphim mentioned in Scripture. The Hebrew word *seraphim* means “to burn” and relates these creatures to the holiness of God. This is why they repeat, “Holy, holy, holy” before the throne of God. Some students think that the seraphim are the “living beings” described in Revelation 4:6–9.

6:7, 8 Before we can minister to others, we must permit God to minister to us. Before we pronounce bad news

and God’s judgment upon others, we must sincerely admit our own sin and inadequacies. Isaiah’s conviction led to confession, and confession led to cleansing (see 1 John 1:9). Like Isaiah, many of the other great heroes of faith saw themselves as sinners and humbled themselves before God: Abraham (Gen. 18:27), Jacob (Gen. 32:10), Job (Job 40:1–5), David (2 Sam. 7:18), Paul (1 Tim. 1:15), and Peter (Luke 5:8–11).

An Experience with God

Is. 6:1

Anyone reading Isaiah’s first two messages might be inclined to ask, “What right does this man have to pronounce judgment on the leaders of our land and the many worshipers in the temple?” The answer is in chapter 6: Isaiah gives his account of his call to ministry. Before he announced any woes on others, he first confessed his own sin and said, “Woe is me, for I am undone!” (v. 5). Isaiah saw the Holy One of Israel and could not keep silent. Note four stages in Isaiah’s experience with God.

- **He saw the Lord** (vv. 1–4). We assume that Isaiah was in the temple when this marvelous event occurred, but we cannot be sure. The temple referred to in verse 1 is the heavenly temple, rather than Solomon’s temple. King Uzziah died in 740 B.C. and was one of Judah’s greatest leaders, even though in his latter years he was disciplined for disobeying God (2 Chr. 26:16–21). A great king may have left his throne on earth, but the greatest King was still seated on the throne of heaven. According to John 12:41, this was the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **He saw himself** (vv. 5–7). The sight of a holy God and the sound of the holy hymn of worship brought great conviction to Isaiah’s heart, and he confessed that he was a sinner. Unclean lips are caused by an unclean heart (Matt. 12:34, 35). Isaiah cried out to be cleansed inwardly (Ps. 51:10), and God met his need. If this scene had been on earth, the coals would have come from the bronze altar where sacrificial blood had been shed or, perhaps, from the censer of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12). Isaiah’s cleansing came by blood and fire, and it was verified by the word of the Lord (Is. 6:7).
- **He saw the need** (v. 8). The nation needed the Lord, and the Lord wanted a servant to minister to the people. Isaiah volunteered to be that servant. He did not discuss his call with God, as had Moses (Ex. 3:11–4:15) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4ff.), but accepted the appointment and made himself available to his Master. Never underestimate what God can do with one willing worker. We have an even greater need for laborers today, and we have tremendous opportunities for sharing the gospel with a lost world. Are you one of God’s willing volunteers?
- **The nation could not see** (vv. 9–13). The Lord did not give His servant much encouragement. Isaiah’s ministry would actually make some people’s eyes more blind, their ears more deaf, and their hearts more calloused. God does not deliberately make sinners blind, deaf, and hard-hearted; the more that people resist God’s truth, however, the less able they are to receive God’s truth. But the servant is to proclaim the Word no matter how people respond, for the test of ministry is faithfulness to the Lord, not outward success.

⁹And He said, “Go, and ^atell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do
not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

¹⁰ “Make ^athe heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
^bLest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

¹¹Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered:

^a“Until the cities are laid waste
and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
¹² ^aThe LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places *are* many
in the midst of the land.
¹³ But yet a tenth *will be* in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump *remains*
when it is cut down.
So ^athe holy seed *shall be* its stump.”

ISAIAH SENT TO KING AHAZ

7 Now it came to pass in the days of ^aAhaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against ^bit, but could not prevail against it. ²And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So

his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

³Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub¹ your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, ⁴and say to him: ‘Take heed, and be ^aquiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. ⁵Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, ⁶“Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel”— ⁷thus says the Lord GOD:

^a“It shall not stand,
Nor shall it come to pass.
⁸ ^aFor the head of Syria *is* Damascus,
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin.
Within sixty-five years
Ephraim will be broken,
So that it will not be a people.
⁹ The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
And the head of Samaria
is Remaliah’s son.
^aIf you will not believe,
Surely you shall not be established.””

THE IMMANUEL PROPHECY

¹⁰Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ^{11a}“Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”

6:9 ^a Matt. 13:14 6:10 ^a Ps. 119:70 ^b Jer. 5:21 6:11 ^a Mic. 3:12
6:12 ^a 2 Kin. 25:21 6:13 ^a Ezra 9:2 7:1 ^a 2 Chr. 28 ^b 2 Kin. 16:5, 9
7:3 ¹ Literally *A Remnant Shall Return* 7:4 ^a Is. 30:15 7:7 ^a Is. 8:10
7:8 ^a 2 Sam. 8:6 7:9 ^a 2 Chr. 20:20 7:11 ^a Matt. 12:38

6:9, 10 These verses are so important that they are quoted six times in the New Testament (Matt. 13:13–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:25–28; Rom. 11:8).

6:11–13 God told Isaiah that his ministry would end in seeming failure, with the land ruined and the people taken off to exile. But a remnant would survive! It would be like the stump of a fallen tree from which the shoots (“the holy seed”—v. 13) would come, and they would continue the true faith in the land. Isaiah needed a long-range perspective on his ministry or else he would feel like he was accomplishing nothing.

7:1–25 God sent Isaiah with a message of hope, a promise, to King Ahaz (vv. 1–9). These were perilous days for the nation of Judah. Assyria was growing stronger and threatening the smaller nations whose security depended on a very delicate political balance. Syria and Ephraim (the northern kingdom) tried to pressure Judah into an alliance against Assyria, but Ahaz refused to join them. Why? Because he had secretly made a treaty with Assyria (2 Kin. 16:5–9). The king was playing power politics instead of trusting in the power of God. Syria and Ephraim planned to overthrow Ahaz and put “the

son of Tabel” (Is. 7:6) on the throne, and Ahaz was afraid. **7:2** Ahaz’s heart had been wavering, and the hearts of his people had been shaking for fear, but Isaiah brought him God’s message of assurance: “Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted” (v. 4a). How would Ahaz find this inner peace? By believing God’s promise that Judah’s enemies would be defeated. “If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established” (v. 9). Faith in God’s promises is the only way to find peace in times of trouble. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You” (26:3).

7:4 In God’s eyes, the two threatening kings were nothing but “two stubs of smoking firebrands” who would be off the scene very soon, and they both died two years later. Furthermore, within sixty-five years, Ephraim (Israel, the northern kingdom) would be gone forever. Isaiah spoke this prophecy in the year 734 B.C. Assyria defeated Syria in 732 B.C. and invaded Israel in 722 B.C. They deported many of the Israelites and assimilated the rest by introducing Gentiles into the land. By 669 B.C. (sixty-five years later), the nation no longer existed.

7:10–16 If Ahaz had believed God’s promise, he would have broken his alliance and called the nation to prayer

¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!”

¹³Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! *Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?* ¹⁴Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear ^ba Son, and shall call His name ‘Immanuel.’* ¹⁵Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. ^{16a}For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by ^bboth her kings. ^{17a}The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father’s house—days that have not come since the day that ^bEphraim departed from Judah.”

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD ^awill whistle for the fly
That is in the farthest part of
the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee that is in
the land of Assyria.

¹⁹ They will come, and all of them will rest
In the desolate valleys and in
^athe clefts of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.

²⁰ In the same day the Lord will
shave with a ^ahired ^brazor,
With those from beyond the River,¹
with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.

²¹ It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a
young cow and two sheep;

²² So it shall be, from the abundance
of milk they give,

That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will
eat who is left in the land.

²³ It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could
be a thousand vines
Worth a thousand *shekels* of silver,
^aIt will be for briers and thorns.

²⁴ With arrows and bows *men*
will come there,
Because all the land will become
briers and thorns.

²⁵ And to any hill which could
be dug with the hoe,
You will not go there for fear
of briers and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

ASSYRIA WILL INVADE THE LAND

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, “Take a large scroll, and ^awrite on it with a man’s pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.¹ ²And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, ^aUria the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.”

³Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; ^{4a}for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ ^bthe riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

^{7:14} ^aMatt. 1:23 ^b[Is. 9:6] ^cIs. 8:8, 10 ¹Literally God-With-Us ^{7:16} ^aIs. 8:4 ^b2 Kin. 15:30 ^{7:17} ^a2 Chr. 28:19, 20 ^b1 Kin. 12:16 ^{7:18} ^aIs. 5:26 ^{7:19} ^aJer. 16:16 ^{7:20} ^aIs. 10:5, 15 ^b2 Kin. 16:7 ¹That is, the Euphrates ^{7:23} ^aIs. 5:6 ^{8:1} ^aHab. 2:2 ¹Literally Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty ^{8:2} ^a2 Kin. 16:10 ^{8:4} ^a2 Kin. 17:6; Is. 7:16 ^b2 Kin. 15:29

and praise, but the king continued in his unbelief. Realizing the weakness of the king’s faith, Isaiah offered to give a sign to encourage him, but Ahaz put on a pious front and refused his offer. Knowing that he was secretly allied with Assyria, how could Ahaz honestly ask the Lord for a special sign? So, instead of speaking only to the king, Isaiah addressed the whole “house of David” and gave the prophecy concerning “Immanuel.”

7:14 The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “God with us” (see Matt. 1:18–25; Luke 1:31–35). The virgin birth of Christ is a key doctrine; for if Jesus Christ is not God come in sinless human flesh, then we have no Savior. Jesus had to be born of a virgin, apart from human generation, because He existed before His mother. He was not just born in this world; He came down from heaven into the world (John 3:13; 6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). Jesus was sent by the Father and therefore came into the world having a human mother but not a human father (John 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30; 9:4).

7:15, 16 Orthodox Jewish boys become “sons of the law” at the age of twelve. This special son was a reminder

that Syria and Ephraim would be out of the picture within the next twelve years. Isaiah delivered his prophecy in 734 B.C. In 732 B.C. Assyria defeated Syria, and in 722 B.C. Assyria invaded the northern kingdom. The prophecy was fulfilled.

7:17–25 Instead of trusting the Lord, Ahaz continued to trust Assyria for help, and Isaiah warned him that Assyria would become Judah’s enemy. The Assyrians would invade Judah and so ravage the land that agriculture would cease and the people would have only dairy products to eat (vv. 15, 21–23). The rich farmland would become wasteland, and the people would be forced to hunt wild beasts in order to get food. It would be a time of great humiliation (v. 20; 2 Sam. 10:4, 5) and suffering that could have been avoided had the leaders trusted in the Lord.

8:1–4 Isaiah married the virgin, and the legal documents were duly witnessed and sealed. He even announced that their first child would be a son and his name would be Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means “swift to plunder, quick to carry away.” That child would be a living reminder of God’s prophecy through Isaiah.

- ⁵The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:
- ⁶ “Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of ^aShiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice ^bin Rezin and
in Remaliah’s son;
⁷ Now therefore, behold, the Lord
brings up over them
The waters of the River,¹
strong and mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
⁸ He will pass through Judah,
He will overflow and pass over,
^aHe will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings
Will fill the breadth of Your
land, O ^bImmanuel.¹
- ⁹ “Be^a shattered, O you peoples,
and be broken in pieces!
Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.
¹⁰ ^aTake counsel together, but it
will come to nothing;
Speak the word, ^bbut it will not stand,
^cFor God is with us.”¹

FEAR GOD, HEED HIS WORD

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

- ¹² “Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’
Concerning all that this people
call a conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their threats,
nor be troubled.
¹³ The LORD of hosts, Him
you shall hallow;

- Let Him be your fear,
And let Him be your dread.*
- ¹⁴ ^aHe will be as a sanctuary,
But ^ba stone of stumbling
and a rock of offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem.
¹⁵ And many among them shall ^astumble;
They shall fall and be broken,
Be snared and taken.”
- ¹⁶ Bind up the testimony,
Seal the law among my disciples.
¹⁷ And I will wait on the LORD,
Who ^ahides His face from
the house of Jacob;
And I ^bwill hope in Him.
¹⁸ ^aHere am I and the children whom
the LORD has given me!
*We ^bare for signs and wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts,
Who dwells in Mount Zion.*

¹⁹And when they say to you, ^a“Seek those who are mediums and wizards, ^bwho whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? *Should they ^cseek the dead on behalf of the living?* ^{20a}To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is because ^bthere is no light in them.*

²¹They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and ^acurse their king and their God, and look upward. ²²Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and *they will be driven into darkness.*

8:6 ^a John 9:7 ^b Is. 7:1, 2 ^c 8:7 ¹ That is, the Euphrates ^a 8:8 ^a Is. 30:28
^b Is. 7:14 ¹ Literally God-With-Us ^a 8:9 ^a Joel 3:9 ^a 8:10 ^a Is. 7:7 ^b Is.
7:14 ^c Rom. 8:31 ¹ Hebrew Immanuel ^a 8:14 ^a Ezek. 11:16 ^b Luke 2:34;
20:17 ^a 8:15 ^a Matt. 21:44 ^a 8:17 ^a Is. 54:8 ^b Hab. 2:3 ^a 8:18 ^a Heb. 2:13
^b Ps. 71:7 ^a 8:19 ^a 1 Sam. 28:8 ^b Is. 29:4 ^c Ps. 106:28 ^a 8:20 ^a Luke
16:29 ^b Mic. 3:6 ^a 8:21 ^a Rev. 16:11

8:5–22 In the remainder of this chapter, Isaiah used three vivid contrasts to show the rulers of Judah the mistake they were making by trusting Assyria instead of the Lord. They chose: a flood instead of a peaceful river (vv. 5–10), a snare instead of a sanctuary (vv. 11–15), and darkness instead of light (vv. 16–22).

8:5–10 The pro-Assyrian faction in Judah rejoiced when Assyria defeated Syria and when both Pekah and Rezin died. These victories seemed to prove that an alliance with Assyria would be the safest course to follow. Instead of trusting the Lord (“the waters of Shiloah that flow softly” in v. 6), they trusted the great river of Assyria. What they did not realize was that this river would become a flood when Assyria would come and destroy Israel and devastate Judah. God offered His people peace, but in unbelief they opted for war. They were walking by sight and not by faith.

8:11–15 God warned Isaiah not to follow the majority and support the popular pro-Assyrian party. Even though his stand was looked upon as treason, Isaiah

opposed all foreign alliances and urged the people to put their faith in the Lord (7:9; 28:16; 30:15). The Jewish political leaders were asking, “Is it popular? Is it safe?” But the prophet was asking, “Is it right? Is it the will of God?” When you fear the Lord, you don’t need to fear people or circumstances. Isaiah compared the Lord to a sanctuary, a rock that is a refuge for believers but a snare to those who rebel. The image of Messiah as a rock is found again in Isaiah 28:16.

8:16–22 The nation had rejected Isaiah’s message, but that didn’t mean his ministry was a failure. The true disciples of the Lord received God’s Word and treasured it in their hearts. By faith, the prophet was willing to wait patiently for God’s Word to be fulfilled.

8:19 In their time of crisis, instead of turning to God for wisdom, the people consulted demons (cf. Deut. 18:10–12), and this only increased their moral and spiritual darkness. The increase of the occult in our own day is evidence that people are deliberately rejecting God’s Word and turning to Satan’s lies.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROMISED SON

- 9** Nevertheless *“the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at ^bfirst He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And ^cafterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.*
- 2** *“The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.*
- 3** *You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy;ⁱ They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice ^awhen they divide the spoil.*
- 4** *For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of ^aMidian.*
- 5** *For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, ^aWill be used for burning and fuel of fire.*

- 6** *“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a ^bSon is given; And ^cthe government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called ^dWonderful, Counselor, ^eMighty God, Everlasting Father, ^fPrince of Peace.*
- 7** *Of the increase of His government and peace ^aThere will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The ^bzeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

THE PUNISHMENT OF SAMARIA

- 8** *The Lord sent a word against ^aJacob, And it has fallen on Israel.*
- 9** *All the people will know— Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria— Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:*

9:1 ^a Is. 8:22 ^b 2 Kin. 15:29 ^c Matt. 4:13–16 ^{9:2} ^a Matt. 4:16 ^{9:3} ^a Judg. 5:30 ¹ Following Qere and Targum; Kethib and Vulgate read *not increased joy*; Septuagint reads *Most of the people You brought down in Your joy.* ^{9:4} ^a Judg. 7:22 ^{9:5} ^a Is. 66:15 ^{9:6} ^a [Luke 2:11] ^b [John 3:16] ^c [Matt. 28:18] ^d Judg. 13:18 ^e Titus 2:13 ^f Eph. 2:14 ^{9:7} ^a Dan. 2:44 ^b Is. 37:32 ^{9:8} ^a Gen. 32:28

9:1–11:16 The name Shear-Jashub (7:3) means “a remnant will return,” and the return of the Jewish remnant to their land is a major theme in these chapters (10:20–22; 11:11, 12, 16). When Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), the nation was never restored but became what we know as Samaria. After the Babylonian captivity (606–586 B.C.), the people of Judah were given another chance to establish themselves in the land, and through them the Lord brought the Messiah into the world. Had a remnant not returned, God’s plans for redeeming a lost world might have been frustrated. How much would depend on that small remnant!

9:1a Even if his words were to fall on deaf ears, Isaiah and his family would be a living prophecy that the nation could not ignore. Isaiah’s name means “Jehovah is salvation,” and this would remind the people to trust the Lord to deliver them. His older son’s name means “A remnant will return,” and this was a word of promise when the nation teetered on the verge of destruction. A believing remnant did return to Jerusalem from Babylon, and they were encouraged by what Isaiah had written in chapters 40–66.

9:2–7 The Lord promised to Israel (and through Israel to us) a Redeemer. Isaiah continued the theme of light and darkness (8:20–22) by announcing that the darkness and despair “will not be upon her who is distressed, as when at first” (9:1). The Redeemer will come and bring to the world the dawning of a new day (v. 2; Luke 1:78, 79; John 8:12). We know that this prophecy refers to Jesus because of the way it is quoted in Matthew 4:13–15.

9:3–7 Here the prophet looked beyond the first coming of Christ to His Second Coming and the establishing of His righteous kingdom. Instead of protecting a small

remnant, God would enlarge the nation. Instead of experiencing sorrow, the people would rejoice like reapers after a great harvest, soldiers after a great victory, or prisoners of war after being released from their yoke of bondage. Of course, some of this occurred when God defeated Assyria and delivered Jerusalem (ch. 37). But the ultimate fulfillment is still future; all military material will be destroyed (9:5) because the nations will not learn war any more (2:4).

9:6 Isaiah declared both the humanity (“a Child is born”) and the deity (“a Son is given”) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet then leaped ahead to the kingdom age when Messiah will reign in righteousness and justice from David’s throne. God had promised David that his dynasty and throne would be established forever (2 Sam. 7:16), and this was fulfilled literally in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32, 33; see Zech. 9:9), who will one day reign from Jerusalem.

9:6b, 7 If His name is “Wonderful,” then there will be nothing dull about His reign! As “Counselor,” He has the wisdom to rule justly; and as the “Mighty God,” He has the power to execute His wise plans. “Everlasting Father” does not suggest that the Son is also the Father, for each Person in the Godhead is distinct. “Father of eternity” would be a better translation. Among the Jews, the word “father” means “originator” or “source.” For example, Satan is the “father of lies” (John 8:44). If you want anything eternal, you must get it from Jesus Christ; He is the “Father of eternity.”

9:8–10:4 God judged Israel for their sins. This long section describes what would happen to the northern kingdom when the Assyrians invaded. While Isaiah’s ministry was primarily to the people of Judah, He

- 10 “The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace *them* with cedars.”
- 11 Therefore the LORD shall set up
The adversaries of Rezin against him,
And spur his enemies on,
- 12 The Syrians before and the
Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel
with an open mouth.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 13 For the people do not turn to
Him who strikes them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off
head and tail from Israel,
Palm branch and bulrush ^ain one day.
- 15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;
The prophet who teaches
lies, he *is* the tail.
- 16 For ^athe leaders of this people
cause *them* to err,
And *those who are* led by
them are destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the Lord ^awill have no
joy in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their
fatherless and widows;
For everyone *is* a hypocrite
and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaks folly.

^bFor all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 18 For wickedness ^aburns as the fire;
It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;
They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
^aThe land is burned up,
And the people shall be as
fuel for the fire;
^bNo man shall spare his brother.

- 20 And he shall snatch on the right hand
And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand
^aAnd not be satisfied;
^bEvery man shall eat the flesh
of his own arm.
- 21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim,
and Ephraim Manasseh;
Together they *shall be* ^aagainst Judah.

^bFor all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 10** “Woe to those who ^adecree
unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
- 2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from
the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
- 3 ^aWhat will you do in ^bthe day
of punishment,
And in the desolation *which*
will come from ^cafar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?
- 4 Without Me they shall bow down
among the ^aprisoners,
And they shall fall among the slain.”

^bFor all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

ARROGANT ASSYRIA ALSO JUDGED

- 5 “Woe to Assyria, ^athe rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hand
is My indignation.
- 6 I will send him against ^aan
ungodly nation,
And against the people of My wrath

9:14 ^aRev. 18:8 9:16 ^aIs. 3:12 9:17 ^aPs. 147:10 ^bIs. 5:25 9:18 ^aMal. 4:1 9:19 ^aIs. 8:22 ^bMic. 7:2, 6 9:20 ^aLev. 26:26 ^bJer. 19:9 9:21 ^a2 Chr. 28:6, 8 ^bIs. 9:12, 17 10:1 ^aPs. 58:2 10:3 ^aJob 31:14 ^bHos. 9:7 ^cIs. 5:26 10:4 ^aIs. 24:22 ^bIs. 5:25 10:5 ^aJer. 51:20 10:6 ^aIs. 9:17

used Israel as an object lesson to warn the southern kingdom that God does not take sin lightly. Judah had sinned greatly, but God in His mercy spared them for David's sake (37:35; 1 Kin. 11:13; 15:4; 2 Chr. 21:7). But God's longsuffering would one day end.

9:12b “His hand is stretched out still.” This refers to the outstretched hand of God's judgment, not His mercy (65:2; Rom. 10:21). God was judging the people for their pride in thinking that their present difficulties were temporary and that the nation could rebuild itself better than before. He also judged the nation for their hardness of heart in their refusal to repent and return to Him (Is. 9:13–17). God's loving purpose in chastening is that we yield to Him, but if we harden our hearts,

then chastening becomes judgment (Heb. 12:1–11). Israel was being led astray by false prophets and foolish leaders; the nation would not listen to God's Word.

9:18, 19 Ephraim's own wickedness was destroying the nation the way a fire destroys a forest or a field. But the sinners would become fuel for the fire God could kindle! In their greed, the people of the northern kingdom were devouring one another (v. 20) and battling one another (v. 21), but they would soon be devoured and defeated by Assyria.

10:5–34 “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger” is how this section begins. Though God had used Assyria to chasten Judah, He would not permit His “rod” to exalt itself in pride. Assyria was His rod, club, ax, and saw

- I will ^bgive him charge,
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
And to tread them down like
the mire of the streets.
- 7 ^aYet he does not mean so,
Nor does his heart think so;
But *it* is in his heart to destroy,
And cut off not a few nations.
- 8 ^aFor he says,
‘Are not my princes altogether kings?
9 Is not ^aCalno ^blike Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria ^clike Damascus?’
- 10 As my hand has found the
kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those
of Jerusalem and Samaria,
- 11 As I have done to Samaria
and her idols,
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem
and her idols?”

¹²Therefore it shall come to pass, when
the Lord has performed all His work ^aon
Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *that He will
say*, ^b“I will punish the fruit of the arrogant
heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory
of his haughty looks.”

¹³^aFor he says:

“By the strength of my hand
I have done *it*,
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the
boundaries of the people,

And have robbed their treasures;
So I have put down the inhabitants
like a valiant *man*.

- 14 ^aMy hand has found like a nest
the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs *that are left*,
I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who
moved *his* wing,
Nor opened *his* mouth
with even a peep.”
- 15 Shall ^athe ax boast itself against
him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against
him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield *itself*
against those who lift it up,
Or as if a staff could lift up,
as if it were not wood!
- 16 Therefore the Lord, the Lord^d of hosts,
Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory
He will kindle a burning
Like the burning of a fire.
- 17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;
^aIt will burn and devour
His thorns and his briars in one day.
- 18 And it will consume the glory of his
forest and of ^ahis fruitful field,

10:6 ^b Jer. 34:22 10:7 ^a Gen. 50:20 10:8 ^a 2 Kin. 19:10 10:9 ^a Amos 6:2
^b 2 Chr. 35:20 ^c 2 Kin. 16:9 10:12 ^a 2 Kin. 19:31 ^b Jer. 50:18 10:13 ^a Is.
37:24–27 10:14 ^a Job 31:25 10:15 ^a Jer. 51:20 10:16 ¹ Following
Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read YHWH (the LORD).
10:17 ^a Is. 9:18 10:18 ^a 2 Kin. 19:23

(vv. 5, 15, 24), but the Assyrians were treating Israel like mud in the streets (v. 6) and had plundered the land like a farmer gathering eggs (v. 14). God’s purpose was to discipline, but the Assyrians were out to destroy (v. 7). They boasted of their conquests (vv. 8–14; see 37:10–13) but did not give glory to God. Because of their arrogant attitude, God would judge Assyria, for the worker certainly has mastery over His tools.

10:28–32 God used Assyria to discipline His people, but He would not permit this godless nation to go beyond His purposes. God may use unbelievers to accomplish His will in the lives of His people, but He is always in control. We need never fear the disciplining hand of God, for He always disciplines in love (Heb. 12:1–11). This principle is true for our individual lives as well as for the nation of which we are a part.

Three Questions for Every Believer

Is. 10:3

Isaiah denounced Ephraim for its injustice, especially toward the poor, the widows, and the orphans. Unjust laws and oppressive decrees robbed these people both of their meager possessions and their God-given rights (Deut. 15:7, 8; 24:17, 18). The prophet’s three questions in Isaiah 10:3 ought to be pondered by every person who wants to be ready when Christ returns: “What will you do in the day of punishment, and in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?”

If God cannot bring us to repentance through His Word, then He must lift His hand and chasten us. If we do not submit to His chastening, then He must stretch out His hand and judge us. God is longsuffering, but we dare not tempt Him by our careless or callous attitude. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

- Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a
sick man wastes away.
- ¹⁹ Then the rest of the trees of his forest
Will be so few in number
That a child may write them.

THE RETURNING REMNANT OF ISRAEL

- ²⁰ And it shall come to pass in that day
That the remnant of Israel,
And such as have escaped of
the house of Jacob,
^aWill never again depend on
him who defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the
Holy One of Israel, in truth.
- ²¹ The remnant will return, the
remnant of Jacob,
To the ^aMighty God.
- ²² ^aFor though your people, O Israel,
be as the sand of the sea,
^bA remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall
overflow with righteousness.
- ²³ ^aFor the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
In the midst of all the land.

²⁴Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, ^ado not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of ^bEgypt. ²⁵For yet a very little while ^aand the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." ²⁶And the LORD of hosts will stir up ^aa scourge for him like the slaughter of ^bMidian at the rock of Oreb; ^cas His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

- ²⁷ It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken
away from your shoulder,
And his yoke from your neck,
And the yoke will be destroyed
because of ^athe anointing oil.
- ²⁸ He has come to Aiath,
He has passed Migron;
At Michmash he has attended
to his equipment.
- ²⁹ They have gone along ^athe ridge,
They have taken up lodging at Geba.

Ramah is afraid,
^bGibeah of Saul has fled.

- ³⁰ Lift up your voice,
O daughter ^aof Gallim!
Cause it to be heard as far as ^bLaish—
O poor Anathoth!¹
- ³¹ ^aMadmenah has fled,
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
- ³² As yet he will remain ^aat Nob that day;
He will ^bshake his fist at the mount
of ^cthe daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.
- ³³ Behold, the Lord,
The LORD of hosts,
Will lop off the bough with terror;
^aThose of high stature *will*
be hewn down,
And the haughty will be humbled.
- ³⁴ He will cut down the thickets
of the forest with iron,
And Lebanon will fall by
the Mighty One.

THE REIGN OF JESSE'S OFFSPRING

- 11** There ^ashall come forth a Rod
from the stem of ^bJesse,
And ^ca Branch shall grow
out of his roots.
- ² ^aThe Spirit of the LORD shall
rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and
of the fear of the LORD.
- ³ His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by
the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
- ⁴ But ^awith righteousness He
shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for
the meek of the earth;
He shall ^bstrike the earth with
the rod of His mouth,

10:20 ^a 2 Kin. 16:7 10:21 ^a [Is. 9:6] 10:22 ^a Rom. 9:27, 28 ^b Is. 6:13 10:23 ^a Dan. 9:27 10:24 ^a Is. 7:4; 12:2 ^b Ex. 14 10:25 ^a Dan. 11:36 10:26 ^a 2 Kin. 19:35 ^b Is. 9:4 ^c Ex. 14:26, 27 10:27 ^a Ps. 105:15 10:29 ^a 1 Sam. 13:23 ^b 1 Sam. 11:4 10:30 ^a 1 Sam. 25:44 ^b Judg. 18:7 ¹ Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *Listen to her, O Anathoth.* 10:31 ^a Josh. 15:31 10:32 ^a 1 Sam. 21:1 ^b Is. 13:2 ^c Is. 37:22 10:33 ^a Amos 2:9 11:1 ^a [Zech. 6:12] ^b [Acts 13:23] ^c Is. 4:2 11:2 ^a [John 1:32] 11:4 ^a Rev. 19:11 ^b Job 4:9

11:1–16 In contrast to the proud trees that God cuts down (10:33, 34) the picture is now that of a tender shoot from a seemingly dead stump. Isaiah was looking beyond His people's trials to the glorious kingdom that will be established when Messiah comes to reign (11:1–9). David's dynasty was ready to end, but out of his family the Messiah would come (Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5).

A godly remnant of Jews would keep the nation alive so that the Messiah could be born.

11:1–5 Jesus' kingdom will involve righteous rule because the Son of God and the Spirit of God will administer its affairs justly. When the Messiah-King speaks the word, He speaks with power (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15). This kingdom is unlike any other that has ever been.

- And with the breath of His lips
He shall slay the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness shall be the
belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.
- 6 “The^a wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down
with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion
and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie
down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 The nursing child shall play
by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put
his hand in the viper’s den.
- 9 “They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all My holy mountain,
For ^bthe earth shall be full of the
knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.
- 10 “And^a in that day ^bthere shall
be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a ^cbanner
to the people;
For the ^dGentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.”
- 11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand
again the second time
To recover the remnant of His
people who are left,
^eFrom Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the
islands of the sea.

- 12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the
outcasts of Israel,
And gather together “the
dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.
- 13 Also “the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah
shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
- 14 But they shall fly down upon the
shoulder of the Philistines
toward the west;
Together they shall plunder
the people of the East;
^aThey shall lay their hand on
Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon
shall obey them.
- 15 The LORD “will utterly destroy¹ the
tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will
shake His fist over the River,²
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over dry-shod.
- 16 “There will be a highway for the
remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
^bAs it was for Israel
In the day that he came up
from the land of Egypt.

A HYMN OF PRAISE

- 12** And “in that day you will say:
“O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry with me,

11:6 ^a Hos. 2:18 11:9 ^a Job 5:23 ^b Hab. 2:14 11:10 ^a Is. 2:11 ^b Rom. 15:12 ^c Is. 27:12, 13 ^d Rom. 15:10 11:11 ^a Zech. 10:10 11:12 ^a John 7:35 11:13 ^a Jer. 3:18 11:14 ^a Dan. 11:41 11:15 ^a Zech. 10:10, 11 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *dry up*. ² That is, the Euphrates 11:16 ^a Is. 19:23 ^b Ex. 14:29 12:1 ^a Is. 2:11

11:6–9 Jesus’ kingdom will also mean a restored creation because nature will once again enjoy the harmony it enjoyed before sin entered in (see also Rom. 8:18–25; Heb. 2:14). We are stewards of a temporary arrangement here on earth that has been ravaged by the effects of sin and the fall. We ourselves will never restore or conserve the earth into this picture ourselves. God will recreate the heavens and the earth (see Rev. 21:1–7) in His timing.

11:10–16 The nucleus of the kingdom will be a regathered and reunited nation. The “root” will become a “banner” for the rallying of the people as God reaches out and gathers His people from the nations where they have been exiled (43:5, 6). This event will be like a second exodus as God opens the way for His people to return to their land. In a limited sense, this promise was fulfilled after the Assyrian conquest and when the Jews left Babylonian captivity, but the ultimate fulfillment will be at the end of the age when the Messiah regathers His people (27:12, 13; 49:22, 23; 56:7;

8; Matt. 24:31; Rom. 11:25–29). The centuries-long division between Israel and Judah will come to an end, and even the Gentiles will walk on the “highway” that leads to Jerusalem.

11:16 The “highway” is one of Isaiah’s favorite images. Those who obey the Lord have a level and smooth road to walk (26:7, 8). When God calls His people back to their land, He will prepare the way for them (40:3, 4) and lead them safely (42:16). He will remove obstacles so the people can travel easily (49:11; 57:14; 62:10). God’s highway will be called “the Highway of Holiness” (35:8). When Isaiah looked at his people, he saw a sinful nation that would one day walk the “Highway of Holiness” and enter into a righteous kingdom.

12:1–6 Isaiah’s name means “Jehovah is salvation,” and “salvation” is a key theme in this song. “In that day” refers to the day of Israel’s regathering and reunion and the righteous reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish remnant will have come through the time of tribulation on earth (“the time of Jacob’s trouble,”

- Your anger is turned away,
and You comfort me.
- 2 Behold, God is my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
^aFor ^bYAH, the LORD, is my
strength and song;
He also has become my salvation.””¹
- 3 Therefore with joy you will draw ^awater
From the wells of salvation.
- ⁴And in that day you will say:
- ^a“Praise the LORD, call upon His name;
^bDeclare His deeds among the peoples,
Make mention that His
name is exalted.
- 5 ^aSing to the LORD,
For He has done excellent things;
This is known in all the earth.
- 6 ^aCry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,
For great is ^bthe Holy One of
Israel in your midst!”

PROCLAMATION AGAINST BABYLON

13 The ^aburden against Babylon which
Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

- 2 “Lift^a up a banner ^bon the
high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
^cWave your hand, that they may
enter the gates of the nobles.

- 3 I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called ^aMy mighty
ones for My anger—
Those who ^brejoice in My exaltation.”
- 4 The ^anoise of a multitude
in the mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms
of nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
- 5 They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven—
The ^aLORD and His weapons
of indignation,
To destroy the whole ^bland.
- 6 Wail, ^afor the day of the LORD is at hand!
^bIt will come as destruction
from the Almighty.
- 7 Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man’s heart will melt,
- 8 And they will be afraid.
^aPangs and sorrows will
take hold of them;
They will be in pain as a
woman in childbirth;

12:2 ^aPs. 83:18 ^bEx. 15:2 ^cExodus 15:2 12:3 ^a[John 4:10, 14; 7:37, 38]
12:4 ^a1 Chr. 16:8 ^bPs. 145:4–6 ^cPs. 34:3 12:5 ^aEx. 15:1 12:6 ^aZeph.
3:14, 15 ^bPs. 89:18 13:1 ^aJer. 50:51 13:2 ^aIs. 18:3 ^bJer. 51:25 ^cIs.
10:32 13:3 ^aJoel 3:11 ^bPs. 149:2 13:4 ^aIs. 17:12 13:5 ^aIs. 42:13 ^bIs.
24:1; 34:2 13:6 ^aZeph. 1:7 ^bJoel 1:15 13:8 ^aPs. 48:6

Jer. 30:7), seen their Messiah, repented, and received Him by faith (Zech. 12:10–13:1; 14:4–11). Cleansed and established in their promised kingdom, the nation will praise the Lord and extol Him among the Gentiles.

12:2 “The LORD is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him” (Ex. 15:2)—was sung at the exodus and at the rededication of the temple in Ezra’s day (Ps. 118:14). The phrase “become my salvation” can also be translated “given me victory.” It was sung by the Red Sea after the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt by Moses, a prophet. It was sung in Jerusalem when the second temple was dedicated under the leadership of Ezra, a priest. It will be sung again when the Jewish nation accepts Jesus Christ as its King. They will recognize Him as “the Holy One of Israel” (Is. 12:6) and willingly obey His holy law.

12:6 This joyful song closes the first section of Isaiah in which the prophet has used four significant names to tell the people what God had planned for them. Because of Immanuel, there is a message of hope. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz gives a warning of judgment, but his brother Shear-Jashub speaks of a promise of mercy. The father’s name, Isaiah, brings a song of rejoicing as the people discover that Jehovah is indeed their salvation. The Lord will never forsake His people. No matter how difficult the days may be, or how long the nights, for the people of God, the best is yet to come.

13:1 This is a prophecy against Babylon. The word “Babel” means “gateway to a god” and sounds like the Hebrew word *balal*, which means “confusion”

(Gen. 10:8–10; 11:1–9). In Scripture, Babylon symbolizes the world system that humans have built in defiance of God. Jerusalem and Babylon are contrasting cities: One is the chosen city of God; the other is the wicked city of sinful humanity. The city of God will last forever, but the rebellious, human city will ultimately be destroyed (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17, 18).

13:2–5 Isaiah was told to announce how God musters His army (vv. 1–5, 17, 18). God is sovereign. He is able to call any army He desires, to accomplish any task He assigns. He can summon them with a whistle (7:18) or by using leaders to raise a banner, shout, and beckon to the soldiers (13:2). In this case, God was mustering the army of the Medes (v. 17; 21:2), and He “commanded [His] sanctified ones” (13:3). Even though they did not believe in Jehovah God, the Medes were set apart by God to do His holy work.

13:6–22 God punishes His enemies. The city of Babylon was completely destroyed in 689 B.C. by Sennacherib and the Assyrian army, but it was rebuilt by Sennacherib’s son. In 539 B.C., Darius the Mede captured the city (Dan. 5:31), but he did not destroy it. In the centuries that followed, Babylon had its shining moments, but after the death of its last great conqueror, Alexander the Great, the city declined and soon was no more. Isaiah’s prophecy of this chapter was fulfilled, for the city was not rebuilt.

13:8a The image of the woman in travail is used in Scripture to describe a time of judgment (v. 8; 21:3; 26:17; Jer. 6:24; Mic. 4:9, 10; Matt. 24:8; 1 Thess. 5:3). Isaiah looked beyond that day to the day when the Babylonian world system would be destroyed (Rev. 17–18).

- They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces *will be like* flames.
- 9 Behold, “the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy ^bits sinners from it.
- 10 For the stars of heaven and
their constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be “darkened
in its going forth,
And the moon will not cause
its light to shine.
- 11 “I will “punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
^bI will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness
of the terrible.
- 12 I will make a mortal more
rare than fine gold,
A man more than the golden
wedge of Ophir.
- 13 “Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move
out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in ^bthe day of His fierce anger.
- 14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man takes up;
“Every man will turn to his own people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.
- 15 Everyone who is found will
be thrust through,
And everyone who is captured
will fall by the sword.
- 16 Their children also will be “dashed
to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ^bravished.
- 17 “Behold, ^aI will stir up the
Medes against them,
Who will not regard silver;
And *as for* gold, they will
not delight in it.
- 18 Also *their* bows will dash the
young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on
the fruit of the womb;
Their eye will not spare children.
- 19 ^aAnd Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride,
Will be as when God overthrew
^bSodom and Gomorrah.
- 20 “It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from
generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch
tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make
their sheepfolds there.
- 21 “But wild beasts of the desert
will lie there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
- 22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
“Her time is near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged.”

