

ISAIAH

Volume I

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

ISAIAH

Volume I

by

Paul T. Butler

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PREFACE

The righteousness of God, apart from the law, was manifested in Jesus Christ. The New Testament is a record of that perfect and final manifestation. But the law and the prophets bore witness to that manifestation (Rom. 3:21).

Of all the "law and the prophets", Isaiah is the chief witness to that "righteousness of God" manifested in Jesus Christ. Isaiah is appropriately called, "The Gospel Prophet." The Messiah's coming, His nature, His work are most graphically and abundantly predicted by Isaiah. The Messiah's kingdom, its coming, its nature, its citizenry, its universality and its victory over its enemies are most vividly portrayed by Isaiah.

We have deliberately refrained from dealing with highly technical problems of textual nature in order to concentrate on application of Isaiah's message to our needs. If the student wishes further study of a more technical nature, other works more competent than ours are available.

Our fourteen years of classroom instruction in the prophets coupled with class notes of V.K. Allison, former professor of Old Testament at San Jose Bible College, form the basis for these volumes.

We commit them to God and His church, the Israel of God, and pray they may glorify His servant, Immanuel, and bring us all to a deeper participation in His glorious Zion, the universal kingdom of God.

My sincerest thanks to two secretaries whose assistance helped make this volume possible, Mrs. Darlene Ashcraft and Mrs. Sherry Lankford.

THIS VOLUME
IS
DEDICATED
TO
Roberta Kenoyer
a true servant of God
and a
friend, helper and encourager
to
anyone
in need.

ISAIAH

by Sherry Butler Lankford

Isaiah son of Amoz, in an hour of meditation
saw God enthroned in splendor . . . he would never be the same.
Looked inside himself and realized
he was needy and unworthy; repentance brought him healing.

Sixty years were spent in preaching
writing prophecies, predicting . . . thru stormy days
and sunlit season love for God brought dignity.
He fixed his heart and set his hand,
to do the thing God did command:
"Thou'll keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

Deep convictions, kingly courage, not a coward soul was he;
bore hardships, perils, disappointment . . .
thru God's strength had victory.
He saw heaven's glories shining and
this gave his words more meaning as they came to human ears:
"Fear not, I am with thee, for I am God; I help thee."

Isaiah son of Amoz, spent his life in bringing the Remnant
to communion with the Father and a knowledge of His word,
to sense something of His loveliness and
to feel His precious nearness
to trust His holy guidance, what a worthy aim for us.
"Flowers fade and grass will wither, but the word of God's forever."

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SPECIAL STUDY

THE KEY TO PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION

By Gorden H. Patten
Missionary - Seoul, Korea

What am I to make of the Prophets?

Of What did they speak?

Can I understand them?

Why is there so much controversy about them?

Why did the apostles use them with such convincing power?

Why don't they carry the same impact today?

Can the position of the word of the prophets be restored so that their word is as final now as it was to the New Testament Christians? Yes, we believe it can. But the first steps we make with the prophets sets our course which we will follow throughout our concourse with them; so these first steps we take are so vitally important.

Should we employ a strictly literal interpretation? Should we employ a spiritual interpretation? Should we pay close attention to every detail? How did the early New Testament writers use the prophets? How did they handle them?

There is a great controversy going on in theological circles about the millennial question. Some don't want to discuss it because they have never bothered to look into the matter seriously enough and they never plan to do so. They resort to the flippant answer, "Well, you'll never change anyone's belief in this matter anyway," or they will sneer, "Oh, that's all he wants to talk about," or "Oh, he just wants to argue for argument's sake."

None of these amount to anything as far as a student of the Word of God is concerned. Admittedly much damage has been done by arrogant dogmatists on either side of the issue. This is not an issue to hold dissenters in contempt for or to mock and chide them. There have been sound evangelical scholars on both sides. Nothing is gained by such an attitude. If we are not afraid for our position why can we not listen to an objective presentation even if it is counter to our concept? Also one should

ask, "Why do you accept your present position?" Most people stumble on to a position by "hit or miss" method then keep on the lookout for ideas to substantiate their position. A much wiser and saner approach is to examine several sides on such an issue as this, compare them, analyze them with a view of the scripture: then formulate one's own idea. I have discussed this issue with many people who do not have the slightest idea what the opposing views are. They don't try to understand. A standard attitude is this: "I know the Bible: what the premillennialists teach is just what the Bible teaches. That's all I want. That's good enough for me." But this is a narrow, legalistic approach. It is not exegetically sound for interpretation of other parts of the Bible. All the positions use the Bible, but they base their opposing views on the same scriptures.

What is needed is a key; a divinely inspired method of interpretation so that we may know if we are even on the right road or not. Is there any such thing available? For instance the Premillennialist accuses the Amillennialists of spiritualizing everything. They say the Amillennialist takes all the glory and beauty from everything. All that's left is a spiritual vacuum in an unreal utopia. This is an over simplification of the issue. Where the Premillennialist calls "Spiritualizing, Spiritualizing, Spiritualizing" out to the Amillennialist, it is just as easy and effective to turn the chide around and have the Amillennialists cry "Literalist, Literalist, Literalist" to the Premillennialist. But neither position really accomplishes much. It would be much more to the point to notice that each position has a basic method of interpretation which is pursued throughout this discussion, and so the basic approach or method of interpretation accounts for such a divergent conclusion in the end.

So the key to the issue is in the approach or method of interpretation. May we hesitate long enough to ask if we have a divinely inspired key so as to know if our approach is correct? I believe we do. There are 300 Old Testament prophecies quoted in the New Testament. Some of these are extensive quotations

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and some exegetical evaluation is made in most of the quotations by the New Testament writers. We believe they were also moved by the Holy Spirit to write the message of God. Here is then a key. Here is God's prophecy interpreted hundreds of years later by God's inspired apostles. How did they proceed? What method did they employ? To what events did they apply the prophetic messages they quoted? To what did they not apply their quotations? Did they employ a literal approach? Did they employ a spiritual approach? Did they employ an altogether different approach? What would happen if we did just what they did? Would it be wrong for us to go beyond what they did? Is it right for us to use a different method because we live in such a later date in the world's history? Does the premillennialist follow this example of the New Testament writers? Do the Amillennialists? Is there not a way here for us to be safe and sure at the same time?

These and related questions demand some answers. To ask some of them is to answer them. If we answer them correctly we will be a long ways down the road in resolving this conflict. This is not an impossible issue. It can be resolved. It should be resolved.

The main things we will want to watch in this survey are, "To what does the New Testament writer apply his quotation? How does he use it? In what does he not apply it?"

- I. The earliest Advocates to Proclaim that Jesus Christ was the Messiah the Old Testament Prophets spoke of.
1. The first interpreter of Old Testament prophecy to indicate that Jesus was, indeed, the very object of the Old Testament prophetic oracles was the angel Gabriel. He was clear in his implications. No one who knows the prophets need misunderstand what he said. He must have spoken with the greatest authority and dignity. No one can set aside the message he delivered.

Gabriel speaking to Zechariah

A. Luke 1:17a quoting Mal. 4:4, 5.

“And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just . . .”

It is most obvious that this is quoting Malachi. Malachi said, “Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come,” while Gabriel said “. . . He shall go before His face.” The “His Face” doesn’t have an antecedent, but it is very clear that it is “Jehovah” or “Lord” or the “Messiah.”

John the Baptist was a fore-runner of Christ. He preached to thousands and told them to, “Repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Many responded to his message and were immersed by him; and many of these turned from following John to Jesus when Jesus started preaching.

Gabriel continuing to speak to Zechariah.

- B. Luke 1:17b quoting Mal. 4:4, 5 and Isa. 40:3.

“. . . To make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him.”

Here Gabriel refers to both Mal. 4:4, 5 and Isa. 40:3 as these prophets foretold the coming of the harbinger of Christ and the work he would do. John said he was that “voice in the wilderness,” Jn. 1:19-23; and Jesus said, “This is Elijah if you’ll believe it.” Matt. 11:14.

Gabriel speaking to Mary.

- C. Luke 1:32 quoting Isa. 9:7.

“He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto the throne of his father David.”

Here Gabriel spoke of his deity. Jesus spoke of this relationship and the rulers wanted to stone Him to death (see Jn. 10:29-33). The Jews understood that Jesus was making Himself equal to God. But Jesus would not recant these implications. Then Gabriel called Him the exalted king who was to fulfill all that David only dreamed of doing. We cannot help but see how he quoted Isa. 9:7 especially; and from there, other related and parallel passages as Isa. 16:5, 32:1; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 6:13, etc.

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This was in accordance to God's promise to David personally. See I Chron. 17:10-15; I Chron. 22:9-13; 28:4-7. God there spoke of a son who would reign forever. Solomon never fulfilled this. All know it rings with Messianic implications.

Then Matthew and Luke are very careful to trace both Mary and Joseph the foster father back to Davidic lineage because of the widespread knowledge of this oracle.

Gabriel continuing with Mary.

- D. Lu. 1:33 quoting Isa. 9:7, Dan. 2:44, Isa. 2:1-4.

"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The emphasis here is upon the eternal duration of His kingdom. It then speaks of something more than frail man who lives and is soon gone. See Isa. 40:6, 7. This kingdom shall not only stand forever - but the increase of it shall always be. It is not stagnant or stale.

2. Zechariah speaking by the Holy Spirit.

- A. Lu. 1:68 quoting Isa. 40:10.

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has visited and wrought redemption for his people."

Here it is the Lord God of Israel who has visited. There are many Old Testament prophecies of the divinity of the Messiah, as the one cited, "Behold the Lord Jehovah will come . . ." Isa. 40:10. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of their rejection of Him and their consequent total destruction assigning this as the justifiable reason. Lu. 11:44. ". . . Because you did not know the hour of your visitation." You were so blind, you were so prejudiced against Me you did not even recognize God when he stood before you face to face!

- B. Lu. 1:69 quoting thoughts from Zech. 9:9, Isa. 12:2, 3.

"And (He) has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."

The "horn" speaks of power and rule and authority. Earlier Gabriel assigned as a reason for His name - "Jesus" - See Matt. 1:21 - "He shall save his people from

their sins." We can not help but see the implications of Zech. 9:9 even if it is not here quoted directly. ". . . Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is just, and having salvation . . ." or who could fail to see application of Isa. 12:2, 3. ". . . (Jehovah) is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall he draw water out of the wells of salvation." Then once again He is spoken of as a son of David. See our earlier comments on this.

- C. Lu. 1:70 Zechariah still speaking.

"As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been of old."

Zechariah here plainly tells us he is alluding to so many prophetic oracles that he doesn't want to take the time and space to delineate them all.

- D. Lu. 1:71 quoting Isa. 11:13-15.

"Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us."

This idea is surely found in Isa. 11:13-16. We believe this warfare and conquest is spiritual. The weapons are the sword of the Spirit, etc. See Eph. 6:1-14. As the church successfully evangelizes and spreads the borders of its kingdom all over the world it will in a very effective and efficient way subdue all its enemies; and thus the Lord will reward her with peace and safety.

- E. Lu. 1:76 quoting Isa. 40:2, 3.

"For you shall go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways;"

Here Zechariah predicts this as applicable to his son John the Baptist who prepared the way for his cousin who was none other than the Messiah of God! So Zechariah here is saying what Gabriel said earlier.

- F. Lu. 1:78 quoting Mal. 4:2.

". . . Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us."

We believe there are few who would deny that the seed thought for these words find their origin in Mal. 4:3 even if it is not a direct quotation. The ideas are so parallel

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that the point can not be missed. "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; . . ."

Here the healing of Luke 1:77 is emphasized. The day-spring is definitely parallel with Malachi's "Arise." Also this visitation is parallel with what we spoke of earlier in #2a, Lu. 1:68. See above.

G. Lu. 1:79a quoting Isa. 9:1-3.

"To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death."

This has to refer to Isa. 9:1, 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined." But it is also parallel to Isa. 49:6; 42:6; 60:1, etc. Then we think of Jesus' transfiguration, appearance to Saul on the Damascus road, or to John on the isle of Patmos, Rev. 1:12-17; and when he said, "I am the light of the world," Jn. 12:46 and Heb. 1:3 he is called "The effulgence of God's glory." We are overwhelmed. Who could miss seeing it unless he didn't want to see? Surely the message is plain enough!

H. Lu. 1:79b quoting Isa. 11:6-9.

"To guide our feet into the way of peace." He is called, "The Prince of Peace," Isa. 9:6. Isa. 42:3 is certainly a picture of His peaceful and tranquil reign. "A bruised reed will he not break . . ."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publishes peace . . ." Isa. 52:7. This is the beautiful picture of peace in His kingdom when vicious men are converted and become humble, gentle, ambassadors even as Paul himself. Phil. 4:7. "And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." Paul is living testimony of what is spoken of here.

3. An Angel speaking to the Shepherds.

A. Lu. 2:10 quoting Isa. 52:7.

"And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." Again this is perhaps not a direct quote of the prophets as such, but who could fail to see the ecstasy of Isa. 52:7 in it? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace, that brings good tidings of good things . . ." There are other such thoughts in the prophets. The angel was first to be able to fulfill it, later John, Jesus and the apostles completed the preaching of these glad tidings which unfolded in the full message of salvation announced through the church.

B. Lu. 2:11 alluding to Micah 5:2, Isa. 53:10, 12.

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

This brings to mind the prediction of Micah that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. "But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah which are little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And to Isaiah 53:12 "... Yet he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors!"

He is of the city of David; He sits and reigns from David's throne. He is king. But as the angels emphasize here He is savior too. He saves His people from their sins. See Matt. 1:21. He is from everlasting. See Jn. 17:5; or as in Dan. 7:22 "... Until the Ancient of Days came." The Ancient of Days there is the Messiah. Psalms 102:25-27. "... And thy years shall have no end;" and the Hebrew writer applies this to Jesus. Heb. 1:10, 12. See also Heb. 13:8 and Prov. 8:22, 23.

C. Lu. 2:14 alluding to Isa. 9:6.

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased." "His name shall be called . . . prince of peace." There are many other sections referring to peace in the Messianic

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kingdom. See Isa. 32:1, 16, 17.

4. Simeon speaking of the Christ child in his arms.

- A. "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;"

This is the prophetic meaning of Isaiah's name. See Isa. 8:18, "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah has given to me are for signs and wonders . . ." Hosea's children's names also carried very significant prophetic messages. Hosea means "deliverer" and Isaiah means the "salvation of God."

This salvation is open to all people not just to the Jews. It is spiritual salvation and not political. See the following section.

- B. Lu. 2:32 quoting Isa. 49:6; 42:6; 60:1, 9.

"A light for revelation to the Gentiles . . ." This is exactly as Isaiah said ". . . I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Isa. 49:6.

"And I will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isa. 42:6.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." Isa. 60:1. ". . . The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined." Isa. 9:2.

The light and the glory of Lu. 2:32 is so well spoken of by these prophecies; many more could be cited.

Gabriel, Zechariah, and Simeon were the first to declare that Jesus the Bethlehem-born carpenter's son from Nazareth was actually and indeed the Christ - the anointed Messiah of God predicted by all the prophets. They tell us how to interpret Old Testament prophecy.

II. Early Gospel Quotations of the Old Testament Prophets.

1. It has always been intriguing to me to see how the New

Testament begins with such a vivid emphasis on the prophets. They are telling us something. God has a plan. God told us many years ahead of time about this plan. God fulfilled all He predicted of the Messiah in Jesus. Therefore God has given you a sure foundation upon which to build your faith. He does not call upon you to make a blind leap into darkness. He calls you to order your life on a message He has substantiated.

2. The first reference Matthew makes to Messianic prophecy is in the first verse. He calls Jesus Christ the Son of David and the son of Abraham. Anyone knowing the sacred scriptures of the Jews will know immediately that this is the ultimate. Even Solomon, David's son of the flesh, was never addressed like this. Then Matthew gives a genealogy to show how this was biologically true of Jesus. Matthew wastes no time. Immediately the import of the prophet is quoted and it is assumed that the message is well understood just by quoting the prophet.

3. This is followed by a quotation in Matt. 1:23 of Isa. 7:14.

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel! Which is being interpreted, God with us!" Matt. 1:22, 23.

With what Matthew says in verses 18 and 25 we know he very definitely intended us to understand the emphasis is upon the word virgin. Matthew plainly tells us what God predicted in Isa. 7:14 He has fulfilled in the virgin born son of Abraham, son of Joseph and son of Mary. Then by way of emphasis he interprets for the Greek speaking people to whom he writes the Hebrew word "Immanuel," "God with us." God has visited this planet. His message is of paramount importance. It can not be over-emphasized. We have a divine Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. The next quotation Matthew makes, 2:6, is of Micah 5:2.

"And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written through the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, land

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of Judah, are in no wise least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel." Matt. 2:5, 6.

It's interesting to notice that no sooner is the question asked than the answer is given. They could have asked hundreds of questions more and in like manner the answers could have been given by the very men who knew the word of the prophets. In this section of the Messiah is called, (1) King of the Jews, (2) the governor of Judah, (3) the shepherd of Israel and (4) He is worthy of worship. Only God can be worshipped. He is our Divine Deliverer.

5. Then Matthew quotes (2:15) a section in Hosea 11:1.

"... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophets, saying, out of Egypt did I call my son." Matt. 2:15.

This section speaks first of Israel in the flesh called out of Egypt through the prophet Moses: but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Matthew tells us there is a fuller application to the Messiah who was called as a child out of Egypt to live in Nazareth of Galilee.

6. The next quotation (2:18) is from the prophet Jeremiah 31:15.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 'a voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not.' " Matt. 2:17-19.

It speaks of the massacre of the innocent by Herod when he tried to kill the Christ child. God spoke of it 60 years before it happened. Anyone can see this if he will take time to study the prophets.

7. Matt. 2:23 quoting Isa. 11:1 etc.

"He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene." Matt. 2:23.

The last verse in Chapter 2, verse 23 is a remarkable text in that Matthew plainly tells us he is quoting the prophets and he makes no distinction from what he was

doing before; so we conclude that he quotes from Isa. 11:1.

In the Hebrew the word for "branch," and "Nazareth" is very similar. The same idea is in Zech. 6:12. We may call this a loose use of the prophets. The Jews said check the prophets. You know that no prophet is to come out of Galilee. Jn. 7:41, 52. But after contemplation Matthew quotes this text and claims the Jewish leaders were wrong. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit we are made to understand that the prophet was to come out of Galilee.