MERCY ON JACOB

14 For the LORD “will have mercy on Jacob, and ^bwill still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. “The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. ²Then people will take them “and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, ^band rule over their oppressors.

FALL OF THE KING OF BABYLON

³It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you

13:9 ^a Mal. 4:1 ^b Prov. 2:22 13:10 ^a Joel 2:31 13:11 ^a Is. 26:21 ^b [Is. 2:17] 13:13 ^a Hag. 2:6 ^b Lam. 1:12 13:14 ^a Jer. 50:16; 51:9 13:16 ^a Nah. 3:10 ^b Zech. 14:2 13:17 ^a Dan. 5:28, 31 13:19 ^a Is. 14:4 ^b Gen. 19:24 13:20 ^a Jer. 50:3 13:21 ^a Is. 34:11–15 13:22 ^a Jer. 51:33 14:1 ^a Ps. 102:13 ^b Zech. 1:17; 2:12 ^c Is. 60:4, 5, 10 14:2 ^a Is. 49:22; 60:9; 66:20 ^b Is. 60:14

13:11 Whether or not Isaiah’s prophecy describes something more significant than the ups and downs of an ancient city is unclear. The prophets often would begin a message by focusing on local events, but then they would enlarge the vision to reveal something greater. Isaiah saw in the fall of Babylon a picture of “the day of the LORD” (vv. 6, 9, 13), that time when God will pour out His wrath on the whole world (v. 11).

14:1–23 The picture is of a mighty monarch whose pride has brought him to destruction. This is what happened to Belshazzar when Darius the Mede captured Babylon in 539 B.C. (Dan. 5). Isaiah described the king’s arrival in Sheol, the world of the dead, where the king’s wealth, glory, and power were gone. The dead kings already in

Sheol stood in tribute to him (Is. 14:9), but it was all a mockery. Death is the great leveler; no kings are in the world of the dead. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning” (v. 12) suggests that this king’s glory did not last very long. The morning star shines but is soon swallowed up by the light of the sun.

14:3 In this event, the prophet saw something far deeper than the defeat of an empire. In the fall of the king of Babylon, he saw the defeat of Satan, the “prince of this world,” who seeks to energize and motivate the leaders of nations (John 12:31; Eph. 2:1–3). Daniel 10:20 indicates that Satan has assigned “princes” (fallen angels) to the various nations so that he can influence leaders to act contrary to the will of God.

were made to serve, ⁴that you ^awill take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

- "How the oppressor has ceased,
The ^bgolden¹ city ceased!
5 The LORD has broken ^athe
staff of the wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;
6 He who struck the people in wrath
with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.
7 The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet;
They break forth into singing.
8 ^aIndeed the cypress trees
rejoice over you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, 'Since you were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against us.'
9 "Hell^a from beneath is
excited about you,
To meet *you* at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10 They all shall ^aspeak and say to you:
'Have you also become as weak as we?
Have you become like us?'
11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your
stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'

THE FALL OF LUCIFER

- 12 "How^a you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer,¹ son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart:
^a"I will ascend into heaven,
^bI will exalt my throne above
the stars of God;
I will also sit on the ^cmount
of the congregation
^dOn the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the
heights of the clouds,
^a"I will be like the Most High.'
15 Yet you ^ashall be brought
down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.

- 16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, *saying*:
'Is this the man who made
the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
17 Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house
of his prisoners?'
18 "All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
19 But you are cast out of your grave
Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
20 You will not be joined with
them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land
And slain your people.
^aThe brood of evildoers shall
never be named.
21 Prepare slaughter for his children
^aBecause of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities."

BABYLON DESTROYED

- 22 "For I will rise up against them,"
says the LORD of hosts,
"And cut off from Babylon ^athe
name and ^bremnant,
^cAnd offspring and posterity,"
says the LORD.
23 "I will also make it a possession
for the ^aporcupine,
And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of
destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

ASSYRIA DESTROYED

- 24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
"Surely, as I have thought, so
it shall come to pass,
And as I have purposed,
so it shall ^astand:

14:4 ^a Hab. 2:6 ^b Rev. 18:16 ¹ Or insolent 14:5 ^a Ps. 125:3 14:8 ^a Ezek. 31:16 14:9 ^a Ezek. 32:21 14:10 ^a Ezek. 32:21 14:12 ^a Is. 34:4 ¹ Literally Day Star 14:13 ^a Ezek. 28:2 ^b Dan. 8:10 ^c Ezek. 28:14 ^d Ps. 48:2 14:14 ^a 2 Thess. 2:4 14:15 ^a Matt. 11:23 14:20 ^a Ps. 21:10; 109:13 14:21 ^a Ex. 20:5 14:22 ^a Prov. 10:7 ^b 1 Kin. 14:10 ^c Job 18:19 14:23 ^a Zeph. 2:14 14:24 ^a Is. 43:13

14:12–15 The phrase "son of the morning" means "morning star" and indicates that Satan tries to imitate Jesus Christ, who is "the bright morning star" (Rev. 22:16). "I will be like the Most High" reveals his basic strategy, for he is an imitator (2 Cor. 11:13–15). Like

the king of Babylon, Satan will one day be humiliated and defeated. He will be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12) and finally cast into hell (Rev. 20:10).

14:24–27 The key word here is "thought." God is in control of the rise and fall of the nations as He works out

- 25 That I will break the
“Assyrian in My land,
 And on My mountains tread
 him underfoot.
 Then ^bhis yoke shall be
 removed from them,
 And his burden removed
 from their shoulders.
- 26 This is the *“purpose* that is purposed
 against the whole earth,
 And this is the hand that is stretched
 out over all the nations.
- 27 For the LORD of hosts has *“purposed,*
 And who will annul *it?*
 His hand is stretched out,
 And who will turn it back?”

PHILISTIA DESTROYED

²⁸This is the burden which came in the
 year that *“King Ahaz died.*

- 29 “Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,
“Because the rod that struck
 you is broken;
 For out of the serpent’s roots
 will come forth a viper,
^bAnd its offspring *will be* a
 fiery flying serpent.
- 30 The firstborn of the poor will feed,
 And the needy will lie down in safety;
 I will kill your roots with famine,
 And it will slay your remnant.
- 31 Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!
 All you of Philistia *are* dissolved;
 For smoke will come from the north,
 And no one *will be* alone in
 his appointed times.”
- 32 What will they answer the
 messengers of the nation?
 That *“the LORD has founded Zion,*
 And ^bthe poor of His people
 shall take refuge in it.

His divine purposes in the world. Assyria was His tool to accomplish His purposes (10:5), and the day would come when God would judge Assyria (see 10:5ff.). The judgment would take place in the land of Judah, and God would be the judge. Assyria invaded Judah during Hezekiah’s reign (701 B.C.), and God destroyed the army as it threatened to capture Jerusalem (37:36). God permitted Assyria to discipline Judah, but He would not allow the enemy to destroy His people.

14:28–32 Isaiah warned the Philistines that their rejoicing was presumptuous, for the new king would be worse than the previous one. Isaiah compared the dead Assyrian ruler to a snake that gave birth to an even worse serpent! “Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!” (v. 31) Note in this prophecy that God had a special word of assurance for His own people, Judah. Even the poorest of the poor would have food and safety (v. 30) and Zion would be delivered from the enemy (v. 32; 37:36), but the Philistines would be wiped out by war and famine

PROCLAMATION AGAINST MOAB

15 The *“burden* against Moab.

- Because in the night ^bAr of
^cMoab is laid waste
 And destroyed,
 Because in the night Kir of
 Moab is laid waste
 And destroyed,
- 2 He has gone up to the
 temple¹ and Dibon,
 To the high places to weep.
 Moab will wail over Nebo
 and over Medeba;
“On all their heads will be baldness,
 And every beard cut off.
- 3 In their streets they will clothe
 themselves with sackcloth;
 On the tops of their houses
 And in their streets
 Everyone will wail, *“weeping*
 bitterly.
- 4 Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,
 Their voice shall be heard
 as far as *“Jahaz;*
 Therefore the armed soldiers¹
 of Moab will cry out;
 His life will be burdensome to him.
- 5 *“My^a heart will cry out for Moab;*
 His fugitives *shall flee* to Zoar,
Like a three-year-old heifer.¹
 For ^bby the Ascent of Luhith
 They will go up with weeping;
 For in the way of Horonaim
 They will raise up a cry
 of destruction,

14:25 ^a Mic. 5:5, 6 ^b Is. 10:27 14:26 ^a Is. 23:9 14:27 ^a Dan. 4:31, 35
 14:28 ^a 2 Kin. 16:20 14:29 ^a 2 Chr. 26:6 ^b 2 Kin. 18:8 14:32 ^a Ps. 87:1,
 5 ^b Zech. 11:11 15:1 ^a 2 Kin. 3:4 ^b Deut. 2:9 ^c Amos 2:1–3 15:2 ^a Lev.
 21:5 ¹ Hebrew *bayith*, literally house 15:3 ^a Jer. 48:38 15:4 ^a Jer.
 48:34 ¹ Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint
 and Syriac read *loins*. 15:5 ^a Jer. 48:31 ^b Jer. 48:5 ¹ Or *The Third*
Eglath, an unknown city (compare Jeremiah 48:34)

(v. 30). The Assyrian army would come from the north like a great cloud of smoke (v. 31), and the gates of the great Philistine cities would not stop them.

15:1–16:14 The Moabites were the product of Lot’s incestuous union with his daughter (Gen. 19:30–38) and were the long-standing, avowed enemies of the Israelites (Num. 25; 31; Deut. 23:3).

15:1–9 Within three years (16:14), this prophecy against Moab would be fulfilled with great national lamentation. At least fourteen different references to lamentation occur in this chapter: weeping, wailing, baldness, sackcloth, crying out, and others. The people would flee to their temples and pray to their gods, but to no avail (15:2). Even a day of national humiliation would not stop Assyria from invading Moab and ravaging the land. Advancing armies often stopped up the springs and watercourses and left the land in desolation (vv. 6, 7). The water in Moab would be stained with blood, so great would be the carnage (v. 9).

- 6 For the waters ^aof Nimrim
will be desolate,
For the green grass has withered away;
The grass fails, there is nothing green.
- 7 Therefore the abundance
they have gained,
And what they have laid up,
They will carry away to the
Brook of the Willows.
- 8 For the cry has gone all around
the borders of Moab,
Its wailing to Eglaim
And its wailing to Beer Elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon¹
will be full of blood;
Because I will bring more upon
Dimon,¹
^aLions upon him who
escapes from Moab,
And on the remnant of the land.”

MOAB DESTROYED

- 16** Send ^athe lamb to the
ruler of the land,
^bFrom Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be as a ^awandering
bird thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab
at the fords of the ^bArnon.
- 3 “Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night
in the middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.
- 4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab;
Be a shelter to them from the
face of the spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,
Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed
out of the land.
- 5 In mercy ^athe throne will
be established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in
the tabernacle of David,

- ^bJudging and seeking justice and
hastening ^c“righteousness.”
- 6 We have heard of the ^a“pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his
pride and his wrath;
^b*But his lies shall not be so.*
- 7 Therefore Moab shall ^a“wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations ^bof Kir
Hareseth you shall mourn;
Surely *they are* stricken.
- 8 For ^athe fields of Heshbon languish,
And ^bthe vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have
broken down its choice plants,
Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the
wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the ^c“sea.
- 9 Therefore I will bewail the
vine of Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
^aO Heshbon and Elealeh;
For battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits
and your harvest.
- 10 ^aGladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will
be no singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out
wine in the presses;
I have made their shouting cease.
- 11 Therefore ^a“my heart shall resound
like a harp for Moab,
And my inner being for Kir Heres.

15:6 ^a Num. 32:36 15:9 ^a 2 Kin. 17:25 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon*; Septuagint reads *Rimon*. 16:1 ^a 2 Kin. 3:4 ^b 2 Kin. 14:7 16:2 ^a Prov. 27:8 ^b Num. 21:13 16:5 ^a [Dan. 7:14] ^b Ps. 72:2 ^c Is. 9:7 16:6 ^a Jer. 48:29 ^b Is. 28:15 16:7 ^a Jer. 48:20 ^b 2 Kin. 3:25 16:8 ^a Is. 24:7 ^b Is. 16:9 ^c Jer. 48:32 16:9 ^a Is. 15:4 16:10 ^a Is. 24:8 16:11 ^a Jer. 48:36

16:1–5 The one place the Assyrians could not conquer was Jerusalem (10:24–34). Though the Assyrian army entered the kingdom of Judah and did a great deal of damage to the land, it could not capture Jerusalem (chs. 36–37). Instead of fleeing to Mount Zion, however, the Moabite fugitives fled south to the fords of the Arnon River and the rock city of Sela in Edom.

16:3, 4 Isaiah warned the people that they would need more than a request: They would need to submit to the king of Judah, which meant acknowledging the God of Judah. In that day, sending animals to a ruler was a form of paying tribute (2 Kin. 3:4).

16:4–6 Isaiah was not impressed with the appeals of the Moabites. He knew of their pride, arrogance, and

rage, and he announced that the nation was destined to be destroyed. Why? Because they wanted Judah's help, but they did not want Judah's God. Verse 5 is definitely a messianic promise, pointing to the day when Messiah will reign in righteousness and mercy on David's throne. But Moab would not submit; they wanted deliverance on their own terms.

16:6–14 We can understand the pride of a city like Babylon (14:12–14), but what did the tiny nation of Moab have to boast about? Their pride kept them from submitting to Judah, and this led to their defeat. Their boasting would turn into wailing and their songs into funeral dirges. Moab would become like a vineyard trampled down and a fruitful field left unharvested.

¹² And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is
weary on ^athe high place,
That he will come to his
sanctuary to pray;
But he will not prevail.

¹³This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time. ¹⁴But now the LORD has spoken, saying, "Within three years, ^aas the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant *will be very small and feeble.*"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST SYRIA AND ISRAEL

17 The ^aburden against Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus will cease
from *being* a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
² The cities of ^aAroer *are* forsaken;¹
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and ^bno one
will make *them* afraid.
³ ^aThe fortress also will cease
from Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of
the children of Israel,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
⁴ "In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will wane,
And ^athe fatness of his flesh grow lean.
⁵ ^aIt shall be as when the harvester
gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers
heads of grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.

⁶ ^aYet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives at the top of
the uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most
fruitful branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel.

⁷ In that day a man will
^alook to his Maker,
And his eyes will have respect
for the Holy One of Israel.
⁸ He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his
^afingers have made,
Nor the wooden images¹ nor
the incense altars.

⁹ In that day his strong cities will
be as a forsaken bough¹
And an uppermost branch,²
Which they left because of
the children of Israel;
And there will be desolation.
¹⁰ Because you have forgotten ^athe
God of your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the
Rock of your stronghold,
Therefore you will plant pleasant plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
¹¹ In the day you will make
your plant to grow,
And in the morning you will
make your seed to flourish;
But the harvest will be a heap of ruins

16:12 ^a Is. 15:2 16:14 ^a Is. 21:16 17:1 ^a Zech. 9:1 17:2 ^a Num. 32:34
^b Jer. 7:33 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads
It shall be forsaken forever; Targum reads *Its cities shall be forsaken
and desolate.* 17:3 ^a Is. 7:16; 8:4 17:4 ^a Is. 10:16 17:5 ^a Jer. 51:33
17:6 ^a Is. 24:13 17:7 ^a Mic. 7:7 17:8 ^a Is. 2:8; 31:7 ¹ Hebrew *Asherim*,
Canaanite deities 17:9 ¹ Septuagint reads *Hivites*; Targum reads *laid
waste*; Vulgate reads *as the plows.* ² Septuagint reads *Amorites*;
Targum reads *in ruins*; Vulgate reads *corn.* 17:10 ^a Ps. 68:19

17:1–14 Damascus (Syria) and Israel (Ephraim, the northern kingdom) were allied in their opposition to both Assyria and Judah (7:1, 2), so the prophet spoke to both in one message. The emphasis in this section is on the God of Israel. He is the "LORD of hosts" (the Lord almighty), who controls the armies of heaven and earth (v. 3). He is the "LORD God of Israel" (v. 6), who called and blessed Israel and warned her of her sins. He is our "Maker ... the Holy One of Israel" (v. 7); He is the God of our salvation and our Rock (v. 10). How foolish of the Israelites to trust their human-made idols instead of trusting the living God (v. 8; 1 Kin. 12:25–33). But like Israel of old, people today trust the gods they have made instead of the God who made them; these include the false gods of pleasure, wealth, military might, scientific achievement, and even religious experience.
17:1, 2 Isaiah warned Damascus, the capital of Aram (Syria), that the city would be taken by the enemy. This occurred when the Assyrians conquered Aram in

732 B.C. Following their usual custom, the Assyrians deported many of the citizens, which left the land and cities deserted.

17:3–13 The prophet used several images to describe Israel's downfall: the destruction of the fortified cities (v. 3); the setting of the sun ("Jacob will wane," v. 4a, 1 Sam. 4:19–22); the "fatness of his flesh grow lean" (Is. 17:4b); the gleaning of a small harvest (vv. 5, 6); the "harvest will be a heap of ruins" (vv. 9–11); the overflowing of a flood (vv. 12, 13a); and the blowing away of chaff and tumbleweeds in a storm (v. 13b).

17:7, 8 When judgment came, the people of Israel realized that their idols could not save them; so they turned to the Lord for help, but it was too late (Prov. 1:20–33). The nation was sick with sin and beyond recovery. Once the wind began to blow and the floods began to rise, the nation was without hope. In 722 B.C. Assyria conquered them, and the kingdom of Israel was no more.

In the day of grief and
desperate sorrow.

- ¹² Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise ^alike the
roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the
rushing of mighty waters!
¹³ The nations will rush like the
rushing of many waters;
But God will ^arebuke them and
they will flee far away,
And ^bbe chased like the chaff of the
mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before
the whirlwind.
¹⁴ Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he is no more.
This is the portion of those
who plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST ETHIOPIA

- 18** Woe ^ato the land shadowed
with buzzing wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,
² Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on
the waters, *saying*,
“Go, swift messengers, to a nation
tall and smooth *of skin*,
To a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide.”
³ All inhabitants of the world and
dwellers on the earth:
^aWhen he lifts up a banner on
the mountains, you see it;
And when he blows a
trumpet, you hear it.

- ⁴ For so the LORD said to me,
“I will take My rest,
And I will look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the
heat of harvest.”
⁵ For before the harvest, when
the bud is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening
in the flower,
He will both cut off the sprigs
with pruning hooks
And take away *and* cut
down the branches.
⁶ They will be left together for the
mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on them,
And all the beasts of the earth
will winter on them.
⁷ In that time ^aa present will be
brought to the LORD of hosts
From ⁱa people tall and smooth *of skin*,
And from a people terrible from
their beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of
the LORD of hosts,
To Mount Zion.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EGYPT

- 19** The ^aburden against Egypt.
Behold, the LORD ^brides on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
^cThe idols of Egypt will totter
at His presence,

17:12 ^a Jer. 6:23 17:13 ^a Ps. 9:5 ^b Hos. 13:3 18:1 ^a Zeph. 2:12; 3:10
18:3 ^a Is. 5:26 18:7 ^a Zeph. 3:10 ⁱ Following Dead Sea Scrolls,
Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text omits *From*; Targum reads
To. 19:1 ^a Joel 3:19 ^b Ps. 18:10; 104:3 ^c Jer. 43:12

18:1–7 The original text has “Cush,” a land that covers the area now occupied by Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Somalia. Isaiah called it a “land with buzzing wings” (v. 1), not only because of the insects that infested the land but also because of the frantic diplomatic activity going on as the nation sought alliances to protect them from Assyria. He pictures the ambassadors in their light, swift boats, going to the African nations for help. But God tells them to go back home (v. 2) because He would deal with Assyria himself, apart from the help of any army.

18:4 In contrast to the frantic human activity on earth is the calm patience of God in heaven (v. 4) as He awaits the right time to reap the harvest of judgment. Assyria is pictured as a ripening vine that will never survive, for God will cut it down (v. 5).

18:7 Instead of rushing here and there with diplomatic plans, the Ethiopians will go to Jerusalem with gifts for the Lord and for the king of Judah (ch. 17;

2 Chr. 32:20–23). When the messianic kingdom is established, the Gentile nations will go to Mount Zion to worship the Lord and bring Him gifts (Is. 60:1–7).

19:1–20:6 In this remarkable prophecy, Isaiah declares that the three enemies—Egypt, Israel, and Assyria (modern Iraq)—will one day be united in worshipping the Lord and sharing His blessing!

19:1–15 God will judge Egypt. This prophecy was probably fulfilled in 670 B.C. when Egypt was conquered by Esarhaddon, king of Assyria. The Assyrian conquest proved that the many gods of Egypt were powerless to help (v. 1) and that the mediums and wizards were unable to give counsel (v. 3). In the days of Moses, God had triumphed over the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4) and the wisdom of the Egyptian leaders, and He would do it again.

19:1 In our day of instant communication and of rapid transportation, when in a matter of minutes nations can come to the brink of war, we forget that God is

And the heart of Egypt will
melt in its midst.

² “I will ^aset Egyptians against Egyptians;
Everyone will fight against his brother,
And everyone against his neighbor,
City against city, kingdom
against kingdom.

³ The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
I will destroy their counsel,
And they will ^aconsult the
idols and the charmers,
The mediums and the sorcerers.

⁴ And the Egyptians I will give
^a“Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,”
Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

⁵ ^a“The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted
and dried up.

⁶ The rivers will turn foul;
The brooks ^aof defense will be
emptied and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.

⁷ The papyrus reeds by the River,¹
by the mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,
Will wither, be driven away,
and be no more.

⁸ The fishermen also will mourn;
All those will lament who cast
hooks into the River,
And they will languish who
spread nets on the waters.

⁹ Moreover those who work
in ^afine flax
And those who weave fine
fabric will be ashamed;

¹⁰ And its foundations will be broken.
All who make wages *will be*
troubled of soul.

¹¹ Surely the princes of ^aZoan *are* fools;
Pharaoh’s wise counselors
give foolish counsel.

^bHow do you say to Pharaoh, “I
am the son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?”

¹² ^aWhere *are* they?
Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now,

And let them know what the LORD of
hosts has ^bpurposed against Egypt.

¹³ The princes of Zoan have become fools;
^a“The princes of Noph¹ are deceived;
They have also deluded Egypt,
Those who are the mainstay of its tribes.

¹⁴ The LORD has mingled ^aa perverse
spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt
to err in all her work,
As a drunken man staggers
in his vomit.

¹⁵ Neither will there be *any*
work for Egypt,
Which ^a“the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.”¹

¹⁶In that day Egypt will ^abe like women,
and will be afraid and fear because of the
waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts,
^bwhich He waves over it. ¹⁷And the land of Ju-
dah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who
makes mention of it will be afraid in him-
self, because of the counsel of the LORD of
hosts which He has ^adetermined against it.

EGYPT, ASSYRIA, AND ISRAEL BLESSED

¹⁸In that day five cities in the land of
Egypt will ^aspeak the language of Canaan
and ^bswear by the LORD of hosts; one will
be called the City of Destruction.¹

¹⁹In that day ^athere will be an altar to the
LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and
a pillar to the ^bLORD at its border. ²⁰And ^a“it
will be for a sign and for a witness to the
LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they
will cry to the LORD because of the oppres-
sors, and He will send them a ^bSavior and
a Mighty One, and He will deliver them.
²¹Then the LORD will be known to Egypt,
and the Egyptians will ^a“know the LORD in
that day, and ^bwill make sacrifice and offer-
ing; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD

^{19:2} ^a Judg. 7:22 ^{19:3} ^a Is. 8:19; 47:12 ^{19:4} ^a Ezek. 29:19 ^{19:5} ^a Jer. 51:36 ^{19:6} ^a 2 Kin. 19:24 ^{19:7} ¹ That is, the Nile ^{19:9} ^a Prov. 7:16 ^{19:11} ^a Num. 13:22 ^b 1 Kin. 4:29, 30 ^{19:12} ^a 1 Cor. 1:20 ^b Ps. 33:11 ^{19:13} ^a Jer. 2:16 ¹ That is, ancient Memphis ^{19:14} ^a Is. 29:10 ^{19:15} ^a Is. 9:14–16 ¹ Compare Isaiah 9:14–16 ^{19:16} ^a Nah. 3:13 ^b Is. 11:15 ^{19:17} ^a Dan. 4:35 ^{19:18} ^a Zeph. 3:9 ^b Is. 45:23 ¹ Some Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targum, and Vulgate read *Sun*; Septuagint reads *Asedek* (literally *Righteousness*). ^{19:19} ^a Ex. 24:4 ^b Ps. 68:31 ^{19:20} ^a Josh. 4:20; 22:27 ^b Is. 43:11 ^{19:21} ^a [Is. 2:3, 4; 11:9] ^b Mal. 1:11

still sovereign and can do whatever He pleases in human affairs. God destroyed everything that the Egyptians trusted—their political unity, their economy, religion, wisdom—and made them an easy target for the Assyrians. When the international news is frightening and you wonder where God is, read Psalm 2 and Acts 4:23–32, and take hope.

19:16–25 God will save Egypt. The phrase “in that day”

is used six times in this passage and refers to the last days when Jesus Christ shall establish His messianic kingdom on earth. Some remarkable changes will take place. Egypt will fear Israel (vv. 16, 17) and become converted to the worship of the true God (vv. 18–22). They will trust Him, not their idols, and pray to Him in times of need. This is a promise that unbelievers in Egypt will one day turn to the Lord and be saved!

and perform *it*. ²²And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and ^aheal *it*; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

²³In that day ^athere will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will ^bserve with the Assyrians.

²⁴In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, ²⁵whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria ^athe work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

THE SIGN AGAINST EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

20 In the year that “Tartan¹ came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, ²at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and remove ^athe sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, ^bwalking naked and barefoot.

³Then the LORD said, “Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years ^afor a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴so shall the ^aking of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, ^bwith their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. ⁶And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for ^ahelp to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?’”

19:22–25 These spiritual changes will bring about a great political change: Israel, Egypt, and Assyria (modern Iraq) will cooperate and enjoy the blessing of the Lord! They will not only receive God’s blessing, but they will all be a blessing to the other nations (vv. 23–25). Once again, Isaiah picks up his “highway” theme to emphasize the unity of these three nations (see 11:16). What a wonderful day it will be when peace comes to the Middle East because the nations have bowed before the King of kings! We must continue praying, “Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

20:1–6 This chapter is a footnote to the prophecy in 19:1–15 and reveals that Isaiah did some unique things to get the attention of the people of Judah. One faction wanted to make an alliance with Egypt and Cush, but Isaiah warned them that such allies were destined to fail. For three years, the prophet dressed like a prisoner of war, wearing only a loincloth, to demonstrate his message. The pro-Egyptian party in Judah gave the prophet as much trouble as the pro-Egyptian people did who journeyed with Moses (30:1–7; 31:1–3; Num. 11; 14). **21:1–10** “The desert by the sea” is probably the area

THE FALL OF BABYLON PROCLAIMED

21 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

As ^awhirlwinds in the South
pass through,
So it comes from the desert,
from a terrible land.

² A distressing vision is declared to me;

^aThe treacherous dealer
deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.

^bGo up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.

³ Therefore ^amy loins are filled
with pain;

^bPangs have taken hold of me, like
the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when I heard it;
I was dismayed when I saw it.

⁴ My heart wavered, fearfulness
frightened me;

^aThe night for which I longed He
turned into fear for me.

⁵ ^aPrepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield!

⁶ For thus has the Lord said to me:
“Go, set a watchman,
Let him declare what he sees.”

19:22 ^a Deut. 32:39 19:23 ^a Is. 11:16; 35:8; 49:11; 62:10 ^b Is. 27:13
19:25 ^a Is. 29:23 20:1 ^a 2 Kin. 18:17 ¹ Or the Commander in Chief
20:2 ^a Zech. 13:4 ^b 1 Sam. 19:24 20:3 ^a Is. 8:18 20:4 ^a Is. 19:4
^b Jer. 13:22 20:5 ^a 2 Kin. 18:21 20:6 ^a Is. 30:5, 7 21:1 ^a Zech. 9:14
21:2 ^a Is. 33:1 ^b Jer. 49:34 21:3 ^a Is. 15:5; 16:11 ^b Is. 13:8 21:4 ^a Deut.
28:67 21:5 ^a Dan. 5:5

around the Persian Gulf. Isaiah used the image of a desert storm as he described the attack of the Assyrians against Babylon, which took place in 689 B.C. At that time, Babylon and Assyria were rival powers (although Assyria was stronger), and the nations in the Fertile Crescent hoped that Babylon would stop the advance of Assyria. Alas, Babylon fell to Assyria, opening the way for Assyria to sweep across the region in conquest.

21:3–10 Realizing the consequences of Babylon’s fall, the prophet experienced pain like a woman in labor (vv. 3, 4) and felt crushed like grain in a mill (v. 10). Had this announcement referred to the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., the Jews would have rejoiced; for it would have meant release from captivity. But in 689 B.C., Babylon’s defeat meant the destruction of the northern kingdom and the devastation of the southern kingdom. Note that Jeremiah (Jer. 51:8) and John (Rev. 14:8; 18:2) both adopted Isaiah’s words, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!” (Is. 21:9)

21:6 Isaiah was the watchman on the wall (see Ezek. 3:16–21; 33:1–11), and he was asked to “declare what he sees.” The advance of the Assyrian army had

- 7 And he saw a chariot *with* a pair of horsemen,
A chariot of donkeys, *and* a chariot of camels,
And he listened earnestly with great care.
- 8 Then he cried, “A lion,¹ my Lord!
I stand continually on the ^a“watchtower in the daytime;
I have sat at my post every night.
- 9 And look, here comes a chariot of men *with* a pair of horsemen!”
Then he answered and said,
^a“Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And ^ball the carved images of her gods
He has broken to the ground.”
- 10 ^a“Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!
That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
I have declared to you.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EDMOM

^{11a}The burden against Dumah.

- He calls to me out of ^bSeir,
“Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?”
- 12 The watchman said,
“The morning comes, and also the night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
Return! Come back!”

brought fearful darkness to the nations, and Edom wanted to know if there was any hope, any light. The prophet's reply was brief but adequate, with both information and invitation. Morning was coming because Assyria would be defeated by God in the fields of Judah (Is. 37:36). But the morning would not last, for Babylon would take Assyria's place and bring further darkness to the nations.

21:11, 12 Isaiah removed one letter in the Hebrew word for “Edom” and created Dumah, which means “stillness, silence.” It was his way of saying, “Edom will be silent; it will be no more.” The Edomites were descendants of Esau, whose nickname was “red [Edom]” (Gen. 25:21–34). Edom was a rugged land of red sandstone; her people were bitterly hostile to the Jews (Ps. 137:7).

21:12 Isaiah added an invitation: “If you will inquire, inquire.” “Return! Come back!” Isaiah urged. That is, “Turn from sin and return to Him. Come to Him, and He will receive you!” A brief day of salvation would dawn, and they had better use the opportunity.

Edom did not heed the invitation. The nation was taken by Babylon, then by the Persians (who changed their name to “Idumea”), and finally by the Romans. The battle between Esau and Jacob was carried on by the Herods, who were Idumeans. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Edom vanished from the scene.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST ARABIA

^{13a}The burden against Arabia.

- In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
O you traveling companies
^bof Dedanites.
- 14 O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
Bring water to him who is thirsty;
With their bread they met him who fled.
- 15 For they fled from the swords,
from the drawn sword,
From the bent bow, and from
the distress of war.

¹⁶For thus the LORD has said to me: “Within a year, ^aaccording to the year of a hired man, all the glory of ^bKedar will fail; ¹⁷and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken *it*.”

PROCLAMATION AGAINST JERUSALEM

22 The burden against the Valley of Vision.

- What ails you now, that you have
all gone up to the housetops,
- 2 You who are full of noise,
A tumultuous city, “a joyous city”
Your slain *men* are not slain
with the sword,
Nor dead in battle.

21:8 ^a Hab. 2:1 ¹ Dead Sea Scrolls read *Then the observer cried*.
21:9 ^a Jer. 51:8 ^b Is. 46:1 **21:10** ^a Jer. 51:33 **21:11** ^a Gen. 25:14 ^b Gen. 32:3 **21:13** ^a Jer. 25:24; 49:28 ^b 1 Chr. 1:9, 32 **21:16** ^a Is. 16:14 ^b Ps. 120:5 **22:2** ^a Is. 32:13

21:13–17 The prophet saw the caravans of the Arabian merchants from Dedan leaving the trade route and hiding in the thickets because of the invasion of the Assyrian army. Food and water were brought to the fugitives by people from Tema, an oasis town. Eventually the caravan had to flee, for how could the merchants' slow animals compete with the Assyrian cavalry or their bows with the invaders' weapons? Like a laborer, God had a contract to fulfill (16:14). Within a year, the pomp and glory of the Arabian tribes would be gone.

22:1–25 The people of Judah were behaving like their pagan neighbors, so it was only right that Isaiah should include them in the list of nations God would judge. Yes, in His mercy, the Lord would deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian army, but He would not deliver them from Babylon.

22:1–14 The unbelief of the people is described. In Isaiah's day, Jerusalem was a joyous city as people would engage in all kinds of celebrations (5:11–13; 32:12, 13). The popular philosophy was, “Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die” (22:13; 56:12; 1 Cor. 15:32). But the prophet did not participate in the parties, for he saw a day coming when death and destruction would reign in the city of David. The people went up to the housetops, but the prophet went down into one of the three valleys around Jerusalem; there God gave him a vision.

- 3 All your rulers have fled together;
They are captured by the archers.
All who are found in you
are bound together;
They have fled from afar.
- 4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me,
^aI will weep bitterly;
Do not labor to comfort me
Because of the plundering of the
daughter of my people."
- 5 ^aFor it is a day of trouble and
treading down and perplexity
^bBy the Lord GOD of hosts
In the Valley of Vision—
Breaking down the walls
And of crying to the mountain.
- 6 ^aElam bore the quiver
With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
And ^bKir uncovered the shield.
- 7 It shall come to pass *that*
your choicest valleys
Shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall set
themselves in array at the gate.
- 8 ^aHe removed the protection of Judah.
You looked in that day to the armor
^bof the House of the Forest;
- 9 ^aYou also saw the damage
to the city of David,
That it was great;
And you gathered together the
waters of the lower pool.
- 10 You numbered the houses
of Jerusalem,
And the houses you broke down
To fortify the wall.
- 11 ^aYou also made a reservoir
between the two walls
For the water of the old ^bpool.
But you did not look to its Maker,
Nor did you have respect for Him
who fashioned it long ago.
- 12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts
^aCalled for weeping and for mourning,
^bFor baldness and for girding
with sackcloth.
- 13 But instead, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,

Eating meat and ^adrinking wine:
^b"Let us eat and drink, for
tomorrow we die!"

- 14 ^aThen it was revealed in my hearing
by the LORD of hosts,
"Surely for this iniquity there ^bwill
be no atonement for you,
Even to your death," says the
Lord GOD of hosts.

THE JUDGMENT ON SHEBNA

¹⁵Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:

- "Go, proceed to this steward,
To ^aShebna, who is over the
house, *and say*:
- 16 "What have you here, and
whom have you here,
That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he ^awho hews himself a
sepulcher on high,
Who carves a tomb for
himself in a rock?
- 17 Indeed, the LORD will throw
you away violently,
O mighty man,
^aAnd will surely seize you.
- 18 He will surely turn violently
and toss you like a ball
Into a large country;
There you shall die, and there
^ayour glorious chariots
Shall be the shame of your
master's house.
- 19 So I will drive you out
of your office,
And from your position he
will pull you down.¹
- 20 "Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant
^aEliakim the son of Hilkiah;

22:4 ^a Jer. 4:19 22:5 ^a Is. 37:3 ^b Lam. 1:5; 2:2 22:6 ^a Jer. 49:35 ^b Is. 15:1 22:8 ^a 2 Kin. 18:15, 16 ^b 1 Kin. 7:2; 10:17 22:9 ^a 2 Kin. 20:20 22:11 ^a Neh. 3:16 ^b 2 Chr. 32:3, 4 22:12 ^a Joel 1:13; 2:17 ^b Mic. 1:16 22:13 ^a Luke 17:26–29 ^b 1 Cor. 15:32 22:14 ^a Is. 5:9 ^b Ezek. 24:13 22:15 ^a Is. 36:3 22:16 ^a Matt. 27:60 22:17 ^a Esth. 7:8 22:18 ^a Is. 2:7 22:19 ¹ Septuagint omits *he will pull you down*; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I will pull you down*. 22:20 ^a 2 Kin. 18:18

22:11 The people did everything but trust the Lord. Instead of feasting, the day "called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth." (v. 12; Ezra 9:3; James 4:8–10). God had sent the nation many prophets to warn them, but the people would not listen. Now it was too late; their sins could not be forgiven because their hearts were hard. Judah would go into captivity, and God's word to Isaiah would be fulfilled (Is. 6:9–13).

22:15–25 The leaders were unfaithful. Had the leaders been faithful to the Lord and called the people

to repentance, there might have been hope. But too many of the leaders were like Shebna, thinking only of themselves. As treasurer (steward), Shebna was second to King Hezekiah in authority (see chs. 36–37), but he used his authority (and possibly the king's money) to build himself a monumental tomb (22:16) and to acquire chariots (v. 18; see 2:7). Shebna was not a spiritual man, and he probably sided with the pro-Egypt party in Judah. 22:20 God chose a new man, Eliakim ("God will raise up"), and called him "My servant." Instead of exploiting the people, he would be a father to them and use his

- ²¹ I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility
into his hand.
He shall be a father to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.
²² The key of the house of David
I will lay on his "shoulder;
So he shall ^bopen, and no
one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no
one shall open.
²³ I will fasten him as "a peg
in a secure place,
And he will become a glorious
throne to his father's house.

²⁴ "They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. ²⁵ "In that day," says the LORD of hosts, "the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that *was* on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken."

PROCLAMATION AGAINST TYRE

23 The "burden against Tyre.

- Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no harbor;
From the land of Cyprus¹ it
is revealed to them.
² Be still, you inhabitants
of the coastland,
You merchants of Sidon,
Whom those who cross the
sea have filled.¹
³ And on great waters the grain
of Shihor,
The harvest of the River,¹
is her revenue;

And "she is a marketplace
for the nations.

- ⁴ Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea has spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
"I do not labor, nor bring forth children;
Neither do I rear young men,
Nor bring up virgins."
⁵ "When the report *reaches* Egypt,
They also will be in agony at
the report of Tyre.
⁶ Cross over to Tarshish;
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!
⁷ Is this your "joyous city,
Whose antiquity *is* from ancient days,
Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
⁸ Who has taken this counsel against
Tyre, "the crowning city,
Whose merchants *are* princes,
Whose traders *are* the
honorable of the earth?
⁹ The LORD of hosts has "purposed it,
To bring to dishonor the
^bpride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the
honorable of the earth.
¹⁰ Overflow through your
land like the River,¹
O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no more strength.
¹¹ He stretched out His hand over the sea,
He shook the kingdoms;
The LORD has given a commandment
"against Canaan
To destroy its strongholds.

22:22 ^a Is. 9:6 ^b Job 12:14; Rev. 3:7 22:23 ^a Ezra 9:8 23:1 ^a Zech. 9:2,
4 ¹ Hebrew Kittim, western lands, especially Cyprus 23:2 ¹ Following
Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Targum read *Passing over
the water*; Dead Sea Scrolls read *Your messengers passing over the sea.*
23:3 ^a Ezek. 27:3–23 ¹ That is, the Nile 23:5 ^a Is. 19:16 23:7 ^a Is. 22:2;
32:13 23:8 ^a Ezek. 28:2, 12 23:9 ^a Is. 14:26 ^b Dan. 4:37 23:10 ¹ That
is, the Nile 23:11 ^a Zech. 9:2–4

"key" (authority, v. 22) for the good of the nation. He would be like a dependable peg, hammered into the wall, on which one could hang many burdens. But even a godly leader like Eliakim could not prevent the ultimate fall of Judah, for one day the whole nation would fall (v. 25). Eliakim is a picture of Jesus Christ (Rev. 3:7), the greatest Servant of all.

23:1–18 The Phoenicians were a merchant people whose land approximated what is today known as Lebanon. Their ships plied the Mediterranean coasts, where their many colonies assured them of an abundant supply of the world's wealth. Tyre and Sidon were key cities. Both David and Solomon made use of workers and building materials from Phoenicia (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kin. 5:8, 9). King Ahab married the Phoenician princess Jezebel, who promoted Baal worship in Israel (1 Kin. 16:29–33).

23:1–7 Isaiah addressed ships from Spain (Tarshish) that were docked at Cyprus (Kittim), telling their crews to weep and go home (v. 6) because Tyre was no more. Merchants from Spain, the coastlands, and even Egypt would wail because Tyre's great shipping industry was gone and the Mediterranean economy had been devastated. The joyful citizens of Tyre would become mourning refugees (v. 7) when Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Phoenicia in 572 B.C.

23:8–14 Isaiah posed almost a rhetorical question, "Who has brought this disaster on Tyre?" (v. 8). The Lord Almighty! Just as He purposed to destroy Egypt (19:23) and Babylon (13:19), so He purposed to judge Tyre. Just as Assyria had destroyed the city of Babylon in 689 B.C., so Tyre and Sidon would be destroyed by a revived Babylon in 585–572 B.C. (23:13). The pride of Tyre (v. 9) was a sin that God could not ignore.

¹² And He said, “You will rejoice no more,
O you oppressed virgin
daughter of Sidon.
Arise, “cross over to Cyprus;
There also you will have no rest.”

¹³ Behold, the land of the “Chaldeans,
This people *which* was not;
Assyria founded it for “wild
beasts of the desert.
They set up its towers,
They raised up its palaces,
And brought it to ruin.

¹⁴ “Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For your strength is laid waste.

¹⁵ Now it shall come to pass in that day
that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, ac-
cording to the days of one king. At the end
of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in
the song of the harlot:

¹⁶ “Take a harp, go about the city,
You forgotten harlot;

Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
That you may be remembered.”

¹⁷ And it shall be, at the end of seventy
years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She
will return to her hire, and “commit forni-
cation with all the kingdoms of the world
on the face of the earth. ¹⁸ Her gain and her
pay “will be set apart for the LORD; it will not
be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be
for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat
sufficiently, and for fine clothing.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON THE EARTH

24 Behold, the LORD makes the
earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.

² And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the “priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;

^{23:12} ^a Rev. 18:22 ^{23:13} ^a Is. 47:1 ^b Ps. 72:9 ^{23:14} ^a Ezek. 27:25–30
^{23:17} ^a Rev. 17:2 ^{23:18} ^a Zech. 14:20, 21 ^{24:2} ^a Hos. 4:9

23:15–18 Even before their eventual destruction, Tyre and Sidon would not be involved in business for seventy years. History reveals that the Assyrians restricted Phoenician trade from 700–630 B.C.; but when Assyria began to weaken in power, Tyre and Sidon revived their businesses. The prophet compared the revived city to an old prostitute who had to sing lovely songs in order to get attention. Apparently the shipping business would not be as easy or as lucrative as it once was. Verse 18 looks ahead to the messianic kingdom, when the wealth of Tyre would not be hoarded (see Zech. 9:3) but given to the Lord as a holy offering.

24:1–27:13 After prophesying concerning eleven different nations, Isaiah enlarged his prophecy and described a judgment that would fall on the whole world. The Hebrew word *erets*, used sixteen times in chapter 24, can be translated “land,” “earth,” or “world.” It is not

always easy to tell when *erets* refers to one country or to the whole earth, but the context usually guides us. Chapters 24 through 27 describe a global judgment that will end with the destruction of God’s enemies and the restoration of God’s people Israel in their land.

24:1–23 The result of God’s judgment will be a world that is empty, laid waste, and distorted, and whose inhabitants are scattered. Isaiah may have had Genesis 1:2 and 11:9 in mind when he wrote this. Nobody on earth will escape, for “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34). Position, power, and wealth are no protection against the wrath of God. The Lord merely speaks the word and, like dying invalids, “the haughty people of the earth languish” (Is. 24:4). People who are proud of their wealth and position will find themselves poor and without power.

24:1 Why does God punish the inhabitants of the world? Because they have defiled the world by their sins. When

God Is in Control!

Is. 23:18

Our trek through chapters 13–23 has taught us some important lessons about international conflicts:

First, *God is in control of the nations of the world, and He can do with them what He pleases.*

Second, *God especially hates the sin of pride* (see 13:11; 16:6; 23:9; Prov. 8:13). When nations turn from the living God to trust their wealth and their armaments, God must show them that He is the only sure refuge.

Third, *God judges the nations for the way they treat each other.* Judah was the only nation mentioned that had God’s law, yet God held the other ten Gentile nations accountable for what they did.

No matter how frightening the national or international situation may become, God’s children can have peace, because they know Almighty God is on His throne. The nations may rage and plot against God, but “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh” (Ps. 2:4). When the Lord of heaven and earth is your Father, and you gladly wear Christ’s yoke, you have nothing to fear (Matt. 11:25–30).

- As with the maid, so with her mistress;
^bAs with the buyer, so with the seller;
 As with the lender, so with
 the borrower;
 As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
- 3 The land shall be entirely emptied
 and utterly plundered,
 For the LORD has spoken this word.
- 4 The earth mourns *and* fades away,
 The world languishes *and* fades away;
 The ^ahaughty people of the
 earth languish.
- 5 ^aThe earth is also defiled
 under its inhabitants,
 Because they have
^btransgressed the laws,
 Changed the ordinance,
 Broken the ^ceverlasting covenant.
- 6 Therefore ^athe curse has
 devoured the earth,
 And those who dwell in it are desolate.
 Therefore the inhabitants of
 the earth are ^bburned,
 And few men *are* left.
- 7 ^aThe new wine fails, the vine languishes,
 All the merry-hearted sigh.
- 8 The mirth ^aof the tambourine ceases,
 The noise of the jubilant ends,
 The joy of the harp ceases.
- 9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
 Strong drink is bitter to
 those who drink it.
- 10 The city of confusion is broken down;
 Every house is shut up, so
 that none may go in.
- 11 *There is* a cry for wine in the streets,
 All joy is darkened,
 The mirth of the land is gone.
- 12 In the city desolation is left,
 And the gate is stricken
 with destruction.
- 13 When it shall be thus in the midst
 of the land among the people,
^a*It shall be* like the shaking
 of an olive tree,
 Like the gleaning of grapes
 when the vintage is done.
- 14 They shall lift up their voice,
 they shall sing;
 For the majesty of the LORD
 They shall cry aloud from the sea.
- 15 Therefore ^aglorify the LORD
 in the dawning light,
^bThe name of the LORD God of Israel
 in the coastlands of the sea.
- 16 From the ends of the earth
 we have heard songs:
 “Glory to the righteous!”
 But I said, “I am ruined, ruined!
 Woe to me!”
^aThe treacherous dealers have
 dealt treacherously,
 Indeed, the treacherous dealers
 have dealt very treacherously.”
- 17 ^aFear and the pit and the snare
 Are upon you, O inhabitant
 of the earth.
- 18 And it shall be
That he who flees from the
 noise of the fear
 Shall fall into the pit,
 And he who comes up from
 the midst of the pit
 Shall be caught in the snare;
 For ^athe windows from on
 high are open,
 And ^bthe foundations of the
 earth are shaken.

24:2 ^bEzek. 7:12, 13 24:4 ^aIs. 25:11 24:5 ^aNum. 35:33 ^bIs. 59:12 ^c1 Chr. 16:14–19 24:6 ^aMal. 4:6 ^bIs. 9:19 24:7 ^aJoel 1:10, 12 24:8 ^aEzek. 26:13
 24:13 ^a[Is. 17:5, 6; 27:12] 24:15 ^aIs. 25:3 ^bMal. 1:11 24:16 ^aJer. 3:20;
 5:11 24:17 ^aJer. 48:43 24:18 ^aGen. 7:11 ^bPs. 18:7; 46:2

Adam sinned, God cursed the ground as a part of the punishment (Gen. 3:17–19; Rom. 8:20–22), and God warned the people of Israel that their sins polluted the Promised Land (Num. 35:33). Today we see human greed polluting land, water, and atmosphere, as well as exploiting the earth of its God-given treasures. Sin has consequences in nature as well as in human character and conscience.

24:2, 3 For centuries, humankind has polluted the world by disobeying God's laws and violating His statutes. This was the reason for the flood (Gen. 6:5; 11–13). Long before Moses gave the law, people knew that it was wrong to lie, steal, and kill (Rom. 1:18–2:16), but they did these evil things anyway.

24:6–13 Here is a vivid picture of what life will be like on the earth during the day of the Lord. In Israel, the harvest was generally a time for great joy; but all joy will be gone with no harvest. God's judgments will destroy the crops as well as the workers who would

till the soil. (See Rev. 6:8; 9:15.) “The city” is mentioned at least eight times in these chapters and should be taken generically rather than as a reference to any one particular city. Whether people live in rural areas or in the cities, they will not escape God's wrath.

24:14–16a The only singing during this harvest will be done by the believing remnant who trust God and are delivered. The doctrine of “the remnant” is an important part of Isaiah's message (1:9; 10:20–22; 11:11, 16; 14:22, 30); Isaiah's eldest son was named “a remnant will return” (7:3).

24:18b The opening of the windows of heaven is a reminder of the flood (Gen. 7:11). Jesus said that, before the day of the Lord, society would be as it was in the days before the flood (Matt. 24:37–42). In that day, God will shake everything, and anything that people made will stagger like a drunk and collapse like a flimsy hut (Is. 24:20; see 1:8). The weight of guilt will be too heavy for people to carry.

- ¹⁹ ^aThe earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.
- ²⁰ The earth shall ^areel to and
fro like a drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.
- ²¹ It shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will punish on high
the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth ^athe kings of the earth.
- ²² They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.
- ²³ Then the ^amoon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts will ^breign
On ^cMount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

PRAISE TO GOD

25 O LORD, You *are* my God.

- ^aI will exalt You,
I will praise Your name,
^bFor You have done wonderful *things*;
^cYour counsels of old *are*
faithfulness *and* truth.
- ² For You have made ^aa city a ruin,
A fortified city a ruin,
A palace of foreigners to
be a city no more;
It will never be rebuilt.
- ³ Therefore the strong people
will ^aglorify You;

The city of the terrible
nations will fear You.

- ⁴ For You have been a strength to the poor,
A strength to the needy in his distress,
^aA refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat;
For the blast of the terrible ones *is*
as a storm *against* the wall.
- ⁵ You will reduce the noise of aliens,
As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud,
The song of the terrible ones
will be diminished.
- ⁶ And in ^athis mountain
^bThe LORD of hosts will make
for ^call people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.
- ⁷ And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering
cast over all people,
And ^athe veil that is spread
over all nations.
- ⁸ He will ^aswallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will ^bwipe
away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

24:19 ^a Jer. 4:23 24:20 ^a Is. 19:14; 24:1; 28:7 24:21 ^a Ps. 76:12
24:23 ^a Is. 13:10; 60:19 ^b Rev. 19:4, 6 ^c [Heb. 12:22] 25:1 ^a Ex. 15:2
^b Ps. 98:1 ^c Num. 23:19 25:2 ^a Jer. 51:37 25:3 ^a Is. 24:15 25:4 ^a Is.
4:6 25:6 ^a [Is. 2:2–4; 56:7] ^b Prov. 9:2 ^c [Dan. 7:14] 25:7 ^a [Eph.
4:18] 25:8 ^a [Hos. 13:14] ^b Rev. 7:17; 21:4

24:21–23 But the day of the Lord will affect not only the earth and its people but also Satan and his hosts. God will “punish on high the host of exalted ones” and “on the earth the kings of the earth” (24:21). These judgments will be part of the spiritual battle that has been waging for centuries between the Lord of Heaven’s Armies and the armies of the devil (Gen. 3:15; Luke 10:17–24; Eph. 6:10ff.; Rev. 12). Isaiah 24:22 parallels Revelation 20:1–3.

25:1–12 This chapter is a song of praise to the Lord from the believing remnant that he preserved during the day of the Lord. Prophetic songs of hindsight are useful to us in reminding us what we will eventually see when we look back on all that God has done in our lives that we are unable to see clearly moment by moment.

25:1–3 We have met this image of the ruined city before (24:10, 12) and noted that “the city” is a generic term for all cities. Isaiah lived in an agricultural world of towns and villages, and the large cities (or city-states) were places of power and wealth. In times of war, the people would flee to the walled cities for protection. But the great cities of the world will offer no protection when God pours His wrath on the nations.

25:4, 5 Isaiah paints two pictures: the buffeting of a storm and the beating down of the rays of a burning sun in the desert. Where can travelers go for refuge? They see a huge rock and find refuge in it. God is that Rock (Deut. 32:3–4, 30; 32:27; Ps. 46:1; 61:1–4), and He will be a refuge for His believing people during that terrible day of the Lord. The victory shouts of the enemy will

disappear the way heat vanishes when a cloud covers the sun. We can remember this picture of refuge when we face the heat in our own lives.

25:4 God cares for His own during times of trial and judgment. He kept Noah and his family alive through the flood (Gen. 6–8) and guarded Israel when His judgments fell on Egypt (Ex. 8:22, 23; 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23; 11:6, 7; 12:13). He protected believing Rahab and her family when Jericho fell (Josh. 6:25) and preserved a faithful remnant when Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity (Ezra 9:8, 9). Throughout the centuries, the Lord has kept His church despite the attacks of Satan (Matt. 16:18) and will deliver His church from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). When the day of the Lord comes to this godless world, God will see to it that the Jewish remnant will be preserved. “Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain” (26:20, 21).

25:6–12 For the Old Testament Jew, a feast pictured the kingdom age when Messiah would reign over Israel and all the nations of the world. Israel would enter into her glory, and the Gentiles would come to Zion to worship the Lord (2:1–5; 55:1–5; 60:1ff.). When Jesus used the image of the feast in Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:28, 29, the people knew He was speaking about the promised kingdom.

9 And it will be said in that day:
 “Behold, this is our God;
 “We have waited for Him,
 and He will save us.
 This *is* the LORD;
 We have waited for Him;
^bWe will be glad and rejoice
 in His salvation.”

10 For on this mountain the hand
 of the LORD will rest,
 And ^aMoab shall be trampled
 down under Him,
 As straw is trampled down
 for the refuse heap.
 11 And He will spread out His
 hands in their midst
 As a swimmer reaches out
 to swim,
 And He will bring down their
 “pride
 Together with the trickery
 of their hands.
 12 The “fortress of the high
 fort of your walls
 He will bring down, lay low,
 And bring to the ground,
 down to the dust.

A SONG OF SALVATION

26 In “that day this song will be sung in
 the land of Judah:

“We have a strong city;
^bGod will appoint salvation for
 walls and bulwarks.

2 “Open the gates,
 That the righteous nation which
 keeps the truth may enter in.

3 You will keep *him* in perfect “peace,
 Whose mind is stayed on You,
 Because he trusts in You.
 4 Trust in the LORD forever,
 “For in YAH, the LORD, is
 everlasting strength.¹
 5 For He brings down those
 who dwell on high,
 “The lofty city;
 He lays it low,
 He lays it low to the ground,
 He brings it down to the dust.
 6 The foot shall tread it down—
 The feet of the poor
 And the steps of the needy.”
 7 The way of the just *is* uprightness;
 “O Most Upright,
 You weigh the path of the just.
 8 Yes, “in the way of Your judgments,
 O LORD, we have ^bwaited for You;
 The desire of *our* soul is for Your name
 And for the remembrance of You.
 9 “With my soul I have desired
 You in the night,
 Yes, by my spirit within me I
 will seek You early;
 For when Your judgments
 are in the earth,
 The inhabitants of the world
 will learn righteousness.

10 “Let grace be shown to the wicked,
 Yet he will not learn righteousness;

25:9 ^a Gen. 49:18 ^b Ps. 20:5 25:10 ^a Amos 2:1–3 25:11 ^a Is. 24:4;
 26:5 25:12 ^a Is. 26:5 26:1 ^a Is. 2:11; 12:1 ^b Is. 60:18 26:2 ^a Ps. 118:19,
 20 26:3 ^a Is. 57:19 26:4 ^a Is. 12:2; 45:17 ¹ Or *Rock of Ages* 26:5 ^a Is.
 25:11, 12 26:7 ^a Ps. 37:23 26:8 ^a Is. 64:5 ^b Is. 25:9; 33:2 26:9 ^a Ps.
 63:6 26:10 ^a [Rom. 2:4]

25:12 God will bring Moab low, along with all the other
 nations that exalt themselves, exploit others, and refuse
 to submit to the Lord.

26:1–27:13 Israel sings once more (24:14–16; 25:1ff.), but
 this time the emphasis is on righteousness and peace. We
 cannot experience true peace apart from righteousness
 (32:17), and we can have no righteousness apart from
 God’s salvation in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21–31). It is at
 Calvary that “righteousness and peace have kissed” each
 other (Ps. 85:10). When Jesus Christ reigns on earth, the
 promise of Psalm 72:7 will be fulfilled: “In His days the
 righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the
 moon is no more.” Jesus Christ is our true Melchizedek—
 King of Righteousness and King of Peace (Heb. 7:1–3).

26:1–6 Samaria had fallen to the Assyrians and Jerusa-
 lem to the Babylonians, but the New Jerusalem will be
 impregnable. During the day of the Lord, God will level
 the lofty cities of the earth, but Mount Zion will be ex-
 alted to the glory of the Lord (2:1–5). Jerusalem will no
 longer be the sinful city described in chapter 1; it will be a
 righteous city for a holy nation whose sins have been
 washed away (Zech. 13:1).

26:1 The phrase “in that day” (see also 27:1, 2, 12, 13) refers
 to the day of the Lord and the blessings that will follow

when the Lord defeats His enemies. In chapters 26 and
 27, the prophet encourages God’s suffering people by
 describing in seven pictures the kingdom blessings that
 await them in the future.

26:2 Only those who have trusted Jesus Christ will enter
 into the strong city, and because they believe, they have
 peace (Rom. 5:1). The Hebrew word for “peace” (*shalom*)
 means much more than a cessation of war. It includes
 blessings such as wholeness, health, quietness of soul,
 preservation, and completeness.

26:7–11 “The way of the just is uprightness” uses the
 image of a highway, as in 11:16. During much of their
 history, the Jews have traveled a rough road, but when
 the kingdom is established, God will give them level paths
 and a smooth way. Because they will be walking in the
 will of God, their way will be safe and enjoyable. They will
 wait on the Lord to discern His will. They will yearn for
 the Lord and worship Him even in the night (Ps. 119:55).

26:9–11 God wants the world to learn righteousness.
 He sends His judgments, but the people still will not
 repent (Rev. 9:20, 21; 16:9). He shows them His grace in a
 thousand ways, but they continue to do evil. His hand is
 at work, but they will not see it. Isaiah prays that God
 will reveal himself through His people as He works on

- In ^bthe land of uprightness
 he will deal unjustly,
 And will not behold the
 majesty of the LORD.
- ¹¹ LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted
 up, ^athey will not see.
 But they will see and be ashamed
 For *their* envy of people;
 Yes, the fire of Your enemies
 shall devour them.
- ¹² LORD, You will establish peace for us,
 For You have also done all
 our works in us.
- ¹³ O LORD our God, ^amasters besides You
 Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make
 mention of Your name.
- ¹⁴ *They are* dead, they will not live;
They are deceased, they will not rise.
 Therefore You have punished
 and destroyed them,
 And made all their memory to ^aperish.
- ¹⁵ You have increased the nation, O LORD,
 You have ^aincreased the nation;
 You are glorified;
 You have expanded all the
 borders of the land.
- ¹⁶ LORD, ^ain trouble they have visited You,
 They poured out a prayer *when* Your
 chastening *was* upon them.
- ¹⁷ As ^aa woman with child
 Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the
 time of her delivery,
 So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
- ¹⁸ We have been with child, we
 have been in pain;
 We have, as it were, brought forth wind;

We have not accomplished any
 deliverance in the earth,
 Nor have ^athe inhabitants
 of the world fallen.

- ¹⁹ ^aYour dead shall live;
Together with my dead body¹
 they shall arise.
^bAwake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
 For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
 And the earth shall cast out the dead.

TAKE REFUGE FROM THE COMING JUDGMENT

- ²⁰ Come, my people, ^aenter
 your chambers,
 And shut your doors behind you;
 Hide yourself, as it were,
^bfor a little moment,
 Until the indignation is past.
- ²¹ For behold, the LORD ^acomes
 out of His place
 To punish the inhabitants of the
 earth for their iniquity;
 The earth will also disclose her blood,
 And will no more cover her slain.

27 In that day the LORD with His
 severe sword, great and strong,
 Will punish Leviathan the
 fleeing serpent,
^aLeviathan that twisted serpent;
 And He will slay ^bthe reptile
 that *is* in the sea.

26:10 ^b Ps. 143:10 26:11 ^a Is. 5:12 26:13 ^a 2 Chr. 12:8 26:14 ^a Eccl. 9:5
 26:15 ^a Is. 9:3 26:16 ^a Hos. 5:15 26:17 ^a [John 16:21] 26:18 ^a Ps. 17:14
 26:19 ^a [Ezek. 37:1–14] ^b [Dan. 12:2] ¹ Following Masoretic Text and
 Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *their dead bodies*; Septuagint reads
those in the tombs. 26:20 ^a Ex. 12:22, 23 ^b [Ps. 30:5] 26:21 ^a Mic.
 1:3 27:1 ^a Ps. 74:13, 14 ^b Is. 5:19

their behalf. The reviving and restoring of Israel should help to convince a lost world that God is not dead and that He keeps His promises.

- 26:12–18** The agony of the day of the Lord is compared to the pain of a woman giving birth (v. 17; 13:6–8; 1 Thess. 5:1–3). Because of the people's sins, they had been subjected to many Gentile tyrants, but now these tyrants were dead and could not return to enslave them. God disciplined His people and brought them to the place where all they could do was whisper their prayers "when Your chastening was upon them" (v. 16), but He heard them and delivered them. Israel was in pain like a woman giving birth, except that their labor pains produced nothing! Israel failed to give birth to the blessings God wanted them to bring to the world (v. 18).
- 26:19–21** Just as the dew brings new life to the soil and vegetation, so God will raise the dead out of the earth. The prophet had already announced God's great victory over death (25:7, 8), and here he explained how God would do it: The Lord will raise their bodies from the dust. Resurrection is not reconstruction; God does not reassemble the body and give it life. Paul compared the miracle of resurrection to the harvesting of grain planted in the soil (1 Cor. 15:35–49).

26:19 When Christ returns for His church, believers who are "dead in Christ" will be raised from the dead (1 Thess. 4:13–18). When He returns with His church to judge His enemies and establish His kingdom, another resurrection will occur (Rev. 19:11–20:6). These two events are called "the first resurrection" and include only saved people. At the end of the thousand years, when Satan is finally imprisoned, the lost will be raised to face the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:7–15). While the Old Testament does not give the complete revelation about death and resurrection, it does assure us that there is a future for the human body (Dan. 12:2; see Ps. 16:9, 10).

27:1 The nations around Israel had many myths about sea monsters, one of which was compared to "Leviathan," possibly the crocodile (Job 3:8; 41:1ff.). To slay Leviathan was a great achievement (Ps. 74:14), and the Lord promised to do it. Satan held these nations in bondage through their superstitious religions, but the remnant did not need to fear the false gods of the Gentiles. God's people today are set free from bondage to Satan and the false gods which he seduces people to worship (Col. 2:13–15), and we can rejoice in our Lord's great victory.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

- 2 In that day ^asing to her,
^b*"A vineyard of red wine!"*
 3 ^aI, the LORD, keep it,
 I water it every moment;
 Lest any hurt it,
 I keep it night and day.
 4 Fury *is* not in Me.
 Who would set ^abriers *and* thorns
 Against Me in battle?
 I would go through them,
 I would burn them together.
 5 Or let him take hold ^aof My strength,
That he may ^bmake peace with Me;
And he shall make peace with Me."
- 6 Those who come He shall cause
^ato take root in Jacob;
 Israel shall blossom and bud,
 And fill the face of the world with fruit.
- 7 ^aHas He struck Israel as He struck
 those who struck him?
 Or has He been slain according
 to the slaughter of those
 who were slain by Him?
- 8 ^aIn measure, by sending it away,
 You contended with it.
^bHe removes *it* by His rough wind
 In the day of the east wind.
- 9 Therefore by this the iniquity
 of Jacob will be covered;
 And this *is* all the fruit of
 taking away his sin:
 When he makes all the
 stones of the altar
 Like chalkstones that are
 beaten to dust,
 Wooden images¹ and incense
 altars shall not stand.

- 10 Yet the fortified city *will be* ^adesolate,
 The habitation forsaken and
 left like a wilderness;
 There the calf will feed, and
 there it will lie down
 And consume its branches.
- 11 When its boughs are withered,
 they will be broken off;
 The women come *and* set
 them on fire.
 For ^ait is a people of no
 understanding;
 Therefore He who made them will
^bnot have mercy on them,
 And ^cHe who formed them will
 show them no favor.
- 12 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will thresh,
 From the channel of the River¹
 to the Brook of Egypt;
 And you will be ^agathered one by one,
 O you children of Israel.
- 13 ^aSo it shall be in that day:
^bThe great trumpet will be blown;
 They will come, who are about to
 perish in the land of Assyria,
 And they who are outcasts
 in the land of ^cEgypt,
 And shall ^dworship the LORD in
 the holy mount at Jerusalem.

27:2 ^a Is. 5:1 ^b Is. 5:7 ¹ Following Masoretic Text (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*), Bomberg, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), some Hebrew manuscripts, and Septuagint read *delight*; Targum reads *choice vineyard*. 27:3 ^a Is. 31:5 27:4 ^a 2 Sam. 23:6 27:5 ^a Is. 25:4 ^b Job 22:21 27:6 ^a Is. 37:31 27:7 ^a Is. 10:12, 17; 30:30–33 27:8 ^a Job 23:6 ^b [Ps. 78:38] 27:9 ¹ Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities 27:10 ^a Is. 5:6, 17; 32:14 27:11 ^a Deut. 32:28 ^b Is. 9:17 ^c Deut. 32:18 27:12 ^a [Is. 11:1; 56:8] ¹ That is, the Euphrates 27:13 ^a Is. 2:11 ^b Rev. 11:15 ^c Is. 19:21, 22 ^d Zech. 14:16

27:2–11 This passage speaks of "a vineyard of red wine." As in 5:1–7, the vineyard is Israel, but here the prophet saw both the Israel of his day and the Israel of the future day when the kingdom will be established. God was not angry with His people (27:4); He just yearned for them to return to Him and fervently trust Him.

27:6 In Isaiah's day, the vineyard was producing wild grapes, but in the future kingdom, Israel will be fruitful and flourishing. God will guard His people and give them all that they need to bring glory to His name. The nation will "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (v. 6). Through Israel, all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3). The Bible speaks of three vines: the people of Israel (Is. 5; 27), Christ and His church (John 15), and godless Gentile society, "the vines of the earth" (Rev. 14:18). The vineyard of Israel is not bearing fruit, the "vine of the earth" is filling the world with poisonous fruit, and God's people must be faithful branches in the Vine and produce fruit that glorifies God's name.

27:9 In the day of the Lord God will use suffering to purge His people and prepare them for their kingdom. Verse 9 does not suggest that personal suffering can

atone for sin, for only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can do that. God uses suffering as a discipline to bring us to submission so that we will seek Him and His holiness (Heb. 12:1–11). The Babylonian captivity cured the Jews of their idolatry once and for all.

27:12, 13 The camp of Israel was directed to move by the blowing of trumpets (Num. 10). The Festival of Trumpets took place on the first day of the seventh month and prepared Israel for the annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:23–32). But the Day of Atonement prepared them for the Festival of Shelters, which is a picture of the joy of the future kingdom (Lev. 23:33–44).

27:13 Isaiah envisioned a glorious day when God would repeat the miracle of the exodus and deliver His people from their bondage to the Gentile nations. The trumpet would summon them to Jerusalem (Matt. 24:31) and announce God's victory over their foes, and they would "worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem." God's people today are also awaiting the sound "of the last trumpet" (1 Cor. 15:50–58; 1 Thess. 4:13–18) announcing the coming of the Lord for His church. Then we will go with Him to heaven and prepare for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

WOE TO EPHRAIM AND JERUSALEM

- 28** Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim,
Whose glorious beauty is
a fading flower
Which is at the head of the
verdant valleys,
To those who are overcome with wine!
- ² Behold, the Lord has a mighty
and strong one,
^aLike a tempest of hail and a
destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty
waters overflowing,
Who will bring *them* down to
the earth with *His* hand.
- ³ The crown of pride, the
drunkards of Ephraim,
Will be trampled underfoot;
- ⁴ And the glorious beauty
is a fading flower
Which is at the head of the
verdant valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer,
Which an observer sees;
He eats it up while it is still in his hand.
- ⁵ In that day the LORD of hosts will be
For a crown of glory and a
diadem of beauty
To the remnant of His people,
- ⁶ For a spirit of justice to him
who sits in judgment,
And for strength to those who turn
back the battle at the gate.

- ⁷ But they also ^ahave erred
through wine,
And through intoxicating
drink are out of the way;
^bThe priest and the prophet have erred
through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through
intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they
stumble *in* judgment.
- ⁸ For all tables are full of vomit
and filth;
No place is *clean*.
- ⁹ “Whom^a will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to
understand the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* drawn from the breasts?”
- ¹⁰ ^aFor precept *must be* upon precept,
precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little.”
- ¹¹ For with ^astammering lips
and another tongue
He will speak to this people,
- ¹² To whom He said, “This is
the *rest with which*
You may cause the weary to rest,”
And, “This is the refreshing”;
Yet they would not hear.

28:2 ^a Ezek. 13:11 28:7 ^a Hos. 4:11 ^b Is. 56:10, 12 28:9 ^a Jer. 6:10
28:10 ^a [2 Chr. 36:15] 28:11 ^a 1 Cor. 14:21 28:12 ^a Is. 30:15

28:1–6 Isaiah began his message by announcing God’s judgment on Ephraim. Surely their neighbor’s fall would serve as a warning to the people of Judah and Jerusalem! If Assyria conquered Samaria, then Judah was next on the list. The northern kingdom was proud of its capital city, Samaria, which sat like a beautiful crown (or wreath) at the head of a fruitful valley. But its citizens’ arrogance was detestable to God, for they thought their fortress city was impregnable. Samaria reigned in luxury and pleasure and had no fear of her enemies. **28:1** The Lord was also appalled by their drunkenness. To the Israelites, wine was a gift from God and a source of joy (Judg. 9:13; Ps. 104:15). The law did not demand total abstinence, but it did warn against drunkenness (Deut. 21:18–21; Prov. 20:1; 23:20, 21, 29–35). The prophet Amos denounced the luxurious indulgences of the people in both Judah and Samaria (Amos 6:1–7), and Isaiah also thundered against such godless living (Is. 5:11, 12, 22).

28:4 Samaria was proud of her beauty, but that beauty was fading like a cut flower (vv. 1, 4) that could never stand before the coming tempest. God was sending a storm across the land, and their proud city would be destroyed by wind, rain, hail, and flood—the Assyrian army! Conquering Samaria would be as easy as plucking a fig from a tree.

28:5–8 Perhaps the people of Judah rejoiced to hear Isaiah announce the fall of their rival kingdom, but their celebration was short-lived; for the prophet announced

that Judah was guilty of the same sins as Samaria and therefore was in danger of judgment (vv. 5–8). The priests and the prophets, who should have been examples to the people, were staggering drunk around the city and carousing at tables covered with vomit. Their counsel to the people did not come from the Spirit of God but from their own drunken delusions (see Eph. 5:18).

28:9, 10 Society today often takes a similar attitude toward God’s servants and God’s Word. People are so intoxicated by intellectual pride that they laugh at the simple message of the gospel presented by humble witnesses (1 Cor. 1:18–31). The prophet Amos was ejected from the king’s chapel because he was a simple farmer and not a member of the religious elite (Amos 7:10–17).

28:12–20 God offers His people rest (7:4; 8:6–8), but they will not obey (hear) His Word. The prophet had given them a plain message that everybody could understand, but they rejected it. Their faith was in their political alliances and not in God (28:15, 18). Their only hope was in the tried and true foundation stone (v. 16), the “eternal Rock” (26:4; see 8:14; 17:10). This is definitely a reference to the Messiah and is so interpreted in the New Testament (Mark 12:10; Acts 4:10–12; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:4–7; see Ps. 118:22). If they had faith in Jehovah, they would not be rushing here and there, trying to forge alliances, a practice that only leads to shame and failure (Rom. 10:11). A solid rock is better protection than a flimsy covering of lies!

- ¹³ But the word of the LORD was to them,
 “Precept upon precept, precept
 upon precept,
 Line upon line, line upon line,
 Here a little, there a little,”
 That they might go and fall
 backward, and be broken
 And snared and caught.
- ¹⁴ Therefore hear the word of the
 LORD, you scornful men,
 Who rule this people who
 are in Jerusalem,
- ¹⁵ Because you have said, “We have
 made a covenant with death,
 And with Sheol we are in agreement.
 When the overflowing scourge
 passes through,
 It will not come to us,
 “For we have made lies our refuge,
 And under falsehood we have
 hidden ourselves.”

A CORNERSTONE IN ZION

- ¹⁶Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
 “Behold, I lay in Zion ^aa stone
 for a foundation,
 A tried stone, a precious cornerstone,
 a sure foundation;
 Whoever believes will not act hastily.
- ¹⁷ Also I will make justice the
 measuring line,
 And righteousness the plummet;
 The hail will sweep away
 the refuge of lies,
 And the waters will overflow
 the hiding place.
- ¹⁸ Your covenant with death
 will be annulled,
 And your agreement with
 Sheol will not stand;
 When the overflowing scourge
 passes through,
 Then you will be trampled down by it.
- ¹⁹ As often as it goes out it will take you;
 For morning by morning
 it will pass over,
 And by day and by night;
 It will be a terror just to
 understand the report.”
- ²⁰ For the bed is too short to stretch out *on*,
 And the covering so narrow that
 one cannot wrap himself *in it*.

- ²¹ For the LORD will rise up as
 at Mount ^aPerazim,
 He will be angry as in the
 Valley of ^bGibeon—
 That He may do His work,
 “His awesome work,
 And bring to pass His act,
 His unusual act.
- ²² Now therefore, do not be mockers,
 Lest your bonds be made strong;
 For I have heard from the
 Lord GOD of hosts,
^aA destruction determined even
 upon the whole earth.

LISTEN TO THE TEACHING OF GOD

- ²³ Give ear and hear my voice,
 Listen and hear my speech.
- ²⁴ Does the plowman keep
 plowing all day to sow?
 Does he keep turning his soil
 and breaking the clods?
- ²⁵ When he has leveled its surface,
 Does he not sow the black cummin
 And scatter the cummin,
 Plant the wheat in rows,
 The barley in the appointed place,
 And the spelt in its place?
- ²⁶ For He instructs him in right judgment,
 His God teaches him.
- ²⁷ For the black cummin is not threshed
 with a threshing sledge,
 Nor is a cartwheel rolled
 over the cummin;
 But the black cummin is
 beaten out with a stick,
 And the cummin with a rod.
- ²⁸ Bread *flour* must be ground;
 Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
 Break *it* with his cartwheel,
 Or crush it *with* his horsemen.
- ²⁹ This also comes from the LORD of hosts,
^aWho is wonderful in counsel *and*
 excellent in guidance.

WOE TO JERUSALEM

29 “Woe ^ato Ariel,¹ to Ariel, the
 city ^bwhere David dwelt!
 Add year to year;
 Let feasts come around.

^{28:15} ^aIs. 9:15 ^{28:16} ^aMatt. 21:42 ^{28:21} ^a2 Sam. 5:20 ^bJosh. 10:10,
 12 ^c[Lam. 3:33] ^{28:22} ^aIs. 10:22 ^{28:29} ^aPs. 92:5 ^{29:1} ^aEzek.
 24:6, 9 ^b2 Sam. 5:9 ¹That is, Jerusalem

28:21–29 Israel’s confidence that God would not judge them was a delusion. What Isaiah’s scoffing opponents did not realize was that God would do an “unusual act”: He would use the enemy to fight against His own people! Just as a farmer has different tasks to perform

and must adapt to each task, whether plowing or threshing, so God must do the work that is necessary to bring about His eternal purposes. He knows just what tool to use and when to use it.

29:1–14 “Ariel” is a code name for Jerusalem and means

- 2 Yet I will distress Ariel;
There shall be heaviness and sorrow,
And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
- 3 I will encamp against you all around,
I will lay siege against you
with a mound,
And I will raise siegeworks against you.
- 4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low,
out of the dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium's,
^aout of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper
out of the dust.
- 5 "Moreover the multitude of your ^afoes
Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
Like ^bchaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be ^cin an instant, suddenly.
- 6 ^aYou will be punished by
the LORD of hosts
With thunder and ^bearthquake
and great noise,
With storm and tempest
And the flame of devouring fire.
- 7 ^aThe multitude of all the nations
who fight against Ariel,
Even all who fight against
her and her fortress,
And distress her,
Shall be ^bas a dream of a night vision.
- 8 ^aIt shall even be as when a
hungry man dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his
soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed *he is faint*,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the
nations shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion."