8. Matt. 3:3 quotes Isa. 40:3.

"For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness make ye ready the way if the Lord. Make His paths straight." Matt. 3:3.

It is applied by Matthew to John the Baptist, the harbinger of the Messiah. See Mark 1:18, and Luke 3:1-6; John 1:19-23; and Luke 7:27.

9. The next is a series of quotations related to Jesus' wilderness temptation.

Matt. 4:4 quotes Deut. 8:3 - Jesus speaking.

Matt. 4:6 quotes Psa. 91:11, 12 - Satan speaking.

Matt. 4:7 quotes Deut. 6:16 - Jesus speaking.

Matt. 4:10 quotes Deut. 6:13 - Jesus speaking.

Here it is evident that the Psalms and the law spoke of the Messiah and Jesus was well aware that He fulfilled many O.T. prophecies in His daily ministry.

10. The next messianic prophecy, 4:15, 16 quotes Isa. 9:1, 2.

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying; the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, towards the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." Matt. 4:14, 16.

This is a very significant text which had long been held by the leaders of Israel as messianic in nature. Matthew said Jesus' ministry itself is an exegesis of it even from its inception.

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11. Now let us go to Luke and view his account of Jesus' ministry as it began. Luke 4:16-30. In this section Jesus quoted Isa. 6:1-2.

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant . . . (and said) 'Today has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.' " Lu. 4:17-21.

Jesus used as His text Isa. 61:1-2.

This is the beginning of a section in Isaiah dealing with the "Mighty Servant" of Jehovah as opposed to the "Suffering Servant" prophecies as in Isa. 53:1-14, etc. Some Rabbis thought these represented two separate servants of God; but Jesus fulfilled both. In choosing this text He couldn't have been more obvious or blunt. He is making His debut with a grand-slam homer. There is no mistaking His position or intention. It was not a process of growth and development in Jesus' mind. "Today has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." If this is true then it is also true that every other Messianic prophecy is either fulfilled or will be very shortly by Him. It's interesting to note the response of the home town. At first they are filled with amazement but somewhat willing to accept or at least hear what He has to say. But then He moved to His second division predicting the very chiding they would use against Him.

(1) Physician heal yourself.

(2) Work great miracles here too.

(3) A prophet is unacceptable in his own country.

But His word about: (1) The widow of Zarephath, and (2) Naaman the leper was the clincher. This was more than they could bear. So they sought to kill Him. So leading off with a "Mighty Servant of Jehovah" text, His first sermon leads

Him in beginning to fulfill the "Suffering Servant" prophecies. So from the very first day of His ministry Jesus is laying claim to fulfillment of both types of Messianic prophecy. But in passing you will please notice Jesus didn't say part of this verse is fulfilled; He did not say this part applies to me now and that part will apply 3,000 years later. He just plainly said; "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

From what follows we know that there was both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment of this text.

III. Jesus' use of the prophets.

It is a sorry thing for us, but we do not have the sermons Jesus preached verbatim. We know He resorted to the prophets very often. What was His attitude? What was His approach? What was His method? Though we don't have all He said on the matter, at least we have enough to know what bridges He crossed and which forks of the road He took. This is clear from what He said to those on the way to Emmaus.

(1) "Oh foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken! . . . and beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:24-27. He must have begun with Deut. 18:15-22. We know He claimed this spoke of Him.

(2) "And He said unto them, these are my words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets and psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44. This wasn't anything new to them. This is the kind of thing He had been saying all along. It just took on more significance in light of the recent crucifixion and resurrection. But notice the emphasis Luke makes in verse 27; The prophecies of (1) Moses (2) all the prophets and (3) all the scriptures. Luke does this again later in verse 44; (1) Moses, (2) the prophets, (3) and the Psalms. Then on top of this verse 25, "slow in

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heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Luke understands Jesus to have fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies. As Jesus Himself said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished." Matt. 5:17-18. If you look at the Olivet discourse aright and study the works of Josephus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. you would say that to the Jewish mind heaven and earth did pass away then (70 A.D.). So we conclude that all that the Old Testament prophets predicted of the Messiah was fulfilled by then.

(3) Luke 7:22-23; Matt. 11:2-6.

Go tell John. "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; now that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached, and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

John is in trouble. He is low in spirit. He needs reassurance. He sent the request to Jesus: "Please tell us plainly if you are the Christ or look we for another?" With this kind of question Jesus was non-committal to His actual brothers or to the chiding crowd. But here was a chance to help his friend. But when I first read this answer I felt that Jesus dodged the issue here. That was because I didn't know the message of the Bible. But John did know the prophets very well. Undoubtedly he preached from the prophets again and again. So rather than dodging the issue Jesus was so very forthright with John in his hour of need. Jesus did not just say "Yes," or "Yes, I am the Messiah." He said, in essence, "John, you know the Messianic prophecies; Isa. 61:1-3; 35:11; 29:11, etc. What do they say the Messiah will do? And what am I doing; I am fulfilling to the very letter both physically and spiritually all that the prophets predicted of me! You know I am the Messiah! These prove beyond all doubt to those who look for the consolation of God that I am the

Messiah." So John was more than satisfied. In His answer Jesus has a compound correlation of the texts we have delineated; It is a loose quotation comprising all the points expressed in these several oracles. Jesus fulfilled them all in His ministry! John has great reason to be fully satisfied. Indeed the Messiah has come! We do not look for another!

(4) Luke 16:16 and Matt. 11:13. Prophets lasted unto John.

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Why? He of whom the prophets spoke is here; He is working! Luke 21:32. He has His kingdom open so men can come into it. "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." Jesus did not expect us to use the prophets to apply them to something way beyond our day. He fulfilled what they spoke of.

(5) The Triumphal entry. Luke 19:30-46. Matt. 21:5 quoting Zech. 9:9 and Isa. 62:11. This is the only day of coronation Jesus knew in His earthly ministry. But this is nothing compared to His enthroned splendor with which He rules the universe.

It is obvious to all that Jesus, by example of life, is a living exegesis of this; "Jerusalem receive your king." "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king comes unto you; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. 9:9.

Then to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion by saying "I tell you that if these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out," verse 40. So Jesus intentionally intends for us to understand, "Because you did not know the time of your visitation" applies to the Messianic visitation. They did not know or believe therefore He predicted as Judgment the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred 36 years later. What a terror filled devastation it was. "Be sure your sins will find you out." Num. 32:23. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Prov. 13:15. They paid dearly for their

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rejection and unbelief. Now we understand the significance of His word, "This generation shall not pass away until all is fulfilled."

(6) Luke 20:42-44 quoting Psa. 110:1.

"And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.' David therefore called Him Lord, how is he then his son?"

Though the Messiah is son of David by ancestral lineage, He is David's Lord by Divine heritage. This Divinity of the Messiah was predicted by the prophets again and again. So Jesus, aware of both angles, asks a question which baffled them but it is very clear to us. Every Christian ought to understand it clearly.

(7) Luke 21:32. All is accomplished.

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

The context here would indicate that Jesus was talking of the end of the world. But actually He speaks of the end of the Jewish dispensation. The whole Olivet discourse is not easy to unravel. Special study needs to be spent on it. But we will not take time here to do so. The conclusion we will seek to emphasize is, so much of what Jesus and the prophets said was fulfilled was fulfilled in the First Coming of Christ and the establishment of His Church and its conquest in this world. They did not often go beyond this at all. This was uppermost in their minds.

(8) Matt. 12:17-21 quoting Isa. 42:61ff.

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

Here is the Mighty Servant of Jehovah; yet He is tender and understanding, careful not to run over anyone who is

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really trying no matter how small that effort may be. He will fully succeed. The Gentiles didn't hear of Him until after His death. It was then His judgments and victory began to be realized by them. This is one of the top Messianic prophecies. Jesus plainly applies it unto Himself.

(9) Matt. 13:14, 15 quoting Isa. 6:9-10.

"And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand, and in seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them.' " Matt. 13:14-15.

Some people see, believe and obey, and are saved. Some see, reject, rebel and are lost. The trouble is not in the Messiah nor His message. The trouble is in the evil hearts of men who do not want to accept the message and will not allow God's leading place in their life. God saw this and spoke of it millenniums ago. We are without excuse.

(10) Matt. 17:10-13 referring to Mal. 4:5, 6.

"Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Mal. 4:5, 6.

Jesus plainly explained that this is another reference to John the Baptist. "That great and terrible day when Jehovah comes" speaks of the divine nature of the Messiah and His Judgments as final. It refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Judgment which fell on the Jews because they rejected their Messiah.

(11) Matt. 21:42 quoting Psalms 118:22ff.

"And Jesus said unto them, 'Did you never read the scriptures? "The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes." ' " Matt. 21:42-43.

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Jesus is a precious building stone chosen of the Father, rejected by the builders (they in unbelief stumbled over Him); still God exalted Him to the position of Chief corner stone. We can't but help to think of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, see Dan. 2, which filled the earth. Here is the stone upon which the church is securely built, see Matt. 16:16.

(12) Matt. 27:9 quoting Zech. 11:12 and 13.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price." Zech. 11:12, 13.

This is attributed to Jeremiah by Matthew, but it is a prophecy of Zechariah as we have it in our Bibles today.

It speaks of the money of Judas' betrayal of his Master for 30 pieces of silver.

(13) John 7:38 referring to Isa. 12:3; 35:1, 7.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, 'From within shall flow rivers of living water.' " Jn. 7:38.

There are other such thoughts from the pen of the Prophets, though it looks like John is making a paraphrase, not an exact quotation. But certainly the thought is there in the Prophets again and again, and certainly Jesus fulfilled all that was written.

(14) John 12:38-40 quoting Isa. 53:1; 6:9, 10.

"That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, 'Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, 'He has blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; lest they should see with their heart, and I should heal them.' " Jn. 12:38-40. Much of Jesus' ministry was rejected. At the beginning He was unknown; for a while popular, then rejected and crucified. Thinking of the masses of the world for whom He died as compared to those who embrace Him, certainly the number is small warranting this question.

(15) John 13:18 quoting Ps. 41:9.

“ . . . He that eateth my bread lifteth up his heel against me.” Jn. 13:18.

Judas, one of the inner circle kicked up his heel against Jesus, betrayed Him and accepted his desolation or judgment.

(16) John 15:25 quoting Psa. 35:19.

“But this came to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that was written in their law; they hated me without a cause.” Jn. 15:25.

These last few prophecies are from the “Suffering Servant of Jehovah” section. Jesus fulfilled them all. These were necessary to perform our redemption. Once completed He was exalted higher than the heavens and now fulfills even more the aspects of the “Mighty Servant of Jehovah” predictions.

IV. Early Preachers use of the Prophets.

Jesus taught with many parables and teachings originating with Himself. These were novel with the people and recorded by those who heard Him. So much of what He did was an exegesis of the prophets' message, we do not have many references recorded which reveal the use Jesus made of the prophets. But we have enough to be sure that He did make extensive use of them and that He left nothing wanting in their fulfillment.

As we turn from the Gospels we notice immediately in Acts the extensive use of the prophets made by the first gospel preachers. Anyone reading the New Testament for the first time is bound to notice this.

(1) Acts 1:16-26 quotes Psa. 69:25, 26 and 109:8.

“Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus . . . For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and His office let another take.’ ” Acts 1:16-20.

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They realized the replacement of Judas was a fulfillment of the prophets.

(2) Acts 2:16-27 quotes Joel 2:28-30.

"But this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel; 'and it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my hand-maidens in those days will I pour forth of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!' " Acts 2:16-21.

In the first gospel message Peter fittingly turned to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-30, showing how the establishment of the Church was in accordance to the word of the prophets. And preceding the quoting of the section Peter said, "This is that." Notice, he did not quote just a few words. He quoted a complete section. He did not say part of this applies to our day and part of it will apply later after two thousand years elapse. He said "This is that." We leave it with him. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit. He preached and Luke wrote what the Holy Spirit wanted communicated. He said "This is that." So we leave it right there. Though the whole language sounds like a description of the end of the world, in actual fact it is apocalyptic literature referring to the end of Judaism and not of the world, and the beginning of the church age or the age of the Holy Spirit. Peter very definitely intends for us to see that the words, "Before the great and notable day of the Lord come" applies to this very hour. The Lord came and offered the salvation spoken of in the next lines and 3,000 were baptized. Therefore there was either a literal or spiritual fulfillment of all the rest of the message recorded there. We see not the slightest inclination on

Peter's part to refer any of this to anything beyond his own day. We don't believe we should either. His use of this text is what is called a spiritual interpretation today.

(3) Acts 2:25-31 referring to Psa. 16:10.

"For David said concerning him, 'I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope; because you will not leave my soul in hades, neither will you give your Holy One to see corruption. You made known unto me the ways of life; You shall make me full of gladness with your countenance.'" Acts 2:25-28.

Peter clearly shows that this text speaks of the double resurrection of Christ. He was raised from the dead - not as a spirit entity, as we see in spiritism, Shammanism or Animism, but He was raised both in body and in spirit. His Spirit was not left in Hades and His body was not left in the tomb. Thus their witness of the resurrection is vindicated by God who had predicted it 1,000 years earlier by David. The significance of this prophecy is tremendous. That is why the New Testament writers used it several times as we will see later. The prophets had predicted that the Messiah would die and rise again from the dead. Early in His ministry Jesus predicted it in plain language; yet the disciples didn't know what He was talking about. But after it was an accomplished fact they saw it so very clearly. Here is a vital link of evidence that was given to break down the unbelief of man. "Reject it if you will but be assured when the history of the world is concluded God will hold you without excuse; He will say, 'I plainly told you; you could have believed if you had wanted to. But you didn't want to bother yourself with a world shaking matter of a crucified Messiah risen from the dead for your propitiation. So now I can't be bothered with you. Away with all who sell their soul out to flippant, eroding platitudes of this world. If they spurn my only provision for their eternal salvation, if they want to "go it on their own" let them keep on "going it on their

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own." I'll honor their choice.' There was absolutely nothing wrong with the message I gave, the method I chose, or the Messiah I sent. The fault lies totally within the man. He is accountable for his own decisions; I honor the choice he made in his life."

(4) Acts 3:18-26. Things God foreshowed.

"But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled." Acts 3:18.

Peter's use of the prophets in this section is constant and with a great deal of finality. God has a plan. God revealed the plan. God fulfilled the plan as depicted by the prophets. What God has so emphasized we dare not call insignificant. We must pay attention.

(5) Acts 3:21-23. Peter here quotes Deut. 18:15-18.

". . . Whereof God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old. Moses indeed said, 'A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me; to him shall you harken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not harken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' " Acts 3:21-23.

Jesus is that distinguished prophet that Moses spoke of. There was only one; none is to follow. Now notice 3:24, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Here Peter is quoted as saying that all the prophets looked to this day. Again his language nearly or completely forbids going beyond that period for its fulfillment.

Then he applied the Abrahamic promise to Christ and the blessings His church brings to the families of earth, "And in thy seed shall all the families of earth be blessed." Gen. 12:3, 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.

(6) Acts 4:11. Rejection of the Chief Corner Stone.

There are several references to this as seen in this study. See III. #(11).

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(7) Acts 4:25 quoting Psalms 28:1.

“Who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, did say, ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his anointed?’ ” Acts 4:25, 26.

This speaks of all who stand opposed to God in rejecting the Messiah He sent into the world. The Psalm continues to show God’s complete victory and their complete and eternal loss in this rejection. But it came as no surprise to God.

(8) Acts 7:37 quoting Deut. 18:15-18, same as Acts 3:18-26. Please refer to section #5 of IV.

(9) Acts 8:28-40 quoting Isa. 53:5-8.

“Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this; He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearers is dumb. So he opened not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth . . . And Philip . . . beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.” Acts 8:32-35.

The key to this experience is verse 35. Philip told the Eunuch plainly that the section from which he was reading referred to Jesus. This is a “Suffering Servant” section of Old Testament prophecy. If this part applies to Jesus the whole section does.

Again the significance of this prophecy and its God inspired interpretation can not be over emphasized. Either the Bible is man-made and therefore a hoax and should be banned and burned or else it is a book from God and all men had better buckle down and submit to its oracles. If God went to the extent of the cross (the predicted Messiah - the Suffering Servant died) it was for some great reason. To flout this message is to spit in God’s face. There is no middle ground. If God predicted these things then fulfilled them all to the very letter, you had better be sure that when

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He predicted the Second Coming of Christ, it shall be as He said: When He predicted the great judgment morning, you can be sure He'll be on time. When you are subpoenaed to this court session it will be too late to seek a lawyer and a defense attorney. Extra time will not be granted to prepare the defense. When questioned, you too will be speechless. Matt. 22:12.

(10) Acts 9:22. Paul confounded the Jews?

How did Paul confound the Jews? Any one who admits Old Testament prophecy is in fact Messianic prophecy has no defense left. The life of Jesus so fulfills all that the prophets predicted the only escape left is to deny the prophecy is Messianic. This of course makes havoc of the Old Testament and hence of the whole Bible and ultimately of one's soul. That is a disastrous road to follow. But it is the road the Jews as a nation chose; this is one reason for rank atheism in their camp so much in our day. They destroyed the foundation for their faith.

(11) Acts 10:43.

Peter says it is a matter of concern. If you are concerned; its just a matter of checking the record. If you are not concerned, you will not be actually persuaded even if the rocks began to break open.

(12) Acts 13:22, 23. Jesus son of David.

Matthew and Luke intentionally trace back the genealogy of Jesus to David to show He fulfills this prophecy. You can deny it if you will: but God has plainly shown it is so.

(13) Acts 13:33 quoting Psa. 2.

"... as also it is written in the second Psalm; 'thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' "

While we may have applied this only to the birth of Christ, it is very obvious that God intended for men to see that this "begotten" extends over to and includes even the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Yea, verily, this is the important significance of the prophecy as interpreted by Paul. He then quotes Isa. 55:3 but all the Messianic element of the chapter is applied here, even as we quote the first line of a song and

imply all its message. See the last verse: "It shall be unto Jehovah for a name for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The sign of Christianity is once and for all the cross. Because Jesus died and rose again He has established a sign that shall not be cut off. Hence the emphasis Paul here makes concerning the resurrection citing this text is vindicated.