THE BLINDNESS OF DISOBEDIENCE

- 9 Pause and wonder!
Blind yourselves and be blind!
^aThey are drunk, ^bbut not with wine;
They stagger, but not with
intoxicating drink.
- 10 For ^athe LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep,
And has ^bclosed your eyes,
namely, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads,
namely, ^cthe seers.
- ¹¹The whole vision has become to you like
the words of a book ^athat is sealed, which
men deliver to one who is literate, saying,
"Read this, please."
^bAnd he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed."
¹²Then the book is delivered to one who is
illiterate, saying, "Read this, please."
And he says, "I am not literate."
¹³Therefore the Lord said:
- ^a"Inasmuch as these people draw
near with their mouths
And honor Me ^bwith their lips,
But have removed their
hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught
by the commandment of men,
- ¹⁴ ^aTherefore, behold, I will again
do a marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
^bFor the wisdom of their wise
men shall perish,
And the understanding of their
prudent *men* shall be hidden."
- ¹⁵ ^aWoe to those who seek deep to hide
their counsel far from the LORD,

29:4 ^aIs. 8:19 29:5 ^aIs. 25:5 ^bJob 21:18 ^cIs. 30:13; 47:11 29:6 ^aIs. 28:2; 30:30 ^bRev. 16:18, 19 29:7 ^aMic. 4:11, 12 ^bJob 20:8 29:8 ^aPs. 73:20 29:9 ^aIs. 28:7, 8 ^bIs. 51:21 29:10 ^aRom. 11:8 ^bPs. 69:23 ^cIs. 44:18 29:11 ^aIs. 8:16 ^bDan. 12:4, 9 29:13 ^aEzek. 33:31 ^bCol. 2:22 29:14 ^aHab. 1:5 ^bJer. 49:7 29:15 ^aIs. 30:1

"lion of God." The lion was a symbol of Assyria, so the prophet may have been saying, "Assyria is now God's lion, and Jerusalem is God's lion in name only." But the Hebrew word also sounds like a term that means "an altar hearth," where the burnt offerings were sacrificed (Ezek. 43:13–18). "It (Jerusalem) shall be unto Me as Ariel (an altar hearth)" (v. 2). In other words, Jerusalem would become a place of slaughter.

29:2–4 God was going to humble the proud city. Instead of roaring and frightening the enemy, the lion would only whisper from the dust (v. 4). Instead of their sacrifices being accepted by God (v. 1), the entire city would become an altar, and God would make His people the sacrifice.

29:13 The people of Jerusalem were ignorant of what was going on. Their hearts were far from God. They were going through the outward forms of worship and

faithfully keeping the annual festivals (v. 1; 1:10ff.), but this was not a true worship of God (Matt. 15:1–9). Going to the temple was popular, but most of the people did not take their worship seriously. Therefore, God sent a spiritual blindness and stupor on His people so that they could not understand their own law. Such blindness persists today (Rom. 11:8; 2 Cor. 3:13–18). If people will not accept the truth, then they must become more and more blind and accept lies. (See John 9:39–41; 2 Thess. 2:1–12.)

29:15–24 This "woe" exposed the devious political tactics of the rulers of Judah, who thought that God would not hold them accountable for what they were doing. They were trying to turn things upside down, like the clay telling the Potter what to do (see 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18; Rom. 9:20). If only people would seek the counsel of the Lord instead of depending on their own wisdom and fragile human promises!

And their works are in the dark;
^bThey say, “Who sees us?” and,
 “Who knows us?”

- ¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around!
 Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;
 For shall the “thing made say
 of him who made it,
 “He did not make me?”
 Or shall the thing formed say
 of him who formed it,
 “He has no understanding?”

FUTURE RECOVERY OF WISDOM

- ¹⁷ Is it not yet a very little while
 Till “Lebanon shall be turned
 into a fruitful field,
 And the fruitful field be
 esteemed as a forest?
¹⁸ In that day the deaf shall hear
 the words of the book,
 And the eyes of the blind shall see out
 of obscurity and out of darkness.
¹⁹ “The humble also shall increase
 their joy in the LORD,
 And ^bthe poor among men shall rejoice
 In the Holy One of Israel.
²⁰ For the terrible one is
 brought to nothing,
 “The scornful one is consumed,
 And all who ^bwatch for
 iniquity are cut off—
²¹ Who make a man an offender by a word,
 And ^alay a snare for him who
 reproves in the gate,
 And turn aside the just
^bby empty words.

²²Therefore thus says the LORD, “who re-
 deemed Abraham, concerning the house
 of Jacob:

- “Jacob shall not now be ^bashamed,
 Nor shall his face now grow pale;
²³ But when he sees his children,
 “The work of My hands, in his midst,
 They will hallow My name,
 And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
 And fear the God of Israel.
²⁴ These also “who erred in spirit
 will come to understanding,
 And those who complained
 will learn doctrine.”

29:17–24 Isaiah asked the people to look ahead and consider what God had planned for them. In their political strategy, they had turned things upside down, but God would one day turn everything around by establishing His glorious kingdom on earth. The devastated land would become a paradise, the disabled would be healed, and the outcasts would be enriched and rejoice in the Lord.

30:1–33 This announcement of coming sorrow (“woe to

FUTILE CONFIDENCE IN EGYPT

- 30** “Woe to the rebellious
 children,” says the LORD,
^a“Who take counsel, but not of Me,
 And who devise plans, but
 not of My Spirit,
^bThat they may add sin to sin;
² “Who walk to go down to Egypt,
 And ^bhave not asked My advice,
 To strengthen themselves in
 the strength of Pharaoh,
 And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
³ “Therefore the strength of Pharaoh
 Shall be your shame,
 And trust in the shadow of Egypt
 Shall be *your* humiliation.
⁴ For his princes were at “Zoan,
 And his ambassadors came to Hanes.
⁵ “They were all ashamed of a people
 who could not benefit them,
 Or be help or benefit,
 But a shame and also a reproach.”

^{6a}The burden against the beasts of the
 South.

Through a land of trouble and anguish,
 From which *came* the lioness and lion,
^bThe viper and fiery flying serpent,
 They will carry their riches on the
 backs of young donkeys,
 And their treasures on the
 humps of camels,
 To a people *who* shall not profit;
⁷ “For the Egyptians shall help in
 vain and to no purpose.
 Therefore I have called her
 Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.¹

A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE

- ⁸ Now go, ^awrite it before
 them on a tablet,
 And note it on a scroll,
 That it may be for time to come,
 Forever and ever:

^{29:15} ^b Ps. 10:11; 94:7 ^{29:16} ^a Is. 45:9 ^{29:17} ^a Is. 32:15 ^{29:18} ^a Is. 35:5 ^{29:19} ^a [Is. 11:4; 61:1] ^b [James 2:5] ^{29:20} ^a Is. 28:14 ^b Mic. 2:1 ^{29:21} ^a Amos 5:10, 12 ^b Prov. 28:21 ^{29:22} ^a Josh. 24:3 ^b Is. 45:17 ^{29:23} ^a [Is. 45:11; 49:20–26] ^{29:24} ^a Is. 28:7 ^{30:1} ^a Is. 29:15 ^b Deut. 29:19 ^{30:2} ^a Is. 31:1 ^b Josh. 9:14 ^{30:3} ^a Is. 20:5 ^{30:4} ^a Is. 19:11 ^{30:5} ^a Jer. 2:36 ^{30:6} ^a Is. 57:9 ^b Deut. 8:15 ^{30:7} ^a Jer. 37:7
¹ Literally *Rahab Sits Idle* ^{30:8} ^a Hab. 2:2

the rebellious children”) against Jerusalem begins with God’s rebuke of the nation’s rebellion (vv. 1–17). Isaiah opened his prophecy with this accusation (1:2, 20, 23), and he ended it on that same note (63:10; 65:2). After all that God had done for His people, they had turned away from Him and had sought the help of feeble Egypt. Unlike the leaders of old—Moses (Num. 27:21), Joshua (Josh. 9:14), David (1 Sam. 30:7, 8), and Jehoshaphat (1 Kin. 22:7ff.)—the rulers of Jerusalem did not seek the will of God.

- 9 That ^athis is a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children *who* will not hear
the law of the LORD;
10 ^aWho say to the seers, "Do not see,"
And to the prophets, "Do not
prophecy to us right things;
^bSpeak to us smooth things,
prophecy deceits.
11 Get out of the way,
Turn aside from the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To cease from before us."

¹²Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

- "Because you ^adespise this word,
And trust in oppression and perversity,
And rely on them,
13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you
^aLike a breach ready to fall,
A bulge in a high wall,
Whose breaking ^bcomes
suddenly, in an instant.
14 And ^aHe shall break it like the
breaking of the potter's vessel,
Which is broken in pieces;
He shall not spare.
So there shall not be found
among its fragments
A shard to take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water from the cistern."

¹⁵For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:

- ^a"In returning and rest you
shall be saved;
In quietness and confidence
shall be your strength."
^bBut you would not,
16 And you said, "No, for we
will flee on horses"—
Therefore you shall flee!
And, "We will ride on swift horses"—
Therefore those who pursue
you shall be swift!
17 ^aOne thousand *shall flee* at
the threat of one,

At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a pole on
top of a mountain
And as a banner on a hill.

GOD WILL BE GRACIOUS

- 18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that
He may be ^agracious to you;
And therefore He will be exalted,
that He may have mercy on you.
For the LORD *is* a God of justice;
^bBlessed *are* all those who ^cwait for Him.
19 For the people ^ashall dwell
in Zion at Jerusalem;
You shall ^bweep no more.
He will be very gracious to you
at the sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will ^canswer you.
20 And *though* the Lord gives you
^aThe bread of adversity and
the water of affliction,
Yet ^byour teachers will not be
moved into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see your teachers.
21 Your ears shall hear a word
behind you, saying,
"This *is* the way, walk in it,"
Whenever you ^aturn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.
22 ^aYou will also defile the covering
of your images of silver,
And the ornament of your
molded images of gold.
You will throw them away
as an unclean thing;
^bYou will say to them, "Get away!"
23 ^aThen He will give the rain
for your seed
With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth;
It will be fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed
In large pastures.

30:9 ^a Is. 1:2, 4; 65:2 30:10 ^a Jer. 11:21 ^b 1 Kin. 22:8, 13 30:12 ^a Is. 5:24 30:13 ^a Ps. 62:3, 4 ^b Is. 29:5 30:14 ^a Jer. 19:11 30:15 ^a Is. 7:4; 28:12 ^b Matt. 23:37 30:17 ^a Josh. 23:10 30:18 ^a Is. 33:2 ^b Jer. 17:7 ^c Is. 26:8 30:19 ^a Is. 65:9 ^b Is. 25:8 ^c Is. 65:24 30:20 ^a 1 Kin. 22:27 ^b Amos 8:11 30:21 ^a Josh. 1:7 30:22 ^a Is. 2:20; 31:7 ^b Hos. 14:8 30:23 ^a [Matt. 6:33]

30:9 God told Isaiah to make a permanent record of the fact that the people are "a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD." He represented a living sign of God's impending judgment as He walked around Jerusalem, and no doubt most of the people laughed at him. The leaders did not want to hear God's truth; they wanted pleasant words from the false prophets, sermons that would not disturb their comfortable way of life. The situation does not seem much different today. God's

message is ignored and His messengers are derided. **30:18–26** Isaiah turned from the subject of rebellion to restoration. "The LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you" (v. 18) he told the people. God's grace is His favor toward those who do not deserve it, and it is only because of His grace that we have any blessings at all. Isaiah described that future day when Israel would be restored to her land to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom. The people would be like liberated prisoners of war (v. 19).

- ²⁴ Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground
Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed
with the shovel and fan.
- ²⁵ There will be ^aon every high mountain
And on every high hill
Rivers *and* streams of waters,
In the day of the ^bgreat slaughter,
When the towers fall.
- ²⁶ Moreover ^athe light of the moon
will be as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun
will be sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day that the LORD binds
up the bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

- ²⁷ Behold, the name of the LORD
comes from afar,
Burning *with* His anger,
And *His* burden *is* heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue like a devouring fire.
- ²⁸ ^aHis breath is like an
overflowing stream,
^bWhich reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the
sieve of futility;
And *there shall be* ^ca bridle in
the jaws of the people,
Causing *them* to err.
- ²⁹ You shall have a song
As in the night *when* a holy
festival is kept,
And gladness of heart as when
one goes with a flute,
To come into ^athe mountain
of the LORD,
To the Mighty One of Israel.
- ³⁰ ^aThe LORD will cause His glorious
voice to be heard,
And show the descent of His arm,

With the indignation of *His* anger
And the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, tempest,
^band hailstones.

- ³¹ For ^athrough the voice of the LORD
Assyria will be beaten down,
As He strikes with the ^brod.
- ³² And *in* every place where the staff
of punishment passes,
Which the LORD lays on him,
It will be with tambourines and harps;
And in battles of ^abrandishing
He will fight with it.
- ³³ ^aFor Tophet *was* established of old,
Yes, for the king it is prepared.
He has made *it* deep and large;
Its pyre *is* fire with much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a
stream of brimstone,
Kindles it.

THE FOLLY OF NOT TRUSTING GOD

- 31** Woe to those ^awho go down
to Egypt for help,
And ^brely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because
they are many,
And in horsemen because
they are very strong,
But who do not look to the
Holy One of Israel,
^cNor seek the LORD!
- ² Yet He also *is* wise and will
bring disaster,
And ^awill not call back His words,
But will arise against the
house of evildoers,
And against the help of those
who work iniquity.
- ³ Now the Egyptians *are*
men, and not God;
And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.

30:25 ^aIs. 2:14, 15 ^bIs. 2:10–21; 34:2 30:26 ^a[Is. 60:19, 20] 30:28 ^aIs. 11:4 ^bIs. 8:8 ^cIs. 37:29 30:29 ^a[Is. 2:3] 30:30 ^aIs. 29:6 ^bIs. 28:2 30:31 ^aIs. 14:25; 37:36 ^bIs. 10:5, 24 30:32 ^aIs. 11:15 30:33 ^aJer. 7:31 31:1 ^aIs. 30:1, 2 ^bPs. 20:7 ^cDan. 9:13 31:2 ^aNum. 23:19

30:27–33 The final theme in this message of sorrow is retribution, the announcement that God would defeat the Assyrians. God had used Assyria to discipline Judah, but He would not permit the Assyrians to take the city of David. Isaiah used several images to describe God's judgment of Assyria: a storm of fire and hail, a flood, the sifting of grain (see Amos 9:9), and the harnessing of a horse so that the enemy is led off like a farm animal.

30:33 Just as Sheol was prepared for the king of Babylon (14:9ff.), so Tophet was prepared for the king of Assyria. Tophet was a site outside Jerusalem where the worshipers of Molech sacrificed their children (2 Kin. 16:3; 21:6; Jer. 7:31, 32). It was defiled by Josiah (2 Kin. 23:10), turned into a garbage dump, and named

Gehenna in the Greek, which comes from the Hebrew *ge hinnom*, meaning “valley of Hinnom.” That was the location of Tophet. Gehenna is the New Testament word for “hell.” The funeral pyre for the great king of Assyria would be a garbage dump.

31:1–9 This statement of sorrow (“Woe to those”) is a brief summary of what Isaiah had already told the people. Indeed, he was teaching them “precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little” (28:10), yet they were not getting the message. Their faith was in human beings, not in God. They also trusted in the legs of horses and the wheels of chariots, not in the hand of the Lord. God had warned the Israelite kings not to go to Egypt for horses and chariots (Deut. 17:14–16), but Solomon had ignored this

When the LORD stretches out His hand,
Both he who helps will fall,
And he who is helped will fall down;
They all will perish ^atogether.

GOD WILL DELIVER JERUSALEM

⁴For thus the LORD has spoken to me:

^a“As a lion roars,
And a young lion over his prey
(When a multitude of shepherds
is summoned against him,
He will not be afraid of their voice
Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down
To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.

⁵ ^aLike birds flying about,
So will the LORD of hosts
defend Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it*;
Passing over, He will preserve *it*.”

⁶Return to *Him* against whom the children of Israel have ^adeeply revolted. ⁷For in that day every man shall ^athrow away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—^bsin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

⁸ “Then Assyria shall ^afall by a sword not of man,
And a sword not of mankind shall ^bdevour him.
But he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall become forced labor.
⁹ ^aHe shall cross over to his stronghold for fear,
And his princes shall be afraid of the banner,”
Says the LORD,
Whose fire is in Zion
And whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

A REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

32 Behold, ^a“a king will reign in righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice.

² A man will be as a hiding place from the wind,
And ^aa cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

³ ^aThe eyes of those who see will not be dim,
And the ears of those who hear will listen.

⁴ Also the heart of the rash will ^aunderstand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

⁵ The foolish person will no longer be called generous,
Nor the miser said to be bountiful;

⁶ For the foolish person will speak foolishness,
And his heart will work ^ainiquity:
To practice ungodliness,
To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied,
And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

⁷ Also the schemes of the schemer *are* evil;
He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with ^alying words,
Even when the needy speaks justice.

⁸ But a generous man devises generous things,
And by generosity he shall stand.

31:3 ^a Is. 20:6 31:4 ^a Hos. 11:10 31:5 ^a Deut. 32:11 31:6 ^a Hos. 9:9
31:7 ^a Is. 2:20; 30:22 ^b 1 Kin. 12:30 31:8 ^a 2 Kin. 19:35, 36 ^b Is. 37:36
31:9 ^a Is. 37:37 32:1 ^a Ps. 45:1 32:2 ^a Is. 4:6 32:3 ^a Is. 29:18; 35:5
32:4 ^a Is. 29:24 32:6 ^a Prov. 24:7–9 32:7 ^a Jer. 5:26–28

warning (1 Kin. 10:28, 29). Going to Egypt for help had always been a temptation to the Israelites.

31:8, 9 As God’s church today faces enemies and challenges, it is always a temptation to turn to the world or the flesh for help. But our first response must be to examine our hearts to see if we have something that we need to confess and make right. Then we just turn to the Lord in faith and obedience and surrender to His will alone. We must trust Him to protect us and fight for us.

32:1 Isaiah wrote here about “a king,” but in 33:17, he called Him “the King.” By the time we get to 33:22, He is “our King.” It is not enough to say that Jesus Christ is “a King” or even “the King.” We must confess our faith in Him and say with assurance that He is “our King.” In contrast to the evil rulers of Isaiah’s day (1:21–23), the Messiah will reign in righteousness and justice. In addition, the King will be like a rock of refuge for the people and like a refreshing river in the desert.

32:3, 4 These verses describe the wonderful transformations that will occur because of Messiah’s reign. Isaiah ministered to spiritually blind, deaf, and ignorant people (6:9, 10; 29:10–12), but in the kingdom, all will see and hear God’s truth as well as understand and obey it (see 29:18; 42:7). This will happen because the nation will have a new heart and enter into a new covenant with the Lord (Jer. 31:31–34).

32:5–8 The scoundrel uses his or her position for personal profit and not for the good of the people. In Isaiah’s day, as in our own day, the common people admired the rich and famous, even though the character and conduct of these celebrities deserved no respect. They had money, fame, and influence, and in the eyes of the populace, that made them important. But in the kingdom, there will be no such deception. Not only will their character and motives be exposed and judged, but so will their ungodly methods (v. 7). No longer will the poor and helpless be cheated by these liars.

CONSEQUENCES OF COMPLACENCY

- 9 Rise up, you women ^awho are at ease,
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
- 10 In a year and *some* days
You will be troubled, you
complacent women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
- 11 Tremble, you *women* who are at ease;
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare,
And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.
- 12 People shall mourn upon their breasts
For the pleasant fields, for
the fruitful vine.
- 13 ^aOn the land of my people will
come up thorns *and* briers,
Yes, on all the happy homes
in ^bthe joyous city;
- 14 ^aBecause the palaces will be forsaken,
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will
become lairs forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a
pasture of flocks—
- 15 Until ^athe Spirit is poured
upon us from on high,
And ^bthe wilderness becomes
a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is
counted as a forest.

THE PEACE OF GOD'S REIGN

- 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness remain
in the fruitful field.
- 17 ^aThe work of righteousness will be peace,
And the effect of righteousness,
quietness and assurance forever.
- 18 My people will dwell in a
peaceful habitation,
In secure dwellings, and in
quiet ^aresting places,

19 ^aThough hail comes down ^bon the forest,
And the city is brought low
in humiliation.

20 Blessed *are* you who sow
beside all waters,
Who send out freely the feet of
^athe ox and the donkey.

A PRAYER IN DEEP DISTRESS

33 Woe to you ^awho plunder, though
you *have not been* plundered;
And you who deal treacherously,
though they have not dealt
treacherously with you!

^bWhen you cease plundering,
You will be ^cplundered;
When you make an end of
dealing treacherously,
They will deal treacherously with you.

2 O LORD, be gracious to us;

^aWe have waited for You.
Be their ^darm every morning,
Our salvation also in the
time of trouble.

3 At the noise of the tumult
the people ^ashall flee;
When You lift Yourself up, the
nations shall be scattered;

4 And Your plunder shall be gathered
Like the gathering of the caterpillar;
As the running to and fro of locusts,
He shall run upon them.

5 ^aThe LORD is exalted, for
He dwells on high;
He has filled Zion with justice
and righteousness.

6 Wisdom and knowledge will be
the stability of your times,

32:9 ^a Amos 6:1 32:13 ^a Hos. 9:6 ^b Is. 22:2 32:14 ^a Is. 27:10
32:15 ^a [Joel 2:28] ^b Is. 29:17 32:17 ^a James 3:18 32:18 ^a [Zech.
2:5; 3:10] 32:19 ^a Is. 30:30 ^b Zech. 11:2 32:20 ^a Is. 30:23, 24
33:1 ^a Hab. 2:8 ^b Rev. 13:10 ^c Is. 10:12; 14:25; 31:8 33:2 ^a Is. 25:9;
26:8 ^d Septuagint omits *their*; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *our*.
33:3 ^a Is. 17:13 33:5 ^a Ps. 97:9

32:15–20 Isaiah returned to his description of the messianic kingdom and emphasized the restoration of peace and prosperity. None of these changes took place after the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. or when the remnant returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, so we must assign these prophecies to the future kingdom. Because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the kingdom will enjoy peace and plenty because of the righteousness in the land (Joel 2:28).

32:17, 18 Judah could have enjoyed safety, quietness, and assurance had they trusted wholly in the Lord and not turned to Egypt for help. “Righteousness” is the key word in verse 17, for true peace only comes through a right relationship with God. When sinners trust Christ and receive the gift of righteousness, then they can

have peace in their hearts and peace with one another.

33:1–24 Assyria was proud of her power and the spoils she had gathered in battle. The Assyrian army swept through the land like devouring locusts, but that would change. The day would come when Judah would strip the dead Assyrian army and Sennacherib would be assassinated in the temple of the god he claimed was stronger than Jehovah.

33:2 This is the prayer of the godly remnant when Jerusalem was surrounded by the Assyrian army. Isaiah had promised that God would be gracious to them if they would only trust Him (30:18, 19), so a few devout people turned His promise into prayer. God spared Jerusalem for David’s sake (37:35) and because a believing remnant trusted God and prayed. Never underestimate the power of a praying minority.

And the strength of salvation;
The fear of the LORD is His treasure.

- 7 Surely their valiant ones
shall cry outside,
“The ambassadors of peace
shall weep bitterly.
8 “The highways lie waste,
The traveling man ceases.
“He has broken the covenant,
He has despised the cities,¹
He regards no man.
9 “The earth mourns and languishes,
Lebanon is shamed and shriveled;
Sharon is like a wilderness,
And Bashan and Carmel
shake off *their fruits*.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON ZION

- 10 “Now^a I will rise,” says the LORD;
“Now I will be exalted,
Now I will lift Myself up.
11 “You shall conceive chaff,
You shall bring forth stubble;
Your breath, as fire, shall devour you.
12 And the people shall be like
the burnings of lime;
“Like thorns cut up they shall
be burned in the fire.
13 Hear, “you *who are* afar off,
what I have done;
And you *who are* near,
acknowledge My might.”
14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:
“Who among us shall dwell with
the devouring “fire?
Who among us shall dwell with
everlasting burnings?”
15 He who “walks righteously
and speaks uprightly,
He who despises the gain of oppressions,
Who gestures with his hands,
refusing bribes,
Who stops his ears from
hearing of bloodshed,

And ^bshuts his eyes from seeing evil:
16 He will dwell on high;
His place of defense *will be*
the fortress of rocks;
Bread will be given him,
His water *will be* sure.

THE LAND OF THE MAJESTIC KING

- 17 Your eyes will see the King
in His “beauty;
They will see the land that is very far off.
18 Your heart will meditate on terror:
“Where is the scribe?
Where is he who weighs?
Where is he who counts the towers?”
19 “You will not see a fierce people,
^bA people of obscure speech,
beyond perception,
Of a stammering tongue *that*
you cannot understand.
20 “Look upon Zion, the city of
our appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see ^bJerusalem,
a quiet home,
A tabernacle *that* will not
be taken down;
“Not one of “its stakes will
ever be removed,
Nor will any of its cords be broken.
21 But there the majestic
LORD *will be* for us
A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
In which no galley with oars will sail,
Nor majestic ships pass by
22 (For the LORD is our “Judge,
The LORD is our ^bLawgiver,
“The LORD is our King;
He will save us);

33:7 ^a 2 Kin. 18:18, 37 33:8 ^a Judg. 5:6 ^b 2 Kin. 18:13–17 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *witnesses*; Septuagint omits *cities*; Targum reads *They have been removed from their cities*.
33:9 ^a Is. 24:4 33:10 ^a Ps. 12:5 33:11 ^a [Ps. 7:14] 33:12 ^a Is. 9:18
33:13 ^a Is. 49:1 33:14 ^a Heb. 12:29 33:15 ^a Ps. 15:2; 24:3, 4 ^b Ps. 119:37
33:17 ^a Ps. 27:4 33:18 ^a 1 Cor. 1:20 33:19 ^a 2 Kin. 19:32 ^b Jer. 5:15
33:20 ^a Ps. 48:12 ^b Ps. 46:5; 125:1 ^c Is. 37:33 ^d Is. 54:2 33:22 ^a [Acts 10:42] ^b James 4:12 ^c Ps. 89:18

33:11, 12 Here Isaiah used several images to describe God’s judgment on the Assyrians. The Assyrians were pregnant with all sorts of plans to conquer Jerusalem, but they would give birth to chaff and straw, and their plans would amount to nothing. Their army was panting to attack, but their hot breath would only become a fire that would destroy them like dead bones or cut bushes. God is long-suffering with His enemies; when He decides to judge, however, He does a thorough job. 33:14–16 The miracle deliverance of Jerusalem not only brought glory to God among the Gentiles, but it also brought fear and conviction to the Jews. God does not deliver us so that we are free to return to our sins. 33:15 This verse describes the kind of person God will accept and bless (see also Ps. 15; 24). By ourselves, we cannot achieve these qualities of character; they come

only as we trust Jesus Christ and grow in grace. Many religious people in Jerusalem had hearts far from God because their religion was only a matter of external ceremonies (29:13). Isaiah hoped that the miracle deliverance of the city would bring these people to a place of true devotion to the Lord. Only as we walk with the Lord can we have real security and satisfaction.

33:17–24 Isaiah lifted his vision to the end times and saw Jerusalem ruled by King Messiah. God’s victory over Assyria was but a dress rehearsal for his victory over the whole Gentile world system that would one day assemble to destroy the Holy City (Zech. 14:1–9). When our Lord was ministering on earth, the unbelieving Jews said, “There is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Is. 53:2). But when they see Him and believe, then they will perceive His great beauty (Zech. 12:3–13:1; see Ps. 45).

- 23 Your tackle is loosed,
They could not strengthen their mast,
They could not spread the sail.

Then the prey of great
plunder is divided;
The lame take the prey.

- 24 And the inhabitant will not
say, "I am sick";
"The people who dwell in it *will*
be forgiven *their* iniquity.

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

- 34** Come ^anear, you nations, to hear;
And heed, you people!

^bLet the earth hear, and all that is in it,
The world and all things that
come forth from it.

- 2 For the indignation of the LORD
is against all nations,
And *His* fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them,
He has given them over
to the ^aslaughter.

- 3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;
^aTheir stench shall rise from
their corpses,
And the mountains shall be
melted with their blood.

- 4 ^aAll the host of heaven
shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be
rolled up like a scroll;
^bAll their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as *'fruit* falling from a fig tree.

- 5 "For ^aMy sword shall be
bathed in heaven;
Indeed it ^bshall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My
curse, for judgment.

- 6 The "sword of the LORD is
filled with blood,
It is made overflowing with fatness,

With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For ^bthe LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in
the land of Edom.

- 7 The wild oxen shall come
down with them,
And the young bulls with
the mighty bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood,
And their dust saturated with fatness."

- 8 For *it* is the day of the
LORD's ^avengeance,
The year of recompense for
the cause of Zion.

- 9 ^aIts streams shall be turned into pitch,
And its dust into brimstone;
Its land shall become burning pitch.

- 10 It shall not be quenched night or day;
^aIts smoke shall ascend forever.

^bFrom generation to generation
it shall lie waste;
No one shall pass through
it forever and ever.

- 11 ^aBut the pelican and the
porcupine shall possess it,
Also the owl and the raven
shall dwell in it.
And ^bHe shall stretch out over it
The line of confusion and the
stones of emptiness.

- 12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom,
But none *shall be* there, and all its
princes shall be nothing.

- 13 And ^athorns shall come up in its palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
^bIt shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.

33:24 ^a Is. 40:2 34:1 ^a Ps. 49:1 ^b Deut. 32:1 34:2 ^a Is. 13:5
34:3 ^a Joel 2:20 34:4 ^a Is. 13:13 ^b Is. 14:12 ^c Rev. 6:12–14
34:5 ^a Jer. 46:10 ^b Mal. 1:4 34:6 ^a Is. 66:16 ^b Zeph. 1:7 34:8 ^a Is.
63:4 34:9 ^a Deut. 29:23 34:10 ^a Rev. 14:11; 18:18; 19:3 ^b Mal. 1:3, 4
34:11 ^a Zeph. 2:14 ^b Lam. 2:8 34:13 ^a Is. 32:13 ^b Is. 13:21

33:23 Jerusalem was a ship that almost sank, but the Lord brought it through the storm (Ps. 107:23–32), and the weakest of the Jews was able to take spoils from the dead army.

33:24 Both sickness and sin will be absent from the city. Messiah will be their Redeemer and Savior, and the nation shall be forgiven their iniquity. In Isaiah's day, the Jews were a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity" (see 1:4), just as lost sinners are today. But when they see Him and trust Him, their sins will be washed away. If you have never heeded the gracious invitation of Isaiah 1:18, do so today!

34:1–17 Israel's ancient enemy Edom is singled out in verses 5, 6, but this divine judgment will come upon the whole world. Edom is only one example of God's judgment on the Gentile nations because of what they have done to His people Israel. "For it is the day

of the LORD's vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion" (v. 8).

34:5–8 Isaiah moved from the battlefield to the temple and saw the worldwide judgment as a great sacrifice that God offers. (See Jer. 46:10; 50:27; Ezek. 39:17–19.) Typically the people would kill the animal sacrifices and offer them to God, but here God is offering the wicked as sacrifices.

34:11–17 While Isaiah focused especially on Edom (vv. 5, 6), he was using that proud nation as an example of what God would do to all the Gentile nations during the day of the Lord. When God finishes His work, the land will be a wilderness, occupied by brambles and thorns, wild beasts, and singular birds. God will see to it that each bird will have a mate to reproduce, and no humans will be around to drive them from their nests.

- ¹⁴ The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
- ¹⁵ There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay *eggs*
And hatch, and gather *them* under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered,
Every one with her mate.
- ¹⁶ “Search from “the book of the LORD, and read:
Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.
- ¹⁷ He has cast the lot for them,
And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever;
From generation to generation they shall dwell in it.”

THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION

- 35** The “wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the ^bdesert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
- ² “It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the ^bglory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.
- ³ “Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
- ⁴ Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come *with* ^avengeance,

With the recompense of God;
He will come and ^bsave you.”

- ⁵ Then the “eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And ^bthe ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- ⁶ Then the “lame shall leap like a deer,
And the ^btongue of the dumb sing.
For “waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
- ⁷ The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In “the habitation of jackals,
where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
- ⁸ A “highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
^bThe unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road,
although a fool,
Shall not go astray.
- ⁹ “No lion shall be there,
Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk *there*,
- ¹⁰ And the “ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And ^bsorrow and sighing shall flee away.

34:16 ^a [Mal. 3:16] 35:1 ^a Is. 32:15; 55:12 ^b Is. 41:19; 51:3 35:2 ^a Is. 32:15 ^b Is. 40:5 35:3 ^a Heb. 12:12 35:4 ^a Is. 34:8 ^b Is. 33:22 35:5 ^a Is. 29:18 ^b [Matt. 11:5] 35:6 ^a Acts 8:7 ^b Is. 32:4 ^c [John 7:38] 35:7 ^a Is. 34:13 35:8 ^a Is. 19:23 ^b Joel 3:17 35:9 ^a Lev. 26:6 35:10 ^a Is. 51:11 ^b [Rev. 7:17; 21:4]

34:16 Why is God waiting? Because God “is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). How much longer God will wait, nobody knows; so it behooves lost sinners to repent today and trust the Savior.

35:1–10 The wilderness will not remain a wilderness because the Lord will transform the earth into a garden of Eden. All of nature eagerly looks for the coming of the Lord (55:12, 13; Ps. 96:11–13; 98:7–9; Rom. 8:19), for nature knows that it will be set free from the curse of sin (Gen. 3:17–19) and share the glory of the kingdom. Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon were three of the most fruitful and beautiful places in the land, and yet the desert would become more fruitful and beautiful than the three places put together! The land would have no more “parched ground” (Is. 35:7) because it would become a garden of glory.

35:3, 4 Isaiah used the promise of the coming kingdom

to strengthen those in his day who were weak and afraid. The kingdom will have no blind or deaf, lame or dumb because all will be made whole to enjoy a glorious new world.

35:8 This verse expresses one of Isaiah’s favorite themes: the highway (11:16; 19:23; 40:3; 62:10). During the Assyrian invasion, highways were not safe (33:8), but during the kingdom age travel will be safe. The kingdom will have one special highway: “The Highway of Holiness.” Ancient cities often had special roads that only kings and priests could use, but when Messiah reigns, all of His people will be invited to use this highway. Isaiah pictures God’s redeemed, ransomed, and rejoicing Jewish families going up to the yearly festivals in Jerusalem, to praise their Lord.

35:10 When Isaiah spoke and wrote these words, the Assyrians likely had already ravaged the land, destroyed the crops, and made the highways unsafe for travel.

SENNACHERIB BOASTS AGAINST THE LORD

36 Now “it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ²Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh¹ with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field. ³And ^aEliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, ^bShebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

^{4a}Then the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: “What confidence is this in which you trust? ⁵I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are mere words*. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? ⁶Look! You are trusting in the “staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who ^btrust in him.

⁷“But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the LORD our God,’ is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall

worship before this altar?’” ⁸Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! ⁹How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ¹⁰Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it.’”

¹¹Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew¹ in the hearing of the people who are on the wall.”

¹²But the Rabshakeh said, “Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?”

¹³Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, “Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able

36:1 ^a 2 Chr. 32:1 36:2 ¹ A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*
36:3 ^a Is. 22:20 ^b Is. 22:15 36:4 ^a 2 Kin. 18:19 36:6 ^a Ezek. 29:6
^b Ps. 146:3 36:11 ¹ Literally *Judean*

The people were cooped up in Jerusalem, wondering what would happen next. The members of the faithful remnant were trusting God’s promises and praying for God’s help, and God answered their prayers. Centuries ago, God had kept His promises to His people and delivered them, so He will surely keep His promises in the future and establish His glorious kingdom for His chosen people.

36:1–39:8 Bible students generally agree that Hezekiah’s sickness (ch. 38) and foolish reception of the envoys (ch. 39) took place before the Assyrian invasion, possibly between the time Hezekiah sent the tribute and Sennacherib broke the treaty. Then why are these chapters not arranged chronologically? The prophet arranged the account as a bridge between the two parts of his book. Chapters 36 and 37 end the first part of the book with its emphasis on Assyria, and chapters 38 and 39 introduce the second part of the book, with its emphasis on Babylon. Isaiah mentioned Babylon earlier in his book (13:1ff.; 31:1ff.), but this is the first time he clearly predicts Judah’s captivity in Babylon. These chapters teach us some valuable lessons about faith, prayer, and the dangers of pride. Though the setting today may be different, the problems and temptations are still the same; for Hezekiah’s history is our history, and Hezekiah’s God is our God.

36:1 The Assyrian invasion was a part of God’s discipline to teach His people to trust Him alone. Even Hezekiah had at first put his trust in treaties and treasures (2 Kin. 18:13–16), only to learn that the enemy would keep the wealth but would not keep its word. Judah had negotiated to get help from Egypt, an act of unbelief that Isaiah severely rebuked (Is. 30:1–7; 31:1–3). God’s great purpose in the life of faith is to build godly character. Hezekiah and his people needed to learn that faith is living without scheming.

36:4–21 The speech by the Assyrian chief of staff is one of the most insolent and blasphemous found anywhere in Scripture, for he reproached the God of Israel (37:4, 17, 23, 24). He emphasized the greatness of the king of Assyria (36:4, 13) because he knew the common people were listening and he wanted to frighten them (vv. 11, 12). His speech is a masterful piece of psychological warfare in which he discredited everything that the Jews held dear.

36:4–7 The Assyrian chief of staff demeaned Judah’s allies. They had turned to Egypt for help, but Egypt was only a “broken reed” (v. 6). (Isaiah had said the same thing! See 30:1–7; 31:1–3.) As for trusting the Lord, that was sure to fail. Hezekiah had incurred the Lord’s displeasure by removing the high places and altars and requiring everybody to worship at Jerusalem. (What did a heathen soldier know about the worship of the true God?) So, according to the chief of staff, Judah had no help on earth (Egypt) or in heaven (the Lord). They were already defeated!

36:8, 9 The Assyrian chief of staff mocked the Judeans’ military resources. Hezekiah had fortified Jerusalem (2 Chr. 32:2–8), but the field commander laughed at Judah’s military might. Judah did not have the soldiers, the horses, or the chariots to attack the Assyrians. Even if Assyria provided the equipment, the Judean soldiers were too weak to defeat the least of the enemy’s officers. All the chariots and horsemen of Egypt could never defeat Sennacherib’s great army.

36:10 The chief of staff’s coup de grace was that everything Assyria had done was according to the will of the Lord. How could Judah fight against its own God? In one sense, this statement was true, for God is in charge of the nations of the world (10:5, 6; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21). But no nation can do what it pleases and use God for the excuse, as Sennacherib and his army would soon find out.

to deliver you; ¹⁵nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, “The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” ¹⁶Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; “and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; ¹⁷until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸*Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” Has any one of the “gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁹Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered “Samaria from my hand? ²⁰Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”’”

²¹But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king’s commandment was, “Do not answer him.” ²²Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

ISAIAH ASSURES DELIVERANCE

37 And “so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. ²Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. ³And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day is a day of “trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there* is no

strength to bring them forth. ⁴It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to “reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.”’”

⁵So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. ⁶And Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, “Thus says the LORD: “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. ⁷Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”’”

SENNACHERIB’S THREAT AND HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER

⁸Then *the* Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. ⁹And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “He has come out to make war with you.” So when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” ¹¹Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? ¹²Have the “gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? ¹³Where *is* the king of “Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?”’”

36:16 ^a Zech. 3:10 36:18 ^a Is. 37:12 36:19 ^a 2 Kin. 17:6 37:1 ^a 2 Kin. 19:1–37 37:3 ^a Is. 22:5; 26:16; 33:2 37:4 ^a Is. 36:15, 18, 20 37:12 ^a Is. 36:18, 19 37:13 ^a Is. 49:23

36:21 Hezekiah and Isaiah had told the people to trust the Lord, but the Assyrian chief of staff reminded the people that the gods of the other nations had not succeeded in protecting or delivering them. (Hezekiah knew why; see 37:18, 19.) Even Samaria was defeated, and they worshiped the same God as Judah. To the chief of staff, Jehovah was just another god, and Sennacherib did not need to worry about him. By the king’s orders, nobody replied to the chief of staff’s speech. Insolence is best answered with silence. Jerusalem’s deliverance did not depend on negotiating with the enemy but on trusting the Lord.

36:22—37:13 Even though the Lord had brought Assyria to chasten Judah, He had determined that Jerusalem would not be taken by the enemy (10:5–34). Previous to the invasion, when Hezekiah had been deathly ill, Isaiah had assured him of deliverance (38:4–6). God’s

promises are sure, but God’s people must claim them by faith before God can work. So the king sent word to Isaiah, asking him to pray, and the king himself called out to the Lord for help. In the building up of our faith, the Word of God and faith go together (Rom. 10:17). That is why Isaiah sent the king a message from the Lord. His word of encouragement had three points: (1) Do not be afraid, (2) the Assyrians will depart, and (3) the “great king” will die in Assyria.

36:22 Hezekiah and his officers humbled themselves before the Lord and sought his face. As the king went into the temple, perhaps he recalled the promise God had given to Solomon after he had dedicated the temple: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr. 7:14).

¹⁴And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: ¹⁶“O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You *are* God, You ^aalone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ^{17a}Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and ^bhear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. ¹⁸Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their ^alands, ¹⁹and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* ^anot gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. ²⁰Now therefore, O LORD our God, ^asave us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may ^bknow that You *are* the LORD, You alone.”

THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING SENNACHERIB

²¹Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, ²²this is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

“The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

²³ “Whom have you reproached
and blasphemed?
Against whom have you
raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.

²⁴ By your servants you have
reproached the Lord,

And said, ‘By the multitude
of my chariots
I have come up to the height
of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter its farthest height,
To its fruitful forest.

²⁵ I have dug and drunk water,
And with the soles of my
feet I have dried up
All the brooks of defense.’

²⁶ “Did you not hear ^along ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities
into heaps of ruins.

²⁷ Therefore their inhabitants
had little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

²⁸ “But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.

²⁹ Because your rage against
Me and your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore ^aI will put My
hook in your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will ^bturn you back
By the way which you came.”

37:16 ^a Is. 43:10, 11 37:17 ^a Dan. 9:18 ^b Ps. 74:22 37:18 ^a 2 Kin. 15:29; 16:9; 17:6, 24 37:19 ^a Is. 40:19, 20 37:20 ^a Is. 33:22 ^b Ps. 83:18
37:26 ^a Is. 25:1; 40:21; 45:21 37:29 ^a Is. 30:28 ^b Ezek. 38:4; 39:2

37:14 When the three Assyrian officers returned to headquarters, they learned that an Egyptian army was on its way to help defend Hezekiah. Sennacherib did not want to fight a war on two fronts, so he started to put more pressure on Jerusalem to surrender immediately. This threatening message came to Hezekiah in the form of a letter, and he took it to the temple and “spread it before the LORD.”

37:15–20 Hezekiah’s prayer is saturated with biblical theology and is similar to the prayer of the church in Acts 4:24–31. He affirmed his faith in the one true and living God, and he worshiped Him. Jehovah is the “LORD of hosts” (Ps. 46:7, 11). He is the Lord who “made the heavens” (Ps. 96:5) and knows what is going on in His creation. His eyes can see our plight, and His ears can hear our plea (see Ps. 115). King Hezekiah did not want deliverance merely for his people’s sake but that God alone might be glorified.

37:21–35 God’s response to this prayer was to send

King Hezekiah another threefold message of assurance: (1) Jerusalem would not be taken (vv. 22, 31–35), (2) the Assyrians would depart (vv. 23–29), and (3) the Jews would not starve (v. 30).

37:22, 31–35 Jerusalem would be delivered. The “daughter of Zion” was still a virgin; she had not been ravaged by the enemy. She could look at the Assyrians and shake her head in scorn, for they could not touch her. God would spare His remnant and plant them once more in the land.

37:23–29 The Assyrians would depart. God addressed the proud Assyrian king and reminded him of all the boastful words he and his servants had spoken. The king of Assyria forgot that he was only God’s tool for accomplishing His purposes on the earth, and the tool must not boast against its Maker (10:5–19). God would humble Sennacherib and his army by treating them like cattle and leading them away from Jerusalem (37:29).

³⁰"This *shall* be a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such
as grows of itself,
And the second year what
springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

- ³¹ And the remnant who have escaped
of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
³² For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The "zeal of the LORD of
hosts will do this.

³³"Therefore thus says the LORD concern-
ing the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.

- ³⁴ By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.

- ³⁵ 'For I will "defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My
servant ^bDavid's sake.'"

SENNACHERIB'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

³⁶Then the "angel" of the LORD went out,
and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one
hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when
people arose early in the morning, there
were the corpses—all dead. ³⁷So Sennach-
erib king of Assyria departed and went away,
returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh.

37:30 The people would not starve. We do not know the month in which these events occurred, but it may have been past the time for sowing a new crop. Before the people could get the land back to its normal productivity, they would have to eat what grew of itself from previous crops, and that would take faith.

37:36–38 After Sennacherib left Judah a defeated man, he returned to his capital city of Nineveh. Twenty years later, as a result of a power struggle among his sons, Sennacherib was assassinated by two of his sons in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (v. 7), and it happened in the temple of his god! The Assyrian chief of staff had ridiculed the gods of the nations, but Sennacherib's own god could not protect him (v. 7).

38:2, 3 The king turned his face to the wall, not in a sulking manner, like Ahab (1 Kin. 21:4), but in order to have privacy for his praying. Also, he may have been turning his face toward the temple (1 Kin. 8:28–30). Some have criticized Hezekiah for weeping and praying, saying that his prayer was selfish, but most of us would have prayed the same way. We naturally want to live and continue serving God. Furthermore, Hezekiah was burdened for the future of the throne and the nation.

38:3 Hezekiah did not ask God to spare him because

³⁸Now it came to pass, as he was worship-
ing in the house of Nisroch his god, that his
sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him
down with the sword; and they escaped into
the land of Ararat. Then "Esarhaddon his son
reigned in his place.

HEZEKIAH'S LIFE EXTENDED

38 In "those days Hezekiah was sick and
near death. And Isaiah the prophet,
the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him,
"Thus says the LORD: ^b"Set your house in or-
der, for you shall die and not live."

²Then Hezekiah turned his face toward
the wall, and prayed to the LORD, ³and said,
"^aRemember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have
walked before You in truth and with a loyal
heart, and have done *what is good* in Your
^bsight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah,
saying, ⁵"Go and tell Hezekiah, "Thus says the
LORD, the God of David your father: "I have
heard your prayer, I have seen your tears;
surely I will add to your days fifteen years. ⁶I
will deliver you and this city from the hand
of the king of Assyria, and ^a"I will defend this
city.'" ⁷And this is "the sign to you from the
LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which
He has spoken: ⁸Behold, I will bring the shad-
ow on the sundial, which has gone down with
the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees
backward." So the sun returned ten degrees
on the dial by which it had gone down.

⁹This is the writing of Hezekiah king of
Judah, when he had been sick and had re-
covered from his sickness:

37:32 ^a 2 Kin. 19:31 **37:35** ^a Is. 31:5; 38:6 ^b 1 Kin. 11:13 **37:36** ^a 2 Kin. 19:35 ¹ Or Angel **37:38** ^a Ezra 4:2 **38:1** ^a 2 Chr. 32:24 ^b 2 Sam. 17:23 **38:3** ^a Neh. 13:14 ^b 2 Kin. 18:5, 6 **38:6** ^a Is. 31:5; 37:35 **38:7** ^a Is. 7:11

he had been such a faithful servant. That would be a subtle form of bribery. Rather, he asked God to spare him so he could continue to serve and complete the spiritual restoration of the nation. Certainly Hezekiah was concerned about his own life, as anyone would be, but he also had a burden for his people.

38:4–8 The request was granted quickly, for Isaiah had not gone very far from the sick room when the Lord gave him the answer (2 Kin. 20:4). The prophet became the king's physician and told the attendants what medicine to apply (Is. 38:21). God can heal by using any means He desires. Isaiah also told the king that his life would be prolonged for fifteen years. The king asked confirmation of the promise (v. 22), and God gave him a sign.

38:9–20 Hezekiah was an author of psalms (see v. 20), and he supervised a group of scholars who compiled the Old Testament Scriptures (Prov. 25:1). In this beautiful meditation, the king tells us how he felt during his experience of illness and recovery. He had some new experiences that transformed him.

38:9–12 God gave Hezekiah a new appreciation of life. We take life for granted till it is about to be taken from us; then we cling to it as long as we can. Hezekiah

- ¹⁰ I said,
 “In the prime of my life
 I shall go to the gates of Sheol;
 I am deprived of the remainder
 of my years.”
- ¹¹ I said,
 “I shall not see YAH,
 The LORD¹ in the land of the living;
 I shall observe man no more among
 the inhabitants of the world.”²
- ¹² ^aMy life span is gone,
 Taken from me like a shepherd’s tent;
 I have cut off my life like a weaver.
 He cuts me off from the loom;
 From day until night You
 make an end of me.
- ¹³ I have considered until morning—
 Like a lion,
 So He breaks all my bones;
 From day until night You
 make an end of me.
- ¹⁴ Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered;
 “I mourned like a dove;
 My eyes fail from looking upward.
 O LORD,¹ I am oppressed;
 Undertake for me!
- ¹⁵ “What shall I say?
 He has both spoken to me,¹
 And He Himself has done it.
 I shall walk carefully all my years
 “In the bitterness of my soul.
- ¹⁶ O Lord, by these *things men* live;
 And in all these *things is*
 the life of my spirit;
 So You will restore me and
 make me live.
- ¹⁷ Indeed *it was for my own peace*
That I had great bitterness;
 But You have lovingly *delivered* my
 soul from the pit of corruption,

For You have cast all my sins
 behind Your back.

- ¹⁸ For “Sheol cannot thank You,
 Death cannot praise You;
 Those who go down to the pit
 cannot hope for Your truth.
- ¹⁹ The living, the living man,
 he shall praise You,
 As I *do* this day;
 “The father shall make known
 Your truth to the children.

²⁰ “The LORD *was ready* to save me;
 Therefore we will sing my songs
 with stringed instruments
 All the days of our life, in the
 house of the LORD.”

²¹ Now ^aIsaiah had said, “Let them take a
 lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on
 the boil, and he shall recover.”

²² And “Hezekiah had said, “What is the
 sign that I shall go up to the house of the
 LORD?”

THE BABYLONIAN ENVOYS

39 At ^athat time Merodach-Baladan¹
 the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,
 sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for
 he heard that he had been sick and had re-
 covered. ^{2a}And Hezekiah was pleased with
 them, and showed them the house of his
 treasures—the silver and gold, the spices

38:11 ^a Ps. 27:13; 116:9 ¹ Hebrew YAH, YAH ² Following some Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *rest*; Septuagint omits *among the inhabitants of the world*; Targum reads *land*. 38:12 ^a Job 7:6 38:14 ^a Is. 59:11 ¹ Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *Lord*. 38:15 ^a Job 7:11; 10:1 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum read *And shall I say to Him*; Septuagint omits first half of this verse. 38:18 ^a Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:11; 115:17 38:19 ^a Deut. 4:9; 6:7 38:21 ^a 2 Kin. 20:7 38:22 ^a 2 Kin. 20:8 39:1 ^a 2 Kin. 20:12–19 ¹ Spelled *Berodach-Baladan* in 2 Kings 20:12 39:2 ^a 2 Chr. 32:25, 31

pictured death as the end of the journey (vv. 11, 12), a tent taken down (v. 12a; and see 2 Cor. 5:1–8), and a weaving cut from the loom (Is. 38:12b).

38:13, 14 Hezekiah also had a new appreciation of prayer. Were it not for prayer, Hezekiah could not have made it. At night the king felt like a frail animal being attacked by a fierce lion, and in the daytime he felt like a helpless bird. During this time of suffering, Hezekiah examined his own heart and confessed his sins, and God forgave him (v. 17).

38:15–20 The king ended with a new appreciation of opportunities for service. Hezekiah had a new humility in his walk, a deeper love for the Lord in his heart, and a new song of praise on his lips. He had a new determination to praise God all the days of his life, for now those days were very important to him.

39:1–8 The news about Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery had spread widely so that even people in Babylon knew about it (2 Chr. 32:23). Hezekiah was famous, and other nations would be concerned about him and want to court his favor. The stability of Judah was important to

the balance of power in that day. At this time, Babylon was not a great world power, and few people would have thought that Assyria would one day collapse and be replaced by Babylon. Of course, God knew, but Hezekiah did not seek his guidance.

39:1 The stated reason for the diplomatic mission was to honor Hezekiah and officially rejoice at his recovery. But the real reason was to obtain information about the financial resources of the nation of Judah. After all, Babylon might need some of that wealth in their future negotiations or battles. It is also likely that Hezekiah was seeking Babylon’s assistance against Assyria.

39:2 Certainly Hezekiah should not have shown his visitors all his wealth, but pride made him do it. After a time of severe suffering, sometimes we feel so good just to feel good that we get off guard and fail to watch and pray. The king was basking in fame and wealth and apparently neglecting his spiritual life. Hezekiah was safer as a sick man in bed than as a healthy man on the throne. Had he consulted first with Isaiah, the king would have avoided blundering as he did.

and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

³Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?”

So Hezekiah said, “They came to me from a far country, from Babylon.”

⁴And he said, “What have they seen in your house?”

So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶Behold, the days are coming “when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the LORD. ⁷And

they shall take away *some* of your “sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

⁸So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ““The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days.”

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE COMFORTED

40 “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.

² “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; “For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins.”

39:3 ^a Deut. 28:49 39:6 ^a Jer. 20:5 39:7 ^a Dan. 1:1–7 39:8 ^a 1 Sam. 3:18 40:2 ^a Is. 61:7

39:3–7 The prophet reminded Hezekiah that, as king, he was only the steward of Judah’s wealth and not the owner (v. 6). Some of that wealth had come from previous kings, and Hezekiah could claim no credit for it. All of us are mere stewards of what God has given to us, and we have no right to boast about anything.

39:7 This is Isaiah’s first explicit announcement of the future Babylonian captivity of Judah. In spite of Hezekiah’s reforms, the nation decayed spiritually during the next century, and in 586 B.C. Babylon destroyed

Jerusalem and took the people captive. Hezekiah’s sin was not the cause of this judgment, for the sins of rulers, priests, and false prophets mounted up from year to year till God could take it no longer (2 Chr. 36:13–16).

39:8 Even the greatest and most godly of the Lord’s servants can become proud and disobey God, so we must pray for Christian leaders that they will stay humble before their Master. But if any of His servants do sin, the Lord is willing to forgive when they sincerely repent and confess to Him (1 John 1:9).

How God Comforts

Is. 40:1

God is greater than our circumstances. As the remnant in Babylon looked back, they saw failure and sin, and they needed encouragement. Four voices are heard, each with a special message for these needy people.

The voice of pardon (vv. 1, 2). The nation had sinned greatly against the Lord, with their idolatry, injustice, immorality, and insensitivity to His messengers (Jer. 7). But they were still His people, and He loved them. Though He would chasten them, He would not forsake them.

The voice of providence (vv. 3–5). The Jews had a rough road ahead of them as they returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, but the Lord would go before them to open the way. The picture here is of an ambassador repairing the roads and removing obstacles, preparing the way for the coming of a king. The image of the highway is frequent in Isaiah’s prophecy (see 11:16).

The voice of promise (vv. 6–8). “People are like the grass!” Assyria was gone, and now Babylon was gone. Like the grass, nations and their leaders fulfill their purposes and then fade away, but the Word of God abides forever (Ps. 37:1, 2; 90:1–6; 103:15–18; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25). As they began their long journey home, Israel could depend on God’s promises. Perhaps they were especially claiming 2 Chronicles 6:36–39.

The voice of peace (vv. 9–11). Now the nation itself comes out of the valley and climbs the mountaintop to declare God’s victory over the enemy. The “messenger” had “good news” to shout. The good news in that day was the defeat of Babylon and the release of the captive Jews (Is. 52:7–9).

The good news today is the defeat of sin and Satan by Jesus Christ and the salvation of all who will trust in Him (61:1–3; Luke 4:18, 19).

- 3 ^aThe voice of one crying in the wilderness:
^b“Prepare the way of the LORD;
 ‘Make straight in the desert’
 A highway for our God.
 4 Every valley shall be exalted
 And every mountain and hill brought low;
^aThe crooked places shall be made straight
 And the rough places smooth;
 5 The ^aglory of the LORD shall be revealed,
 And all flesh shall see *it* together;
 For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
- 6 The voice said, “Cry out!”
 And he^c said, “What shall I cry?”
- ^a“All flesh *is* grass,
 And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field.
 7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
 Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
 Surely the people *are* grass.
 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
 But ^athe word of our God stands forever.”
- 9 O Zion,
 You who bring good tidings,
 Get up into the high mountain;
 O Jerusalem,
 You who bring good tidings,
 Lift up your voice with strength,
 Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
 Say to the cities of Judah,
 “Behold your God!”
- 10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong *hand*,
 And ^aHis arm shall rule for Him;
 Behold, ^bHis reward *is* with Him,
 And His work before Him.
- 11 He will ^afeed His flock like a shepherd;
 He will gather the lambs with His arm,
 And carry *them* in His bosom,
 And gently lead those who are with young.
- 12 ^aWho has measured the waters^d
 in the hollow of His hand,

- Measured heaven with a span
 And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?
 Weighed the mountains in scales
 And the hills in a balance?
 13 ^aWho has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
 Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?
 14 With whom did He take counsel,
 and *who* instructed Him,
 And ^ataught Him in the path of justice?
 Who taught Him knowledge,
 And showed Him the way of understanding?
- 15 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket,
 And are counted as the small dust on the scales;
 Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.
 16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn,
 Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.
 17 All nations before Him *are* as ^anothing,
 And ^bthey are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.
- 18 To whom then will you ^aliken God?
 Or what likeness will you compare to Him?
- 19 ^aThe workman molds an image,
 The goldsmith overspreads it with gold,
 And the silversmith casts silver chains.
 20 Whoever *is* too impoverished for *such* a contribution
 Chooses a tree *that* will not rot;
 He seeks for himself a skillful workman
^aTo prepare a carved image
that will not totter.
- 21 ^aHave you not known?
 Have you not heard?

40:3 ^a Matt. 3:3 ^b [Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6] ^c Ps. 68:4 ^d Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *in the desert*. 40:4 ^a Is. 45:2 40:5 ^a Is. 35:2 40:6 ^a Job 14:2 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *l*. 40:8 ^a [John 12:34] 40:10 ^a Is. 59:16, 18 ^b Is. 62:11 40:11 ^a [John 10:11, 14–16] 40:12 ^a Prov. 30:4 ¹ Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *waters of the sea*; Targum reads *waters of the world*. 40:13 ^a [1 Cor. 2:16] 40:14 ^a Job 36:22, 23 40:17 ^a Dan. 4:35 ^b Ps. 62:9 40:18 ^a Is. 46:5 40:19 ^a Is. 41:7; 44:10 40:20 ^a Is. 41:7; 46:7 40:21 ^a Rom. 1:19

40:12–26 The Jews were few in number, only a remnant, and facing a long and difficult journey. The victories of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia made it look as though the false gods of the Gentiles were stronger than the God of Israel, but Isaiah reminded the people of the greatness of Jehovah. When you behold the greatness of God, then you will see everything else in life in its proper perspective.

40:12–20 God is greater than anything on earth. Creation shows His wisdom, power, and immensity. He is greater than the nations and their gods. He founded the

earth and sits on the throne of heaven, and nothing is equal to our God, let alone greater than our God. The next time you are tempted to think that the world is bigger than God, remember the “drop in the bucket” (v. 15) and the “grasshoppers” (v. 22; see Num. 13:33). 40:21–26 God is greater than anything in heaven. And if you ever feel so small that you wonder if God really cares about you personally, remember that He knows the name of every star (40:26) and your name as well (see John 10:3, 27). The same God who numbers and names the stars can heal your broken heart (Ps. 147:3, 4).

- Has it not been told you
from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the
foundations of the earth?
- 22 *It is* He who sits above the
circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants *are* like
grasshoppers,
Who ^astretches out the
heavens like a curtain,
And spreads them out like
a ^btent to dwell in.
- 23 He brings the ^aprinces to nothing;
He makes the judges of the earth useless.
- 24 Scarcely shall they be planted,
Scarcely shall they be sown,
Scarcely shall their stock take
root in the earth,
When He will also blow on them,
And they will wither,
And the whirlwind will take
them away like stubble.
- 25 “To^a whom then will you liken Me,
Or to *whom* shall I be equal?”
says the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these *things*,
Who brings out their host by number;
^aHe calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing.
- 27 ^aWhy do you say, O Jacob,
And speak, O Israel:
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
And my just claim is passed
over by my God?”
- 28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,

- The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
^aHis understanding is unsearchable.
- 29 He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might
He increases strength.
- 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
- 31 But those who ^await on the LORD
^bShall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with
wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

ISRAEL ASSURED OF GOD'S HELP

41 “Keep ^asilence before
Me, O coastlands,
And let the people renew *their* strength!
Let them come near, then
let them speak;
Let us ^bcome near together
for judgment.

- 2 “Who raised up one ^afrom the east?
Who in righteousness called
him to His feet?
Who ^bgave the nations before him,
And made *him* rule over kings?
Who gave *them* as the dust to his sword,
As driven stubble to his bow?
- 3 Who pursued them, *and* passed safely
By the way *that* he had not
gone with his feet?
- 4 ^aWho has performed and done *it*,
Calling the generations from
the beginning?
‘I, the LORD, am ^bthe first;
And with the last I *am* ‘He.’”

40:22 ^a Jer. 10:12 ^b Ps. 19:4 40:23 ^a Ps. 107:40 40:25 ^a Is. 40:18
40:26 ^a Ps. 147:4 40:27 ^a Is. 54:7, 8 40:28 ^a Rom. 11:33 40:31 ^a Is.
30:15; 49:23 ^b Ps. 103:5 41:1 ^a Zech. 2:13 ^b Is. 1:18 41:2 ^a Is. 46:11
^b Is. 45:1, 13 41:4 ^a Is. 41:26 ^b Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13 ^c Is. 43:10; 44:6

40:27–31 God is greater than the circumstances within us. Instead of praising the Lord, the nation was complaining to Him that He acted as though He did not know their situation or have any concern for their problems (v. 27; 49:14). Instead of seeing the open door, the Jews saw only the long road before them, and they complained that they did not have strength for the journey. God was asking them to do the impossible.

40:28–31 God knows how we feel and how we fear, and He is adequate to meet our every need. We can never obey God in our own strength, but we can always trust Him to provide the strength we need (Phil. 4:13). If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall, but if we wait on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey. Trusting in the Lord means to look to God for all that we need (Is. 26:3; 30:15). This involves meditating on His character and His promises, praying, and seeking to glorify Him.

40:31 “Renew” means “to exchange,” as taking off old clothing and putting on new. We exchange our

weakness for His power (2 Cor. 12:1–10). As we trust God, He enables us to soar during a crisis, to run when the challenges are many, and to walk faithfully in the routine day-by-day demands of life. Walking in the ordinary pressures of life can be much more difficult than flying like an eagle in a time of crisis.

41:1–44:28 In this section of the book, the Lord seven times says, “Fear not” to His people (41:10, 13, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8), and He says “Don’t be afraid” to us today. As the Jewish remnant faced the challenge of the long journey home and the difficult task of rebuilding, they could think of many causes for fear. But they had one big reason not to be afraid: The Lord was with them and would give them success. God sought to calm their fears by assuring them that He would be going before them and working on their behalf. The Lord explained the wonderful truth that He had three servants in his employ who would accomplish his will: Cyrus, king of Persia (41:1–7); the nation of Israel (vv. 8–29; 43:1–44:27); and the Messiah (42:1–25).

- 5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid;
They drew near and came.
- 6 “Everyone helped his neighbor,
And said to his brother,
“Be of good courage!”
- 7 “So the craftsman encouraged
the ^bgoldsmith;
He who smooths *with* the hammer
inspired him who strikes the anvil,
Saying, “It is ready for the soldering”;
Then he fastened it with pegs,
^c*That* it might not totter.
- 8 “But you, Israel, *are* My servant,
Jacob whom I have ^achosen,
The descendants of Abraham My ^bfriend.
- 9 You whom I have taken from
the ends of the earth,
And called from its farthest regions,
And said to you,
“You *are* My servant,
I have chosen you and have
not cast you away:
- 10 “Fear not, ^bfor I *am* with you;
Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My
righteous right hand.’
- 11 “Behold, all those who were
incensed against you
Shall be ^aashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with
you shall perish.
- 12 You shall seek them and not find them—
Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing,
As a nonexistent thing.
- 13 For I, the LORD your God, will
hold your right hand,
Saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’
- 14 “Fear not, you ^aworm Jacob,
You men of Israel!
I will help you,” says the LORD

- And your Redeemer, the
Holy One of Israel.
- 15 “Behold, ^aI will make you into a new
threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains
and beat *them* small,
And make the hills like chaff.
- 16 You shall ^awinnow them, the
wind shall carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD,
And ^bglory in the Holy One of Israel.
- 17 “The poor and needy seek
water, but *there is* none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not
^aforsake them.
- 18 I will open ^arivers in desolate heights,
And fountains in the midst
of the valleys;
I will make the ^bwilderness
a pool of water,
And the dry land springs of water.
- 19 I will plant in the wilderness the
cedar and the acacia tree,
The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the ^adesert the
cypress tree *and* the pine
And the box tree together,
- 20 ^aThat they may see and know,
And consider and understand
together,
That the hand of the LORD
has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel
has created it.

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLS

- 21 “Present your case,” says the LORD.
“Bring forth your strong *reasons*,”
says the ^aKing of Jacob.

41:6 ^a Is. 40:19 41:7 ^a Is. 44:13 ^b Is. 40:19 ^c Is. 40:20 41:8 ^a Deut. 7:6; 10:15 ^b James 2:23 41:10 ^a Is. 41:13, 14; 43:5 ^b [Deut. 31:6] 41:11 ^a Zech. 12:3 41:14 ^a Job 25:6 41:15 ^a Mic. 4:13 41:16 ^a Jer. 51:2 ^b Is. 45:25 41:17 ^a Rom. 11:2 41:18 ^a Is. 35:6, 7; 43:19; 44:3 ^b Ps. 107:35 41:19 ^a Is. 35:1 41:20 ^a Job 12:9 41:21 ^a Is. 43:15

41:8–10 God is not afraid of the nations because He is greater than the nations (40:12–17); He controls their rise and fall. Here He announced that He would raise up a ruler named Cyrus, who would do his righteous work on earth by defeating other nations for the sake of His people Israel. Cyrus would be a shepherd (44:28) anointed by God (45:1), a bird of prey that could not be stopped (46:11).

41:8–13 In contrast to the fear experienced by the Gentile nations is the confidence shown by Israel, God’s chosen servant, because God was working on their behalf. In spite of their past rebellion, Israel was not cast away by the Lord. The Jewish captives did not

need to fear either Cyrus or Babylon because Cyrus was working for God, and Babylon would be no more. In this passage we sense God’s love for His people and His desire to encourage them to trust Him for the future.

41:17–20 Isaiah turned again to the picture of a desert becoming a garden (32:15–20). The image reminds us of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness and God’s provision for their every need. Water and trees are important possessions in the East, and God will supply both to His people. Certainly Isaiah was also looking beyond the return from Babylon to the future kingdom when “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose” (35:1).

- 22 "Let^a them bring forth and show us what will happen;
Let them show the ^bformer things, what they *were*,
That we may consider them,
And know the latter end of them;
Or declare to us things to come.
- 23 "Show the things that are to come hereafter,
That we may know that you *are* gods;
Yes, ^bdo good or do evil,
That we may be dismayed and see *it* together.
- 24 Indeed ^ayou *are* nothing,
And your work is nothing;
He who chooses you is an abomination.
- 25 "I have raised up one from the north,
And he shall come;
From the rising of the sun ^ahe shall call on My name;
^bAnd he shall come against princes as *though* mortar,
As the potter treads clay.
- 26 "Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know?
And former times, that we may say, '*He is righteous*?
Surely *there is* no one who shows,
Surely *there is* no one who declares,
Surely *there is* no one who hears your words.
- 27 "The first time ^bI said to Zion,
'Look, there they are!'
And I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings.
- 28 "For I looked, and *there was* no man;
I looked among them, but *there was* no counselor,
Who, when I asked of them, could answer a word.
- 29 "Indeed they *are* all worthless;¹
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are* wind and confusion.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

- 42** "Behold! ^aMy Servant whom I uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My soul ^bdelights!
^cI have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
- 2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice*,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
- 3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
- 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
^aAnd the coastlands shall wait for His law."
- 5 Thus says God the LORD,
^aWho created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
^bWho gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
- 6 "I, ^athe LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You ^band give You as a covenant to the people,
As ^ca light to the Gentiles,
- 7 ^aTo open blind eyes,
To ^bbring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in ^cdarkness from the prison house.

41:22 ^aIs. 45:21 ^bIs. 43:9 41:23 ^a[John 13:19] ^bJer. 10:5 41:24 ^a[1 Cor. 8:4] 41:25 ^aEzra 1:2 ^bIs. 41:2 41:26 ^aIs. 43:9 41:27 ^aIs. 41:4 ^bIs. 40:9 41:28 ^aIs. 63:5 41:29 ^aIs. 41:24 ¹Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Targum read *nothing*; Septuagint omits the first line. 42:1 ^a[Phil. 2:7] ^bMatt. 3:17; 17:5 ^c[Is. 11:2] 42:4 ^a[Gen. 49:10] 42:5 ^aZech. 12:1 ^bActs 17:25 42:6 ^aIs. 43:1 ^bIs. 49:8 ^cLuke 2:32 42:7 ^aIs. 35:5 ^bLuke 4:18 ^cIs. 9:2

41:25a Sometimes we forget that God can use even unconverted world leaders for the good of His people and the progress of His work. That's one of the demonstrations that He is really in control of His world. He raised up Pharaoh in Egypt that He might demonstrate His power (Rom. 9:17), and He even used wicked Herod and cowardly Pontius Pilate to accomplish His plan in the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 4:24–28).

41:25b As Cyrus moved across the territory east and north of the Holy Land, the nations were afraid and turned to their gods for help. With keen satire, Isaiah described various workmen helping each other manufacture a god who cannot help them! After all, when the God of heaven is in charge of the conquest, how can people or gods oppose Him? Cyrus may have thought that he was accomplishing his own plans, but actually he was doing the pleasure of the Lord (44:28). By defeating Babylon, Cyrus made it possible for the Jewish

captives to be released and allowed to return to their land to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Ezra 1:1–4).

42:1–7 This is the first of four "Servant Songs" in Isaiah, referring to God's Servant, the Messiah. The others are 49:1–6; 50:1–11; and 52:13–53:12. Contrast "their molded images are wind and confusion" (41:29) with "Behold! My servant" (42:1). Matthew 12:14–21 applies these words to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. He could have destroyed His enemies (the weakest reed), but He was patient and merciful. The Father delights in His Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

42:1 God will accomplish His great plan of salvation for this world through the ministry of the Servant. God chose him, God upheld him, and God enabled him to succeed in his mission. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, one day will come a glorious kingdom on earth, and God will "bring justice to the Gentiles."

- 8 I *am* the LORD, that is My name;
And My ^aglory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
9 Behold, the former things
have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I
tell you of them.”

PRAISE TO THE LORD

- 10 “Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the
ends of the earth,
^bYou who go down to the sea,
and all that is in it,
You coastlands and you
inhabitants of them!
11 Let the wilderness and its
cities lift up *their voice*,
The villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top
of the mountains.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in
the coastlands.
13 The LORD shall go forth
like a mighty man;
He shall stir up *His* zeal
like a man of war.
He shall cry out, “yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

PROMISE OF THE LORD’S HELP

- 14 “I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
16 I will bring the blind by a way
they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they
have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.

- 17 They shall be “turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,
Who say to the molded images,
‘You *are* our gods.’
18 “Hear, you deaf;
And look, you blind, that you may see.
19 “Who is blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger *whom* I send?
Who is blind as *he who* is perfect,
And blind as the LORD’s servant?
20 Seeing many things, ^abut
you do not observe;
Opening the ears, but he does not hear.”

ISRAEL’S OBSTINATE DISOBEDIENCE

- 21 The LORD is well pleased for
His righteousness’ sake;
He will exalt the law and
make *it* honorable.
22 But this is a people robbed
and plundered;
All of them are snared in holes,
And they are hidden in
prison houses;
They are for prey, and no
one delivers;
For plunder, and no one
says, “Restore!”
23 Who among you will give
ear to this?
Who will listen and hear for
the time to come?
24 Who gave Jacob for plunder,
and Israel to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD,
He against whom we have sinned?
^aFor they would not walk in His ways,
Nor were they obedient to His law.
25 Therefore He has poured on
him the fury of His anger
And the strength of battle;
^aIt has set him on fire all around,
^bYet he did not know;
And it burned him,
Yet he did not take *it* to heart.

42:8 ^aIs. 48:11 42:10 ^aPs. 33:3; 40:3; 98:1 ^bPs. 107:23 42:13 ^aIs. 31:4
42:17 ^aPs. 97:7 42:19 ^a[John 9:39, 41] 42:20 ^aRom. 2:21 42:24 ^aIs.
65:2 42:25 ^a2 Kin. 25:9 ^bHos. 7:9 ^cIs. 29:13

42:22 The closing section (vv. 10–25) describes a singing nation (vv. 10–12), giving praise to the Lord, and a silent God who breaks that silence to become a shouting conqueror (vv. 13–17). God is longsuffering toward sinners, but when He begins to work, He wastes no time! The “servant” in verses 18–25 is the people of Israel, blind to their own sins and deaf to God’s voice (6:9, 10); yet the Lord graciously forgave them and led them out of bondage. Now God says to the Babylonians, “Restore!”

42:25 How sad it is when God disciplines us and we do not understand what He is doing or take it to heart. Israel’s captivity in Babylon cured the nation of their idolatry, but it did not create within them a desire to please God and glorify Him.

43:1—44:28 The theme of “Israel God’s Servant” is continued in these chapters with an emphasis on God the Redeemer of Israel (43:1–7; see v. 14; 44:6, 22–24). The word translated “ransom” or “Redeemer” is the

THE REDEEMER OF ISRAEL

- 43** But now, thus says the LORD,
 who created you, O Jacob,
 And He who formed you, O Israel:
 “Fear not, ^afor I have redeemed you;
^bI have called *you* by your name;
 You *are* Mine.
² “When you pass through the
 waters, ^bI *will be* with you;
 And through the rivers, they
 shall not overflow you.
 When you ^cwalk through the fire,
 you shall not be burned,
 Nor shall the flame scorch you.
³ For I *am* the LORD your God,
 The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
^aI gave Egypt for your ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
⁴ Since you were precious in My sight,
 You have been honored,
 And I have ^dloved you;
 Therefore I will give men for you,
 And people for your life.
⁵ “Fear not, for I *am* with you;
 I will bring your descendants
 from the east,
 And ^egather you from the west;
⁶ I will say to the “north, ‘Give them up!’
 And to the south, ‘Do not
 keep them back!’
 Bring My sons from afar,
 And My daughters from the
 ends of the earth—
⁷ Everyone who is ^fcalled by My name,
 Whom ^bI have created for My glory;
 I have formed him, yes, I
 have made him.”
⁸ “Bring out the blind people
 who have eyes,
 And the ^gdeaf who have ears.
⁹ Let all the nations be gathered together,
 And let the people be assembled.
^aWho among them can declare this,
 And show us former things?
 Let them bring out their witnesses,
 that they may be justified;
 Or let them hear and say, “*It is truth.*”

Hebrew word for “a family redeemer,” a near relative who could free family members and their property from bondage by paying their debts for them (see Lev. 25:23–28 and the Book of Ruth).

43:8–13 Israel is God’s servant in the world and also God’s witness to the world. This is another courtroom scene where God challenges the idols. “Let them bring out their witnesses!” says the Judge, but of course the idols are helpless and speechless. Twice the Lord says to Israel, “You are My witnesses” (vv. 10, 12), for it is in the history of Israel that God has revealed himself to the world.

43:14–28 Along with Israel’s new freedom and new witness, Isaiah wrote about Israel’s new exodus. Just as God had led His people out of Egypt and through

- ¹⁰ “You^a *are* My witnesses,” says the LORD,
^b“And My servant whom I have chosen,
 That you may know and ^cbelieve Me,
 And understand that I *am* He.
 Before Me there was no God formed,
 Nor shall there be after Me.
¹¹ I, *even* I, ^a*am* the LORD,
 And besides Me *there is* no savior.
¹² I have declared and saved,
 I have proclaimed,
 And *there was* no “foreign
 god among you;
^bTherefore you *are* My witnesses,”
 Says the LORD, “that I *am* God.
¹³ “Indeed before the day *was*, I *am* He;
 And *there is* no one who can
 deliver out of My hand;
 I work, and who will ^breverse it?”
¹⁴ Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
 The Holy One of Israel:
 “For your sake I will send to Babylon,
 And bring them all down as fugitives—
 The Chaldeans, who rejoice
 in their ships.
¹⁵ I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
 The Creator of Israel, your “King.”
¹⁶ Thus says the LORD, who
^a“makes a way in the sea
 And a ^bpath through the mighty waters,
¹⁷ Who ^a“brings forth the
 chariot and horse,
 The army and the power
 (They shall lie down together,
 they shall not rise;
 They are extinguished, they are
 quenched like a wick):
¹⁸ “Do^a not remember the
 former things,
 Nor consider the things of old.

43:1 ^aIs. 43:5; 44:6 ^bIs. 42:6; 45:4 43:2 [Ps. 66:12; 91:3] ^b[Deut. 31:6] ^cDan. 3:25 43:3 ^a[Prov. 11:8; 21:18] 43:4 ^aIs. 63:9 43:5 ^aIs. 41:10; 44:2 ^bIs. 54:7 43:6 ^aIs. 49:12 43:7 ^aJames 2:7 ^b[2 Cor. 5:17] 43:8 ^aEzek. 12:2 ^bIs. 29:18 43:9 ^aIs. 41:21, 22, 26 43:10 ^aIs. 44:8 ^bIs. 55:4 ^cIs. 41:4; 44:6 43:11 ^aHos. 13:4 43:12 ^aDeut. 32:16 ^bIs. 44:8 43:13 ^aPs. 90:2 ^bJob 9:12 43:15 ^aIs. 41:20, 21 43:16 ^aEx. 14:16, 21, 22 ^bJosh. 3:13 43:17 ^aEx. 14:4–9, 25 43:18 ^aJer. 16:14

the Red Sea (Ex. 12–15), so He would lead them out of Babylon and through the terrible wilderness to their home in the Holy Land. Just as He had defeated Pharaoh’s army (14:28; 15:4), so He would defeat Israel’s enemies so that “they are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick” (43:17).