(14) Acts 13:35 quoting Psa. 16:10.

Then He quotes Psa. 16:10 even as Peter did in Acts 2:25-31. We need not comment further here; please see #3 of IV.

(15) Acts 13:41 quoting Hab. 1:5.

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you."

To reject the resurrection of Christ is to reject everything - there is nothing further to say. But still they will be held accountable for their unbelief.

(16) Acts 13:47 quoting Isa. 49:6.

"For so has the Lord commanded us, saying; I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 13:47.

This is related to Isa. 9:1, 2, 60:1, which is implied by Jesus in John 12:35, 36, 46. He is the light of the world. This is a very popular theme with the prophets. See Heb. 1:1, 2 and II Cor. 4:4-6.

(17) Acts 15:15-18 quoting Amos 9:11, 12.

"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who makes these things known from old." Acts 15:15-18.

The tabernacle is fallen. Here God plainly says He had predicted these things He has thus fulfilled. This would speak of the establishment of the church upon the foundation

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of Judaism which itself came into disrepute and obliteration a few years later when Titus with his Roman Legions marched against Jerusalem and destroyed it completely. But from among the rubble God raised up an impressive institution which has stood against the tests of time which opened its doors to the Gentiles hence it has spread to every corner of the earth since that day. The apostles and New Testament prophets saw clearly the fulfillment of this text; hence just a quoting of it was sufficient without comment to show that what God had predicted by Amos had been fulfilled by their lives and activities. They did not go beyond their day for the fulfillment of any word of the prophet.

(18) Acts 18:28. Paul confuted the Jews.

"He powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." What Scriptures? The scriptures the Jews accepted of course. What were these? The Old Testament prophets.

We've heard them testify today with our own ears that these very prophets we use are the very ones they have used for millenniums. How did he powerfully confute the Jews? By quoting the prophets again and again and showing that Jesus fulfilled it all and this is the exact meaning of the writing they handled. "This is that" as Peter said at Pentecost. What the prophets said Jesus did.

(19) Acts 26:27. "Do you believe the prophets?"

If one believes the prophets he must believe that Jesus is the Christ. If Jesus is the Christ then Paul has successfully vindicated himself of all charges brought against him. The clarity and certainty of the matter must here be emphasized. If you want to believe, all you have to do is examine the records and check the life of Christ. The noble ones (Acts 17:11) do, unto eternal life. The ignoble ones don't, unto their eternal destruction.

(20) Acts 28:23. Persuading them all day long.

They were persuaded when they listened to Paul. They are persuaded even today when they listen to Moses and the prophets and see how Jesus fulfills it all.

(21) Acts 28:25-27 quoting Isa. 6:9, 10.

See Matt. 13:14, 15, #9 of III where we commented on this section.

The last prophecy of Acts is pathetic. God knew from of Old that blind people in unbelief would not pay attention, hence the quotation of Isa. 6:9, 19. But look at what a great expense they turn from the prophets . . . "And I should heal them." To neglect them is to neglect the only healing balm from Gilead. Jer. 8:22.

V. The prophets in the Epistles.

1. Romans.

A. Introductory remarks from the Old Testament.

The first use of the Old Testament by Paul in Romans is 3:10-18 which is a series of quotes but they are not necessarily Messianic so we will not quote or comment on them. We will just acknowledge their locations:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1) Psa. 14:1 | 5) Psa. 14:7 |
| 2) Psa. 53:1 | 6) Isa. 59:7 |
| 3) Psa. 5:9 | 7) Psa. 36:7 |
| 4) Psa. 140:3 | |

This section Paul uses to show all men are under sin. Then in Chapter 4:7-8 again he quotes the prophets (Psa. 32:1) to get a person to desire relief from the guilt of sin. Then he speaks of the victorious suffering of the saints in 8:36 as he quotes Psa. 94:32.

B. In chapter 9:25-30 quoting Hos. 2:23; 1:10.

"As he said also in Hosea, 'I will call that my people, which was not my people; and her beloved, that was not beloved, and it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people. There shall they be called sons of the living God.' " Rom. 9:25, 26.

His first real use of Messianic prophecy is Hosea 2:23 and 1:10. Here a little understanding of the prophet Hosea is required to get the full implication of what Paul is driving at. Hosea's wife turned from faithfulness to

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whoredom and ended up as a destitute slave. In mercy Hosea bought her and as a slave she had to obey orders which she transgressed as a free woman. When she obeyed he re-established her in her role as a mother of his family. The illegitimate children were also accepted into the family. What Hosea did to his wife, God sought to do for adulterous Israel in Hosea's day. But here Paul is truly pointing out that there is a third dialogue going along with this drama at the same time. The third level of this discourse is here applied by Paul to the Messiah: He drew us back and adopted us into His family. Now we are sons of God because in Christ we have been bought from the slavery of sin and now we obey orders of God which we hadn't obeyed before so He adopts us into His family and calls us by His name. By His mercy and sacrifice, family unity and respect has been re-established.

Hosea's second child's name is Lo-rahamah; it means "unpitied." The name of his third child is Lo-ammi; it means "not my people." But in both cases he elided the "Lo" and the meaning changed to "pitied" and "my people" respectfully. So also in the family of God the "unpitied" through the Messiah is "pitied" and the "not my people" are "sons of the living God!" "Behold what manner of love of father has been bestowed upon us that we might be called children of God." 1 Jn. 3:1.

C. In Rom. 9:27 Paul quotes Isa. 9:22.

"And Isaiah cried concerning Israel, 'If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved!' " Rom. 9:27.

There are other places which state it is a remnant of Israel which was predicted by the prophets which would be saved. This remnant we definitely believe is the remnant or group which would obey the Messiah. He then quoted Isa. 1:9 in Rom. 9:29 which shows us it was a very small remnant which was to be saved. God has made broader preparations than what people take advantage of; so if they are not saved, it is not God's fault.

- D. He closes the chapter (9:33) with a quotation which we have seen before, Isa. 28:16. Matt. 21:42, #11 of III.
- In Zion, the city of the great King, a stone: strong, safe, secure, and immovable. A stone of stumbling because the Jewish leaders stumbled over it. They did not recognize in Jesus their Messiah even though God went to the end of the world to make it so very plain and obvious. He is the rock of offense because so many of His kinsmen have been offended in Him since the day He started preaching. But the believer shall not be put to shame, yea, verily, He shall fully and readily be saved through the exalted chief corner stone.
- E. Then in Rom. 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32.
- Paul quotes a part of the section of Joel 2:32 which Peter quoted more extensively on the day of Pentecost when the church was established. Please note the comments there. Acts 2:16. See #2 of IV.
- F. Rom. 10:15 quoting Isa. 52:7.
- “... even as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!’ ” Rom. 10:15.
- G. Rom. 10:16 quoting Isa. 55:1.
- “For Isaiah said; ‘Lord who has believed our report.’ ” Rom. 10:16.
- H. Rom. 10:18 quoting Psa. 19:4.
- “Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Rom. 10:18.
- I. Rom. 10:19 quoting Deut. 32:21.
- “First Moses said, ‘I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you!’ ” Rom. 10:19.
- J. Rom. 10:20 quoting Isa. 65:1.
- “And Isaiah is very bold, and said, ‘I was found of them that sought me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me.’ ” Rom. 10:20.
- K. Rom. 10:21 quoting Isa. 65:2.
- “But as to Israel he said, ‘all day long did I spread

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out my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.' ”
Rom. 10:21.

In sections F - K Paul quotes from the prophets as Luke did at the close of the book of Acts to show how God had spoken beforehand how people would refuse Him even if He told them thousands of years ahead of time, and then fulfilled it all in the death of His Son. Here he is saying, “Men don’t care; men are intentionally blind. They don’t want to be helped. Any that want help, healing or deliverance will turn to me and receive it. But the rest will not turn to me with the heart no matter what I do. If I break the rocks and scare them they tremble a few days; but for the most part they are unchanged. But in the process heaven is being peopled. All who desire may enter in. If they don’t desire, I’ll not force them; if they choose to rebel, if they choose the wrong road I’ll allow them, but it is for all eternity; and the choice is theirs. Woe be unto their sin sick souls as Jeremiah said, “A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will you do in the end thereof?” Jer. 5:30.

L. Rom. 11:8-9 quotes Isa. 29:10; Deut. 29:4; Psalms. 69:22.

“And David said, ‘Let their table be a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow thou down their back always.’ ” Rom. 11:9, 10.

All of this is a continuation of what we have in the last of chapter 10 . . . Turning a deaf ear to God will one day bring its just reward.

M. Rom. 11:26 quotes Isa. 59:20.

“And so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, ‘there shall come out of Zion the deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.’ ” Rom. 11:26, 27.

This section is quite similar to Joel 2:28ff, which Peter quoted on Pentecost and it is quite similar to Isa. 61:1ff which Jesus quoted as He entered His ministry. Here the emphasis is upon the Messianic entry into Zion with salvation from sin as in Zech. 9:9. "Behold your King comes unto you . . . having salvation." "He who has ears to hear let him hear." God has spoken plainly enough. If it had been political salvation they would have heard Him - but salvation from sin is disinteresting to Jew and Greek alike. But that is not God's fault. He knows it is the real and vital and imperative need of man, so He has provided it.

N. Rom. 14:11 quotes Isa. 45:23.

"For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.' "

Rom. 14:11.

God is not mocked. God will call all mankind into judgment. The Holy Spirit convicts men in respect of sin and righteousness and judgment. Of sin - I have sinned; of righteousness - Jesus is righteous, in Him is no guile; of judgment because the devil is judged. His Kingdom is fallen and all who throw in their lot with him are fallen too. This could refer to the Great Judgment Day at the close of earth's history. It doesn't have to; but it may; if it does we must acknowledge that it is the first and only prophecy so far in the New Testament which is applied to anything beyond the age of the apostles. It really makes better sense in the context not to extend this to the end of the world's judgment; but we acknowledge it may. It will come up again in Phil. 2:10 where Paul makes a looser quote of it or states the whole idea more clearly and emphatically through the spirit of prophecy and inspiration given to him irrespective of what is meant in Isa. 45:23 or Rom. 14:11.

O. Rom. 14:3 quotes Psa. 69:9.

"For Christ also pleased not himself; but as it is written; the reproaches of them that reproach thee fell

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upon me." Rom. 15:3.

Many have been abused, mocked, chided and killed because of faith in Christ. But this is nothing more than what happened to Jesus. In the end God vindicated Him and in the end He will vindicate all who have trusted in Him.

P. Rom. 15:9-12 quotes Psa. 18:49; II Sam. 22:50; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 117:1; Isa. 11:1, 10.

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, 'therefore will I give praise unto thee among Gentiles, and sing unto thy name! And again he said; rejoice, ye Gentiles, with the people. And again; praise the Lord, ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him. And again Isaiah said; there shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope.' " Rom. 15:9-12.

In each of these prophecies Paul is plainly showing that it was manifestly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. Yes! But it was no new thing; in fact it was not his idea; it was his commission. See Acts 26:17-19. But here Paul resorts to the prophets to vindicate himself and his mission and his ministry and to hold out the gospel of hope to the Gentiles at Rome. This is as God planned and predicted.

Q. Rom. 15:21 quotes Isa. 52:15.

"But as it is written; they shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand." Rom. 15:21.

Paul continues to emphasize the same things discussed earlier.

2. I Corinthians.

A. I Cor. 1:19 quotes Isa. 29:14.

"For it is written; 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.' " I Cor. 1:19. This prophecy leads up to a description of the ministry of the Messiah. Later when

John's servants came asking Jesus for a sign He quoted this Messianic prophecy and told them they were seeing it fulfilled every day as they watched Him work. Here Paul is quoting this leading thought which shows the hardness of men's hearts. They see God working before their very eyes and fail to believe. Woe unto those who make wisdom their God and reason and intellect their only Lord. God easily destroys the wisdom of the wisest men with His foolishness or less complicated act. How shall we stand against Him in His strength?

- B. I Cor. 2:9 quotes Isa. 64:4.

"But as it is written, 'things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.' " I Cor. 2:9.

God saves blessings untold to those who walk by faith and in patience all the days of their life wait to the day when God will exalt them. I Pet. 5:5, 6.

- C. I Cor. 15:27 quoting Psalms 8:6.

"For he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he said, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him." I Cor. 15:27.

Through the spirit of prophecy in him it appears that Paul is amplifying this prophecy beyond what we can see in the text so that it then included something beyond his and our day. It goes clear to the conclusion of the history of the world itself. So here is a first definite or second possible reference we have found which is applied to Christian eschatology.

- D. I Cor. 15:54 quotes Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14.

"But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written; 'Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy victory, O death where is thy sting?' " I Cor. 15:54, 55.

This, again, could as in Isaiah's text, all be applied to

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our being made alive in Christ, though we were dead because of our trespasses and sins. But here Paul applies it to something beyond us in time. The context fairly demands it. So here we have either the second definite or maybe a third Old Testament prophecy quoted and applied to a day way on the other side of the apostles. It speaks of the consumation of the Christian's life and victory in Jesus Christ.

Here in Hos. 13:14 is a third definite or possible fourth Old Testament prophecy applied by a New Testament writer to a day millenniums beyond his day, and is paralleled with what we have just seen in the 55th verse. Christ arose from the dead. We will be raised to reign with Him when the fullness of time comes according to what God has allotted on His eternal calendar.

In all three cases the quotes are brief and no elaborate system is built of the text by the New Testament writer. Just a casual mention of victory itself is enough.

3. II Corinthians.

A. II Cor. 6:2 quotes Isa. 49:8.

"For he said, 'at an acceptable time I hearkened unto you, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee.' " II Cor. 6:2.

Paul applies this to the urgency of the present hour. Sinful man ought not keep God waiting. He may too soon run out of time with no recourse left to him.

B. II Cor. 6:16 quotes Lev. 26:12.

"I will walk among you;" Ex. 29:45, "I will dwell among them;" Ex. 29:45, "I will dwell among them;" Ez. 37:27, "My tabernacle shall be among them;" Jer. 31:1 "I shall be God to all the families of Israel and they shall be my people." Isa. 52:11, "touch no unclean thing." Hos. 1:10, "Ye are the people of the living God." Isa. 43:6, "Bring my daughters from the ends of the earth." There are also many other such quotes which could be applied to this section. But the meaning is clear: under the Messiah God would have new, closer affiliation

with His people. Jer. 31:31-33 is a more full aspect of this prophetic oracle.

- C. II Cor. 8:15 quoting Ex. 16:18.

"As it is written, 'He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.' " II Cor. 8:15.

God has always sought a measure of equality among His people. We are brothers together. The advancement of Christ's Kingdom anywhere in the world is my particular gain and advantage. We need to see and realize this. Also see Matt. 19:29.

- D. II Cor. 9:9 quoting Ps. 112:9.

"As it is written, 'He has scattered abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness abides forever.' " II Cor. 9:9.

God watches over His children. In all His righteous goodness He waits an opportunity to bless His Saints.

- E. II Cor. 10:17 quotes Jer. 9:24.

"But he that glories, let him glory in the Lord." II Cor. 10:17.

This is the same as II Cor. 1:31. We do not exalt in men. Men fail us. Jesus is exonerated. We trust in and praise Him. We do not call ourselves after the names of the reformers. We call ourselves by Jesus' name. We glory in the Lord. See also Gal. 6:16, Isa. 62:2 and 65:15. We go by the name he gave us. It is His church; He died for it. It is Christ's church: we are Christians with no aliases.

4. Galatians.

- A. Gal. 3:8 quotes Gen. 12:3.

"In thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. 3:8.

This is definitely Messianic. Abraham's seed is Christ, (see Gal. 3:16) the seed of woman, the saviour of men. See Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 17:8. Through Him all the families of the earth are blessed.

- B. Gal. 3:13 quotes Deut. 21:23.

"For it is written, 'cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.' " Gal. 3:13.

Jesus tasted of ignominy to cleanse us from sin. All our

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sins were cast upon Him. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6.

- C. Gal. 4:4 quotes Gen. 3:15.

"But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under Law." Gal. 4:4.

The oldest prophecy of the Bible speaks of the ultimate victory of Christ, The seed of woman, over satan and all his seed (cohorts).

- D. Gal. 4:27 quotes Isa. 54:1.

"For it is written, 'Rejoice, thou barren that beareth not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband.' " Gal. 4:27.

Jesus Himself had no children. This was a disgrace to a Jew. But through the Word of God and the New Birth untold millions have been born into the family of the faith so that in actuality Jesus has a greater posterity than any other man of the history of the world. And it is a perfected family which shall stand for all eternity. He is proud of His family. He gladly shares His inheritance together with them. Rom. 8:16, 17. He fully accomplished His purpose.

5. Ephesians.

- A. Eph. 4:8 quotes Psalms 68:18.

"Wherefore he said, 'when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' " Eph. 4:8.

This speaks of the conquest of the Messiah. He shall make conquest in the Name of God. He shall establish the rule of God in the hearts of men. He shall succeed. His conquest shall not be small. He shall fully realize His purpose.

- B. Eph. 5:14 quotes Jer. 1:12.

"Wherefore he said, 'awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.' " Eph. 5:14.

The sleeping almond was the first plant to blossom from the long winter sleep. It was first to show life from what appeared to be dead, so see Isa. 60:1 and 66:24.

6. Philippians.
7. Colossians.
8. I & II Thessalonians.
9. I & II Timothy.
10. Titus.
11. Philemon.

It is an amazing thing to me that in these eight epistles Paul does not make direct use of the prophets at all. Certainly it is a break from what he did in Romans and Corinthians and from what we find in Acts. These are addressed to Gentiles and those more unacquainted with the Old Testament, hence we assume he made less use of the prophets.

12. Hebrews.

A. Heb. 1:1.

"God, having of olden time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions in divers manners." Heb. 1:1.

Immediately the writer speaks of the work of the prophets as occupying a prominent part in the program of God and His plan for the history of man on the earth.

B. Heb. 1:5 quoting Psa. 2:7.

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, 'you are my son, this day have I begotten thee?' " Heb. 1:5.

This, as interpreted by Paul in Acts 13:33, refers to or was fulfilled by the resurrection of Christ. Here it seems to speak of His office or position.

C. Heb. 1:5 quotes II Sam. 7:14.

"And again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.' " Heb. 1:5.