43:18–21 When God forgives and restores His people, He wants them to forget the failures of the past, witness for Him in the present, and claim His promises for the future (vv. 18–21). Why should we remember that which God has forgotten (v. 25)? He forgave the people, not because they brought Him sacrifices—for they had no altar in Babylon—but purely because of His mercy and grace.

- ¹⁹ Behold, I will do a ^anew thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
^bI will even make a road in
the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.
- ²⁰ The beast of the field will honor Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because ^aI give waters in
the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen.
- ²¹ ^aThis people I have formed
for Myself;
They shall declare My ^bpraise.

PLEADING WITH UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL

- ²² “But you have not called
upon Me, O Jacob;
And you ^ahave been weary
of Me, O Israel.
- ²³ ^aYou have not brought Me the sheep
for your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me
with your sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve
with grain offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.
- ²⁴ You have bought Me no sweet
cane with money,
Nor have you satisfied Me with
the fat of your sacrifices;
But you have burdened Me
with your sins,
You have ^awearied Me with
your iniquities.
- ²⁵ “I, *even I, am* He who ^ablots out your
transgressions ^bfor My own sake;
^cAnd I will not remember your sins.
- ²⁶ Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your *case*, that you
may be acquitted.
- ²⁷ Your first father sinned,
And your mediators have
transgressed against Me.
- ²⁸ Therefore I will profane the
princes of the sanctuary;
^aI will give Jacob to the curse,
And Israel to reproaches.

GOD’S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

- 44** “Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant,
And Israel whom I have chosen.
- ² Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the
womb, *who* will help you:
‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant;
And you, Jeshurun, whom
I have chosen.
- ³ For I will pour water on
him who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on
your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
- ⁴ They will spring up among
the grass
Like willows by the watercourses.’
- ⁵ One will say, ‘I *am* the LORD’s’;
Another will call *himself* by
the name of Jacob;
Another will write *with* his
hand, ‘The LORD’s,’
And name *himself* by the
name of Israel.

THERE IS NO OTHER GOD

- ⁶ “Thus says the LORD, the
King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
^a‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last;
Besides Me *there is* no God.
- ⁷ And ^awho can proclaim as I do?
Then let him 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 these to them.
- ⁸ Do not fear, nor be afraid;
^aHave I not told you from that
time, and declared *it*?
^bYou *are* My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed ^c*there is* no other Rock;
I know not *one*.”

43:19 ^a [2 Cor. 5:17] ^b Ex. 17:6 43:20 ^a Is. 48:21 43:21 ^a Ps. 102:18
^b Jer. 13:11 43:22 ^a Mal. 1:13; 3:14 43:23 ^a Amos 5:25 43:24 ^a Is.
1:14; 7:13 43:25 ^a Jer. 50:20 ^b Ezek. 36:22 ^c Is. 1:18 43:28 ^a Dan.
9:11 44:6 ^a Is. 41:4 44:7 ^a Is. 41:4, 22, 26 44:8 ^a Is. 41:22 ^b Is.
43:10, 12 ^c 1 Sam. 2:2

44:1–20 God chose the people of Israel and redeemed them, but He also formed them for himself. In this chapter, Isaiah contrasts God’s forming of Israel (vv. 1–8) with the Gentiles forming their own gods (vv. 9–20). Because God formed Israel, chose them, and redeemed them, they had nothing to fear. He will pour water on the land and His Spirit on the people, and both will prosper to the glory of the Lord. The final fulfillment of this will be in the future kingdom age when Messiah reigns.

44:9–20 Isaiah shows us the folly of idolatry and his words should be compared with Psalm 115. Those who defend idols and worship them are just like the idols themselves: blind and ignorant and “nothing.” God made people in His own image, and now they are making gods in their own image! Part of the tree becomes a god, and the rest of the tree becomes fuel for the fire. The worshiper is feeding on ashes and deriving no benefit at all from the worship experience.

IDOLATRY IS FOOLISHNESS

- ⁹ “Those who make an image, all of them *are* useless,
And their precious things shall not profit;
They *are* their own witnesses;
^bThey neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.
¹⁰ Who would form a god or mold an image
“That profits him nothing?
¹¹ Surely all his companions would be ^aashamed;
And the workmen, they *are* mere men.
Let them all be gathered together,
Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear,
They shall be ashamed together.
¹² “The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals,
Fashions it with hammers,
And works it with the strength of his arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails;
He drinks no water and is faint.
¹³ The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man,
that it may remain in the house.
¹⁴ He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures *it* for himself among the trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes *it*.
¹⁵ Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it and warm himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships *it*;
He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.
¹⁶ He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
“Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire.”
¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.

He falls down before it and worships *it*,
Prays to it and says,
“Deliver me, for you *are* my god!”

- ¹⁸ “They do not know nor understand;
For ^bHe has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see,
And their hearts, so that they cannot ^cunderstand.
¹⁹ And no one ^aconsiders in his heart,
Nor *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say,
“I have burned half of it in the fire,
Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten *it*;
And shall I make the rest of it an abomination?
Shall I fall down before a block of wood?”
²⁰ He feeds on ashes;
^aA deceived heart has turned him aside;
And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, “*Is there* not a ^blie in my right hand?”

ISRAEL IS NOT FORGOTTEN

- ²¹ “Remember these, O Jacob,
And Israel, for you *are* My servant;
I have formed you, you *are* My servant;
O Israel, you will not be ^aforgotten by Me!
²² ^aI have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for ^bI have redeemed you.”
²³ ^aSing, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it*!
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, you mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And ^bglorified Himself in Israel.

JUDAH WILL BE RESTORED

- ²⁴ Thus says the LORD, ^ayour Redeemer,
And ^bHe who formed you from the womb:
“I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things*,
^cWho stretches out the heavens all alone,

44:9 ^a Is. 41:24 ^b Ps. 115:4 44:10 ^a Hab. 2:18 44:11 ^a Ps. 97:7
44:12 ^a Jer. 10:3–5 44:18 ^a Is. 45:20 ^b Is. 6:9, 10; 29:10 ^c Jer. 10:14
44:19 ^a Is. 46:8 44:20 ^a 2 Thess. 2:11 ^b Rom. 1:25 44:21 ^a Is. 49:15
44:22 ^a Is. 43:25 ^b 1 Cor. 6:20 44:23 ^a Ps. 69:34 ^b Is. 49:3; 60:21
44:24 ^a Is. 43:14 ^b Is. 43:1 ^c Job 9:8

44:21–26 God formed Israel, forgave His people their sins (v. 22; see 43:25), and is glorified in them (44:23). He speaks to His people and is faithful to keep His

Word (v. 26). May we never take for granted the privilege we have of knowing and worshipping the true and living God!

- Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
 25 Who ^afrustrates the signs ^bof the babblers,
 And drives diviners mad;
 Who turns wise men backward,
^cAnd makes their knowledge foolishness;
 26 ^aWho confirms the word of His servant,
 And performs the counsel of His messengers;
 Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,'
 To the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,'
 And I will raise up her waste places;
 27 ^aWho says to the deep, 'Be dry!'
 And I will dry up your rivers';
 28 Who says of ^aCyrus, '*He is My shepherd,*
 And he shall perform all My pleasure,
 Saying to Jerusalem, ^b"You shall be built,"
 And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."

CYRUS, GOD'S INSTRUMENT

- 45** "Thus says the LORD to His anointed,
 To ^aCyrus, whose ^bright hand I have held—
^cTo subdue nations before him
 And ^dloose the armor of kings,
 To open before him the double doors,
 So that the gates will not be shut:
 2 'I will go before you
^aAnd make the crooked places' straight;
^bI will break in pieces the gates of bronze
 And cut the bars of iron.
 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
 And hidden riches of secret places,
^aThat you may know that I, the LORD,
 Who ^bcall *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.
 4 For ^aJacob My servant's sake,
 And Israel My elect,
 I have even called you by your name;
 I have named you, though you have not known Me.
 5 I ^a*am* the LORD, and ^b*there is no other*;
There is no God besides Me.
^c'I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

- 6 ^aThat they may ^bknow from the rising of the sun to its setting
 That *there is none besides Me.*
I am the LORD, and *there is no other*;
 7 I form the light and create darkness,
 I make peace and ^a'create calamity';
 I, the LORD, do all these *things*.
 8 "Rain^a down, you heavens, from above,
 And let the skies pour down righteousness;
 Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation,
 And let righteousness spring up together.
 I, the LORD, have created it.
 9 "Woe to him who strives with ^ahis Maker!
Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth!
^bShall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'
 Or shall your handiwork *say*, 'He has no hands'?
 10 Woe to him who says to *his* father, 'What are you begetting?'
 Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?'"

- 11 Thus says the LORD,
 The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
^a"Ask Me of things to come concerning ^bMy sons;
 And concerning ^cthe work of My hands, you command Me.
 12 ^aI have made the earth, and ^bcreated man on it.
 I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
 And ^c'all their host I have commanded.
 13 ^aI have raised him up in righteousness,
 And I will direct all his ways;
 He shall ^bbuild My city
 And let My exiles go free,
^c'Not for price nor reward,"
 Says the LORD of hosts.

44:25 ^a Is. 47:13 ^b Jer. 50:36 ^c 1 Cor. 1:20, 27 44:26 ^a Zech. 1:6
 44:27 ^a Jer. 50:38; 51:36 44:28 ^a Ezra 1:1 ^b Ezra 6:7 45:1 ^a Is. 44:28
^b Is. 41:13 ^c Dan. 5:30 ^d Job 12:21 45:2 ^a Is. 40:4 ^b Ps. 107:16 ^c Dead
 Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *mountains*; Targum reads *I will trample
 down the walls*; Vulgate reads *I will humble the great ones of the earth*.
 45:3 ^a Is. 41:23 ^b Ex. 33:12 45:4 ^a Is. 44:1 45:5 ^a Deut. 4:35; 32:39 ^b Is.
 45:14, 18 ^c Ps. 18:32 45:6 ^a Mal. 1:11 ^b [Is. 11:9; 52:10] 45:7 ^a Amos
 3:6 45:8 ^a Ps. 85:11 45:9 ^a Is. 64:8 ^b Jer. 18:6 45:11 ^a Is. 8:19 ^b Jer.
 31:9 ^c Is. 29:23; 60:21; 64:8 45:12 ^a Is. 42:5 ^b Gen. 1:26 ^c Gen. 2:1
 45:13 ^a Is. 41:2 ^b 2 Chr. 36:22 ^c [Rom. 3:24]

44:1–25 Just as prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for service, so Cyrus was anointed by God to perform His special service for Israel's sake. In this sense, Cyrus was a "messiah," an "anointed one." God called him by name over a century before he was born! Cyrus was the human instrument for the conquest, but Jehovah God gave the victories.
 45:9, 10 Anyone who opposed Cyrus was arguing with

God, and that was like the clay commanding the potter or the child giving orders to his parents.

45:13 God raised up Cyrus to do His specific will, and nothing would prevent him from succeeding. Note the emphasis on salvation. The idols cannot save Babylon (v. 20), but God is the Savior of Israel (vv. 15, 17). He is "a just God and a Savior" (v. 21), and He offers salvation to the whole world (v. 22).

THE LORD, THE ONLY SAVIOR

¹⁴Thus says the LORD:

^a“The labor of Egypt and
merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and
they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over ^bin chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you,
saying, “Surely God is in you,
And *there is no other*;
^a*There is no other God.*”

- ¹⁵ Truly You *are* God, ^awho hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!
- ¹⁶ They shall be ^aashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who *are* makers of idols.
- ¹⁷ ^a*But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an ^beverlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or ^cdisgraced
Forever and ever.
- ¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
^aWho created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be ^binhabited:
^c*I am the LORD, and there is no other.*
- ¹⁹ I have not spoken in ^asecret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
‘Seek Me in vain’;
^bI, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.
- ²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped
from the nations.
^aThey have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of
their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
- ²¹ Tell and bring forth *your case*;
Yes, let them take counsel together.
^aWho has declared this from
ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?

Have not I, the LORD?

^bAnd *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.

- ²² “Look to Me, and be saved,
^aAll you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
- ²³ ^aI have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My
mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every ^bknee shall bow,
^cEvery tongue shall take an oath.
- ²⁴ He shall say,
‘Surely in the LORD I have
^arighteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And ^ball shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
- ²⁵ ^aIn the LORD all the
descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and ^bshall glory.”

DEAD IDOLS AND THE LIVING GOD

- 46** Bel ^abows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the
beasts and on the cattle.
Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
^bA burden to the weary *beast*.
- ² They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
^aBut have themselves gone
into captivity.
- ³ “Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the
house of Israel,
^aWho have been upheld *by*
Me from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
- ⁴ Even to *your* old age, ^aI *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs ^bI will carry *you*!
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.
- ⁵ “To ^awhom will you liken Me,
and make *Me* equal

45:14 ^a Zech. 8:22, 23 ^b Ps. 149:8 ^c 1 Cor. 14:25 ^d Is. 45:5 45:15 ^a Ps. 44:24 45:16 ^a Is. 44:11 45:17 ^a Is. 26:4 ^b Is. 51:6 ^c Is. 29:22 45:18 ^a Is. 42:5 ^b Ps. 115:16 ^c Is. 45:5 45:19 ^a Deut. 30:11 ^b Ps. 19:8 45:20 ^a Is. 44:9; 46:7 45:21 ^a Is. 41:22; 43:9 ^b Is. 44:8 45:22 ^a Ps. 22:27; 65:5 45:23 ^a [Heb. 6:13] ^b Rom. 14:11 ^c Deut. 6:13 45:24 ^a [1 Cor. 1:30] ^b Is. 41:11 45:25 ^a Is. 45:17 ^b 1 Cor. 1:31 46:1 ^a Jer. 50:2 ^b Jer. 10:5 46:2 ^a Jer. 48:7 46:3 ^a Ps. 71:6 46:4 ^a Mal. 3:6 ^b Ps. 48:14 46:5 ^a Is. 40:18, 25

46:1–13 The false gods were disgraced. Bel was the Babylonian sun god, and Nebo was his son, the god of writing and learning. But both of them together could not stop Cyrus! As the Babylonians fled from

the enemy, they had to carry their gods, but their gods went into captivity with the prisoners of war! God assures His people that He will carry them from the womb to the tomb.

- And compare Me, that we should be alike?
- 6 ^aThey lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a ^bgoldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
- 7 ^aThey bear it on the shoulder, they carry it And set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though ^bone cries out to it, yet it cannot answer Nor save him out of his trouble.
- 8 “Remember this, and show yourselves men; ^aRecall to mind, O you transgressors.
- 9 ^aRemember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and ^bthere is no other; I *am* God, and *there is none like Me*,
- 10 ^aDeclaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, ^b“My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,”
- 11 Calling a bird of prey ^afrom the east, The man ^bwho executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed ^c“I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.
- 12 “Listen to Me, you ^astubborn-hearted, ^bWho *are* far from righteousness:
- 13 ^aI bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation ^bshall not linger. And I will place ^csalvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.

THE HUMILIATION OF BABYLON

- 47** “Come ^adown and ^bsit in the dust, O virgin daughter of ‘Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate.
- 2 ^aTake the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers.

- 3 ^aYour nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen; ^bI will take vengeance, And I will not arbitrate with a man.”
- 4 *As for* ^aour Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.
- 5 “Sit in ^asilence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; ^bFor you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms.
- 6 ^aI was angry with My people; ^bI have profaned My inheritance, And given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; ^cOn the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.
- 7 And you said, ‘I shall be ^aa lady forever,’ So that you did not ^btake these *things* to heart, ^cNor remember the latter end of them.
- 8 “Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, ‘I *am*, and *there is no one else besides me*; I shall not sit *as a widow*, Nor shall I know the loss of children’;
- 9 But these two *things* shall come to you ^aIn a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries, For the great abundance of your enchantments.
- 10 “For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, ‘No one ^asees me’; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, ‘I *am*, and *there is no one else besides me*.’

46:6 ^aIs. 40:19; 41:6 ^bIs. 44:12 46:7 ^aJer. 10:5 ^bIs. 45:20 46:8 ^aIs. 44:19 46:9 ^aDeut. 32:7 ^bIs. 45:5, 21 46:10 ^aIs. 45:21; 48:3 ^bPs. 33:11 46:11 ^aIs. 41:2, 25 ^bIs. 44:28 ^cNum. 23:19 46:12 ^aPs. 76:5 ^b[Rom. 10:3] 46:13 ^a[Rom. 1:17] ^bHab. 2:3 ^cIs. 62:11 47:1 ^aJer. 48:18 ^bIs. 3:26 ^cJer. 25:12; 50:1—51:64 47:2 ^aEx. 11:5 47:3 ^aIs. 3:17; 20:4 ^b[Rom. 12:19] 47:4 ^aJer. 50:34 47:5 ^a1 Sam. 2:9 ^b[Dan. 2:37] 47:6 ^a2 Sam. 24:14 ^bIs. 43:28 ^cDeut. 28:49, 50 47:7 ^aRev. 18:7 ^bIs. 42:25; 46:8 ^cDeut. 32:29 47:9 ^a1 Thess. 5:3 47:10 ^aIs. 29:15

46:13 How comforting to know that our God cares for us before we are born (Ps. 139:13–16), when we get old, and each moment in between!

47:1–15 Babylon, the proud queen, is now a humbled

slave. “I shall be a lady forever,” she boasted (v. 7). But in a moment, the judgment for her sins caught up with her, and she became a widow.

¹¹ Therefore evil shall come upon you;
You shall not know from where it arises.
And trouble shall fall upon you;
You will not be able to put it off.
And ^adesolation shall come
upon you ^bsuddenly,
Which you shall not know.

¹² “Stand now with your enchantments
And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored
from your youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit,
Perhaps you will prevail.

¹³ ^aYou are wearied in the multitude
of your counsels;
Let now ^bthe astrologers, the stargazers,
And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you
From what shall come upon you.

¹⁴ Behold, they shall be ^aas stubble,
The fire shall ^bburn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not be a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!

¹⁵ Thus shall they be to you
With whom you have labored,
^aYour merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each
one to his quarter.
No one shall save you.

ISRAEL REFINED FOR GOD'S GLORY

48 “Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the
name of Israel,
And have come forth from the
wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But ^anot in truth or in righteousness;
² For they call themselves
^aafter the holy city,
And ^blean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name:

³ “I have ^adeclared the former
things from the beginning;
They went forth from My mouth,
and I caused them to hear it.

Suddenly I did *them*, ^band
they came to pass.

⁴ Because I knew that you *were* obstinate,
And ^ayour neck *was* an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze,

⁵ Even from the beginning I
have declared *it* to you;
Before it came to pass I
proclaimed *it* to you,
Lest you should say, ‘My
idol has done them,
And my carved image and
my molded image
Have commanded them.’

⁶ “You have heard;
See all this.
And will you not declare *it*?
I have made you hear new
things from this time,
Even hidden things, and you
did not know them.

⁷ They are created now and not
from the beginning;
And before this day you have
not heard them,
Lest you should say, ‘Of
course I knew them.’

⁸ Surely you did not hear;
Surely you did not know;
Surely from long ago your
ear was not opened.
For I knew that you would deal
very treacherously,
And were called ^aa transgressor
from the womb.

⁹ “For ^aMy name's sake ^bI will
defer My anger,
And *for* My praise I will
restrain it from you,
So that I do not cut you off.

¹⁰ Behold, ^aI have refined you,
but not as silver;
I have tested you in the
^bfurnace of affliction.

47:11 ^a 1 Thess. 5:3 ^b Is. 29:5 47:13 ^a Is. 57:10 ^b Dan. 2:2, 10
47:14 ^a Nah. 1:10 ^b Jer. 51:58 47:15 ^a Rev. 18:11 48:1 ^a Jer. 4:2; 5:2
48:2 ^a Is. 52:1; 64:10 ^b Mic. 3:11 48:3 ^a Is. 44:7, 8; 46:10 ^b Josh. 21:45
48:4 ^a Deut. 31:27 48:8 ^a Ps. 58:3 48:9 ^a Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 44 ^b Ps.
78:38 48:10 ^a Ps. 66:10 ^b Deut. 4:20

47:12–14 Neither Babylon's idols nor her occult practices was able to warn her or prepare her for her destruction. But God knew that Babylon would fall because He had planned it ages ago! He called Cyrus, who swooped down on Babylon like a bird of prey. Babylon had shown no mercy to the Jews, and God judged them accordingly.

48:1–22 The Jews had become comfortable and complacent in their captivity and did not want to leave. They had followed the counsel of Jeremiah (Jer. 29:4–7)

and had houses, gardens, and families, but they had become so attached to those things that it would not be easy for them to pack up and go to the Holy Land. Nevertheless, the Holy Land was where they belonged and where God had a work for them to do.

48:1, 2 God told His people that they were hypocritical in using His name and identifying with His city but not obeying His will. They were “obstinate” (v. 4) and were not excited about the new things God was doing for them.

- ¹¹ For My own sake, for My
own sake, I will do it;
For ^ahow should *My name* be profaned?
And ^bI will not give My glory to another.

GOD'S ANCIENT PLAN TO REDEEM ISRAEL

- ¹² "Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I *am* He, ^aI *am* the ^bFirst,
I *am* also the Last.
- ¹³ Indeed ^aMy hand has laid the
foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched
out the heavens;
When ^bI call to them,
They stand up together.
- ¹⁴ "All of you, assemble
yourselves, and hear!
Who among them has
declared these *things*?
^aThe LORD loves him;
^bHe shall do His pleasure on Babylon,
And His arm *shall be against*
the Chaldeans.
- ¹⁵ I, *even* I, have spoken;
Yes, ^aI have called him,
I have brought him, and his
way will prosper.
- ¹⁶ "Come near to Me, hear this:
^aI have not spoken in secret
from the beginning;
From the time that it was, I *was* there.
And now ^bthe Lord God and His Spirit
Have^c sent Me."
- ¹⁷ Thus says ^athe LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
^a"I *am* the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
^bWho leads you by the way
you should go.
- ¹⁸ "Oh, that you had heeded My
commandments!

^bThen your peace would have
been like a river,
And your righteousness like
the waves of the sea.

- ¹⁹ ^aYour descendants also would
have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body
like the grains of sand;
His name would not have
been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me."

²⁰ ^aGo forth from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing,
Declare, proclaim this,
Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, "The LORD has ^bredeemed
His servant Jacob!"

- ²¹ And they ^adid not thirst
When He led them through
the deserts;
He ^bcaused the waters to flow
from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the
waters gushed out.

²² "There^a is no peace," says the
LORD, "for the wicked."

THE SERVANT, THE LIGHT TO THE GENTILES

49 "Listen, ^aO coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you
peoples from afar!
^bThe LORD has called Me
from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother He
has made mention of My name.

48:11 ^a Ezek. 20:9 ^b Is. 42:8 48:12 ^a Deut. 32:39 ^b [Rev. 22:13]
48:13 ^a Ps. 102:25 ^b Is. 40:26 48:14 ^a Is. 45:1 ^b Is. 44:28; 47:1–15
48:15 ^a Is. 45:1, 2 48:16 ^a Is. 45:19 ^b Zech. 2:8, 9, 11 ^c The Hebrew verb
is singular. 48:17 ^a Is. 43:14 ^b Ps. 32:8 48:18 ^a Ps. 81:13 ^b Ps. 119:165
48:19 ^a Gen. 22:17 48:20 ^a Zech. 2:6, 7 ^b [Ex. 19:4–6] 48:21 ^a [Is. 41:17,
18] ^b Ex. 17:6 48:22 ^a [Is. 57:21] 49:1 ^a Is. 41:1 ^b Jer. 1:5

48:18–20 Had the Jews obeyed the Lord in the first place, they would have experienced peace and not war (vv. 18, 19); but it was not too late. He had put them into the furnace to refine them and prepare them for their future work (v. 10). "Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans!" was God's command (v. 20; see Jer. 50:8; 51:6; 45; Rev. 18:4). God would go before them and prepare the way, and they had nothing to fear.

48:20–22 One would think that the Jews would have been eager to leave their prison and return to their land to see God do new and great things for them. But they had grown accustomed to the security of bondage and had forgotten the challenges of freedom. The church today can easily grow complacent with its comfort and affluence. God may have to put us into the furnace to remind us that we are here to be servants and not consumers or spectators.

49:1–50:3 The "Servant" is Messiah. He addresses the nations that did not know Israel's God. The Gentiles were "distant," and only God's Servant could bring them near (Eph. 2:11–22). Christ confirmed God's promises to the Jews and also extended God's grace to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:8–12). In this message, God's Servant explains His ministry as bringing light in the darkness (Is. 49:1–7), liberty to the captive (vv. 8–13), and love and hope to the discouraged (49:14–50:3).

49:1–7 What right did God's Servant have to address the Gentile nations with such authority? Before His birth, He had been called by God to His ministry (Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15), and God had prepared him like a "two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16). Messiah came as both a Servant and a Warrior, serving those who trust Him and ultimately judging those who resist Him.

- 2 And He has made ^aMy mouth
like a sharp sword;
^bIn the shadow of His hand
He has hidden Me,
And made Me ^ca polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me.”
- 3 “And He said to me,
^a“You *are* My servant, O Israel,
^bIn whom I will be glorified.’
- 4 ^aThen I said, ‘I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for
nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward
is with the LORD,
And my work with my God.’”
- 5 “And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the
womb *to be* His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,
So that Israel ^ais gathered to Him¹
(For I shall be glorious in
the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
- 6 Indeed He says,
‘It is too small a thing that You
should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved
ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a ^alight
to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation
to the ends of the earth.’”
- 7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel,
their Holy One,
^aTo Him whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers:
^b“Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You.”

⁸Thus says the LORD:

- “In an ^aacceptable time I
have heard You,
And in the day of salvation
I have helped You;
I will preserve You ^band give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the
desolate heritages;
- 9 That You may say ^a“to the
prisoners, ‘Go forth,’
To those who *are* in darkness,
‘Show yourselves.’
- “They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures *shall be* on
all desolate heights.
- 10 They shall neither ^ahunger
nor thirst,
^bNeither heat nor sun shall
strike them;
For He who has mercy on
them ^cwill lead them,
Even by the springs of water
He will guide them.
- 11 ^aI will make each of My
mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.
- 12 Surely ^athese shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north
and the west,
And these from the land of Sinim.”
- 13 ^aSing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted
His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

49:2 ^a Rev. 1:16; 2:12 ^b Is. 51:16 ^c Ps. 45:5 49:3 ^a [Zech. 3:8] ^b Is. 44:23 49:4 ^a [Ezek. 3:19] 49:5 ^a Matt. 23:37 ¹ Qere, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Septuagint read *is gathered to Him*; Kethib reads *is not gathered*. 49:6 ^a [Luke 2:32] 49:7 ^a [Is. 53:3] ^b [Is. 52:15] 49:8 ^a 2 Cor. 6:2 ^b Is. 42:6 49:9 ^a Is. 61:1 49:10 ^a Rev. 7:16 ^b Ps. 121:6 ^c Ps. 23:2 49:11 ^a Is. 40:4 49:12 ^a Is. 43:5, 6 49:13 ^a Is. 44:23

49:3 The Jewish nation was called to glorify God and be a light to the Gentiles, but they failed in their mission. This is why Messiah is called “Israel” in v. 3: He did the work that Israel was supposed to do. Today, the church is God’s light in the dark world (Acts 13:46–49; see Matt. 5:14–16), and like Israel, we seem to be failing in our mission to take the good news to the ends of the earth.

49:4 As Jesus Christ ministered on earth, especially to His own people Israel, at times His work seemed in vain. The religious leaders opposed Him, the disciples did not always understand Him, and those He helped did not always thank Him. He lived and labored by faith, and God gave him success.

49:8–13 Not only is God’s Servant the “new Israel,” but

He is also the “new Moses” in setting His people free. Jesus Christ is God’s covenant (42:6), so we can be sure that God will keep His promises. Moses led the nation out of bondage in Egypt, and God will lead His people out of captivity in Babylon. Joshua led the people into their land so they could claim their inheritance, and God will bring them back to their land and “cause them to inherit the desolate heritages” (49:8).

49:8 If God had not restored the people, the city, and the temple, He could not have fulfilled His promises concerning the Messiah. With no Bethlehem, where would He have been born? With no Nazareth, where would He have grown up? With no Jerusalem and no temple, where would He have taught, suffered, and died? And He did this for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

GOD WILL REMEMBER ZION

- ¹⁴ ^aBut Zion said, “The LORD
has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me.”
- ¹⁵ “Can^a a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on
the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
^bYet I will not forget you.
- ¹⁶ See, ^aI have inscribed you on
the palms of *My hands*;
Your walls *are* continually before Me.
- ¹⁷ Your sons¹ shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those
who laid you waste
Shall go away from you.
- ¹⁸ ^aLift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together
and come to you.
As I live,” says the LORD,
“You shall surely clothe yourselves
with them all ^bas an ornament,
And bind them *on you* as a bride *does*.
- ¹⁹ “For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
^aWill even now be too small
for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed
you up will be far away.
- ²⁰ ^aThe children you will have,
^bAfter you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
“The place *is* too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.”

- ²¹ Then you will say in your heart,
“Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children
and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where *were* they?”

²² ^aThus says the Lord GOD:

- “Behold, I will lift My hand in
an oath to the nations,
And set up My standard for the peoples;
They shall bring your sons in *their* arms,
And your daughters shall be
carried on *their* shoulders;
²³ ^aKings shall be your foster fathers,
And their queens your
nursing mothers;
They shall bow down to you with
their faces to the earth,
And ^blick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I *am* the LORD,
^cFor they shall not be ashamed
who wait for Me.”

- ²⁴ ^aShall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the captives of the
righteous¹ be delivered?

^{49:14} ^a Is. 40:27 ^{49:15} ^a Ps. 103:13 ^b Rom. 11:29 ^{49:16} ^a Song 8:6
^{49:17} ¹ Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *builders*.
^{49:18} ^a Is. 60:4 ^b Prov. 17:6 ^{49:19} ^a Zech. 10:10 ^{49:20} ^a Is. 60:4
^b [Rom. 11:11] ^{49:22} ^a Is. 60:4 ^{49:23} ^a Is. 52:15 ^b Ps. 72:9 ^c [Rom. 5:5]
^{49:24} ^a Luke 11:21, 22 ¹ Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea
Scrolls, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the mighty*; Septuagint reads *unjustly*.

The Ways God Loves

Is. 49:14

The Lord assures His people of His love by comparing Himself to a compassionate mother (49:14–23), a courageous warrior (49:24–26), and a constant lover (50:1–3). God still longs to fulfill these roles in our lives.

(1) A *compassionate mother* (49:14–23). The Bible emphasizes the fatherhood of God, but God’s nature also has a “motherhood” side that we must not forget. God is compassionate, and He comforts us as a mother comforts her children (66:13). Isaiah pictures Israel as a nursing child, totally dependent on the Lord, who will never forget them or forsake them.

(2) A *courageous warrior* (49:24–26). The Babylonians were fierce warriors, but the Lord would snatch Israel from their grasp. In His compassion, He would set the captives free and see to it that Babylon would never afflict them again. The fact that God permitted Babylon to conquer His people did not mean that God was weak or unconcerned. When the right time comes, He will set His people free.

(3) A *constant lover* (50:1–3). The image of Israel as the wife of Jehovah is found often in the prophets (54:4–5; 62:1–5; Jer. 2:1–3; 3:1–11; Ezek. 16; Hos. 2). Israel was “married” to Jehovah when they accepted the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 19–20), but they violated that covenant by playing the harlot and worshiping idols. But God did not forsake His people even though they had been unfaithful to Him.

²⁵But thus says the LORD:

“Even the captives of the mighty
shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible
be delivered;
For I will contend with him
who contends with you,
And I will save your children.
²⁶ I will ^afeed those who oppress
you with their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their
own ^bblood as with sweet wine.
All flesh ^cshall know
That I, the LORD, *am* your Savior,
And your Redeemer, the
Mighty One of Jacob.”

THE SERVANT, ISRAEL'S HOPE

50 Thus says the LORD:

“Where is ^athe certificate of
your mother's divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My ^bcreditors is it to
whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities ^cyou have
sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your
mother has been put away.
² Why, when I came, *was there* no man?
Why, 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?
Indeed with My ^arebuke
I dry up the sea,

I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because
there is no water,
And die of thirst.

³ ^aI clothe the heavens with blackness,
^bAnd I make sackcloth their covering.”

⁴ “The^a Lord GOD has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to *him who is* ^bweary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.

⁵ The Lord GOD ^ahas opened My ear;
And I was not ^brebellious,
Nor did I turn away.

⁶ ^aI gave My back to those who struck Me,
And ^bMy cheeks to those who
plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from
shame and ^cspitting.

⁷ “For the Lord GOD will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore ^aI have set My face
like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.

⁸ ^aHe is near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who is My adversary?
Let him come near Me.

49:26 ^aIs. 9:20 ^bRev. 14:20 ^cPs. 9:16 50:1 ^aDeut. 24:1 ^bDeut. 32:30; 2 Kin. 4:1 ^cIs. 52:3 50:2 ^aNah. 1:4 50:3 ^aEx. 10:21 ^bRev. 6:12 50:4 ^aEx. 4:11 ^bMatt. 11:28 50:5 ^aPs. 40:6 ^bMatt. 26:39 50:6 ^aMatt. 27:26 ^bMatt. 26:67; 27:30 ^cLam. 3:30 50:7 ^aEzek. 3:8, 9 50:8 ^a[Rom. 8:32–34]

50:2 How could the people say they were forgotten and forsaken, when the Lord is a compassionate mother, a courageous warrior, and a constant lover? He is faithful to His Word even when we are unfaithful (2 Tim. 2:11–13). He is faithful to chasten when we rebel (Heb. 12:1–11), but He is also faithful to forgive when we repent and confess (1 John 1:9). The Servant's message to the Gentiles was one of hope and blessing. He would deal with His people so that they, in turn, could bring God's blessing to the Gentiles.

50:4–11 In the first two “Servant Songs” (42:1–7; 49:1–7), we find hints of opposition to Messiah's ministry, but in this third song, his suffering is vividly described. When we get to the fourth song (52:12–53:12), we will be told not only how He suffered, but why His suffering was necessary.

Note that four times in this passage the Servant uses the name “Lord GOD” (50:4, 5, 7, 9). “Jehovah Adonai” can also be translated “sovereign LORD,” and you will find this title nowhere else in the “Servant Songs.” The name “Jehovah Adonai” means that “God claims the unrestricted obedience of all.” So the emphasis here is on the Servant's submission to the Lord God in every area of His life and service.

50:4 The Servant's mind was submitted to the Lord God so that he could learn His work and His will. Everything

Jesus said and did was taught to Him by His Father (John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28). He prayed to the Father for guidance (John 11:42; see Mark 1:35) and meditated on the Word. What God taught the Servant, the Servant shared with those who needed encouragement and help. The Servant sets a good example here for all who know the importance of a daily quiet time with the Lord.

50:5 The Servant's will was also yielded to the Lord God. “I have listened” is the description of one that hears and obeys the voice of the master. The people to whom Isaiah ministered were neither willing nor obedient (1:19), but the Servant did the will of the Lord God. This was not easy, for it meant yielding His body to wicked men who mocked Him, whipped Him, spat on Him, and then nailed Him to a cross (Matt. 26:67; 27:26, 30).

50:7–11 The Servant did all of this by faith in the Lord God. He was determined to do God's will even if it meant going to a cross (Luke 9:51; John 18:1–11), for he knew that the Lord God would help him. The Servant was falsely accused, but he knew that God would vindicate him and eventually put His enemies to shame. Keep in mind that when Jesus Christ was ministering here on earth, he had to live by faith even as we must today. He did not use His divine powers selfishly for himself but trusted God and depended on the power of the Spirit.

- 9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?
^aIndeed they will all grow
old like a garment;
^bThe moth will eat them up.
- 10 “Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who ^awalks in darkness
And has no light?
^bLet him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely upon his God.
- 11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:
Walk in the light of your fire and in
the sparks you have kindled—
^aThis you shall have from My hand:
You shall lie down ^bin torment.

THE LORD COMFORTS ZION

- 51** “Listen to Me, ^ayou who follow
after righteousness,
You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock *from which*
you were hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *from*
which you were dug.
- 2 ^aLook to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
^bFor I called him alone,
And ^cblessed him and increased him.”
- 3 For the LORD will ^acomfort Zion,
He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert ^blike the
garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.
- 4 “Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
^aFor law will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest

- ^bAs a light of the peoples.
- 5 ^aMy righteousness *is* near,
My salvation has gone forth,
^bAnd My arms will judge the peoples;
^cThe coastlands will wait upon Me,
And ^don My arm they will trust.
- 6 ^aLift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath.
For ^bthe heavens will vanish
away like smoke,
^cThe earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will
die in like manner;
But My salvation will be ^dforever,
And My righteousness will
not be abolished.
- 7 “Listen to Me, you who know
righteousness,
You people ^ain whose heart *is* My law:
^bDo not fear the reproach of men,
Nor be afraid of their insults.
- 8 For ^athe moth will eat them
up like a garment,
And the worm will eat
them like wool;
But My righteousness
will be forever,
And My salvation from
generation to generation.”
- 9 ^aAwake, awake, ^bput on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake ^cas in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
^dAre You not *the* arm that
cut ^eRahab apart,
And wounded the ^fserpent?

50:9 ^a Job 13:28 ^b Is. 51:6, 8 ^c 50:10 ^a Ps. 23:4 ^b 2 Chr. 20:20
50:11 ^a [John 9:39] ^b Ps. 16:4 ^c 51:1 ^a [Rom. 9:30–32] ^b 51:2 ^a Heb.
11:1 ^b Gen. 12:1 ^c Gen. 24:35 ^d 51:3 ^a Is. 40:1; 52:9 ^b Gen. 13:10
51:4 ^a Is. 2:3 ^b Is. 42:6 ^c 51:5 ^a Is. 46:13 ^b Ps. 67:4 ^c Is. 60:9 ^d [Rom.
1:16] ^e 51:6 ^a Is. 40:26 ^b Matt. 24:35 ^c Is. 24:19, 20; 50:9 ^d Is. 45:17
51:7 ^a Ps. 37:31 ^b [Matt. 5:11, 12; 10:28] ^c 51:8 ^a Is. 50:9 ^b 51:9 ^a Ps. 44:23
^b Ps. 93:1 ^c Ps. 44:1 ^d Job 26:12 ^e Ps. 87:4 ^f Ps. 74:13

51:1–8 The three admonitions—verses 1–3; verses 4–6; and verses 7, 8—are addressed to the faithful remnant in Israel, the people described in 50:10. In the first admonition, the Lord told them to look back and remember Abraham and Sarah, the progenitors of the Israelite nation (Gen. 12–25). God called them “alone,” but from these two elderly people came a nation as numerous as the dust of the earth and the stars of the heaven (Gen. 13:16; 15:5). The remnant leaving Babylon was small and weak, but God was able to increase them into a mighty nation and also turn their ravaged land into a paradise.

51:4–6 In the second admonition, God told them to look ahead and realize that justice would come to the world and that they would be vindicated by the Lord. Note the emphasis on the word “My”: My people, My nation, My righteousness, My salvation, My arms, My powerful arm, My salvation, and My righteous rule. This

is the grace of God, doing for His people what they did not deserve and what they could not do for themselves.

51:7, 8 The third admonition (see vv. 1, 4) focuses on looking within, where we find either fear or faith. Why should the nation fear humans when God is on its side? To have God’s law in your heart means to belong to Him and be saved (Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 10:16). The moth and the worm will destroy the enemy, but God’s salvation will endure. Moths and worms do not do their work conspicuously, but they work efficiently just the same.

51:9 The remnant in Babylon prayed as though God were asleep and needed to be awakened (Ps. 7:6; 44:23; 78:65–72). They wanted God to flex His mighty arm as He did when He defeated Pharaoh and redeemed His people from Egyptian bondage. The return from Babylon was looked upon as another “exodus” (43:16, 17; 49:9–12), with God wholly in charge and the enemy completely defeated.

- 10 *Are You not the One* who
^adried up the sea,
 The waters of the great deep;
 That made the depths of the sea a road
 For the redeemed to cross over?
- 11 So ^athe ransomed of the
 LORD shall return,
 And come to Zion with singing,
 With everlasting joy on their heads.
 They shall obtain joy and gladness;
 Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
- 12 “I, *even I, am* He ^awho comforts you.
 Who *are* you that you should be afraid
^bOf a man *who* will die,
 And of the son of a man *who*
 will be made ^clike grass?
- 13 And ^ayou forget the LORD your Maker,
^bWho stretched out the heavens
 And laid the foundations of the earth;
 You have feared continually every day
 Because of the fury of the oppressor,
 When *he has* prepared to destroy.
^cAnd where *is* the fury of the oppressor?
- 14 The captive exile hastens,
 that he may be loosed,
^aThat he should not die in the pit,
 And that his bread should not fail.
- 15 But I *am* the LORD your God,
 Who ^adivided the sea whose
 waves roared—
 The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
- 16 And ^aI have put My words
 in your mouth;
^bI have covered you with the
 shadow of My hand,
^cThat I may plant the heavens,
 Lay the foundations of the earth,
 And say to Zion, ‘You *are* My people.’”

GOD'S FURY REMOVED

- 17 ^aAwake, awake!
 Stand up, O Jerusalem,
 You who ^bhave drunk at the
 hand of the LORD
 The cup of His fury;
 You have drunk the dregs of
 the cup of trembling,
 And drained it out.

- 18 *There is* no one to guide her
 Among all the sons she
 has brought forth;
 Nor *is there any* who takes
 her by the hand
 Among all the sons she has brought up.
- 19 ^aThese two *things* have come to you;
 Who will be sorry for you?—
 Desolation and destruction,
 famine and sword—
^bBy whom will I comfort you?
- 20 ^aYour sons have fainted,
 They lie at the head of all the streets,
 Like an antelope in a net;
 They are full of the fury of the LORD,
 The rebuke of your God.
- 21 Therefore please hear this,
 you afflicted,
 And drunk ^abut not with wine.
- 22 Thus says your Lord,
 The LORD and your God,
 Who ^apleads the cause of His people:
 “See, I have taken out of your hand
 The cup of trembling,
 The dregs of the cup of My fury;
 You shall no longer drink it.
- 23 ^aBut I will put it into the hand
 of those who afflict you,
 Who have said to you,¹
 ‘Lie down, that we may walk over you.’
 And you have laid your body
 like the ground,
 And as the street, for those
 who walk over.”

GOD REDEEMS JERUSALEM

- 52** Awake, awake!
 Put on your strength, O Zion;
 Put on your beautiful garments,
 O Jerusalem, the holy city!
 For the uncircumcised
^aand the unclean
 Shall no longer come to you.

51:10 ^a Ex. 14:21 51:11 ^a Is. 35:10 51:12 ^a 2 Cor. 1:3 ^b Ps. 118:6 ^c Is. 40:6, 7 51:13 ^a Is. 17:10 ^b Ps. 104:2 ^c Job 20:7 51:14 ^a Zech. 9:11 51:15 ^a Job 26:12 51:16 ^a Deut. 18:18 ^b Is. 49:2 ^c Is. 65:17 51:17 ^a Is. 52:1 ^b Job 21:20 51:19 ^a Is. 47:9 ^b Amos 7:2 51:20 ^a Lam. 2:11 51:21 ^a Lam. 3:15 51:22 ^a Jer. 50:34 51:23 ^a Zech. 12:2 ¹ Literally *your soul* 52:1 ^a [Rev. 21:2–27]

51:12–16 God replied to their prayer with words of comfort. He reminded them again of the frailty of humanity (see 40:6–8) and the power of God the Creator (51:13). Why should they be afraid of “a man who will die,” when the God of the universe was on their side? Because they are His people, with whom He has deposited His Word, He will release them, protect them, and provide for them. They had an important task to perform and He would enable them to do it.

51:17–23 Isaiah spoke to the ruined city of Jerusalem and pictured her as a mother in a drunken stupor with

no children to help her. In the Bible, judgment is sometimes pictured as drinking a cup of wine (29:9; 63:6; Ps. 75:8; Jer. 25:15, 16; Rev. 14:10). Jerusalem’s children had gone into captivity, but now they would return and give their “mother” new hope and a new beginning. God would take the cup of judgment from the Jews and give it to their enemies.

52:1–6 This paragraph is addressed to Jerusalem and is a command not only to wake up but to dress up! It is not enough for her to put off her drunkenness (51:17–23); she must also put on her glorious garments.

- ² *"Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
^bLoose yourself from the
bonds of your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!*
- ³For thus says the LORD:
- ^a"You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed
^bwithout money."*
- ⁴For thus says the Lord God:
- "My people went down at first
Into ^aEgypt to dwell there;
Then the Assyrian oppressed
them without cause.*
- ⁵ Now therefore, what have I
here," says the LORD,
*"That My people are taken
away for nothing?
Those who rule over them
Make them wail,"ⁱ says the LORD,
"And My name is ^ablasphemed
continually every day.*
- ⁶ Therefore My people shall
know My name;
Therefore *they shall know* in that day
That I *am* He who speaks:
'Behold, it is I.'
- ⁷ *^aHow beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who
brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings
of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,*

- Who says to Zion,
^b"Your God reigns!"
- ⁸ Your watchmen shall lift up
*their voices,
With their voices they shall
sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.*
- ⁹ Break forth into joy, sing together,
You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
- ¹⁰ *^aThe LORD has made bare His holy arm
In the eyes of ^ball the nations;
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.*
- ¹¹ *^aDepart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean thing;
Go out from the midst of her,
^bBe clean,
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.*
- ¹² For *^ayou shall not go out with haste,
Nor go by flight;
^bFor the LORD will go before you,
^cAnd the God of Israel will
be your rear guard.*

THE SIN-BEARING SERVANT

- ¹³ Behold, *^aMy Servant shall
deal prudently;
^bHe shall be exalted and extolled
and be very high.*

52:2 ^a Is. 3:26 ^b Zech. 2:7 ^{52:3} ^a Ps. 44:12 ^b Is. 45:13 ^{52:4} ^a Gen. 46:6 ^{52:5} ^a Ezek. 36:20, 23 ¹ Dead Sea Scrolls read *Mock*; Septuagint reads *Marvel and wail*; Targum reads *Boast themselves*; Vulgate reads *Treat them unjustly*. ^{52:7} ^a Rom. 10:15 ^b Ps. 93:1 ^{52:10} ^a Ps. 98:1–3 ^b Luke 3:6 ^{52:11} ^a Is. 48:20 ^b Lev. 22:2 ^{52:12} ^a Ex. 12:11, 33 ^b Mic. 2:13 ^c Ex. 14:19, 20 ^{52:13} ^a Is. 42:1 ^b Phil. 2:9

Babylon the "queen" would fall to the dust in shame (47:1), but Jerusalem would rise up from the dust and be enthroned as a queen! Egypt had enslaved God's people, Assyria had oppressed them, and Babylon had taken them captive, but now that was ended. Of course, the ultimate fulfillment of this promise will occur when the Messiah returns, delivers Jerusalem from her enemies, and establishes Mount Zion as the joy of all the earth (61:4–11).

52:7–12 The defeat of Babylon by Cyrus was certainly good news to the Jews because it meant freedom for the captives (40:9; 41:27). The good news we share today is that Jesus Christ can set the prisoners free (Rom. 10:15). For decades, the remnant had suffered in a foreign country, without an altar or a priesthood, but now they would return to their land, rebuild their temple, and restore their God-given ministry.

52:11 It seems strange that God would have to urge His people to leave a place of captivity, but some of them had grown accustomed to Babylon and were reluctant to leave. The first group, about fifty thousand people, left Babylon in 539–538 B.C. when Cyrus issued his decree. They were under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua the high priest (Ezra 1–2). They carried with them "the vessels of the LORD" (Is. 52:11),

the articles that were needed for the service in the temple. A second group of nearly eighteen hundred people, led by Ezra, left in 458 B.C.

God commanded the Jews to depart because Babylon was a condemned city (Jer. 50:8ff.; 51:6, 45). He warned them not to linger but to get out quickly while they had the opportunity (Is. 48:20). They did not have to flee like criminals, but there was no reason to tarry. He also cautioned them not to take any of Babylon's uncleanness with them.

52:12 The prophet added a final word of encouragement: "For the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (v. 12; see 58:8). This reminds us of Israel's exodus from Egypt when the Lord went before them (Ex. 13:21) and stood between them and the enemy (Ex. 14:19, 20). When God's people obey God's will, they can always count on God's leading and protection.

52:13–53:12 The messianic interpretation of Isaiah 53 was held by Jewish rabbis until the twelfth century. After that, Jewish scholars started interpreting the passage as a description of the sufferings of the nation of Israel. But how could Israel die for the sins of Israel (53:8)? And who declared that Israel was innocent of sin and therefore had suffered unjustly (53:9)? No, the

- ¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you,
 So His ^avisage was marred
 more than any man,
 And His form more than
 the sons of men;
¹⁵ ^aSo shall He sprinkle¹ many nations.
 Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
 For ^bwhat had not been told
 them they shall see,
 And what they had not heard
 they shall consider.

53 Who ^ahas believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

- ² For He shall grow up before
 Him as a tender plant,
 And as a root out of dry ground.
 He has no form or comeliness;
 And when we see Him,
*There is no beauty that we
 should desire Him.*
³ ^aHe is despised and rejected by men,
 A Man of sorrows and
^bacquainted with grief.
 And we hid, as it were, *our
 faces from Him;*

52:14 ^a Ps. 22:6, 7 52:15 ^a Ezek. 36:25 ^b Rom. 15:21 ¹ Or *startle*
 53:1 ^a John 12:38 53:3 ^a Ps. 22:6 ^b [Heb. 4:15]

prophet wrote about an innocent individual, not a guilty nation. He was crystal clear that this individual died for the sins of the guilty so that the guilty might go free.

52:13–15 The Servant's people did not admire or desire Him (53:2, 3), and yet when it was all over, He shocked and astonished kings! If we take these verses in their chronological order, we see that people were shocked by His appearance (52:14), His exaltation (52:13), and His message (52:15). We have here our Lord's suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension, and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

52:13 The Servant suffered and died, but He did not remain dead. He will be "exalted." Jesus was not only raised from the dead, but His body was glorified. He ascended to heaven, where He sat at the right hand of the Father. He has all authority (Matt. 28:18) because all things have been put under His feet (Eph. 1:20–23). No one in the universe is higher than Jesus. What an astonishment to those who esteemed Him the lowest of the low! (See Phil. 2:1–11.)

52:14 When you consider all that Jesus endured physically between the time of His arrest and His crucifixion, no wonder He no longer looked like a man. Not only were His legal rights taken away from Him, including the right to a fair trial, but His human rights were taken from Him, so that He was not even treated like a person, let alone a Jewish citizen.

53:1–3 With uncanny accuracy, Isaiah describes the life and ministry (vv. 1–4), death (vv. 5–8), burial (v. 9), resurrection, and exaltation (vv. 10–12) of Jesus Christ. The theme that ties the chapter together is that the innocent Servant died in the place of the guilty. When theologians speak about "the vicarious atonement," that is what they mean. We cannot explain everything about the cross, but this much is clear: Jesus took the place of guilty sinners and paid the price for their salvation.

Israel was not a paradise when Jesus was born; politically and spiritually, it was a wilderness of dry ground. He did not come as a great tree but as a "tender plant." He was born in poverty in Bethlehem and grew up in a carpenter's shop in despised Nazareth (John 1:43–46). Because of His words and works, Jesus attracted great crowds, but nothing about His physical appearance made Him different from any other Jewish man. While few people deliberately try to be unattractive, modern society has made a religion out of physical beauty. We should remember that Jesus succeeded without it.

53:3 Once people understood what the Servant demanded of them, how did most people treat Him? The way they treated any other slave: They despised Him, put a cheap price on Him (thirty pieces of silver), and "hid, as it were, [their] faces from Him." They were ashamed of Him because He did not represent what was important to them: things like wealth (Luke 16:14), social

Astonished into Repentance

Is. 52:15

The people whose mouths dropped open with astonishment at the Servant's humiliation and exaltation will shut their mouths in guilt when they hear His message. "What had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider" (52:15b). Paul quotes these lines in relation to his preaching of the gospel to the Gentile nations (Rom. 15:20, 21).

Many people have been tortured and killed in an inhumane way, but knowing about their suffering does not touch our conscience, though it may arouse our sympathy. Our Lord's sufferings and death were different, because they involved everybody in the world. The gospel message is that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:1–4). You and I are as guilty of Christ's death as Annas, Caiaphas, Herod Antipas, and Pilate.

Now we see why people are astonished when they understand the message of the gospel: This Man whom they condemned has declared that they are condemned unless they turn from sin and trust Him. You cannot rejoice in the good news of salvation until first you face the bad news of condemnation. Jesus did not suffer and die because he was guilty, but because *we* were guilty. People are astonished at this fact; it shuts their mouths.

He was despised, and ^cwe
did not esteem Him.

- 4 Surely ^aHe has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
- 5 But He *was* ^awounded for
our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our
peace *was* upon Him,
And by His ^bstripes we are healed.
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one,
to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him
the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet ^aHe opened not His mouth;
^bHe was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its
shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
- 8 He was ^ataken from prison
and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For ^bHe was cut off from the
land of the living;

For the transgressions of My
people He was stricken.

- 9 ^aAnd they¹ made His grave
with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* ^bdeceit in His mouth.
- 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul
^aan offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall
prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD
shall prosper in His hand.
- 11 He shall see the labor of His
soul,¹ and be satisfied.
By His knowledge ^aMy righteous
^bServant shall ^cjustify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
- 12 ^aTherefore I will divide Him a
portion with the great,
^bAnd He shall divide the spoil
with the strong,

53:3 ^c[John 1:10, 11] 53:4 ^a[Matt. 8:17] 53:5 ^a[Rom. 4:25] ^b[1 Pet. 2:24, 25] 53:7 ^aMatt. 26:63; 27:12–14 ^bActs 8:32, 33 53:8 ^aLuke 23:1–25 ^b[Dan. 9:26] 53:9 ^aMatt. 27:57–60 ^b1 Pet. 2:22 ¹Literally *he* or *He* 53:10 ^a[2 Cor. 5:21] 53:11 ^a[1 John 2:1] ^bIs. 42:1 ^c[Rom. 5:15–18] ¹Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *From the labor of His soul He shall see light*. 53:12 ^aPs. 2:8 ^bCol. 2:15

prestige (Luke 14:7–14; 15:12), reputation (Luke 18:9–14), being served by others (Luke 22:24–27), and being pampered (Matt. 16:21–28). He is rejected today for the same reasons.

53:4–6 This is the heart of the passage, and it presents the heart of the gospel message: the innocent Servant dying as the sacrifice for sin. This message was at the center of Israel's religious system—the innocent animal sacrifice dying for the guilty sinner (Lev. 16). Jesus bore our sins on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), but He also identified with the consequences of Adam's sin when He ministered to needy people. Matthew 8:14–17 applies Isaiah 53:4 to our Lord's healing ministry and not to His atoning death. Every blessing we have in the Christian life comes because of the cross.

53:5 The only way a lawbreaker can be at peace with the law is to suffer the punishment that the law demands. Jesus kept the law perfectly, yet He suffered the whipping that belonged to us. Because He took our place, we now have peace with God and cannot be condemned by God's law (Rom. 5:1; 8:1). The "healing" in Isaiah 53:5 refers to the forgiveness of sins, not the healing of the body.

53:5, 8 Sin is serious. Isaiah calls it our rebellion against God, daring to cross the line that God has drawn (v. 5). He also calls it sin in the sense that refers to the crookedness of our sinful nature (vv. 5, 6). In other words, we are sinners by choice and by nature. Like sheep, we are born with a nature that prompts us to go astray, and like sheep we foolishly decide to go our own way. By nature we are born children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), and by choice we become children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). Under the Law of Moses, the sheep died for the shepherd; but under grace, the Good Shepherd died for the sheep (John 10:1–18).

53:6 On the cross, Jesus Christ was "bruised" (v. 5), which means "crushed under the weight of a burden." What was the burden? "The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (see also v. 12; 1:4). Sin is indeed a burden that grows heavier the longer we resist God (Ps. 38:4).

53:7–9 A servant is not permitted to talk back; he or she must submit to the will of the master or mistress. Jesus Christ was silent before those who accused Him as well as those who afflicted Him. He was silent before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:62, 63), the chief priests and elders (Matt. 27:12), Pilate (Matt. 27:14; John 19:9), and Herod Antipas (Luke 23:9). He did not speak when the soldiers mocked Him and beat Him (1 Pet. 2:21–23). This is what impressed the Ethiopian treasurer as He read this passage in Isaiah (Acts 8:26–40).

53:10–12 Next Isaiah explains the cross from God's point of view. Even though Jesus was crucified by the hands of wicked men, His death was determined beforehand by God (Act 2:22, 23). Jesus was not a martyr, nor was His death an accident. He was God's sacrifice for the sins of the world.

53:11 The Servant's work on the cross brought satisfaction. To begin with, the Servant satisfied the heart of the Father. "For I always do those things that please [the Father]" (John 8:29). The heavenly Father did not find enjoyment in seeing His beloved Son suffer, for the Father is not pleased with the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23, 32), let alone the death of the righteous Son of God. But the Father was pleased that His Son's obedience accomplished the redemption that He had planned from eternity.

53:12 The death of the Servant also satisfied the law of God. The theological term for this is "propitiation" (see "sacrifice" in Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). In pagan religions, the word meant "to offer a sacrifice to placate an angry

Because He ^cpoured out His
soul unto death,
And He was ^dnumbered with
the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And ^emade intercession for
the transgressors.

A PERPETUAL COVENANT OF PEACE

54 “Sing, O ^abarren,
You *who* have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You *who* have not labored with child!
For more *are* the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married
woman,” says the LORD.
² “Enlarge^a the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the
curtains of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.

³ For you shall expand to the
right and to the left,
And your descendants will
^ainherit the nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.
⁴ “Do^a not fear, for you will
not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you
will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame
of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach
of your widowhood anymore.
⁵ ^aFor your Maker is your husband,
The LORD of hosts is His name;
And your Redeemer is the
Holy One of Israel;
He is called ^bthe God of the whole earth.

53:12 ^c Is. 50:6 ^d Matt. 27:38 ^e Luke 23:34 54:1 ^a Gal. 4:27 54:2 ^a Is.
49:19, 20 54:3 ^a Is. 14:2; 49:22, 23; 60:9 54:4 ^a Is. 41:10 54:5 ^a Jer.
3:14 ^b Zech. 14:9

god,” but the Christian meaning is much richer. God is angry at sin because it offends His holiness and violates His holy law. In His holiness, He must judge sinners, but in His love, He desires to forgive them. God cannot ignore sin or compromise with it, for that would be contrary to His own nature and law. The Judge took the place of the criminals and met the just demands of His own holy law! The law has been satisfied, and God can now graciously forgive all who receive His Son.

Grace is love that has paid a price, and sinners are saved by grace. Justice can only condemn the wicked and justify the righteous, but grace justifies the ungodly when they trust Jesus Christ! To justify means “to declare righteous.” He took our sins that we might receive the gift of His righteousness. Justification means God declares believing sinners righteous in Christ and never again keeps a record of their sins.

54:1–17 The image in this chapter is that of Jehovah, the faithful husband, forgiving Israel, the unfaithful wife, and restoring her to the place of blessing. Isaiah has used the marriage image before (50:1–3), and he

will use it again (62:4). Jeremiah also used it (Jer. 3:8), and it is an important theme in both Hosea (Hos. 2) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 16 and 23). The nation was “married” to Jehovah at Mount Sinai, but she committed adultery by turning to other gods, and the Lord had to abandon her temporarily. The prophets promise, however, that Israel will be restored when Messiah comes and establishes His kingdom.

54:1a Israel is restored to joy, which creates an occasion for singing. Isaiah is certainly the prophet of song; this book mentions songs and singing more than thirty times. The immediate occasion for this joy is the nation’s deliverance from captivity, but the ultimate fulfillment is when the Redeemer comes to Zion and the nation is born anew (59:20).

54:1b–3 Fruitfulness will also be restored when the nation will increase and need more space. The nation had been diminished because of the Babylonian invasion, but God would help them multiply again. At the end of this age, only a believing remnant will enter into the kingdom, but the Lord will enlarge the nation abundantly.

No Need to Be Afraid!

Is. 54:4

Isaiah gave another one of his “fear not” promises and explained why there was no need for the nation to be afraid. To begin with, *their sins were forgiven* (54:4). Why should they fear the future when God had wiped out the sins of the past? Yes, the people had sinned greatly against their God, but He had forgiven them, and this meant a new beginning.

Another reason for Israel to be confident is the *steadfast love of the Lord* (54:5, 6). Jehovah was their Maker and would not destroy the people He had created for His glory. He was their Redeemer and would not sell them into the hands of the enemy. He is their Husband and would not break His covenant promises.

A third reason for confidence is the *dependable promise of God* (54:7–10). God had to show His anger at their sin, but now the chastening was over, and they were returning to their land. Israel’s restoration to their land would bring them confidence. “My covenant of blessing will never be broken,” the Lord promises in verse 10.

- 6 For the LORD ^ahas called you
Like a woman forsaken and
grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when
you were refused,”
Says your God.
- 7 “For ^aa mere moment I
have forsaken you,
But with great mercies ^bI
will gather you.
- 8 With a little wrath I hid My face
from you for a moment;
^aBut with everlasting kindness I
will have mercy on you,”
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.
- 9 “For this *is* like the waters
of ^aNoah to Me;
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would
no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with
^byou, nor rebuke you.
- 10 For ^athe mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
^bBut My kindness shall not
depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of
peace be removed,”
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.
- 11 “O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, *and*
not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones
with ^acolorful gems,
And lay your foundations
with sapphires.
- 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.
- 13 All your children *shall be*
^ataught by the LORD,
And ^bgreat *shall be* the peace
of your children.
- 14 In righteousness you shall
be established;
You shall be far from oppression,
for you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall
not come near you.

- 15 Indeed they shall surely assemble,
but not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you
shall *“fall for your sake.”*
- 16 “Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument
for his work;
And I have created the
spoiler to destroy.
- 17 No weapon formed against
you shall *“prosper,”*
And every tongue *which* rises
against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This *is* the heritage of the
servants of the LORD,
^bAnd their righteousness
is from Me,”
Says the LORD.

AN INVITATION TO ABUNDANT LIFE

- 55** “Ho! ^aEveryone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
^bCome, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.
- 2 Why do you spend money
for *what is* not bread,
And your wages for *what*
does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and
eat *what is* good,
And let your soul delight
itself in abundance.
- 3 Incline your ear, and ^acome to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
^bAnd I will make an everlasting
covenant with you—
The ^csure mercies of David.
- 4 Indeed I have given him *as* ^aa
witness to the people,
^bA leader and commander
for the people.

54:6 ^a Is. 62:4 54:7 ^a Is. 26:20; 60:10 ^b [Is. 43:5; 56:8] 54:8 ^a Jer. 31:3 54:9 ^a Gen. 8:21; 9:11 ^b Ezek. 39:29 54:10 ^a Is. 51:6 ^b Ps. 89:33, 34 54:11 ^a Rev. 21:18, 19 54:13 ^a [John 6:45] ^b Ps. 119:165 54:15 ^a Is. 41:11–16 54:17 ^a Is. 17:12–14; 29:8 ^b Is. 45:24, 25; 54:14 55:1 ^a [John 4:14; 7:37] ^b [Rev. 3:18] 55:3 ^a Matt. 11:28 ^b Jer. 32:40 ^c 2 Sam. 7:8 55:4 ^a [Rev. 1:5] ^b [Dan. 9:25]

54:11 Whenever we rebel against God and refuse to listen to His warning, He must chasten us—but He does it in love (Heb. 12:1–11). Our Father cannot permit His children to sin and get away with it. But the purpose of His chastening is to bring us to repentance and enable us to produce “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

55:1–56:8 God gives a threefold invitation to the

Gentiles: Come (55:1–5), seek (vv. 6–13), and worship (56:1–8).

55:1–5 The invitation to “come” is extended to “everyone” and not just to the Jews. Anyone who is thirsting for that which really satisfies (John 4:10–14) is welcome to come. As in Isaiah 25:6, the prophet pictures God’s blessings in terms of a great feast, where God is the host.

- 5 ^a“Surely you shall call a nation
you do not know,
^bAnd nations *who* do not know
you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
^cFor He has glorified you.”
- 6 ^a“Seek the LORD while He may be ^bfound,
Call upon Him while He is near.
- 7 ^a“Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man
^bhis thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
^cAnd He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
- 8 “For^a My thoughts *are* not
your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways,”
says the LORD.
- 9 “For^a as the heavens are
higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 “For ^aas the rain comes down, and
the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
- 11 ^a“So shall My word be that goes
forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall ^bprosper in *the*
thing for which I sent it.
- 12 “For^a you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall ^bbreak forth into
singing before you,
And ^call the trees of the field
shall clap *their* hands.

- 13 ^a“Instead of ^bthe thorn shall come
up the cypress tree,
And instead of the brier shall
come up the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the LORD
^cfor a name,
For an everlasting sign *that*
shall not be cut off.”

SALVATION FOR THE GENTILES

56 Thus says the LORD:

- “Keep justice, and do righteousness,
^aFor My salvation *is* about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.
- 2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,
And the son of man *who* lays hold on it;
^aWho keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from
doing any evil.”
- 3 Do not let ^athe son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
“The LORD has utterly separated
me from His people”;
Nor let the ^beunuch say,
“Here I am, a dry tree.”
- 4 For thus says the LORD:
“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in ^aMy house
And within My walls a
place ^band a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them¹ an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.
- 6 “Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the
LORD, to serve Him,

55:5 ^aEph. 2:11, 12 ^bIs. 60:5 ^cIs. 60:9 55:6 ^a[Heb. 3:13] ^bPs. 32:6
55:7 ^aIs. 1:16 ^bZech. 8:17 ^cJer. 3:12 55:8 ^a2 Sam. 7:19 55:9 ^aPs.
103:11 55:10 ^aDeut. 32:2 55:11 ^aIs. 45:23 ^bIs. 46:9–11 55:12 ^aIs.
35:10 ^bPs. 98:8 ^c1 Chr. 16:33 55:13 ^aIs. 41:19 ^bMic. 7:4 ^cJer. 13:11
56:1 ^aMatt. 3:2; 4:17 56:2 ^aIs. 58:13 56:3 ^a[Eph. 2:12–19] ^bActs
8:27 56:5 ^a1 Tim. 3:15 ^b[1 John 3:1, 2] ¹Literally *him*

55:6–13 When God delivered His people from Babylon and took them safely back to their own land, it was a witness to the other nations. It also gave Israel another opportunity to be a light to the Gentiles (49:6) and bring them to faith in the true and living God. While Israel needed to seek the Lord and be wholly devoted to Him, they also were expected to share this invitation with the nations.

55:10, 11 How does God go about calling and saving lost sinners? By the power of His Word. God's Word is seed (Luke 8:1). Just as the rain and snow are never wasted but accomplish His purposes, so His Word never fails. “The word of our God stands forever” (Is. 40:8). We

never know how God will use even a casual word of witness to plant and water the seed in somebody's heart.

56:1–8 The nation had gone into captivity because she had disobeyed the law of God, particularly the fourth commandment to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. God never before asked the Gentiles to join the Jews in keeping the Sabbath, but here He does so. He calls the very people He had prohibited from entering His covenant nation. The invitation is still “Everyone come!” It applies to sinners today, but it will apply in a special way when Israel enters her kingdom, the temple services are restored, and the Sabbath is once again a part of Jewish worship.

- And to love the name of the
 LORD, to be His servants—
 Everyone who keeps from
 defiling the Sabbath,
 And holds fast My covenant—
 7 Even them I will ^abring to
 My holy mountain,
 And make them joyful in
 My ^bhouse of prayer.
^cTheir burnt offerings and
 their sacrifices
 Will be ^aaccepted on My altar;
 For ^eMy house shall be called a house
 of prayer ^ffor all nations.”
 8 The Lord GOD, ^awho gathers the
 outcasts of Israel, says,
^b“Yet I will gather to him
 Others besides those who are
 gathered to him.”

ISRAEL'S IRRESPONSIBLE LEADERS

- 9 ^aAll you beasts of the field,
 come to devour,
 All you beasts in the forest.
 10 His watchmen ^aare ^ablind,
 They are all ignorant;
^bThey ^aare all dumb dogs,
 They cannot bark;
 Sleeping, lying down,
 loving to slumber.
 11 Yes, ^athey ^aare “greedy dogs
 Which ^bnever have enough.
 And they ^aare shepherds
 Who cannot understand;
 They all look to their
 own way,
 Every one for his own gain,
 From his ^aown territory.
 12 “Come,” ^aone says, “I will
 bring wine,
 And we will fill ourselves with
 intoxicating ^adrink;
^bTomorrow will be ^cas today,
 And much more abundant.”

ISRAEL'S FUTILE IDOLATRY

- 57** The righteous perishes,
 And no man takes ^ait to heart;
^aMerciful men ^aare taken away,
^bWhile no one considers
 That the righteous is taken
 away from evil.
 2 He shall enter into peace;
 They shall rest in ^atheir beds,
 Each one walking in his uprightness.
 3 “But come here,
^aYou sons of the sorceress,
 You offspring of the adulterer
 and the harlot!
 4 Whom do you ridicule?
 Against whom do you make
 a wide mouth
 And stick out the tongue?
 Are you not children of transgression,
 Offspring of falsehood,
 5 Inflaming yourselves with gods
^aunder every green tree,
^bSlaying the children in the valleys,
 Under the clefts of the rocks?
 6 Among the smooth ^astones
 of the stream
 Is your portion;
 They, they, ^aare your lot!
 Even to them you have poured
 a drink offering,
 You have offered a grain offering.
 Should I receive comfort in ^bthese?
 7 “On ^aa lofty and high mountain
 You have set ^byour bed;
 Even there you went up
 To offer sacrifice.

56:7 ^a[Is. 2:2, 3; 60:11] ^bMark 11:17 ^c[Rom. 12:1] ^dIs. 60:7 ^eMatt. 21:13 ^f[Mal. 1:11] 56:8 ^aIs. 11:12; 27:12; 54:7 ^b[John 10:16] 56:9 ^aJer. 12:9 56:10 ^aMatt. 15:14 ^bPhil. 3:2 56:11 ^a[Mic. 3:5, 11] ^bEzek. 34:2–10 56:12 ^aIs. 28:7 ^bLuke 12:19 ^c2 Pet. 3:4 57:1 ^aPs. 12:1 ^b1 Kin. 14:13 57:2 ^a2 Chr. 16:14 57:3 ^aMatt. 16:4 57:5 ^a2 Kin. 16:4 ^bJer. 7:31 57:6 ^aJer. 3:9 ^bJer. 5:9, 29; 9:9 57:7 ^aEzek. 16:16 ^bEzek. 23:41

56:9—57:2 Spiritual leaders are “watchmen” (Ezek. 3:17–21; 33:1–11) who must be awake to the dangers that threaten God’s people. They are “shepherds” who must put the care of the flock ahead of their own desires. When the foreign invaders (“beasts of the field”) come, the shepherds must protect the flock, no matter what the danger might be. See Acts 20:18–38 for the description of a faithful spiritual ministry.

God permitted the unrighteous leaders to live and suffer the terrible consequences of their sins, but the righteous people died before the judgment fell. The godly found rest and peace, while the ungodly went into captivity and some were killed. Rebellious people do not deserve dedicated spiritual leaders. When His people reject His Word and prefer worldly leaders, God may give them exactly what they desire and let them suffer the consequences.

57:3–13 During the last days of Judah and Jerusalem,

before the Babylonian army came, the land and the city were polluted with idols. King Hezekiah and King Josiah had led the people in destroying the idols and the high places, but as soon as an ungodly king took the throne, the people went right back to their old ways. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah told the people that God would punish them for breaking His law, but they persisted in the ways of the godless nations around them.

57:6–10 Anything that we trust other than the Lord becomes our god and therefore is an idol. It may be our training, experience, job, money, friends, or position. One of the best ways to find out whether we have idols in our lives is to ask ourselves, “Where do I instinctively turn when I face a decision or need to solve a problem?” Do we reach for the phone to call a friend? Do we assure ourselves that we can handle the situation ourselves? Or do we turn to God to seek His will and receive His help?

- 8 Also behind the doors and their posts
You have set up your remembrance;
For you have uncovered yourself
to those *other* than Me,
And have gone up to them;
You have enlarged your bed
And made a *covenant* with them;
^aYou have loved their bed,
Where you saw *their* nudity.¹
- 9 ^aYou went to the king with ointment,
And increased your perfumes;
You sent your ^bmessengers far off,
And *even* descended to Sheol.
- 10 You are wearied in the
length of your way;
^aYet you did not say, "There is no hope."
You have found the life of your hand;
Therefore you were not grieved.
- 11 "And ^aof whom have you been
afraid, or feared,
That you have lied
And not remembered Me,
Nor taken *it* to your heart?
Is it not because ^bI have held
My peace from of old
That you do not fear Me?
- 12 I will declare your righteousness
And your works,
For they will not profit you.
- 13 When you cry out,
Let your collection of *idols* deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away,
A breath will take *them*.
But he who puts his trust in Me
shall possess the land,
And shall inherit My holy mountain."

HEALING FOR THE BACKSLIDER

- 14 And one shall say,
^a"Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way,
Take the stumbling block out
of the way of My people."
- 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity,
^awhose name is Holy:
^b"I dwell in the high and holy *place*,
^cWith him *who* has a contrite
and humble spirit,
^dTo revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of
the contrite ones.
- 16 ^aFor I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;

- For the spirit would fail before Me,
And the souls ^b*which* I have made.
- 17 For the iniquity of ^ahis covetousness
I was angry and struck him;
^bI hid and was angry,
^cAnd he went on backsliding
in the way of his heart.
- 18 I have seen his ways, and ^awill heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him
And to ^bhis mourners.
- 19 "I create ^athe fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace ^bto him *who* is far
off and to him *who* is near,"
Says the LORD,
"And I will heal him."
- 20 ^aBut the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
- 21 "^aThere *is* no peace,"
Says my God, "for the wicked."

FASTING THAT PLEASES GOD

- 58** "Cry aloud, spare not;
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
^aTell My people their transgression,
And the house of Jacob their sins.
- 2 Yet they seek Me daily,
And delight to know My ways,
As a nation that did righteousness,
And did not forsake the
ordinance of their God.
They ask of Me the
ordinances of justice;
They take delight in approaching God.
- 3 'Why^a have we fasted,' *they say*,
'and You have not seen?'
Why have we ^bafflicted our souls,
and You take no notice?'
- "In fact, in the day of your fast
you find pleasure,
And exploit all your laborers.
- 4 ^aIndeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.
You will not fast as *you do* this day,
To make your voice heard on high.

57:8 ^a Ezek. 16:26 ¹ Literally *hand*, a euphemism 57:9 ^a Hos. 7:11
^b Ezek. 23:16, 40 57:10 ^a Jer. 2:25; 18:12 57:11 ^a Is. 51:12, 13 ^b Ps. 50:21
57:14 ^a Is. 40:3; 62:10 57:15 ^a Job 6:10 ^b Zech. 2:13 ^c Ps. 34:18; 51:17
^d Is. 61:1-3 57:16 ^a [Mic. 7:18] ^b Num. 16:22 57:17 ^a Jer. 6:13 ^b Is.
8:17; 45:15; 59:2 ^c Is. 9:13 57:18 ^a Jer. 3:22 ^b Is. 61:2 57:19 ^a Heb.
13:15 ^b Eph. 2:17 57:20 ^a Job 15:20 57:21 ^a Is. 48:22 58:1 ^a Mic. 3:8
58:3 ^a Mal. 3:13-18 ^b Lev. 16:29; 23:27 58:4 ^a 1 Kin. 21:9

58:1-14 God told Isaiah to shout aloud with a voice like a trumpet and announce the sins of the nation. The people went to the temple, obeyed God's laws, fasted, and appeared eager to seek the Lord, but their worship

was only an outward show. Their hearts were far from God. When we worship because it is the popular thing to do, not because it is the right thing to do, then our worship becomes hypocritical.

5 Is ^ait a fast that I have chosen,
^bA day for a man to afflict his soul?
 Is it to bow down his head
 like a bulrush,
 And ^cto spread out sackcloth and ashes?
 Would you call this a fast,
 And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 “Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
 To ^aloose the bonds of wickedness,
^bTo undo the heavy burdens,
^cTo let the oppressed go free,
 And that you break every yoke?
 7 Is it not ^ato share your bread
 with the hungry,
 And that you bring to your house
 the poor who are cast out;
^bWhen you see the naked,
 that you cover him,
 And not hide yourself from
^cyour own flesh?
 8 ^aThen your light shall break
 forth like the morning,
 Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
 And your righteousness
 shall go before you;
^bThe glory of the LORD shall
 be your rear guard.
 9 Then you shall call, and the
 LORD will answer;
 You shall cry, and He will
 say, ‘Here I am.’

“If you take away the yoke
 from your midst,
 The pointing of the finger, and
^aspeaking wickedness,
 10 If you extend your soul to the hungry
 And satisfy the afflicted soul,
 Then your light shall dawn
 in the darkness,
 And your darkness shall
^bbe as the noonday.
 11 The LORD will guide you continually,
 And satisfy your soul in drought,
 And strengthen your bones;
 You shall be like a watered garden,
 And like a spring of water,
 whose waters do not fail.
 12 Those from among you
^aShall build the old waste places;

You shall raise up the foundations
 of many generations;
 And you shall be called the
 Repairer of the Breach,
 The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

13 “If ^ayou turn away your foot
 from the Sabbath,
 From doing your pleasure
 on My holy day,
 And call the Sabbath a delight,
 The holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
 And shall honor Him, not
 doing your own ways,
 Nor finding your own pleasure,
 Nor speaking *your own* words,
 14 ^aThen you shall delight
 yourself in the LORD;
 And I will cause you to ^bride on
 the high hills of the earth,
 And feed you with the heritage
 of Jacob your father.
 “The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

SEPARATED FROM GOD

59 Behold, the LORD’s hand
 is not ^ashortened,
 That it cannot save;
 Nor His ear heavy,
 That it cannot hear.
 2 But your iniquities have separated
 you from your God;
 And your sins have hidden
 His face from you,
 So that He will ^anot hear.
 3 For ^ayour hands are defiled with blood,
 And your fingers with iniquity;
 Your lips have spoken lies,
 Your tongue has muttered perversity.
 4 No one calls for justice,
 Nor does *any* plead for truth.
 They trust in ^aempty words
 and speak lies;
^bThey conceive evil and
 bring forth iniquity.