The son of David was to sit on his throne forever. So though the next text speaks of Solomon in particular it has also some prophetic implications because David's spiritual son was to reign and complete all that David started and dreamed of in expanding the borders of the kingdom of God and securing peace and prosperity for the people of God.

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D. Heb. 1:6 quoting Deut. 32:43, Psalms 97:7.

"And when he again bringeth in the first born into the world he saith, 'and let all the angels of God worship him.' " Heb. 1:6.

There are many prophetic utterances relating to the divine nature of the Messiah. Here, this utterance, with the command for angels to worship Him, reveals that He is more than lofty, more than prophet, He is worthy of worship - only God is worthy of worship. Hence He is divine. All this was told beforehand by the prophets.

E. Heb. 1:7 quotes Psalm 104:4.

"And of the angels he saith, 'who makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire,' " Heb. 1:7.

He lays a foundation for the following verse which completes the contrast.

F. Heb. 1:8 quotes Psalm 45:7.

"But of the son he said, 'thy throne O God, is for ever and ever; and the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom.' " Heb. 1:8.

This is a Messianic Psalm pointing out His lofty position, person, and attributes.

G. Heb. 1:10-12 quotes Psalm 102:25.

"You, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish; but you continue; and they all shall wax old as does a garment, and as a mantle shall you roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Heb. 1:10-12.

The prophets by prophetic vision looked back into the ancient past instead of the distant future and saw the Messianic position in the act of creation. All that is made is the work of His hands. Here stress is laid on His lofty position again.

H. Heb. 1:13 quotes Psalm 110:1.

"But of which of the angels has he said at any time, 'Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?' " Heb. 1:13.

The obvious answer to the question of the verse is, None; He never did. But He did to His Son, the Messiah, hence, He is greater than any or all of the angels.

- I. Heb. 2:6-8 quoting Psa. 8:4.

"But one has somewhere testified, saying, 'What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands; you did put all things in subjection under his feet!' " Heb. 2:6-8.

Here a description of the nature of man is used as a foundation of a contrast depicting the divine nature of the Messiah.

- J. Heb. 2:12 quoting Psa. 22:22.

"Saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise." Heb. 2:12.

This is accomplished in the church. Jesus is our elder brother. We are joint heirs with Him. Rom. 8:16, 17.

- K. Heb. 2:13 quoting Psa. 22:8.

"I will put my trust in Him." Jesus did this. In fact they chided Him on the cross with these very words. Matt. 27:43.

- L. Heb. 2:13 quoting Isa. 8:17.

"Behold, I and the children God has given me." Heb. 2:13.

The same kind of thing we spoke of earlier; though He had no natural children He did have numerous spiritual children.

- M. Heb. 3:7-11 quoting Psa. 95:7.

"Harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation. . . . As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." Heb. 3:7-11.

The writer works with this scripture through the rest of the chapter and on into the middle of the next and he culminates it in verse 9 with the words, "There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God." This is now the fourth example and may be the fifth we have

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found where a New Testament writer may have gone beyond his day for the fulfillment of prophecy of which he is dealing. This may speak of our eternal abode with God.

N. Heb. 5:5 quoting Psa. 2:7.

“ . . . This day have I begotten thee.”

As we have seen earlier in 1:5 and once again this time the verse is applied to His office and how He got into it.

O. Heb. 5:6 quoting Psa. 110:4.

“As he said also in another place; ‘thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’ ” Heb. 5:6.

This also speaks of the dignity of His office and again in Heb. 7:17 and 21. It is much higher and filled with more dignity than that of Aaron.

P. Heb. 8:5 quoting Ex. 25:40.

“Even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for ‘See,’ saith he, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount.’ ” Heb. 8:5.

This calls to mind how the tabernacle of God was to be built. We also expect in establishing the church to see everything built according to the pattern. We must be careful how we build. I Cor. 3:12-14. Those building with wood, hay and stubble had their works burned up; they suffered the loss of their lifetime of labor. Those building with silver, gold and precious stone endured the testing of fire and were eternally blessed. If we build according to the pattern we will be eternally blessed. If we pay no attention to the pattern and build according to the dictates of men we will suffer eternal loss of reward.

Q. Heb. 8:8-12 quoting Jer. 31:31ff.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord for this is the covenant that I will

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make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother saying, know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." Heb. 8:8-12.

This is one of the most extensive quotations of the O.T. prophets. It is one of the two extensive Messianic prophecies we find from the pen of Jeremiah. Its meaning is very clear.

The only thing some people miss is why Christians don't teach "every man," "know the Lord." The Jews had to do this because they were born Jews and had to learn of their faith later. But a Christian becomes a Christian only after he "knows the Lord." He is not born a Christian, he becomes a Christian by choice. Once becoming a Christian then it is not necessary to teach him to "know the Lord" because this is the very knowledge he has learned which caused him to become a Christian. But the only application the writer makes here is the "new covenant," which replaces the "old covenant." This fact could have been as well established by Jeremiah's other extensive Messianic prophecy too. See Ch. 3 of Jeremiah.

R. Heb. 10:5-7 quoting Ps. 40:6.

"Wherefore when he came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not, but a body did you prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings as sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure:' then said I, 'Lo, I am come (in the roll of a book it is written of me), to do thy will, O, God.' " Heb. 10:5-7.

This is applied to the incarnation of the Messiah which led the way to the sacrifice for sin which He made. Again the writer concludes from the text that there is a new sacrifice or a new covenant separate from Judaism.

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S. Heb. 10:16 quoting Jer. 31:33f.

Going back to Jeremiah, having established the idea of a new covenant, he wants to emphasize the thorough, extensive forgiveness from sin we have through the blood of Jesus. Ours is a much better covenant! See Q above.

T. Heb. 10:37-38 quoting Hab. 2:3, 4.

"For yet a very little while, He that commeth shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous ones shall live by faith." Heb. 10:37, 38.

Some would quickly conclude that this is applied to the Second Coming of Christ. But Habakkuk spoke of a judgment and we believe as Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem in His Olivet discourse He spoke of His coming in judgment. That came just seven years after this epistle was written and is probably closer to the context. "The righteous living" here would be the Christians who escaped this destruction because they believed the warnings of Christ and left before Jerusalem fell. But though it is doubtful, in passing we will say that this admits the interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ if we ignore the context and the people addressed in the epistle and their living situation.

U. Heb. 12:5 quoting Prov. 3:11.

"My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved of him; for whom the Lord loves he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Heb. 12:5, 6.

Here the family father is paralleled with the heavenly Father in His roll of dealing with Christians as His children to perfect them.

V. Heb. 12:22-24. You have come to Zion.

"But you are come

1. unto Mount Zion, and
2. unto the city of the living God,
3. the heavenly Jerusalem, and
4. to innumerable hosts of angels,
5. to the general assembly and

6. the church of the First born
7. who are enrolled in heaven, and
8. to God the Judge of all, and
9. to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and
10. to Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant, and
11. to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel."

The significance of Zion in Isa. 2:1-4 is so very important in rightly interpreting that section of Messianic prophecy. But in this contrast the Hebrew writer is making between the Church of Christ and the religion of the Jews (see Heb. 12:18-24) it can not be mistaken. The church is the Zion of which the prophets spoke. This whole list of titles in fact are titles used by the prophets in describing the utopia which the Jews looked forward to which would be established by their Messiah. Look how Zion is used in these Messianic sections: Isa. 28:16; "Behold I lay in Zion a Foundation Stone." Isa. 35:10; "Come with singing into Zion." Isa. 40:9; "Oh, thou that bringest tidings to Zion." Isa. 52:7; "That says to Zion, 'Behold thy God reigns.'" Zech. 2:10; "Rejoice oh daughter of Zion." Zech. 9:9; "Zion - thy King comes." Here the Hebrew writer is claiming they all speak of the Christian Church. He is doing like Peter did in I Pet. 2:9. All those titles were used exclusively of the Jews in their special relationship to God because of their being a chosen people. But Peter applies them all to the Christians. They have taken the place of the Jews who fell because of rebellion and refusal to accept their Messiah when He came. But those who accepted Him take on these significant titles and receive these special privileges no matter what their national background may be. Paul did the same thing in Gal. 6:16 where he called the Christians the "Israel of God," irrespective of national descent or race. So here the Hebrew writer is doing the same thing except his list is fuller and more complete.

1. We come to Jesus by way of "Mount Zion" because

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the church was established there and the law went forth from there. (see Isa. 2:1-4).

2. We come to "the city of the living God," because he is perfecting us unto his city. "Our citizenship in heaven." Phil. 3:20. Heaven is a prepared place for the prepared people. We are prepared for it by the sacrifice of Christ. I Cor. 1:30.
3. We come to "Heavenly Jerusalem." This is not a new idea; it is a further description of the last statement. We are in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. At death we do not enter into a new kingdom. We cross the threshold into a fuller realization of this present kingdom.
4. "To hosts of angels." All we need to do is reflect on the material the author has just presented and we will see that this clause is applicable to the church today also. We do not have to go beyond our day to see its fulfillment. In chapter 11, the author speaks of the saints in God's Hall of Fame. Then verses 1 and 2 of the next chapter are a conclusion of that chapter and should not be divided from it. "Seeing we are encompassed by such a cloud of witnesses." We are on the field; the ball is in our hand right now. Eyes are focused on us. Let's do our best. These I believe are angelic eyes as well as eyes of Old Testament saints plus New Testament saints who have finished their course. As Elijah requested, "Lord open his eyes," then he saw the mountains filled with horses and chariots of fire. We in the church of Christ are also "come to innumerable hosts of angels." See II Kings 6:17.
5. "The general assembly." This is a general name for the church rather than something specific. It is the gathering together of those who belong to Jesus. We are called out from the world to serve Christ.
6. "The church of the First Born." This is much more specific, the word "church" here connotes the same

things as "assembly" did in the last clause. The "First Born" here would speak first of all of Jesus Christ, "The First-born from the dead," Rev. 1:15. It is His Church, see Matt. 16:18. We come to His church. But I believe this term is extended to all those twice born ones over whom the power of the second death has no influence. It is powerless over them because they were spiritually born again or born-first - prior to the finality of death hence they too are first-born. The church is comprised of those born again from the dead or first-born ones.

7. "Enrolled in Heaven" (see Luke 10:20 and Rev. 20:15) A Christian is now ready if he remains faithful, Rev. 3:5. (See Mal. 3:16; Dan. 12:1; and Psa. 69:28)
8. We come to God - we are unshamed. Col. 1:22, we are presented without blemish and faultness. We have no fear of judgment because of what Christ has done for us.
9. "Spirits of just men made perfect." Just men, because of the sacrifice of Christ. We are justified by the blood of His cross, Rom. 5:1. We are made perfect because we have a perfect saviour, a perfect sacrifice, a perfect high priest, a perfect new covenant and a perfect word of God to instruct us. God sees us not as we are but as we can be through Christ. God sees us not as we are, but just as we look through a telescope to see distant stars, so God looks through the telescope of Jesus Christ Himself and sees us perfected. (see I Cor. 1:30).
10. "To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant." This absolutely identifies this as the present Church of Christ rather than some future millennium. (see Matt. 26:26) Jeremiah spoke graphically of this new covenant; 31:31ff and 3:14-18. This is the new testament or new covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If this speaks of the church and it most certainly does, and if numbers 5 and 6 do too, and

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they do, and so does #11; *then all the rest of them do too!* This whole business speaks of the church as having taken on the significant titles of Judaism. So what the prophets foretold as a glorious future for the Jews is fulfilled by us who are called by the name of Christ. The prophet's glorious day or better day is realized in the church of Christ today!

11. "The blood . . . of Abel." Most commentators want to apply this to Abel's blood; but we believe it speaks of the blood of his sacrifice which was accepted while his brother's was rejected. It was accepted because it was offered in faith and obedience. But he didn't realize that God looked forward to the blood of Christ to forgive him because Heb. 10:4 tells us the blood of bulls and goats couldn't take away sin. So ours is a better sacrifice because it doesn't look through and on into another era and age, ours is efficacious because of itself. Abel's was efficacious because of a perfect sacrifice made later. Ours then is better than Abel's.

Jesus is the long awaited Messiah of the Jews. He is deliverer to those who follow Him. His own people rejected him. John 1:11; so He made those to become His people who were outside the chosen circle. He brought them in and at the same time cast those who were inside by election out. So now those who were not Jews are the real Jews and the real Jews are not Jews really. So the Jewish Messiah makes Messianic Jews. But these Messianic Jews are not those many people expected them to be.

So in a graft the foreign wood becomes the genuine fruit bearer while the real tree is cut away to make room for it. So has God done with His church. How thankful we are, unworthy as we are, to be grafted into the vine of Christ that we might bear much fruit. Jn. 15:5.

W. Heb. 12:26 quoting Hag. 2:6.

“... Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven.” Heb. 12:26.

The “shaking” here would apply first to Judaism and then to anything else which does not find itself anchored in Jesus and the kingdom He is establishing in the hearts of men. As Daniel says, “it shall stand forever.” Dan. 2:44. It is eternal. It can not be shaken. So the context is clear. They, the Hebrew Christians, should not drag their feet in changing from the old and decaying covenant to another of great glory; from one kingdom to another. But they should make the transition quickly while they yet have opportunity. It is a wise and very profitable thing to do.

X. Heb. 13:6 quoting Psa. 118:6.

“... The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?” Heb. 13:6.

We have nothing in this world or of this world to fear. God is for us. Who can be against us. To die is to enter directly into heavenly bliss; to live is to serve Jesus and fulfill plans God laid so very long ago. We can't miss unless we reject the very thing that impressed the prophets so.

13. James. He does not make direct use of O.T. prophecy as such.

14. I Peter.

A. I Pet. 1:10-12. Prophets spoke of the grace we have.

“Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but to you, did they minister these things. . . .” I Pet. 1:10-12.

Peter emphasizes that the prophets ministered not to themselves but unto us in the Christian faith. We have revealed through the preached gospel the epitome of what the prophets spoke.

B. I Pet. 1:24 quoting Isa. 40:6.

“The word of the Lord abides forever.” I Pet. 1:24, 25.

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What word of the Lord? The gospel Peter preached; the gospel of which the prophets spoke in grand detail.

C. I Pet. 2:6-8 quoting Isa. 28:14-16, Psa. 118:22, etc. See Matt. 21:42, #11 of III.

Jesus, the Chief corner stone was rejected by the builders. They stumbled over it not seeing its beauty, value or worth; but God exalted it to the position of being the Chief corner stone, the very most important part of the building in Jewish architecture.

15. II Peter.

16. I John.

17. II John.

18. III John.

These also do not make direct quotes from O.T. prophets.

This makes a total of 14 short epistles which do not use the O.T. prophets.

19. Jude.

Jude 14 "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, 'Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones . . .'"

This is not found anywhere in the Old Testament.

It seems to be a quote from the apocrypha. Jude 14 speaks of the Second Coming of Christ. But we know this is not an Old Testament prophecy. Without passing sentence on its validity either way we are just plainly stating a fact that it is not an O.T. prophecy as we have it. But the Old Testament as we have it is the only Old Testament we have. So this verse does not contribute directly to our discussion.

VI. Old Testament Prophets in Revelation.

1. Revelation.

While John quotes extensively from Jewish history and thought, he does not quote any Old Testament prophet directly and amplify it or apply it to any future message he has to deliver. This is an amazing thing. If Premillennialists

followed his example the whole idea of premillennialism would fall crumbling and broken to the ground. They claim their authority from the Bible and say we have to listen to them but they are not using the Bible as did Philip, Peter, Paul or John. When they quote an Old Testament prophet they do not apply it to anything the New Testament writers did. Why can they do something entirely different than the New Testament writers did and expect us, demand of us, that we accept their interpretation as the only canonized interpretation of eschatology?

VII. What the New Testament writers did not do with the Old Testament prophets.

Can I understand the prophets? Jesus intended His disciples to. He called them foolish and slow to learn because of their ignorance of the prophets. Paul and Apollos powerfully confuted the Jews, proving from the prophets that Jesus was Christ. We ought also to be able to understand and use the prophets. The two on the way to Emmaus said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He opened unto us the scriptures?" Lu. 24:32. Any student of the prophets ought to be able to truly say this many times as he studies and comes to an understanding of the prophets. Their message carries the same impact today that it ever did. Why is there so much controversy about them? Because people try to make the prophets say what they want them to say, without paying any attention to how the New Testament writers used and applied them. But if we return to the method of interpretation the New Testament writers used and stand with a united voice declaring the same thing from the prophets they did, then the voice of controversy and confusion will be shattered and the prophets will be restored to their original position of import.

We find some literal application of the prophets applied by New Testament writers. But for the most part it was a figurative or spiritual interpretation. It was applied only to the Christ and His church as it was established and made

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conquest in the world. It was a very rare thing indeed for them to go beyond their own time. When they did the application was short and uninvolved. They very seldom paid close attention to details or sideline issues of the prophets. The general thrust of the prophecy was emphasized and being a final voice the issue was dropped. Never once did they give a word for word application of every thought raised by the prophet. We are left to assume that many times the prophetic oracle was robed in apocalyptic garb which spoke of the great significance of the occasion rather than a scientific, literal unfolding of the exact details spoken of, such as real stars falling or the moon dripping with blood.

1. They did not once quote an Old Testament prophet to apply his message to a millennial kingdom.
2. They did not once apply an elaborate prophetic test or system to anything beyond their own day.
3. Less than one percent of the time did they ever apply an Old Testament prophecy to any date beyond their own age.
4. They always applied the Old Testament prophet's message to their situation even if it did sound apocalyptic.
5. They never did say part of their text was part of what the prophets said, while the rest was to come millenniums later.
6. Not once do we ever find a series of Old Testament prophecies quoted in support of a second or third coming of Christ.
7. There are only four prophecies quoted in reference to any aspect of Christian eschatology. None of these are elaborate or extensive, and some are questionable.
8. Anyone can see that the New Testament writers employed what is called a spiritual interpretation to Old Testament prophets. What they did we must do. We are in the same age or dispensation as they were in; "Now is the last hour." They did not feel they were taking all the glory from the prophets. Counterwise they emphasized the glory and splendor of the present kingdom especially in

the mind of God. In this we do not deny the beautiful eschatology of the Christian faith; No, not at all! We believe there is a beautiful eternal heritage for every true believer. But we are saying it is vain and antisciptural to turn to the Old Testament prophets to establish any long drawn-out doctrine concerning these ending things of the Christian faith. It is a misuse of the Old Testament. The inspired New Testament writers didn't do it. There is no living man who can give us a more clear interpretation of the Old Testament prophets than the New Testament inspired writers did. We don't have anything more dependable to rely on to guide us. To rely on tradition is a bankrupt, helpless, inexcusable method to follow. Rather we have a key. Let's use it; let's follow it. Let's be sure of the ground upon which we build our faith. How can we be wrong if we do not go beyond what the New Testament writers did?