58:5 ^aZech. 7:5 ^bLev. 16:29 ^cEsth. 4:3 58:6 ^aLuke 4:18, 19 ^bNeh. 5:10–12 ^cJer. 34:9 58:7 ^aEzek. 18:7 ^bJob 31:19–22 ^cNeh. 5:5 58:8 ^aJob 11:17 ^bEx. 14:19 58:9 ^aPs. 12:2 58:12 ^aIs. 61:4 58:13 ^aIs. 56:2, 4, 6 58:14 ^aJob 22:26 ^bDeut. 32:13; 33:29 ^cIs. 1:20; 40:5 59:1 ^aNum. 11:23 59:2 ^aIs. 1:15 59:3 ^aEzek. 7:23 59:4 ^aJer. 7:4 ^bJob 15:35

58:5 True fasting will lead to humility before God and ministry to others. We deprive ourselves so that we might share with others, and we do so to the glory of God. If we fast in order to get something for ourselves from God, instead of to become better people for the sake of others, then we have missed the meaning of worship. The Lord is delighted when we delight in the Lord.

59:1–21 God pointed out there was a great deal of injustice in the land, with the rich exploiting the poor and the rulers using their authority only to make themselves

rich (see 1:17–23; 3:13–15; 5:8–30). The people were lifting their hands to worship God, but their hands were stained with blood (1:15, 21). God could not answer their prayers because their sins hid His face from them.

59:4 Here is a conflict between truth and lies, just as it is today. Isaiah compared the evil rulers to pregnant women giving birth to sin (see Ps. 7:14; Is. 33:11), to snakes hatching their eggs, and to spiders weaving their webs (59:5, 6). What they give birth to will only destroy them (James 1:13–15), and their beautiful webs of lies can never protect them.

- 5 They hatch vipers' eggs and
weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed
a viper breaks out.
- 6 ^aTheir webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves
with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
- 7 ^aTheir feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed
^binnocent blood;
^cTheir thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and ^adestruction
are in their paths.
- 8 The way of ^apeace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
^bThey have made themselves
crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall
not know peace.

SIN CONFESSED

- 9 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
^aWe look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, *but* we
walk in blackness!
- 10 ^aWe grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead *men* in desolate places.
- 11 We all growl like bears,
And ^amoan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
- 12 For our ^atransgressions are
multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us,
And *as for* our iniquities,
we know them:
- 13 In transgressing and lying
against the LORD,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering ^afrom the
heart words of falsehood.
- 14 Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,

And equity cannot enter.
15 So truth fails,
And he *who* departs from evil
makes himself a ^aprey.

THE REDEEMER OF ZION

- Then the LORD saw *it*, and
it displeased Him
That *there was* no justice.
- 16 ^aHe saw that *there was* no man,
And ^bwondered that *there*
was no intercessor;
^cTherefore His own arm brought
salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness,
it sustained Him.
- 17 ^aFor He put on righteousness
as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of
vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
- 18 ^aAccording to *their* deeds,
accordingly He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.
- 19 ^aSo shall they fear
The name of the LORD from the west,
And His glory from the
rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in ^blike a flood,
The Spirit of the LORD will lift up
a standard against him.
- 20 ^a"The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from
transgression in Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

21 ^a"As ^afor Me," says the LORD, "this *is* My
covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon
you, and My words which I have put in your
mouth, shall not depart from your mouth,
nor from the mouth of your descendants,
nor from the mouth of your descendants'
descendants," says the LORD, "from this time
and forevermore."

59:6 ^a Job 8:14 59:7 ^a Rom. 3:15 ^b Prov. 6:17 ^c Is. 55:7 ^d Rom. 3:16,
17 59:8 ^a Is. 57:20, 21 ^b Prov. 2:15 59:9 ^a Jer. 8:15 59:10 ^a Job 5:14
59:11 ^a Ezek. 7:16 59:12 ^a Is. 24:5; 58:1 59:13 ^a Matt. 12:34 59:15 ^a Is.
5:23; 10:2; 29:21; 32:7 59:16 ^a Ezek. 22:30 ^b Mark 6:6 ^c Ps. 98:1
59:17 ^a Eph. 6:14, 17 59:18 ^a Is. 63:6 59:19 ^a Mal. 1:11 ^b Rev. 12:15
59:20 ^a Rom. 11:26 59:21 ^a [Heb. 8:10; 10:16]

59:9–11 People who live on lies do not know where they are going. When trust falls, it creates a traffic jam, and justice and honesty cannot make progress (vv. 12–15). God is displeased with injustice, and He wonders that none of His people will intercede or intervene (Prov. 24:11, 12). So the Lord himself intervened and brought the Babylonians to destroy Judah and

Jerusalem and to teach His people that they cannot despise His law and get away with it.

59:20 God's judgment on His people was a foreshadowing of that final day of the Lord when all the nations will be judged. When it is ended, then "the Redeemer will come to Zion," and the glorious kingdom will be established. Israel will be not only God's chosen people

THE GENTILES BLESS ZION

- 60** Arise, ^ashine;
For your light has come!
And ^bthe glory of the LORD
is risen upon you.
- 2 For behold, the darkness
shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
- 3 The ^cGentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness
of your rising.
- 4 “Lift^a up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together,
^bthey come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be
nursed at *your* side.
- 5 Then you shall see and become radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because ^athe abundance of the
sea shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles
shall come to you.
- 6 The multitude of camels
shall cover your *land*,
The dromedaries of Midian and ^aEphah;
All those from ^bSheba shall come;
They shall bring ^cgold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the
praises of the LORD.
- 7 All the flocks of ^aKedar shall be
gathered together to you,
The rams of Nebaioth shall
minister to you;
They shall ascend with
^bacceptance on My altar,
And ^cI will glorify the house of My glory.
- 8 “Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
- 9 ^aSurely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first,
^bTo bring your sons from afar,

^cTheir silver and their gold with them,
To the name of the LORD your God,
And to the Holy One of Israel,
^dBecause He has glorified you.

- 10 “The^a sons of foreigners shall
build up your walls,
^bAnd their kings shall minister to you;
For ^cin My wrath I struck you,
^dBut in My favor I have had
mercy on you.
- 11 Therefore your gates ^ashall
be open continually;
They shall not be shut day or night,
That *men* may bring to you the
wealth of the Gentiles,
And their kings in procession.
- 12 ^aFor the nation and kingdom which
will not serve you shall perish,
And *those* nations shall be
utterly ruined.
- 13 “The^a glory of Lebanon
shall come to you,
The cypress, the pine, and
the box tree together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make ^bthe place
of My feet glorious.
- 14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you
Shall come ^abowing to you,
And all those who despised
you shall ^bfall prostrate at
the soles of your feet;
And they shall call you The
City of the LORD,
^cZion of the Holy One of Israel.
- 15 “Whereas you have been
forsaken and hated,
So that no one went through *you*,

60:1 ^aEph. 5:14 ^bMal. 4:2 60:3 ^aIs. 49:6, 23 60:4 ^aIs. 49:18 ^bIs. 49:20–22 60:5 ^a[Rom. 11:25–27] 60:6 ^aGen. 25:4 ^bPs. 72:10
^cMatt. 2:11 60:7 ^aGen. 25:13 ^bIs. 56:7 ^cHag. 2:7, 9 60:9 ^aPs. 72:10
^b[Gal. 4:26] ^cJer. 3:17 ^dIs. 55:5 60:10 ^aZech. 6:15 ^bRev. 21:24
^cIs. 57:17 ^dIs. 54:7, 8 60:11 ^aRev. 21:25, 26 60:12 ^aZech. 14:17
60:13 ^aIs. 35:2 ^b1 Chr. 28:2 60:14 ^aIs. 45:14 ^bRev. 3:9 ^c[Heb. 12:22]

but God's cleansed people, and the glory of the Lord will radiate from Mount Zion.

60:1–22 The Babylonian captivity had been the nation's darkest hour, but that is not the darkness that Isaiah was describing. He was describing the awful darkness that will cover the earth during the day of the Lord (Amos 5:18) when God punishes the nations of the earth for their sins (Is. 2:12ff.; 13:6ff.). But the prophet was also describing the glorious light that will come to Israel when her Messiah returns to reign in Jerusalem.

60:1 “Arise, shine” is God's wake-up call to Jerusalem (v. 14) because a new day is dawning for Israel. This light is not from the sun but from the glory of God shining on the city.

60:5–7 Isaiah saw ships and caravans bringing people and wealth to Jerusalem, and he saw that the nations

refusing to honor the Lord and His city would be judged (v. 12). Even Israel's old enemies will submit and help to serve the Lord (vv. 10, 14).

60:15–22 The Lord describes some of the joys and wonders of the glorious kingdom. The nation will no longer be forsaken but will be enriched by the Gentiles and nursed like a beloved child (vv. 4, 16; 49:23; 61:6). As in the days of King Solomon (1 Kin. 10:21, 27), precious metals will be plentiful. Peace and safety will be the rule. “I will also make your officers peace, and your magistrates righteousness” (Is. 60:17). John used some of the characteristics of the millennial Jerusalem when he described the Holy City (Rev. 21–22): The sun never sets; no sorrow is there; the gates never close; and so forth. But the city Isaiah described is the capital city of the restored Jewish nation, and Jesus Christ

- I will make you an eternal excellence,
A joy of many generations.
16 You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles,
“And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that ^bI, the
LORD, *am* your Savior
And your Redeemer, the
Mighty One of Jacob.
- 17 “Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace,
And your magistrates righteousness.
- 18 Violence shall no longer be
heard in your land,
Neither wasting nor destruction
within your borders;
But you shall call ^ayour walls Salvation,
And your gates Praise.

GOD THE GLORY OF HIS PEOPLE

- 19 “The ^asun shall no longer be
your light by day,
Nor for brightness shall the
moon give light to you;
But the LORD will be to you
an everlasting light,
And ^byour God your glory.
- 20 ^aYour sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your
everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning
shall be ended.
- 21 ^aAlso your people *shall all be* righteous;
^bThey shall inherit the land forever,
^cThe branch of My planting,
^dThe work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.
- 22 ^aA little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time.”

THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION

61 “The ^aSpirit of the Lord
GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD ^bhas anointed Me

- To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me ^cto heal the
brokenhearted,
To proclaim ^dliberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison
to *those who are bound*;
2 ^aTo proclaim the acceptable
year of the LORD,
And ^bthe day of vengeance of our God;
^cTo comfort all who mourn,
- 3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
^aTo give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the
spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees
of righteousness,
^bThe planting of the LORD, ^cthat
He may be glorified.”
- 4 And they shall ^arebuild the old ruins,
They shall raise up the
former desolations,
And they shall repair the ruined cities,
The desolations of many generations.
- 5 ^aStrangers shall stand and
feed your flocks,
And the sons of the foreigner
Shall be your plowmen and
your vinedressers.
- 6 ^aBut you shall be named the
priests of the LORD,
They shall call you the
servants of our God.
^bYou shall eat the riches
of the Gentiles,
And in their glory you shall boast.
- 7 ^aInstead of your shame *you
shall have double honor*,
And *instead* of confusion they
shall rejoice in their portion.
Therefore in their land they
shall possess double;
Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

60:16 ^a Is. 49:23 ^b Is. 43:3 60:18 ^a Is. 26:1 60:19 ^a Rev. 21:23; 22:5
^b Zech. 2:5 60:20 ^a Amos 8:9 60:21 ^a Rev. 21:27 ^b Ps. 37:11 ^c Is. 61:3
^d [Eph. 2:10] 60:22 ^a Matt. 13:31, 32 61:1 ^a Luke 4:18, 19 ^b Luke 7:22
^c Ps. 147:3 ^d Is. 42:7 61:2 ^a Lev. 25:9 ^b Is. 34:8 ^c Matt. 5:4 61:3 ^a Ps.
30:11 ^b Is. 60:21 ^c [John 15:8] 61:4 ^a Ezek. 36:33 61:5 ^a [Eph. 2:12]
61:6 ^a Ex. 19:6 ^b Is. 60:5, 11 61:7 ^a Zech. 9:12

shall sit on the throne of David and judge righteously.
The Jewish “remnant” will increase and fill the land
(Is. 60:22; 51:2; 54:3).

61:1–11 The background of this passage is the Year
of Jubilee described in Leviticus 25:7ff. Every seven
years, the Israelites were to observe a sabbatical year
and allow the land to rest. After seven sabbaticals, or
forty-nine years, they were to celebrate the fiftieth year
as the Year of Jubilee. During that year, all debts were
canceled, all land was returned to the original owners,
all slaves were freed, and everybody was given a fresh

beginning. This was the Lord’s way of balancing the
economy and keeping the rich from exploiting the poor.
61:3 If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, you are liv-
ing today in a spiritual “Year of Jubilee” (Luke 4:16–21).
You have been set free from bondage; your spiritual
debt to the Lord has been paid; it is “the acceptable
year of the LORD” (Is. 61:2). Instead of the ashes of
mourning, you have a crown on your head, for He has
made you a king (Rev. 1:6). You have been anointed
with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and you wear a robe of
righteousness (Is. 61:3, 10).

- 8 “For ^aI, the LORD, love justice;
^bI hate robbery for burnt offering;
 I will direct their work in truth,
^cAnd will make with them an
 everlasting covenant.
- 9 Their descendants shall be
 known among the Gentiles,
 And their offspring among the people.
 All who see them shall
 acknowledge them,
 “That they *are* the posterity *whom*
 the LORD has blessed.”
- 10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God;
 For ^bHe has clothed me with the
 garments of salvation,
 He has covered me with the
 robe of righteousness,
^cAs a bridegroom decks *himself*
 with ornaments,
 And as a bride adorns *herself*
 with her jewels.
- 11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
 As the garden causes the things that
 are sown in it to spring forth,
 So the Lord GOD will cause
 “righteousness and ^bpraise to
 spring forth before all the nations.

ASSURANCE OF ZION'S SALVATION

- 62** For Zion's sake I will not
 hold My peace,
 And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
 Until her righteousness goes
 forth as brightness,
 And her salvation as a lamp *that* burns.
- 2 “The Gentiles shall see your
 righteousness,
 And all ^bkings your glory.
^cYou shall be called by a new name,
 Which the mouth of the
 LORD will name.

- 3 You shall also be “a crown of glory
 In the hand of the LORD,
 And a royal diadem
 In the hand of your God.
- 4 “You shall no longer be termed ^bForsaken,
 Nor shall your land any more
 be termed ^cDesolate;
 But you shall be called Hephzibah,¹
 and your land Beulah;²
 For the LORD delights in you,
 And your land shall be married.
- 5 For *as* a young man marries a virgin,
 So shall your sons marry you;
 And *as* the bridegroom
 rejoices over the bride,
 “So shall your God rejoice over you.
- 6 “I have set watchmen on your
 walls, O Jerusalem;
 They shall never hold their
 peace day or night.
 You who make mention of the
 LORD, do not keep silent,
- 7 And give Him no rest till He establishes
 And till He makes Jerusalem
 “a praise in the earth.
- 8 The LORD has sworn by His right hand
 And by the arm of His strength:
 “Surely I will no longer “give your grain
 As food for your enemies;
 And the sons of the foreigner shall
 not drink your new wine,
 For which you have labored.
- 9 But those who have gathered
 it shall eat it,
 And praise the LORD;

61:8 ^a Ps. 11:7 ^b Is. 1:11, 13 ^c Is. 55:3 61:9 ^a Is. 65:23 61:10 ^a Hab. 3:18 ^b Ps. 132:9, 16 ^c Is. 49:18 61:11 ^a Ps. 72:3; 85:11 ^b Is. 60:18; 62:7 62:2 ^a Is. 60:3 ^b Ps. 102:15, 16; 138:4, 5; 148:11, 13 ^c Is. 62:4, 12; 65:15 62:3 ^a Zech. 9:16 62:4 ^a Hos. 1:10 ^b Is. 49:14; 54:6, 7 ^c Is. 54:1
¹ Literally *My Delight Is in Her* ² Literally *Married* 62:5 ^a Is. 65:19
 62:6 ^a Ezek. 3:17; 33:7 62:7 ^a Zeph. 3:19, 20 62:8 ^a Deut. 28:31, 33

61:8 The “everlasting covenant” is described in Jeremiah 31:31–37 and includes the blessings of the new covenant that Jesus Christ instituted by His death (Heb. 10:1–18; see Matt. 26:28). Note that Isaiah 61:9 speaks of the Jews’ “descendants.” Those who enter into the millennial kingdom will marry, have families, and enjoy God’s blessings on the earth for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1–5). They will study God’s Word from generation to generation (Is. 59:21).

61:10, 11 Isaiah is speaking on behalf of the remnant who are praising God for all He has done. They rejoice that He has cleansed them and clothed them and turned their desert into a fruitful garden (55:10). They have gone from a funeral to a wedding!

62:1–12 God will not “hold [His] peace” (vv. 1–5). The “I” in verse 6 indicates that the Lord is the speaker. God promises to keep speaking and working till His purposes for Jerusalem are fulfilled. This is not only for the sake of Zion but also for the sake of the nations of the world. The earth will know no righteousness or

peace until Jerusalem gets her new name and becomes a crown of glory to the Lord.

62:6–12 The watchmen must not hold their peace or “hold their peace.” God gave His people leaders to guide them, but they had not been faithful (56:10). Now He gives them faithful watchmen, who constantly remind God of His promises. “Give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (62:7). What an encouragement to us to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:6).

62:8, 9 God promises that the Jews will never again lose their harvests to the enemy but will enjoy the fruit of their labors in the very courts of His sanctuary. What a privilege! According to Ezekiel 40–48, there will be a millennial temple, and the Jews will worship the Lord there. Having received their Messiah, they will now clearly understand the spiritual meaning of their worship. Today, their minds are veiled (2 Cor. 3:14–18), but then their eyes will be opened.

Those who have brought it together
shall drink it ^ain My holy courts.”

- ¹⁰ Go through,
Go through the gates!
^aPrepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
^bLift up a banner for the peoples!
- ¹¹ Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
^a“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His ^breward is with Him,
And His work before Him.’”
- ¹² And they shall call them
The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

THE LORD IN JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

63 Who is this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness
of His strength?—

- “I who speak in righteousness,
mighty to save.”
- ² Why ^ais Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who
treads in the winepress?
- ³ “I have ^atrodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no
one *was* with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled
upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
- ⁴ For the ^aday of vengeance
is in My heart,

And the year of My redeemed
has come.

- ⁵ ^aI looked, but ^b*there was no*
one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own ^carm brought
salvation for Me;
And My own fury, it sustained Me.
- ⁶ I have trodden down the
peoples in My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their
strength to the earth.”

GOD'S MERCY REMEMBERED

- ⁷ I will mention the lovingkindnesses
of the LORD
And the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD
has bestowed on us,
And the great goodness toward
the house of Israel,
Which He has bestowed on them
according to His mercies,
According to the multitude of
His lovingkindnesses.
- ⁸ For He said, “Surely they *are*
My people,
Children *who* will not lie.”
So He became their Savior.
- ⁹ ^aIn all their affliction He was afflicted,
^bAnd the Angel of His
Presence saved them;
^cIn His love and in His pity
He redeemed them;
And ^dHe bore them and carried them
All the days of old.
- ¹⁰ But they ^arebelled and ^bgrieved
His Holy Spirit;
^cSo He turned Himself against
them as an enemy,
And He fought against them.

62:9 ^a Deut. 12:12; 14:23, 26 62:10 ^a Is. 40:3; 57:14 ^b Is. 11:12
62:11 ^a Zech. 9:9 ^b [Rev. 22:12] 63:2 ^a [Rev. 19:13, 15] 63:3 ^a Rev.
14:19, 20; 19:15 63:4 ^a Is. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2 63:5 ^a Is. 41:28; 59:16 ^b [John
16:32] ^c Ps. 98:1 63:9 ^a Judg. 10:16 ^b Ex. 14:19 ^c Deut. 7:7 ^d Ex.
19:4 63:10 ^a Ex. 15:24 ^b Ps. 78:40 ^c Ex. 23:21

62:10–12 God will have no rest till He accomplishes His purposes for His people, and the world will have no peace till He succeeds. He asks us to “give Him no rest” (v. 7) but to intercede for Israel and Jerusalem, for the prayers of His people are an important part of the program of God.

63:1–6 The prophet looks ahead in vv. 1–6 and sees Jesus Christ returning from the battle of Armageddon that climaxes the day of the Lord (Rev. 19:11–21). Edom is named here as a representative of the nations that have oppressed the Jews. Bozrah was one of its main cities, and its name means “grape gathering.” This is significant since the image here is that of the

winepress. The ancient winepress was a large, hollowed rock into which the grapes would be put for the people to tread on them. The juice would run out a hole in the rock and be caught in vessels. As the people crushed the grapes, some of the juice would splash on their garments. Our Lord’s garments were dyed with blood as the result of the great victory over His enemies (Rev. 19:13).

63:7–14 Isaiah looked back at what God has done for Israel. He praised God for His unfailing love and goodness, for the pity and love bestowed on Israel. God identified with Israel’s suffering as He does with His people’s suffering today.

- 11 Then he ^aremembered the days of old,
Moses *and* his people, *saying*:
“Where is He who ^bbrought them up out of the sea
With the shepherd of His flock?
^cWhere is He who put His Holy Spirit within them,
12 Who led *them* by the right hand of Moses,
^aWith His glorious arm,
^bDividing the water before them
To make for Himself an everlasting name,
13 ^aWho led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness,
That they might not stumble?”
14 As a beast goes down into the valley,
And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest,
So You lead Your people,
^aTo make Yourself a glorious name.

A PRAYER OF PENITENCE

- 15 ^aLook down from heaven,
And see ^bfrom Your habitation,
holy and glorious.
Where *are* Your zeal and Your strength,
The yearning ^cof Your heart and Your mercies toward me?
Are they restrained?
16 ^aDoubtless You *are* our Father,
Though Abraham ^bwas ignorant of us,
And Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, O LORD, *are* our Father;
Our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name.
17 O LORD, why have You ^amade us stray from Your ways,
And hardened our heart from Your fear?
Return for Your servants' sake,
The tribes of Your inheritance.
18 ^aYour holy people have possessed it but a little while;
^bOur adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary.
19 We have become *like* those of old,
over whom You never ruled,
Those who were never called by Your name.

- 64 Oh, that You would rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at Your ^apresence—
2 As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence!
3 When ^aYou did awesome things *for which* we did not look,
You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence.
4 For since the beginning of the world
^a*Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.
5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness,
Who remembers You in Your ways.
You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—
^aIn these ways we continue;
And we need to be saved.
6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*,
And all ^aour righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags;
We all ^bfade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.
7 And *there is* no one who calls on Your name,
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
For You have hidden Your face from us,
And have consumed us because of our iniquities.
8 But now, O LORD,
You *are* our Father;
We *are* the clay, and You our ^apotter;
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.
9 Do not be furious, O LORD,
Nor remember iniquity forever;

63:11 ^a Ps. 106:44, 45 ^b Ex. 14:30 ^c Num. 11:17, 25, 29 63:12 ^a Ex. 15:6
^b Ex. 14:21, 22 63:13 ^a Ps. 106:9 63:14 ^a 2 Sam. 7:23 63:15 ^a Deut. 26:15 ^b Ps. 33:14 ^c Jer. 31:20 63:16 ^a Deut. 32:6 ^b Job 14:21
63:17 ^a John 12:40 63:18 ^a Deut. 7:6 ^b Ps. 74:3–7 64:1 ^a Mic. 1:3, 4
64:3 ^a Ex. 34:10 64:4 ^a Ps. 31:19 64:5 ^a Mal. 3:6 64:6 ^a [Phil. 3:9]
^b Ps. 90:5, 6 64:8 ^a Is. 29:16; 45:9

63:15 This is one of the greatest revival prayers found in Scripture. Just as God had come down in fire at Sinai (Ex. 19:16–19), so let Him come down again and reveal His awesome power to the nations. They trust in dead idols, so let them see what the living God of Israel can do!
64:4–6 Why is God not working wonders? The people

have sinned (vv. 5, 6) and must confess their sins and turn from them. If our righteous deeds are filthy, what must our sins look like in His sight! According to verse 4, God has planned wonderful things for His people, things beyond their imagination, but their sins prevent Him from sharing His blessings.

- Indeed, please look—we all
are Your people!
- 10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,
Zion is a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
- 11 Our holy and beautiful temple,
Where our fathers praised You,
Is burned up with fire;
And all ^aour pleasant things
are laid waste.
- 12 ^aWill You restrain Yourself because
of these *things*, O LORD?
^bWill You hold Your peace, and
afflict us very severely?

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

- 65** ^a"I was ^asought by *those*
who did not ask for Me;
I was found by *those who*
did not seek Me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation *that* ^bwas not
called by My name.
- 2 ^aI have stretched out My hands all
day long to a ^brebellious people,
Who ^cwalk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
- 3 A people ^awho provoke Me to
anger continually to My face;
^bWho sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;
- 4 ^aWho sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
^bWho eat swine's flesh,
And the broth of abominable
things is *in* their vessels;
- 5 ^aWho say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!'
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.

- 6 "Behold, ^a*it is* written before Me:
^bI will not keep silence, ^cbut will repay—
Even repay into their bosom—
- 7 Your iniquities and ^athe iniquities
of your fathers together,"
Says the LORD,
^b"Who have burned incense
on the mountains
^cAnd blasphemed Me on the hills;
Therefore I will measure their
former work into their bosom."

⁸Thus says the LORD:

- "As the new wine is found in the cluster,
And *one* says, 'Do not destroy it,
For *a blessing is in it*,'
So will I do for My servants' sake,
That I may not destroy them ^ball.
- 9 I will bring forth descendants
from Jacob,
And from Judah an heir
of My mountains;
My ^aelect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there.
- 10 ^aSharon shall be a fold of flocks,
And ^bthe Valley of Achor a place
for herds to lie down,
For My people who have ^csought Me.
- 11 "But you *are* those who
forsake the LORD,
Who forget ^aMy holy mountain,
Who prepare ^ba table for Gad,¹
And who furnish a drink
offering for Meni.²

64:11 ^aEzek. 24:21 64:12 ^aIs. 42:14 ^bPs. 83:1 65:1 ^aRom. 9:24; 10:20
^bIs. 63:19 65:2 ^aRom. 10:21 ^bIs. 1:2, 23 ^cIs. 42:24 65:3 ^aDeut. 32:21
^bIs. 1:29 65:4 ^aDeut. 18:11 ^bIs. 66:17 65:5 ^aMatt. 9:11 65:6 ^aDeut.
32:34 ^bPs. 50:3 ^cPs. 79:12 65:7 ^aEx. 20:5 ^bEzek. 18:6 ^cEzek.
20:27, 28 65:8 ^aJoel 2:14 ^bIs. 1:9 65:9 ^aMatt. 24:22 65:10 ^aIs. 33:9
^bJosh. 7:24 ^cIs. 55:6 65:11 ^aIs. 56:7 ^bEzek. 23:41 ¹Literally Troop
or Fortune, a pagan deity ²Literally Number or Destiny, a pagan deity

64:12 This prayer (and that of the believing remnant) ends with a question: Why is God silent? His temple has been destroyed, His glorious land has been ravaged, and His people are in exile. God's reply is found in the next two chapters

65:1 God issued the blessing of a New Creation. First, He announced that His salvation would go to the Gentiles (v. 1), even though they did not seek the Lord or experience the blessings that He gave to Israel. Paul applied this verse to the Gentiles in Romans 10:19, 20. If Israel did not want what God had to offer, then He would give it to others. **65:2–7** God described the sins of His people that kept Him from answering their prayers. They resisted His grace and His loving appeals, though He held out His arms to them and spoke to them through His Word (Rom. 10:21). They went their own way (Is. 53:6) and provoked Him with their evil worship of false gods, getting involved with the occult and demons. They ate food that was unclean and openly worshiped idols in the high places. And yet these rebellious people considered themselves to be better than others!

65:8–16 God then explained that He had to judge the nation for her sins. He called the Babylonians to be His instrument of punishment, to teach His people that they could not sin and get away with it. However, in mercy He preserved a remnant—like a few grapes rescued from the winepress—and that remnant would return to the land and restore the nation. When His people sincerely seek Him (v. 10), then He will bless them (2 Chr. 7:14).

65:10 The valley of Achor was the place where Achan was stoned to death because he had disobeyed the Lord (Josh. 7). When the Lord restores His estranged wife, Israel, the valley of Achor will become for them "a door of hope" (Hos. 2:15).

65:11–16 God sees two kinds of people in the land: those who forsake the Lord and those who serve the Lord ("My Servant" has now become "My servants"). Those who forsake the Lord ignore His temple and worship false gods, such as fortune and destiny. These disobedient Jews will not live but be destroyed, and those who do survive will not enjoy life. In fact, their very names will be used as curses in the years to come!

- ¹² Therefore I will number
you for the sword,
And you shall all bow down
to the slaughter;
^aBecause, when I called, you
did not answer;
When I spoke, you did not hear,
But did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which
I do not delight.”
- ¹³Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
- “Behold, My servants shall eat,
But you shall be hungry;
Behold, My servants shall drink,
But you shall be thirsty;
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
But you shall be ashamed;
¹⁴ Behold, My servants shall
sing for joy of heart,
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And ^awail for grief of spirit.
¹⁵ You shall leave your name ^aas
a curse to ^bMy chosen;
For the Lord GOD will slay you,
And ^ccall His servants by
another name;
¹⁶ ^aSo that he who blesses
himself in the earth
Shall bless himself in the
God of truth;
And ^bhe who swears in the earth
Shall swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles
are forgotten,
And because they are hidden
from My eyes.

THE GLORIOUS NEW CREATION

- ¹⁷ “For behold, I create ^anew
heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be
remembered or come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem
as a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.

- ¹⁹ ^aI will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The ^bvoice of weeping shall no
longer be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.
- ²⁰ “No more shall an infant from
there *live but a few days*,
Nor an old man who has not
fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one
hundred years old,
^aBut the sinner *being* one hundred
years old shall be accursed.
- ²¹ ^aThey shall build houses
and inhabit *them*;
They shall plant vineyards
and eat their fruit.
- ²² They shall not build and
another inhabit;
They shall not plant and
^aanother eat;
For ^bas the days of a tree, *so shall*
be the days of My people,
And ^cMy elect shall long enjoy
the work of their hands.
- ²³ They shall not labor in vain,
^aNor bring forth children
for trouble;
For ^bthey *shall be* the descendants
of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.
- ²⁴ “It shall come to pass
That ^abefore they call, I will answer;
And while they are still
speaking, I will ^bhear.
- ²⁵ The ^awolf and the lamb
shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw
like the ox,
^bAnd dust *shall be* the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all My holy mountain,”
Says the LORD.

65:12 ^a Prov. 1:24 65:14 ^a Matt. 8:12 65:15 ^a Jer. 29:22 ^b Is. 65:9, 22
^c [Acts 11:26] 65:16 ^a Jer. 4:2 ^b Zeph. 1:5 65:17 ^a Rev. 21:1 65:19 ^a Is.
62:4, 5 ^b Rev. 7:17; 21:4 65:20 ^a Eccl. 8:12, 13 65:21 ^a Amos 9:14
65:22 ^a Is. 62:8, 9 ^b Ps. 92:12 ^c Is. 65:9, 15 65:23 ^a Hos. 9:12 ^b Is.
61:9 65:24 ^a Is. 58:9 ^b Dan. 9:20–23 65:25 ^a Is. 11:6–9 ^b Gen. 3:14

65:17—66:24 God saves the best for the last: His description of the “new heavens and a new earth” (the millennial kingdom). This is not the same as John’s “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1ff.), because the characteristics Isaiah gives do not fit the eternal state. As far as we know, in the eternal state people will not get old or die (Is. 65:20), nor will there be any danger of losing anything to invaders (vv. 21–23). Jerusalem will be a source of joy, not only to the Lord but to the whole earth. It will be a city of holiness, harmony, and happiness. During the millennial kingdom, people will work, and God

will bless their labors. People will pray, and God will answer (v. 24). Nature will be at peace (v. 25) because the curse will be lifted.

66:1–24 Of course, the remarkable thing will be the birth of a nation as Israel takes center stage on the international scene (vv. 7–9). The return of the Jews to their land will be as swift as the birth of a baby. Israel’s travail will be “the day of the Lord” or “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), when God will purify His people and prepare them for the coming of their Messiah. Like a nursing baby, she will find health and peace in the arms of the Lord.

TRUE WORSHIP AND FALSE

66 Thus says the LORD:

- ^a“Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that
you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?”
- ² For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,”
Says the LORD.
- ^a“But on this *one* will I look:
^bOn *him who is poor* and of
a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.
- ³ “He^a who kills a bull *is as if*
he slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, *as if*
he ^bbreaks a dog’s neck;
He who offers a grain offering,
as if he offers swine’s blood;
He who burns incense, *as if*
he blesses an idol.
Just as they have chosen
their own ways,
And their soul delights in
their abominations,
- ⁴ So will I choose their delusions,
And bring their fears on them;
^aBecause, when I called, no
one answered,
When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which
I do not delight.”

THE LORD VINDICATES ZION

- ⁵ Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble at His word:
“Your brethren who ^ahated you,
Who cast you out for My
name’s sake, said,
^b“Let the LORD be glorified,
That ‘we may see your joy.’
But they shall be ashamed.”
- ⁶ The sound of noise from the city!
A voice from the temple!
The voice of the LORD,
Who fully repays His enemies!

- ⁷ “Before she was in labor, she gave birth;
Before her pain came,
She delivered a male child.
- ⁸ Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to
give birth in one day?
Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children.
- ⁹ Shall I bring to the time of birth, and
not cause delivery?” says the LORD.
“Shall I who cause delivery shut up
the womb?” says your God.
- ¹⁰ “Rejoice with Jerusalem,
And be glad with her, all
you who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you
who mourn for her;
- ¹¹ That you may feed and be satisfied
With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply
and be delighted
With the abundance of her glory.”

¹²For thus says the LORD:

- “Behold, ‘I will extend peace
to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles
like a flowing stream.
Then you shall ^bfeed;
On *her* sides shall you be ^ccarried,
And be dandled on *her* knees.
- ¹³ As one whom his mother comforts,
So I will ^acomfort you;
And you shall be comforted
in Jerusalem.”

THE REIGN AND INDIGNATION OF GOD

- ¹⁴ When you see *this*, your
heart shall rejoice,
And ^ayour bones shall flourish like grass;
The hand of the LORD shall be
known to His servants,
And *His* indignation to His enemies.

66:1 ^a 1 Kin. 8:27 66:2 ^a [Is. 57:15; 61:1] ^b Ps. 34:18; 51:17 66:3 ^a [Is. 1:10–17; 58:1–7] ^b Deut. 23:18 66:4 ^a Is. 65:12 66:5 ^a Is. 60:15 ^b Is. 5:19 ^c [Titus 2:13] 66:12 ^a Is. 48:18; 60:5 ^b Is. 60:16 ^c Is. 49:22; 60:4 66:13 ^a Is. 51:3 66:14 ^a Ezek. 37:1

66:1–6 There will be a new temple (see Ezek. 40–48), but the ceremonies of worship can never take the place of a humble heart. God does not live in buildings; He dwells with those who submit to Him. Stephen quoted Isaiah 66:1, 2 in his defense before the Jews (Acts 7:48–50), and Paul referred to these words in his address to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:24).

In Isaiah’s day, were God’s people trembling at His Word? No, they were not. Instead, they were going through the motions of worship without having a heart

for God. The people were not sacrificing the animals; they were murdering them! Because their hearts were far from God (Is. 29:13), their offerings were as unclean things to the Lord. The heart of the worshiper determines the value of the offering.

66:14 God’s hand will bring blessing to His servants but His anger will come “against His enemies.” Isaiah describes that “anger” in verses 15–18. The day of the Lord will be a storm of judgment with fire and whirlwinds and with the sword of God—“the slain of the LORD shall be many” (v. 16).

- 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.
¹⁶ For by fire and by ^aHis sword
The LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD
shall be ^bmany.

¹⁷ “Those^a who sanctify themselves
and purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
After an *idol* in the midst,
Eating swine’s flesh and the
abomination and the mouse,
Shall be consumed together,”
says the LORD.

¹⁸ “For I *know* their works and their
“thoughts. It shall be that I will ^bgather all
nations and tongues; and they shall come
and see My glory. ¹⁹ “I will set a sign among
them; and those among them who escape
I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and
Pul¹ and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal
and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who
have not heard My fame nor seen My glory.
^bAnd they shall declare My glory among the
Gentiles. ²⁰ Then they shall ^abring all your
brethren ^bfor an offering to the LORD out of

all nations, on horses and in chariots and in
litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy
mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the
children of Israel bring an offering in a clean
vessel into the house of the LORD. ²¹ And I
will also take some of them for “priests and
Levites,” says the LORD.

- ²² “For as “the new heavens
and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain
before Me,” says the LORD,
“So shall your descendants and
your name remain.
²³ And “it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
^bAll flesh shall come to worship
before Me,” says the LORD.

²⁴ “And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their “worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence
to all flesh.”

66:15 ^a Is. 9:5 66:16 ^a Is. 27:1 ^b Is. 34:6 66:17 ^a Is. 65:3–8 66:18 ^a Is.
59:7 ^b Jer. 3:17 66:19 ^a Luke 2:34 ^b Mal. 1:11 ¹ Following Masoretic
Text and Targum; Septuagint reads *Put* (compare Jeremiah 46:9).
66:20 ^a Is. 49:22 ^b [Rom. 15:16] 66:21 ^a Ex. 19:6 66:22 ^a Rev.
21:1 66:23 ^a Zech. 14:16 ^b Zech. 14:17–21 66:24 ^a Mark 9:44, 46, 48

66:17, 18 Who will be killed? Those who have disobeyed
God’s law in their eating and in their worshiping. Instead
of worshiping the true and living God, they had turned
to pagan idols and pagan practices. Being religious is
not enough; we must serve God according to what He
says in His Word (8:20).

66:19 The book closes with a description of messengers
going to the ends of the earth to announce what God
has done for Israel. The result will be a flow of people
to Jerusalem (see 50:3–14; 66:12) to bring offerings
to the Lord. In the past, Gentile nations had come to

Jerusalem to attack and destroy, but in the kingdom
age, they will come to worship and glorify God.

66:24 The book ends on a seemingly negative note
describing worshipers looking at the desecrated and
decayed corpses of the rebels (v. 24). The valley of
Hinnom (Hebrew, *ge hinnom* = Gehenna in the Greek) is
a picture of judgment (30:33). Jesus used it to picture
hell (Mark 9:43–48). The people who come to Jerusalem
to worship will also go outside the city to this garbage
dump and be reminded that God is a consuming fire
(Jer. 7:32).