Rather than taking all the glory and beauty out of eschatology just the opposite is accomplished. The real glory and beauty and significance of the present system is emphasized. What are we really involved in now? What does Christ think of His church? How is it compared to the world of Judaism? This is the outcome of a study of this nature. We do not reject the idea of a utopia. We maintain that once the utopia begins it is filled with more glory and splendor than the premillennialist speaks of for the millennium, but it is not something transitory; it is for all eternity. There is no need of a transitory kingdom between the Church age and eternity. In fact the Church is the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It goes right on through time into eternity without an interruption of 1,000 years delay of the millennial kingdom. That's why the New Testament writers speak of Christians as having citizenship in heaven, now! The transition is from earth to heaven. It is not delayed for 1,000 years in between. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we shall be

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changed." I Cor. 15:52.

There are characteristic themes descriptive of the Messiah recurring in the prophets again and again such as:

1. That day - The latter day
2. The King
3. The light
4. The shoot or branch
5. Righteousness and/or peace
6. The highway
7. The water in a dry place
8. The stone
9. The kingdom
10. Conquest
11. Jehovah will come
12. Singing and everlasting joy
13. Vengeance of God

The New Testament writers apply all of these to Christ His first advent. The premillennialists want to reserve numbers 2, 9, 10, etc. to the second advent or to the future millennium; but there are no such reservations on the part of the New Testament writers at all. Actually by the time they finish there isn't anything left which is descriptive of a future utopia after the Christian era this side of eternal bliss of heaven itself. They applied almost everything to Christ of His conquering church.

The burden of Old Testament eschatology is the end of Judaism and the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom in this world. The burden of the New Testament eschatology is the eternal bliss with perfection with God in heaven. The two are not the same. Old Testament and New Testament prophets did not see the same mountains as some interpreters report.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION:

I. The personality of Isaiah

1. His name - "Yesha-yahu" (Heb.) meaning "the salvation of Jehovah," comparable to Hezekiah, which means "the strength of Jehovah;" and to Zedekiah, meaning "the righteousness of Jehovah." In this case the name is very appropriate since the salvation of Jehovah is the great theme of the book.
2. Parentage and family - son of Amoz, 1:1; 2:1; 13:1. Isaiah has two sons whose names are connected with his prophetic office: "Shear-jashub" and "Maher-shalal-hash-baz."
3. The date - he saw a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. 1:1. He was very likely born some 35 or 40 years before the death of Uzziah, and perhaps lived for some time contemporaneous with Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, which would place him about 90 years of age at his death, living between the years 780-690 B.C.
4. His position - a Jew in good position dwelling in Jerusalem; a man who had familiar contact with Jewish kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah, 7:3-16; 37:21-35; 39:3-8. Tribe of Judah.

He received his call early in life, probably about the age of 20. From II Chron. 26:22, 32:32, it would seem that he was officially appointed historiographer, at the Hebrew court, during the reign of Jotham, and later during the reign of Hezekiah, for the book of Kings.

His name in office was that of prophet or preacher to both King and People.

It is not certain that we possess all of his prophecies, for the book as it comes down to us is fragmentary in character and appears to be a compilation. Recently discovered MSS have added nothing more.

5. His call - his first call is unrecorded which is the case of most of the prophets. A very solemn call is related in the 6th chapter, but this would not be the original one. He was

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probably 35 or 40 years old.

6. His prophetic career.

- (1) Began in the reign of Uzziah (Azariah), perhaps late in his reign. Uzziah was a leper at this time, II Kings 15:5. The first five chapters were likely produced at this time. Chapter 6:1, his second call, either just before or after Uzziah's death - more likely after.
- (2) Chapter 6 is the only one of his extant writings that can be definitely assigned to the *next 16 years*; as a prophet he seems to be silent during the reign of Jotham.
- (3) Beginning with the reign of Ahaz (743 B.C.) there was a period of great prophetic activity.

From 7:1 to 10:4 the prophecies have a structural connection and unity of purpose which unite them in a single body, and belongs evidently to that portion of Ahaz's reign when he was engaged in war with Syria and the 10 northern tribes (Israel).

A prophecy in 14:28-32 also belongs to the last year of Ahaz.

- (4) There are sufficient reasons for assigning to the reign of Hezekiah the entire series of prophecies following 10:5 with exception of the above mentioned passage (14:28-32).

The *contents* of the prophecies tend to spread them out over the different periods of Hezekiah's reign and shows the activity of the prophet over its entire duration.

- (5) A portion of the prophecies contained in the book are thought by some to belong to Manasseh's reign, and Jewish tradition places his death under the reign of Manasseh.

7. His character.

- (1) He was bold, earnest, and unafraid; he lived under five different kings, only one of whom was religious and God-fearing; he was uncompromising, was no boot-licker or back-patter, 7:13; 38:1; he denounces

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in the strongest terms the injustice, oppression, covetousness, and sensuality of the people; 1:10-23; 2:11-17; 3:9-15. He does not curry favor with the people, 1:21, 1:4, 29:13; 30:9.

- (2) He was tender and compassionate, 22:4; 15:5; 16:9-11; 21:3-4.
- (3) He delights in the victory and exaltation of the people and their admission into the final kingdom of the Messiah, 2:2; 11:10-12.
- (4) He is world-wide in his sympathy, yet is not so cosmopolitan as to be devoid of patriotism or to view with unconcern anything which affects the welfare of his country, city, or people.

He is indignant at Syria and Ephraim that plot against Judah; he is contemptuous of Sennacherib who comes to invade the borders of Judah, 7:5-9; 37:22.

He nurses a deep seated hostility against Babylon as the destroyer of the Holy City and ravager of the Holy Land, which shows itself in almost every section of the book, 13:1-22; 14:4-23; 21:1-10.

He is sarcastic and satirical, 3:16-24; 7:4; 44:12-17.

- (5) He is deeply reverent and spiritual; he has no use for the formal outward manifestations of religion, nothing is important but the inward spiritual life; temples are worthless, 66:1; sacrifices are of no account, 1:11-13; 66:3; the observance of days are worthless, 1:14; nothing has any value with God but real purity of heart and life, 46:2.
8. His death - Tradition tells that Isaiah, during the reign of Manasseh, was placed between two planks and sawn asunder; it is possible that Paul was referring to the Prophet Isaiah in Heb. 11:37.

II. Historical background of Isaiah's prophecy.

1. He grew to manhood as a subject of the Judean kingdom,

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during the period of the two kingdoms known as Judah and Israel.

- (1) Israel was nearing the end of its existence.
- (2) Isaiah was about ten years old when the Assyrian Pul came against the land; liberty, however, was bought with ransom, 2 Kings 15:19.
- (3) Twenty years later, Tiglath-Pileser II, 745 B.C. - a coalition formed against him by kings of Syria and Palestine, under Rezin of Damascus.
- (4) Ahaz refused to enter this coalition, recognizing in both Syria and Israel enemies of his kingdom.
- (5) Whereon they attempted to coerce him or place on Judah's throne a king who would accept the Syrian policy.
- (6) Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria marched into Judah and inflicted severe defeats on Ahaz, II Chron. 28:5-6, and went on to besiege Jerusalem, II Kings 16:5.
- (7) Ahaz then placed himself under the protection of Tiglath-Pileser, (Pul) declaring himself to be his servant. Tiglath-Pileser complied and marched a great army to Damascus; slew Rezin, defeated Pekah, and carried a large part of the Israelites into captivity. II Kings 15:29; 16:9; I Chron. 5:26.
Ahaz thence reigned as vassal of the Assyrian Monarch.
- (8) In 724 B.C. Isaiah about 55 years old - Shalmaneser V determined to destroy the last vestige of Israelite independence, laid siege to Samaria for three years, but finally captured it in 722 just as Sargon took the throne from him.
- (9) Sargon claimed the glory and carried off nearly 30,000 prisoners.
- (10) Judah now has no independent neighbors. Only Ahaz's subservience to the Assyrian king put off the day of their doom. II Kings 16:10-18.
- (11) With the accession of Hezekiah, 727, Judah adopts

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a bolder policy. He rebels against the Assyrian king. II Kings 18:7. Isaiah aids him in this policy for he had always urged his countrymen not to be afraid of the Assyrians. 10:24; 37:6.

- (12) Isaiah counseled that no foreign alliance be made, but to depend on God who would protect his own people.
- (13) The king's other counselors, Shebna and Eliakim, however, counseled an alliance with some great world power. The simple faith of the prophet was to them fanaticism and folly.
- (14) At this time there was only one possible rival to Assyria - Egypt - (Ethiopia).
- (15) Not known exactly the time when Assyria began to threaten Hezekiah with vengeance. Sargon made several expeditions into Syria (Isa. 20:1) and even into Philistia and in one place calls himself the "Conqueror of Judah."
- (16) It was not till Sennacherib had come to the throne in 704 that conquest of the rebellious Jews was actually taken in hand by the great monarch.
- (17) But the danger had shadowed the land all thru Hezekiah's reign. Now, as it became more imminent, the counsellors of the Anti-religious party prevail. Ambassadors go to Egypt. 30:2-4.
- (18) The alliance is made and the reigning Pharaoh, Shabatok and Tirhakah, promise an army to aid Hezekiah in case he is invaded.
- (19) The invasion came. Sennacherib overran the valleys and captured 46 fortified cities. Hezekiah received no aid by Egypt. Bought off the enemy . . . II Kings 18:14-16 . . . with treasures from the temple. Sennacherib withdrew and Hezekiah submitted to his rule.
- (20) Neither trusted the other and soon war broke out again. Isaiah prevailed with Hezekiah to resist invasion by appealing to God; and the destruction of the

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KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
Jotham reigns alone in Judah, 2 Ki. 15:7-35; 2 Chron. 26:23—27:6		
War Between Jotham and Rezin and Pekah, 2 Kings 15:37		
Death of Jotham, 2 Ki. 15:36-38; 2 Chron. 27:7-9, 736 B.C.		
Ahaz, king of Judah, 2 Ki. 15:38b—16:4; 2 Chron. 27:9b—28:4 736 B.C.		
War Between Ahaz, Rezin and Pekah, 2 Ki. 16:5-6; 2 Chron. 28:5-8		
Oded, the prophet, Procures the Release of the Jewish Captives, 2 Chron. 28:9-15		
Edomite & Philistine Invasion of Judah, 2 Chron. 28:17-19		
<i>Isaiah, chapter 7 probably here 734 B.C.</i>		
Ahaz seeks help from Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Ki. 16:7-8; 2 Chron. 28:16-21		
Ahaz Becomes Tributary to Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Ki. 16:10a 2 Chron. 28:20		
Ahaz Copies Idolatry of Damascus, 2 Ki. 16:10b-18 (cf. also 2 Chron. ch. 21-25)		
Death of Ahaz, 2 Ki. 16:19-20a 2 Chron. 28:26-27a, 728 B.C.		
Hezekiah becomes king of Judah 2 Ki. 16:20bff; 2 Chron. 28:27b—29:2, 728 B.C.		
The Cleansing of the Temple 2 Chron. 29:3-19		
The Reconsecration of the Temple, 2 Chron. 29:20-36		
	Death of Pekah, 2 Ki. 15:30-31	
	Hoshea, king of Israel, 2 Ki. 17:1-2, 732 B.C.	
		Tiglath-Pileser Captures Damascus, 2 Ki. 16:9 732 B.C.
		Tiglath-Pileser Wars Against Israel in Alliance with Ahaz.
		Many Israelites Deported to Assyria, 2 Ki. 15:29

BIBLICAL OUTLINE

BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Many of the Subjects of Hoshea (Israel) Unite With the People of Judah in Keeping The Pass-over, 2 Chron. 30:1-27</p> <p>The Enthusiasm Aroused Results in Widespread Iconoclasm, 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Chron. 31:1</p> <p>Hezekiah's Further Reforms 2 Chron. 31:2-21; 2 Kings 18:9-11</p>	<p>Hoshea's Subservience to Assyria and Secret Alliance with Egypt, 2 Kings 17:3-5</p> <p>Hoshea Imprisoned, 2 Ki. 17:4b</p> <p>Appendix to the History of Israel—Sins for which carried captive, 2 Ki. 17:7-23; 18:12</p> <p>Peoples that were brought to Inhabit Samaria, 2 Ki. 17:24-41</p>	<p>Shalmaneser IV, king of Assyria 727 B.C.</p> <p>Samaria taken by Sargon II, 722 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon II, King of Assyria 722-705 B.C.</p> <p>Westland Rebels against Sargon 720 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon routs the Egyptians at Raphia, 719 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon crushes Carchemish, 717 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon Imports Peoples into Samaria, 715 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon Subdues Ashdod, 711 B.C.</p> <p>Merodach-baladan driven from Babylon, 709 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon completes his palace, 706 B.C.</p> <p>Sargon's violent death, 705 B.C.</p>

Isaiah, chapter 20, refers to this event.

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BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Hezekiah throws off the Assyrian Yoke, 2 Ki. 18: 7b-8 704 B.C.</p> <p>Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah, 2 Ki. 18:13-16; 2 Chron. 32:1-8; 701 B.C.</p> <p>Sennacherib's advance toward Jerusalem; Rabshakeh's message, 2 Ki. 18:17-25; 2 Chron. 32:9-15</p> <p><i>Isaiah, chapters 36-38 here 704-700 B.C. approx.</i></p> <p>Reply of Hezekiah's Ministers 2 Ki. 18:26</p> <p>Further insolence of Rabshakeh, 2 Ki. 18:27-35; 2 Chron. 32:16-19</p> <p>The Despair of Hezekiah's Ministers, 2 Ki. 18:36-37</p> <p>Hezekiah's Message to Isaiah, 2 Ki. 19:1-5</p> <p>Isaiah's Answer, 2 Ki. 19:6-7</p> <p>Rabshaken's Departure, 2 Ki. 19:8</p> <p>Sennacherib's Letter to Hezekiah, 2 Ki. 19:9-13; 2 Chron. 32:17</p> <p>Hezekiah's Prayer, 2 Ki. 19:14-19; 2 Chron. 32:20</p> <p>Jehovah's Answer through Isaiah 2 Ki. 19:20-34</p> <p>The Overthrow of the Assyrians, 2 Ki. 19:35-36; 2 Chron. 32:21-22</p> <p>Hezekiah's Reception of the Babylonian Embassy, 2 Ki. 20:12-19; 2 Chron. 32:25-26,31</p> <p>Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery, 2 Ki. 20:1-11; 2 Chron. 32:24</p>		<p>Sennacherib, King of Assyria 704-681 B.C.</p>

BIBLICAL OUTLINE

BIBLICAL OUTLINE—BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH'S LIFE

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	ASSYRIA
<p>Hezekiah once more prosperous 2 Chron. 32:23</p> <p><i>Isaiah 39 here, approx. 695 B.C.</i></p> <p>Death of Hezekiah, 2 Ki. 20:20-21, 2 Chron. 32:32-33</p> <p>Accession of Manasseh, 2 Ki. 20:21—21:1; 2 Chron. 32:33—31:1, 695-642 B.C.</p> <p>Manasseh's excessive idolatries 2 Ki. 21:2-9; 2 Chron. 33:2-9</p> <p><i>Isaiah 40-66 written before —Isaiah's Death approx. 690 B.C.</i></p> <p>Jehovah's Message by His Servants the Prophets, 2 Ki. 21:10-15; 2 Chron. 33:10</p> <p>Manasseh's Crimes and Captivity, 2 Ki. 21:16; 2 Chron. 33:11</p> <p>Manasseh's Repentance and Restoration, 2 Chron. 33:12-16</p> <p>Spiritual Condition of the People, 2 Chron. 33:17</p> <p>Manasseh's Death, 2 Ki. 21:17-18; 2 Chron. 33:18-20 642 B.C.</p>		<p>Sennacherib's Death, 2 Ki. 19:37; 2 Chron. 32:21, 681 B.C.</p> <p>Esar-haddon, King of Assyria 2 Ki. 19:37b, 680 B.C.</p> <p>Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria 668 B.C. — 626 B.C.</p>

ISAIAH

THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT

(Isaiah 1-35)

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Ch. 40-66: Looking Beyond the Captivities

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(Isaiah 40-66)

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PURPOSE

Isaiah was called by God at one of the most critical and unique moments in the history of the covenant people. It was a time when men needed to be turned away from their own self-conceived and carnally-oriented schemes of utopianism. They were bent on saving themselves in their own way. They were certain that salvation was merely a matter of making the correct sacrifices and observing the proper rituals and making the right political alliances.

Isaiah's era and message form the precise historical and theological pivotal point between the theocracy and the church, between Moses and Christ. There were definite predictions and historical inferences that the old order and old relationships were to pass away and God was preparing to deal with all mankind (including Gentiles) through a new order and new relationships. The crucial questions were, where is Judah's place in this unfolding drama? and, how is Judah to fulfill her function, once it is known? The problem facing Isaiah was, will Judah prepare herself to be and do what Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, has planned for her in this great drama of redemption? Will Judah allow herself to be purged? Will she repent and become a messianically-prepared people—a light to lighten the Gentiles—or would she fall into the darkness by turning to the pagan nations around her and become like them?

The history of man from his first sin was one long account of man's attempts to save himself in his sins, by his self-centered methods. But man grew more and more wicked. God judged the world by a great flood. Not long after that men made another attempt to storm the ramparts of heaven by building a tower to reach up to God at Babel. Again, their attempt to save themselves resulted in an awful judgement of God when he confounded their speech and scattered them abroad. Thus God would not permit sin to be concentrated in one place where mankind could concentrate all his efforts in a united way to save himself. Nations and societies arose. From among them God chose one particular nation to be for Him a kingdom of priests—to exemplify in the

PURPOSE

earth, among the nations, His plan for redemption and man's necessity to give up self-conceived ways of saving himself and trust in God.

But the covenant people faltered. They begged for "a king like the nations." They divided into warring camps (Israel and Judah). They both eventually became, in fact, worse than the pagan nations about them. In addition to this age of particularism (many nations, cults, cultures) the old spirit of Babel again asserted itself. In such world-wide nationalism and particularism, man could not unite to find his utopia, so, as never before in the history of the world the idea of conquest gained ground and one nation sought to subdue other nations and to make them a part of itself. Thus the powerful Assyrian monarch appeared on the scene and his appearance signaled the striving of man for a new world-order—universalism. It would be followed in succession by four great, universal, world-empires. There would be no tower reaching to heaven, but there would be a world-empire. Mankind would not be concentrated in one spot; he would cover the earth but would belong to one kingdom, the kingdom of man. Man was to rule and extend his sway, and man's kingdom was to cover the world so that man alone would be exalted through such universalism. Sound familiar? It should, for this is prevalent in our own country with "one-worlders" and United Nations devotees.

Where would the covenant people fit into this scheme? Were they to be swallowed up in the world kingdom, or would they, for some reason or other, resist the march of civilization and universalism? The covenant people seemed to be infatuated with the prospects of being like the nations about them—even guardedly in favor of universalism. God's purposes for man stood in diametric opposition to such an idea. He had made it known in the past that He and He alone was capable of bringing man to salvation. Man must learn that his deliverance cannot come from himself. To God alone must he look.

The exile, (the captivities of the Jews) that period of God's great indignation, must come upon the covenant people in order that through the exile a holy remnant might pass and return

and from this remnant the Suffering Servant, the Saviour, might finally come. They must understand that the bondage to Babylon (just like the bondage of their forefathers in Egypt) from which Cyrus (God's Servant in type, Isa. 44:28—45:1ff) would free them was but a type of the greater bondage to which all men are ensalved, that bondage of a spiritual nature. They must learn that salvation is not in human universality. Isaiah, in glowing, emotive, figurative language which hopefully his contemporaries would best understand, predicted that the experiences of the covenant people past and present were merely types of the redemptive work which God was going to culminate in "Zion" (the N.T. Church) through the Servant of the Lord (the One, Unknown, yet so well known), the Redeemer. He will accomplish the purpose of God as the nation itself could never do.

To explain to the people of God that the old order of God's method in carrying out His plan of redemption, that is, in a particular nation, was passing away and that the new order (universal salvation) was approaching in a universal Kingdom of God was the task of Isaiah, the prophet. The covenant people had defaulted their commission to be a light to lighten the world. They must be purged. Captivity will come. But a "faithful remnant" is seen by the prophet which will, at some future time, return to the land and out of this remnant will come the "seed of woman" to bruise the serpent's head. Then will be fulfilled the covenant made with Abraham, "from thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." It is no wonder that Isaiah has been called "The Gospel Prophet."

But now, in Isaiah's own day, as never before, the covenant people had to know that their help was in Jehovah. The threatening appearance of Assyria had to be explained for the people of Judah were tempted to turn to Assyria for help. But in spite of Isaiah's warning and predictions that God was able and had already planned to deliver them, they still turned to Assyria. They turned to the one who was to accomplish their destruction, and so the Lord, who overrules all things for His glory, brought upon them what they had asked for, even the king of Assyria (Isa. 7:17). The king of Assyria did come, and the whole course

PURPOSE

of human history was changed. Isaiah advised one after another of the kings of Judah against dependence upon Assyria, but to no avail. It became his God-appointed duty, therefore, to explain the course of events that would follow (Babylonian exile, restoration, Messianic glories) so that the faithful remnant might be encouraged to even greater faithfulness in the midst of dire circumstances.

All the forces of the world are subject to Jehovah. The great empires, though they are free to exert their own will, unconsciously fulfill the will of God in His plan of redemption. He uses their evil for both judgement and chastening. The heathen empires rage against God (Psa. 2:1-11), but He will not allow them to utterly annihilate His people. A "faithful remnant" will survive. To this end Isaiah is called to predict its survival and its glorious destiny. Jerusalem (meaning, of course, the faithful remnant which grows into the N.T. church) shall remain inviolate. Judah may be overrun by the heathen but Jerusalem can not fail.

Jerusalem, it must be remembered, was the one spot on earth where Jehovah was worshipped. His shrine was there. There lived the only community on earth which preserved for mankind the true knowledge of Jehovah and His purposes. The little band of faithful Jews to whom Isaiah committed His testimony and revelation was there. The preservation and continued existence in the world of this *spiritual Israel* culminating in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:28; 11:26) is what Isaiah proclaims with such unwearied assurance against both the fears of the rulers of Judah and the arrogance of the heathen who sought their overthrow.

So the gist of Isaiah's prophecy is this: The sinners having been destroyed (1:28), and Jerusalem purified, the city shall be a city of righteousness (1:25ff), under a righteous ruler (9:7; 11:4ff). But above all Jehovah's own presence and government shall be very manifest, with exceeding joy and glory. As a result, men shall abandon all their idols (2:20, etc.), the worship of which had not wholly disappeared from Israel, in spite of the fact that the national religion was that of Jehovah. With righteousness

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shall come peace (2:40), and with peace the renewed fertility, and the free enjoyment of the fruits of such prosperity (1:19; 4:2; 30:23-26, etc.). Over all a wonderful light shall be shed, dispersing the people's gloom. Moreover, the nations shall willingly come to "Jerusalem" to be taught of Israel's God and His law.

I. PERVERSITY AND PROPHET - CHAPTERS 1 - 6

CHAPTER ONE

A. THE IMPEACHING ACCUSATION

1. CONTROVERSY DECLARED 1:1-20

a. JEHOVAH'S COMPLAINT

TEXT: 1:1-9

- 1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
- 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
- 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.
- 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! They have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward.
- 5 Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
- 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.
- 7 Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is

desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

QUERIES

- a. Why mention the fact that Uzziah was dead?
- b. Why compare people with animals?
- c. What sickness did the people have?

PARAPHRASE

These are the messages that came to Isaiah, son of Amoz, in the visions he saw during the reigns of King Uzziah, King Jotham, King Ahaz, and King Hezekiah—all kings of Judah. In these messages God showed him what was going to happen to Judah and Jerusalem in the days ahead. Listen, O heaven and earth, to what the Lord is saying: the children I raised and cared for so long and tenderly have turned against Me. Even the animals—the donkey and the ox—know their owner and appreciate his care for them, but not My people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still don't care. Oh, what a sinful nation they are! They walk in reverse from the way I have asked them to walk. Their fathers before them were evil too. Born to be bad, they have turned their backs upon the Lord, and have despised the Holy One of Israel. They have cut themselves off from My help. Oh, my people, haven't you had enough of punishment? Why will you force Me to whip you again and again? Must you forever rebel? From head to foot you are sick and weak and faint, covered with bruises and welts and infected wounds, untreated and unbound. Your country lies in ruins; your cities are burned; while you watch, foreigners are destroying

and plundering everything they see. You stand there helpless and abandoned like a watchman's shanty in the field when the harvest time is over—or when the crop is stripped and robbed. If the Lord of Hosts had not stepped in to save a few of us, we would have been wiped out as Sodom and Gomorrah were.

COMMENTS

v. 1 The first chapter is a prototype of the entire book. Contains the basic outline of the whole message: (a) sinfulness of Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 3-8); (b) appeals for repentance (vv. 16-19); (c) the coming judgment (vv. 24, 25, 29-31); (d) the blessings of the salvation to come (vv. 26, 27). The combined reigns of the four kings mentioned covered some 81 years. II Chron. 32:32 suggests that Isaiah may have outlived Hezekiah. The prophecy concerns the destinies of Judah and Jerusalem—not the Second Coming of Christ—the preservation of the covenant people and points toward a fulfillment in the First Advent of Christ.

v. 2 Jehovah's complaint is expressed in terms of Fatherhood (Cf. Hosea 11:1-7). When God chose Israel she was a small and insignificant people. He reared her and nourished her to a position of eminence and exaltation through special gifts and protections. Then she rebelled against Him and spurned His love (Cf. Ezek. 16:1-63).

v. 3 This sin on the part of Israel is unnatural. It is animalistic, brutish, unreasoning. They behave worse than the most unintelligent, instinctive brute, for even the ass and the ox know enough to know who feeds them. Men often allow sin to degrade them; they behave worse than animals (Cf. Hosea 10:11-12; Jer. 5:8; II Pet. 2:12; Psa. 73:22; Isa. 56:9-12; Rom. 1:18-32). When men "exchange the truth of God for a lie and serve the creature rather than the Creator" they "live in the passions of their flesh," following the (animal) desires of body and mind" (Cf. Eph. 2:1-3). Evolutionism as a philosophy teaches that man has no Creator and such a philosophy is responsible for much of the animalistic behavior of men and women in our age.

v. 4 Notice the sins of which they were guilty: Inconsiderate-

ness; Sins of their forefathers (grumbling, idolatry, etc.); Crooked dealing; Forsaking the Lord; Going backward (backsliding); Reducing their worship to a mere formality; Despising the Holy One of Israel. Unbelief usually first manifests itself in the sin of Ingratitude (Inconsiderateness) (Rom. 1:21; Deut. 8:11-20; I Cor. 10:1-10).

v. 5 It amazes the Lord that in spite of the afflictions He has allowed to come upon them, they persist in the hard way of the transgressor. (Cf. Ezek. 33:10-11) So useless, uncalled for, but as long as they continue in sin they will be stricken. Jesus "marvelled" at the unbelief of the people of His home town (Mk. 6:6). With all the advantages, liberties, and blessings of people in countries where the Gospel has been preached for centuries, it is nothing short of amazing to behold the unbelief, ingratitude and despising of the Holy God.

v. 6 What is the explanation? The head is sick and diseased. The intellectual and moral life of the nation is diseased. They think wrong, because they love sin (Cf. John 3:18-20). "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," (Prov. 14:34). You cannot *think* wrong and *be* right! "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," (Prov. 23:7). The malignant cancer of sin is in all four receptacles of the heart (intellect; emotions; will; conscience). The whole man is diseased! The immortal heart pours its poison to every facet of life.

v. 7 Note the use of both figurative and literal language. The country is desolate and literally burned with fire because of the spiritual conditions described figuratively. Desolation—burned cities—foreigners occupying their farms. Who the invaders were we do not know for certain. Possibilities: Edomites and Philistines who invaded Judea in the time of Ahaz; Israelites under Amaziah; Assyrians under Sargon.

v. 8 Because of this condition Jerusalem is left humiliated like a frail, lonely, neglected watchman's shack in a vineyard or a cucumber patch. She was surrounded by her enemies and cut off from the rest of the nations like a besieged city.

v. 9 But there is one hope—a remnant, literally, a very small number which remains righteous and thus saved from the coming

judgment. Only a few thousand remained faithful through the captivity and returned to restore the commonwealth of the covenant people with Ezra, Nehemiah, et al. Had it not been for this faithful remnant, Judah and Jerusalem would have been utterly obliterated like Sodom and Gomorrah. Ed. J. Young says, "Whereas, however, the delay of judgment also involves postponement of blessing, nevertheless the fact of the choice of the remnant is evidence that God is fulfilling His purposes in history. Here, then, is the true philosophy of history. It is because of the righteous remnant that the world remains. The wickedness of the world is permitted to continue until, in the counsel of God's infinite wisdom, the time of punishment has come. That time is delayed for God is truly the God of the heathen also, a God of longsuffering and mercy. At the same time, in that delay, the delay of the full accomplishment of the blessing is also involved. The preserving of a remnant, however, is a step toward the fulfillment of the promise of blessing." This applies to the blessings of redemption fulfilled in the First Coming of Christ and applies to the redemption and ultimate salvation to be fulfilled in the Second Coming of Christ.

QUIZ

1. How many years are spanned by the four kings who reigned during Isaiah's ministry?
2. What makes men act like animals?
3. What is usually the first sign of unbelief?
4. Where does spiritual sickness start?
5. What is a "booth" in a vineyard?
6. Who is the "remnant" remaining?

b. JEHOVAH'S CORRECTION

TEXT: 1:10-17

- 10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.
- 11 What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.
- 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts?
- 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with; it is iniquity and the solemn meeting.
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them.
- 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.
- 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
- 17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

QUERIES

- a. Is God here contradicting His commandments to make sacrifices?
- b. Does God really refuse to hear anyone's prayer?
- c. How were the people to "wash" themselves clean?

PARAPHRASE

An apt comparison! Listen, you leaders of Israel, you men of

Sodom and Gomorrah, as I call you now. Listen to the Lord. Hear what he is telling you! I am sick of your sacrifices. Don't bring Me any more of them. I don't want your fat rams; I don't want to see the blood from your offerings. Who wants your sacrifices when you have no sorrow for your sins? The incense you bring Me is a stench in my nostrils. Your holy celebrations of the new moon and sabbath, and your special days for fasting—even your most pious meetings—all are frauds! I want nothing more to do with them. I hate them all; I can't stand the sight of them.

From now on, when you pray with your hands stretched out to heaven, I won't look or listen. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are those of murderers; they are covered with the blood of your innocent victims.

O, wash yourselves! Be clean! Let Me no longer see you doing all these wicked things; quit your evil ways. Learn to do good, to be fair and to help the poor, the fatherless and widows.

COMMENTS

V. 10 THE CALL TO CONSIDER: Be still and give attention for it is Jehovah who speaks. One does not truly hear God's Word unless he obeys that word (Cf. Jas. 1:22). Until a person is in an attitude of willingness to do the Lord's will, he cannot know it (Cf. John 17:17). If one does not obey, it is as though he had not even heard.

V. 11-15 THE FALSE APPROACH: Sacrifices without their heart in them. Sacrifices without faith in the One (God) to whom they were supposedly being offered. Ceremony without obedience (Cf. I Sam. 15:22; Jer. 6:16-20; Amos 5:21-24). To worship without doing God's commandments in the rest of life is no true worship, and any ritual of worship without faith is a hollow mockery. All that is done in a religious way if it is not accompanied with faith in the Person of God is vain and offensive to God (Cf. Matt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23). Without faith it is *impossible* to please God! And, of course, worshipping Him in

violation of any expressed commandment is to make void the Word of God. Worship and sacrifice and solemn assembly, without faith, becomes a "weariness" to God—it vexes His innermost soul—it disgusts Him. Who required of them such a steady stream of traffic in faithless sacrifices? Not God! They willfully forced these rituals upon Him. He loathed them. Their worship and their living were incongruous—they did not go together—because iniquity and solemn assembly are totally incompatible. God was fed up with them, sick of them, tired of them and would "spew them out of His mouth" (Cf. Rev. 3:16). They were there in bodily presence but their hearts were far from Him. This is totally unacceptable to God. Goodness, love and faith begins in the mind and heart—this is what God wants!

v. 16-17 THE TRUE APPROACH: Get your heart right! Wash, cleanse, repent! The O.T. abounds in the use of the figure of washing to refer to repentance (Cf. Psa. 51:2, 7; Jer. 4:14; Ezek. 36:24-26; Zech. 13:1). Repentance is the condition which God demands in order to work His cleansing in man, (Cf. I Pet. 1:22-23). Repentance is: "ceasing to do evil—learning (become skilled in) to do well." Doing well is: being just and seeing that justice is given; correcting and chastening the oppressor; championing the orphans' cause and that of the widow. God cannot even be approached by man unless man is in an attitude of repentance (change of mind). Wm. Chamberlain, in his book, *The Meaning Of Repentance*, defines repentance: "A pilgrimage from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ." Repentance is surrender; a change of thinking, willing, acting; a life directed toward the will of God as revealed in His Word.

QUIZ

1. When does one hear the Word of God?
2. Why is worship without faith unacceptable to God?
3. What is God's attitude toward faithless sacrifice?
4. Why must worship and manner of life go together?
5. When does God cleanse us?

6. What is repentance?
7. How is repentance manifested in one's life?

c. JEHOVAH'S CALL

TEXT: 1:18-20

- 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
- 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:
- 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Is God's invitation to "reason together" an invitation to us to help Him decide our means of being saved?
- b. Does obedience save a man?

PARAPHRASE

Come! Think about this matter! says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool! If you will only be willing to let Me help you, if you will only obey, then I will make you rich. But if you keep on turning your backs and refusing to listen to Me, you will be killed by your enemies; I, the Lord, have spoken.

COMMENTS

v. 18 THE INVITATION: Come is in the imperative—a command. The invitation is to think—not to make any decisions about the means of one's salvation. God alone can lay down the arbitrary conditions for salvation, for He is infinitely knowledgeable, wise, loving and powerful. On the basis of past *historical* demonstrations of God's omniscience and omnipotence, man is commanded to come and use his mind to remember, to think, to reason. If God has been absolutely faithful in keeping His word in the past, it should stand to reason that He will do so in the future. Man must think God's thoughts—man must conform his thinking to the revealed thoughts of God in order to be reasonable. To be reasonable is to obey the commands which God has given and the promises He has made. All sin and rebellion, whether in deed or thinking, is unreasonable. "Come to your right mind, and sin no more" (I Cor. 15:34). "... they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened . . . claiming to be wise, they became fools . . ." (Rom. 1:21-22). "... irrational animals . . ." (II Pet. 2:10-13). In the light of the historically established evidence and the pragmatic proof of the commandments and promises of God's Word, unbelief is irrational, unreasonable and immoral. Only God knows where man came from, what man's purpose in existing is, and what man's destiny is. All other thinking about these ultimates, unless conformed to God's revealed thinking, is irrational and untrue.

v. 18 THE PROMISE: The bloodiest sin can be erased and the sinner transformed into such purity as the whitest snow or wool. God pardons the penitent sinner vicariously and judicially. That is, the sinner does not merit his own pardon. When the sinner turns to God in faith, trust and repentance, God forgives and erases his past and pronounces him righteous, even though the sinner himself could never do enough or be perfect enough to earn this forgiveness. Lest anyone should think, however, that this was an offer of unconditional pardon, whether there was faith or repentance or obedience on the part of the sinner, the

Lord immediately calls the attention of the nation to the need for repentance and obedience.

v. 19-20 THE ALTERNATIVE: The alternative to blessing is curse! God wants willing obedience—not the obedience of force. One translation has it: “If ye be willing and hearken . . .” To hearken is to obey. “If any man hears these words of mine and does them, he is like the wise man. . . .” “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man . . .” (Matt. 7:24-27). The alternative to salvation is destruction. Such alternatives are inevitable in a moral universe!

QUIZ

1. Is God inviting man to help Him figure out how to save man?
2. What is God inviting man to do? .
3. Why is sin unreasonable?
4. How is man pardoned from his sin?
5. What is the alternative to pardon?
6. Does one have to obey the Word of God to truly hear it?

2. THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED 1:21-31

a. REASON FOR JUDGMENT, THE CORRUPT CITY

TEXT: 1:21-23

- 21 How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of justice! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers.
- 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water
- 23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

QUERIES

- a. Why use the word "harlot" to describe Jerusalem?
- b. Why the condemnation of the "princes"?

PARAPHRASE

Jerusalem, once My faithful wife! And now a prostitute! Running after other gods. Once the city of Fair Play, but now a gang of murderers. Once like sterling silver; now mixed with worthless alloy! Once so pure, but now diluted like watered-down wine! Your leaders are rebels, companions of thieves; all of them take bribes and won't defend the widows and orphans.

COMMENTS

V. 21 JERUSALEM HAD BECOME A HARLOT: a profligate, sensual, mercenary city, worshipping idols. It was no longer wed to God, sharing His nature and His goals. People make up a city. The city is what the people make it. Some cities have parks, flowers, trees, churches, justice and peace some have saloons, brothels, gambling halls, law-breaking and fear. The spirit of harlotry is the spirit of promiscuousness (see our comments on Hosea, in *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press). Jerusalem left her first love and prostituted herself to pagan idolatry (which is in reality selling oneself to Satan who exploits for his own prideful purposes anyone who will do so).

V. 21 WISDOM AND JUSTICE WERE LOST: Justice and righteousness had found permanent residence in Jerusalem before (probably in the days of David and Solomon, I Kings 3:9-28; II Chron. 19:5-11, or the days of Jehoshaphat). Jerusalem had been known throughout the world for her wise and just men—but now she was known for her profligacy, injustice and murderers.

V. 22 GREAT MEN HAVE BECOME CONTAMINATED: Silver represents nobility—but it had been mixed with "dross" (the scum

or refuse matter thrown off from molten ore or metal). Her great men had deteriorated. They had been weakened by mixing in sin like wine is weakened when mixed with water. The further a nation gets from God, the harder to find men with elements of greatness; faith, vision, initiative, moral integrity, humility, unselfishness. When a nation allows its young men to be taught unbelief and sin, its noble manhood is weakened to little men with enlarged egos—self-serving, greedy, stupid men, drunk with the intoxication of their self-importance.

v. 23 **REBELLIOUS PRINCES:** The royal household (princes) were in rebellion against the true king (God). The princes were companions of thieves—in league with criminals, involved in bribery and graft. Men sworn to uphold law and decency using their position and power to defraud the very people they are supposed to govern and protect. They are greedy shepherds devouring the flock over which they have been made overseers (Cf. Ezek. 34; John 10). They use the law for lawless purposes—for selfish ends. Could such a scathing condemnation be true of some of the leaders of God's kingdom (the Church) today? Unquestionably!



QUIZ

1. What makes a city a “harlot”?
2. What does Satan do with those who prostitute themselves spiritually?
3. In what era was Jerusalem known for righteousness and justice?
4. What does silver symbolize?
5. What is the figurative picture induced by “water-weakened wine”?
6. In what way were the princes rebelling?

b. THE RESULTS OF JUDGMENT, A CLEANSED CITY

TEXT: 1:24-31

- 24 Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies;
- 25 and I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin;
- 26 and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called The City of Righteousness, a faithful town.
- 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness.
- 28 But the destruction of transgressors and sinners shall be together, and they that forsake Jehovah shall be consumed.
- 29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
- 30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
- 31 And the strong shall be as two, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

QUERIES

- a. When is this "purging" of the city to take place?
- b. Who are the "converts" of Zion?
- c. What are the "oaks" they desired?

PARAPHRASE

Therefore the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, says: I will pour out My anger on you, My enemies! I Myself will melt you in a smelting pot, and skim off your slag. And afterwards

I will give you good judges and wise counsellors like those you used to have. Then your city shall again be called "The City of Justice," and "The Faithful Town." Those who return to the Lord, who are just and good, shall be redeemed. (But all sinners shall utterly perish, for they refuse to come to Me.) Shame will cover you, and you will blush to think of all those times you sacrificed to idols in your groves of "sacred" oaks. You will perish like a withered tree or a garden without water. The strongest among you will disappear like burning straw; your evil deeds are the spark that sets the straw on fire, and no one will be able to put it out.

COMMENTS

v. 24-27 RESTORATION: The impenitent sinner is the enemy of Almighty God! The sinner is a burden to God—the sinner's rebellion is unreasonable and unjust in the light of God's love. Therefore God is justified in avenging Himself of impenitent rebels. But in the process God's wrath also works chastening, repentance and purification of some. Smelting silver ore is a radical process; purifying sinners is a radical process demanding the death of self! But when the purification has been accomplished, the beauty and utility of the finished product is well worth enduring the crucible. The promises given in verses 26-27 are not that of mere restoration of physical conditions, but the introduction of new conditions that never, in their fullest sense, prevailed before. There may be some temporary reference to the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth after the exile, but this restored commonwealth was only typical of the Messianic kingdom to come, so that the fundamental meaning of the prophecy is that there will come a time, typified by the former reign of David (righteousness and justice) in which true righteousness and justice will be found, namely, the Messianic Age (Cf. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9ff; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24, etc.). This purifying reign of justice and righteousness would be accomplished by the redemption wrought through Jesus Christ (Cf. Lk.

1:67-79; Acts 13:34-40; Titus 2:11-14). The "converts" of Zion are Christians, both Jew and Gentile, of the N.T. Church.

v. 28-31 REPROBATION: The doom of the apostates. They will reap what they have sown—they will be paid shameful, confounding, condemning wages for their shameful, confounding, condemning deeds (Cf. Rom. 6:20-23; Gal. 6:7-9; Rom. 1:18-32, etc.). Those who turn to dumb idols will one day be brought face to face with the brutal reality that their false gods are dumb, impotent and useless—and they will be ashamed. The "oak groves" where they set up idols to worship would incriminate them in their shameful apostacy—places they would like to forget when God's judgment begins to fall. The nation would be seared and withered by the heat of God's wrath as well as by their own spiritual starvation. They would not be like a tree planted by the water (Psa. 1:1-6). They would be as the "tow" (the coarse and broken part of flax) used for burning. All of man's strength—whether intellectual or physical—will be consumed and disappear as rapidly as tow when God's judgment breaks out. This judgment is much more than the exile and captivity. The sin, spiritual in nature, if not forgiven, will be rewarded with spiritual punishment—eternal punishment in Hell.

QUIZ

1. Why is God justified in condemning impenitent sinners?
2. What does God's judgment work upon those who trust Him?
3. What is the goal or fulfillment in the ultimate sense of the promises of Zion's redemption? Prove it!
4. Who are Zion's converts?
5. What is the destiny of the enemies of God?
6. How helpful is the strength of man's intellectual abilities when the wrath of God begins to fall?

B. THE IMPLORING APPEAL - CHAPTERS 2 - 4**CHAPTER TWO****1. VISION OF THE COMING MESSIANIC AGE****THE LORD'S HOUSE ESTABLISHED****TEXT: 2:1-4**

- 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and 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 any more.

QUERIES

- a. When are the "latter days"?
- b. Who are the "people" of verse 3?
- c. When will the cessation of war take place?

PARAPHRASE

And this is the message to Isaiah from the Lord concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the closing days of the Old Testament era the faithful people of God's remnant will grow into a great and spectacular kingdom into which people from all the nations

and races on the earth will come for membership. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, into this universal kingdom, saying, Let us join with this faithful remnant and learn of the One True God of Israel; He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. Out of this Heavenly Community shall go forth the revealed will and word of God. And God, Himself, through His word will arbitrate between citizens of this new kingdom. Its citizens shall be people of peace and love and they will not fight against one another any more. All their activities and attributes will be directed toward fruitful and productive ends.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **THE TIME:** In the latter days of Judah and Jerusalem as the exclusive covenant people of God. "Latter days" does not refer to the end of time or the Second Advent of Christ or the so-called millenium. The N.T. definitely and clearly applies the phrase "latter days" to that period of time which began to run its course with the first advent of Christ (Cf. Acts 2:17 with Joel 2:28; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; I Pet. 1:5, 20; II Pet. 3:3 and I John 2:18). Literally the phrase is, "the last parts of the days," and means, "the end of the ages" (Cf. I Cor. 10:11). So the Lord's house is to be established in its glorified and pre-eminent state in the last parts of the days of the Jewish Dispensation. In these "last days" of Judah, Herod the Great was King and he was the first foreigner ever to be King over Judah. This is a fulfillment of Gen. 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh (Christ) come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the people be." It is not the present upon which the eyes of the Israelites are to be directed, but a time which is the end or goal of the contemporary course of events, when the Messiah will have come and the breach which sin had introduced between man and God will be healed (Cf. our comments in *Daniel*, College Press, chapter 9). The figure of Zion being exalted above the hills is significant. At the

time when Isaiah spoke, the very reverse was the case—many other “hills” were “higher” than Zion (Cf. Psa. 67:16). The Temple in Isaiah’s day was situated on Zion, but the false gods had their mountains as well: the Captiol, Olympus, Albordash, Meru, and Zaphon. But Zion, which, in Isaiah’s day and up to Christ, was comparatively insignificant will one day surpass all others. Even Sinai, the mount of law, will recede into the background, for the new covenant is superior to the old. This is the meaning of Hebrews 12:18-24 where Sinai represents the old covenant and Zion represents the new covenant, or the church. See also Daniel 2:35, 44; Jer. 31:12a; 51:44.

v. 2 THE SCOPE: All peoples! No longer exclusively to the Jews. A constant accession of converts streaming (flowing) from all parts of the world upward to God’s house. This high and pre-eminent mount (Zion—the church) is to serve as a unifying force for the whole world. It is to be a reversal of the dispersion (Babel). (Cf. Matt. 8:10-11; Lk. 13:29; Jn. 10:16; Acts 13:44-47, etc.).

v.3 THE NATURE: Enlightenment! The “law” here is not the law of Moses for that went forth from Sinai. It is the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” It is the “perfect law of liberty.” It is the word of the Lord that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ’s name beginning from Jerusalem (Cf. Lk. 24:47). It will be *missionary and evangelistic*! “Many people will go and say, Come ye . . .” No national or racial boundaries. It will be didactic and doctrinal. Those who come to it will necessarily be taught His way. As a consequence of being taught, men will want to walk in God’s way. True doctrine places within one’s heart the desire to walk in the law of God. Truth leads to godliness, and when one has been truly instructed, he will want to do God’s will. One must be instructed first before he can walk in God’s way. Doctrine and ethics must go hand in hand. There can be no right obedience nor any right worship, until first one has learned of God (Cf. Heb. 8:8-13; Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11-15; John 6:44-46). It is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be declared (Eph. 3:10). The church’s work is to produce a ministry for evangelizing and

edifying (Eph. 4:11-16). God's Word is the only source and foundation of truth. Those who preach must preach the Word! This passage teaches that what unbelievers need above all else is teaching which is indoctrination. The missionary and evangelistic activity of the church must be doctrinal in character. The great need of the world is the preaching of revealed absolutes (restrictive and difficult though it may be). The world does not need speculative and theoretical philosophies and theologies of men. There will be some who will reject His Way (Cf. Jer. 6:16-21; Isa. 42:24; Acts 9:2, etc.).

v. 4 THE RESULTS: Peace! is the result of this establishing of the Lord's house. When men are brought into the kingdom of God, the church, they are brought to peace—peace with God and peace with their fellow citizens of the kingdom (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 3:15; Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom. 14:17, etc.). It does not necessarily demand the cessation of all literal human or physical war for the fulfillment of this prophecy. There will be war between human beings as long as there are unregenerate people. But if all men knew and did the will of God war would cease. Peace comes through knowing and doing (voluntarily, not by force) the will of God. There can not be war in the kingdom of God, the church, for it is recreated in the image of God and knows no man anymore after a human (unregenerate) point of view (Cf. II Cor. 5:16-21). If the peace of Christ rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15), this will arbitrate any disagreement we might have as Christians (Cf. I Cor. 5:9—6:8). The Christian, "if possible, so far as it depends upon him, must live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). When the exalted, universal house of the Lord is established and people are so taught His Way that they want to walk in it, the result will be peace and productivity. The instruments of their bodies, the talents they have, formerly used for unrighteousness, will now be "beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks" and used for productive profitable ends (glorifying God and serving others) (Cf. Rom. 6:12-23).

QUIZ

1. When ("latter days") is the Lord's house to be established?
2. Cite two scriptures to show that Mount Zion is typical or prophetic of the church in the N.T.
3. Who is to be included in the exalted house of the Lord?
4. What will be the essential nature of the establishing of this house?
5. What will be the result of it?

2. THE VIOLENCE OF CORRUPTION AND JUDGMENT

2:5-22

a. LIGHT UPON THE DARKNESS

TEXT: 2:5-9

- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.
- 6 For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with customs from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.
- 7 And their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.
- 8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.
- 9 And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low: therefore forgive them not.

QUERIES

- a. What is wrong with the "customs of the east"?
- b. What is "striking hands"?

c. Who is the "mean man"?

PARAPHRASE

If the nations are going to seek to walk in His ways, O house of Jacob, then, come, let us walk in the light of Jehovah also! But, thou O Jehovah, hast withdrawn thy mercy from the house of Jacob because they are filled with the superstition and idolatry of the eastern peoples and God's sons have become like a nation of uncircumcised Philistines; they reject their own godly heritage to fraternize with foreign unbelievers and their pagan life. They have become money mad and filled the land with the machinery of war. More heinous than that, however, is their inordinate, insatiable hunger to practice idolatry—the land is filled with idols. The common men and the great men all bow down before things they have invented with their own hands. Do not forgive them, O lord!

COMMENTS

v. 5 THE APPEAL TO WALK IN THE LIGHT: In view of the vision which has just preceded this of the Gentiles voluntarily coming to walk in the ways of Jehovah, Isaiah attempts to provoke the house of Jacob to seek His ways. To walk in the light of Jehovah they would have to give up all their materialism and idolatry.

v. 6 GOD HAS FORSAKEN THEM: This does not mean God would not turn and heal them should they repent, but it means He must forsake them as long as they forsake Him. If they will not have Him, He cannot have them. They are granted the freedom to choose whom they will serve—they chose the pagan superstition and idolatry of their eastern neighbors (Syrians, Assyrians, Ammonites, Babylonians, etc.) "Striking hands" (literally, "to clap hands with") means to fraternize with, approve or associate with to the extent of cooperation, indulgence appropriation. It is not wrong in itself to be found in the midst of foreigners or sinners, but to participate in their sin is what the house of Jacob was doing and this is a rejection of Him. Judah

was "filled" with heathen customs of all kinds: animism, sexual sins, human sacrifices, divination, etc. (Cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). It was not that God did not want them—they did not want God!

v. 7 **MATERIALISM:** In the law of Moses (Deut. 17:17) the king was forbidden to multiply silver and gold, for these would tend toward an indulgent and profligate life. Those who possess much silver and gold generally are never satisfied with what they have but always seek to procure more (Cf. I Chron. 29:4; II Chron. 8:18; 9:10). It is not the silver and gold in themselves which are condemned, but the filling of the land with them—they were money mad! When God's people are filled with the fullness which the world offers, they are empty toward God (Cf. Lk. 12:21). God's people should be filled with those things in which the world is empty (Cf. Eph. 5:18). They also filled their land with the machinery of war—horses and chariots. A standing army for the purpose of self defense is not wrong and is even advocated specifically in the O.T. and in principle in the N.T. But multiplying a "military-industrial complex" inevitably leads men to trust more in their own power than in God. The multiplication of horses and chariots was another prohibition of the Mosaic law for kings (Deut. 17:17). The military might of a nation can be made into an idol by proud and vain men (Nazi Germany, Communist Russia and China, Roman Empire, etc.).

v. 8 **IDOLATRY:** Generally speaking, it can be established that there was no national idolatry under Uzziah and Jotham. But by the time of Ahaz, there had been such a wide practice of private idolatry by the people, it had become a national policy. Ahaz promoted it personally. Showing the stupidity of idolatry is one of Isaiah's recurring themes (Cf. Isa. 40:18-31; 41:21-29; 44:9-20, etc.). The utter stupidity of bowing down and worshipping and asking help from a figurine which owes its existence to the one bowing down should be manifest to any intelligent being. Then to receive no utterance or oracle from a block of wood or granite should convince the idolator of his folly, (Cf. Acts 17:22-31). But men have continued for nearly as long as the world has existed to prostitute themselves to objects fashioned

by their own hands, or the hands of others, and called them gods.

v. 9 DEGRADATION: All classes of men are brought low and degraded as a result of Judah's sin. Two Hebrew words for man are used here—*adam*, the general word or “mean” word for man (common mankind), and *ish*, the word for men of importance. All men, high and low, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, are bowing themselves before idols. It is a national disease. Therefore, the prophet commands (imperative), “forgive them not.” Isaiah asks that his message be vindicated—God is asked to withhold His forgiveness so long as Judah remains in stubborn rebellion and idolatry. This is what Isaiah proclaimed—now God will establish the truth of what Isaiah preached.

QUERIES

1. Upon what basis does the prophet exhort Jacob to walk in the light of God?
2. When does God “forsake” His people?
3. What is “striking of hands”?
4. Why did God forbid the accumulation of silver and gold?
5. Why did God forbid the accumulation of horses and chariots?
6. Why is idolatry stupid?
7. How extensive was idolatry in Judah at this time?

b. LOSS OF DIGNITY

TEXT: 2:10-22

- 10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it

- shall be brought low;
- 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,
- 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,
- 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall,
- 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery.
- 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.
- 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats;
- 21 to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

QUERIES

- a. Why command the sinful people to try to hide from God?
- b. Why does God bring His wrath upon nature and things?
- c. What does "cease ye from man . . ." mean?

PARAPHRASE

There is only one recourse left to you, Come, crawl into the depressions in the rocks or holes in the earth and try to hide from the terror and majesty of Jehovah's inexorable judgment. For

the day is coming when your proud looks will be turned into looks of terror and shame and God alone will be exalted. On that day the Lord of Hosts will act against the proud and haughty and bring them down into the dust. All the tall cedars of Lebanon and the mighty oaks of Bashan which you admire and feel secure about will bend low. All the high mountains and hills, and every military tower and fortified wall, and all the proud ocean ships which bring you commercial treasure and all the trim pleasure craft which you enjoy so—all shall be crushed before the Lord that day. All the glory of mankind will bow low; the pride of men will lie impotent in the dust, and the Lord alone shall be exalted. Finally, idolatry shall be utterly abolished and destroyed. When the Lord stands up from His throne to shake the earth, His enemies will crawl with fear into the holes in the rocks and into the caves because of the glory of His majesty. Then will be the time when they will at last abandon their gold and silver idols to the moles and bats, and crawl into the caverns to hide among the jagged rocks at the tops of the cliffs to try to get away from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty when He rises to terrify the earth. Quit placing your confidence for salvation in puny man! Man's life is extremely transitory! He is nothing compared to God!

COMMENTS

v. 10-11 **TERROR OF JEHOVAH:** In view of the sin of Judah and the inexorable judgment of God because of it, Judah's only recourse is to attempt to hide from God in the limestone rocks of Palestine which are filled with crevices in which people often took cover from threatened danger (Cf. Judges 6:2; I Sam. 13:6, etc.). Of course, it is impossible for man to hide from God. But Isaiah is emphasizing that the time for repentance is past—the only hope for Judah (which is no hope at all) is to try to hide. This is the judgment which is to come upon Judah in the devastation of the Babylonian captivities, but it typifies and foreshadows the final judgment of God (Cf. Rev. 6:15-17; and our Special Study on *The Day of the Lord* in *Minor Prophets*,

College Press). The appearance of Jehovah in judgment is both glorious and terrible at the same time! God's glory is manifested in His judgment as well as in His grace! Isaiah's appeal to the fear of God's judgment as a motive in preaching runs contrary to most modern psychological theories which assert that it is wrong to use fear as a motive in preaching and teaching. How different God's methods! Judgment is set before sinful men as a terrible reality! Men must turn from sin if they are to escape such judgment. This is the only motive that will prevail with rebellious sinners. The only way to run from God is to run to Him!

V. 12-17 MAN, AND HIS PRIDE BROUGHT LOW: Isaiah announces the judgment of God upon a number of objects in which man had placed his confidence. The cedars of Lebanon—used in the Temple (I Kings 5:6); for masts of ships (Ezek. 27:5); as a symbol of beauty (Jer. 22:6; Zech. 11:1ff); particularly admired by Jews (Cf. Psalms 92:12; 104:16; Ezek. 31:3). Because of man's sin, even the great and beautiful things of creation will suffer His judgment. Things created by man's hand—his buildings for wealth, show and fortification will never survive the judgment of God. One only has to read the notes of archaeologists to verify this statement. The greatest fortifications that the mind of man can devise and the hand of man can build can be destroyed by the least, most insignificant handiwork of God. God is able to direct and send the smallest insect to ruin and make helpless the most complex electronic defense instrument ever devised by man! God can shake the tallest and thickest wall or bridge or sky-scraper to rubble and dust through an earthquake. Objects which bring to man the necessities and luxuries of life—ships of commerce from Tarshish which was a critical lifeline of the nation of Judah would be cut off. Also the ships of pleasure which the rich people of Judah used for selfish pleasure would be destroyed. Verses 11 and 17, beginning and ending of specifying judgments, emphasize that God's eye of judgment is upon the evil of man and not on things. Man's sin has perverted the object and the objects have become a cause of man's sin and so God will remove the cause.

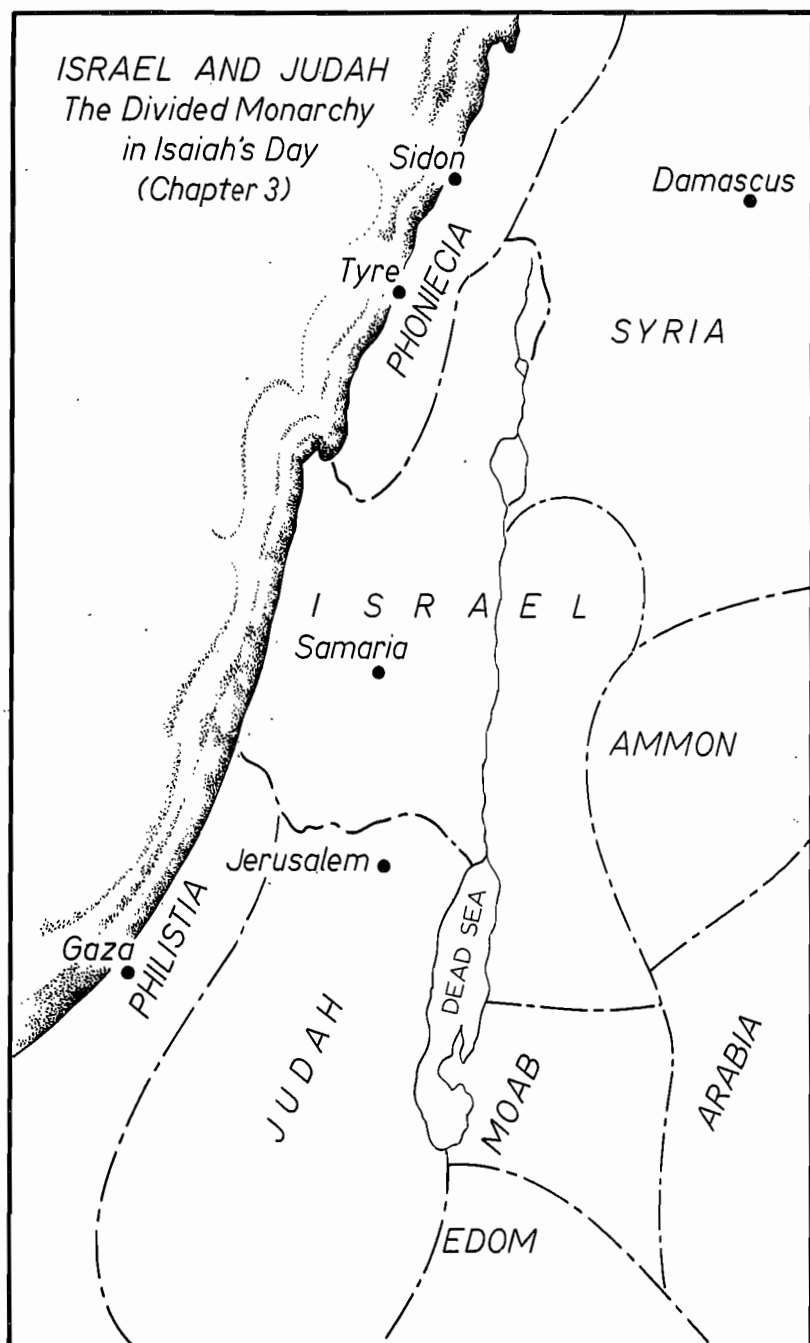
v. 18-21 **IDOLATRY TO BE DESTROYED:** When God begins to act in judgment, the impotence of their idols and their own stupidity in trusting in them will be so evident the people will cast them away in shame. Also, the people will be so intent upon escaping during these terrible times they will consider their idols only hindrances, encumbering their attempts to escape, and they will leave them behind for the heathen to carry off as booty. The destruction of idols is mentioned last because idolatry is the root sin that causes all the rest. Covetousness (the desire to have more) is called idolatry in the N.T. The captives destroyed forever the practice of idolatry among the Jews.

v. 22 **TRUST IN MAN TO BE DESTROYED:** Trust in idolatry is, in a sense, trust in man himself, for the idols are the products of his ingenuity and creative powers. But any trust in any man for salvation of the soul, for redemption is to be stopped! Man's knowledge, limited by the finitude of his being, is not only unable to extricate him from his predicament, but when trusted in to the exclusion of God, buries man deeper and deeper in his own predicament—ignorance and immorality. Man's life is extremely transitory (Cf. Psalms 146:3-4; 118:8; 104:29; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Psalm 33:10; James 4:13-17, etc.). What can man do against the wrath of God? The answer is: Nothing! Man without God is lost!

QUERIES

1. Why would Isaiah direct men to try the impossible—hide from God?
2. Is an appeal to fear God a proper avenue of motivation?
3. Why will God bring His wrath upon the objects of creation as well as persons?
4. Why would the people of Judah "cast away" their idols?
5. Why not trust in man?

ISRAEL AND JUDAH
The Divided Monarchy
in Isaiah's Day
(Chapter 3)





CHAPTER THREE

3. THE VENGEANCE UPON DECADENCE 3:1—4:1

a. THE WEALTHY

TEXT: 3:1-15

- 1 For, behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water;
- 2 the 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, and the counselor, and the expert artificer, and the skillful enchanter.
- 4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
- 5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable.
- 6 When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand;
- 7 in that day shall he lift up his voice, saying, I will not be a healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the people.
- 8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory.
- 9 The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have done evil unto themselves.
- 10 Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
- 11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him.

- 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.
- 13 Jehovah standeth up to contend, and standeth to judge the peoples.
- 14 Jehovah will enter into judgment with the elders of his people, and the princes thereof; It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses:
- 15 what mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

QUERIES

- a. What is the meaning of “babes” ruling over them?
- b. Why did they not hide their sin?
- c. How were “children” their oppressors?

PARAPHRASE

The Lord of Hosts is about to cut off Jerusalem's and Judah's food and water supplies; He is about to kill her leaders; He will destroy her armies, judges, prophets, elders, army officers, businessmen, lawyers, expert craftsmen and magicians. Israel's kings will be immature boys and they will rule like capricious children. And the worst sort of anarchy will prevail—everyone stepping on someone else, neighbors fighting neighbors, youths revolting against authority, criminals sneering at honorable men. The days will be characterized by such widespread poverty, ruin and destitution, that when men find one of their brethren who seems to be prosperous they will try to force him to be their king, saying, you have extra clothing, so you be our king and take care of this mess we are all in. He will reply, Absolutely not! I do not want any part of leadership in such a state of affairs as these. Judah's civil government will be in utter ruin because its people have spoken against all that God stands for and have acted in the same way. They have refused to worship Him; they have exhibited their brazen rebellion before the eyes

of His glorious presence. The evil thoughts of their heart they brazenly manifest in their facial expressions. And they boast about their sins being as bad as those of Sodom—they show no shame about it at all. How utterly horrible! They have sealed their own doom! Still, all will be well for the godly man. Tell him that he will be rewarded with goodness because he has done goodness. But say to the wicked, Your doom is certain! You too shall be rewarded according to what you have done—evil! O My people! Can you not see what fools your rulers are? They are as weak and vacillating as women. They are as foolish and capricious as little children, playing at being king. True leaders? No, misleaders! They are leading you down the path of evil unto destruction. Look! The Lord is standing up—He is preparing to act as Prosecutor and Judge—to convict and sentence. First to feel the wrath of his judgment will be the elders and the princes, for they have defrauded the poor. They have grown prosperous with the properties they have extorted from the helpless poor. They have literally consumed the poor. How dare you grind My people by your greedy oppression into nothingness. You press them and squeeze them until there is nothing left of them. This is the accusation of the Lord God of Hosts!

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 RUINED GOVERNMENT. Every necessity will be taken away from Jerusalem and Judah. Every stay and staff. Bread and water are essential for physical life, but they would disappear when God stepped forth to judge the land for its sins. Civil and cultural stay and staff (perhaps even more necessary than bread and water) would also be taken away. Every form of authority would disappear:

- a. mighty man — hero; man of valor already tested in battle
- b. man of war — common soldier; lower in rank than mighty man
- c. judge — civil officer who arbitrated civil cases
- d. prophet — one who delivered God's revelation to the people (with the prophet gone would come a "famine of

hearing the words of the Lord . . ." Cf. Amos 8:11)

- e. diviner — not a legitimate support, but one depended upon, nevertheless, by the people. The entire present order of things, the "Judean way of life" was to be changed radically.
- f. captain of fifty — designates a particular officer (Cf. II Kings 1:9; Exodus 18:25; I Sam. 8:12).
- g. honorable men — "favored persons"—those who had the favor of the king, probably occupied positions of responsibility
- h. counsellor — one who served the public in counselling
- i. expert artificer — one who is wise or skillful with respect to arts (Cf. II Kings 24:14ff; Jer. 24:1; 29:2).
- j. skillful enchanter — one who whispered or muttered magical formulas; not a legitimate office

In the place of experienced and sagacious adult authorities, God would cause "children" and "babes" (literally: puerilities) to rule over them. Incompetent, inexperienced, childish, bratlike rulers would be substituted for Jerusalem and Judah. A whole line of youthful kings followed Hezekiah. After him, only one was 25 years of age (the legal age of a Jew was 30):

Jehoahaz - 23 yrs. old; II Kings 23:31

Amon - 22 yrs. old; II Kings 21:19

Zedekiah - 21 yrs. old; II Kings 24:18

Jehoiachim - 18 yrs. old; II Kings 24:8

Mannasseh - 12 yrs. old; II Kings 21:1

Josiah - 8 yrs. old; II Kings 22:1

It is the hotheadedness, the over-confidence, and the recklessness of youth that is stressed here. The lack of maturity in judgment and decision would be the ruin of the nation. As an Arabian writer said, "A blow in the face by an axe is easier to take than the rule of a boy." Young writes: "When respect for age goes, moral anarchy is at hand . . . Respect for old age had been coupled in the law with the fear of God (Lev. 19:32). When all authority passes, respect for age also passes. One evidence of the degeneration of a government and people is seen in the manner in which the aged are treated." The N.T. clearly teaches Christians to respect the authority of age (especially of those appointed

elders and overseers of the Lord's church) (Cf. I Tim. 3:1-13; 5:1-24; II Tim. 3:2; Titus 3:1ff; Heb. 13:7; 13:17; I Pet. 5:5; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20, etc.). The childish vexation of Ahab, king of Israel, because he could not have Naboth's vineyard, (Cf. I Kings 21:1ff) is a pointed example of what type of rulers would soon come to Judah because of their sin, (Cf. Eccl. 10:5-7; 10:16-17).

V. 5-7 **RESULTING CHAOS.** Social chaos is inevitable. Oppression by one another ("everyman did that which was right in his own eyes, for there was no king in Israel" [Judges 17:6, etc.]), is the certain result of such moral anarchy. The spirit of Rehoboam (rebellion) would take precedence over the spirit of Solomon (wise judgment) and the result would be rashness, recklessness and failure. Those who should occupy a place of subserviency arrogate to themselves places of power. Men will seek to appoint rulers on the mere basis of possessing a few garments. The extremely critical condition of Judah appears in this prophecy. Anyone who possesses extra clothing will be accosted and forced to try to rescue the nation from civil economic and international ruin. The one accosted will vehemently refuse the pressure. In the first place he does not consider himself to possess the means necessary to alleviate the existing conditions; and in the second place he considers the circumstances impossible—the ruined nation beyond all help—and he does not want the responsibility. He refuses to be a "healer" because Judah is beyond being "healed." It is indeed tragic, in nation or church, that conditions can become so calamitous that a righteous man will refuse to undertake the responsibilities of leadership!

V. 8-12 **THE REASON—THE PEOPLE.** In word and in deed—speaking and acting in rebellion against the Lord. It is not out of ignorance they have sinned! It is deliberate sin. They have done it knowing full well the eyes of the Lord of Glory are upon it—their brazenness is like that of Sodom. They boast of their sin (Cf. Jude 8-16; II Pet. 2:1-22; II Tim. 4:3-4; Rom. 1:32).

By such blatant disregard of the moral and spiritual government of God, they have earned for themselves the consequences of moral and spiritual anarchy. They have "cut off their noses to

spite their faces." They have done evil to themselves! If man and his universe is to be governed by any moral principles of right and wrong at all, then wrong must be punished. Anyone who deliberately does wrong deserves punishment, he deserves the fruit of his doings.

But God is not unjust or unmerciful to forget the intentions and deeds of the righteous. God is fair! God is merciful! If a man is righteous of heart (wanting to do right) and righteous of deed (doing right—though sometimes sinning ignorantly), God will reward that man with the fruit of his doings, (Cf. Matt. 25:31-46). God's judgment is not indiscriminate—He judges omnisciently as well as omnipotently.

Those who were supposed to lead the people were oppressing them and leading them into abject slavery, morally and politically. Their rulers were capricious as children and vacillating as women. They lacked the stability that grown men naturally had.

v. 13-15 RESPONSE OF JEHOVAH. It is not merely with foreign nations they shall have to contend—Almighty God, the Lord of Hosts, arises to contend with this people. The great sin of the time was oppression of the poor by the rich. God is represented as the advocate and helper for the cause of the downtrodden. He enters into judgment with the leaders and elders of Judah and accuses them of having oppressed and defrauded His people (Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, accuses the rich of "skinning the poor alive!"). Such sin exemplifies precisely the injustice, greed, and irresponsibility of the rich and ruling and is a perfect example of the cruelty which God hates. The rich and ruling had devoured for themselves what did not belong to them—God's own people ("vineyard"). When the prophets came to warn them to leave the harvest of God's vineyard to Him, they killed the prophets. And when the Heir (the Son) came, they killed him (Cf. Lk. 20:9-18). How brazen could they be—how did they dare to mistreat the precious heritage of the Almighty God?

QUIZ

1. Why mention the taking away of bread and water only?
2. What is a "mighty man" and an "expert artificer"?
3. What is meant by saying that "children and babes" would rule Judah?
4. Why seek a man with clothing to be ruler?
5. Why would such a man refuse to rule?
6. Why mention the righteous here?
7. Did women actually rule over the nation of Judah at this time? What does verse 12 mean?

b. THE WOMEN

TEXT: 3:16—4:1

- 16 Moreover Jehovah said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet;
- 17 therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts.
- 18 In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets; and the cauls, and the crescents;
- 19 the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers;
- 20 the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets;
- 21 the rings, and the nose jewels;
- 22 the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels;
- 23 the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils.
- 24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a robe, a gird-

ing of sackcloth; branding instead of beauty.

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she shall be desolate and sit upon the ground.

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

QUERIES

- a. What are "mincing" steps?
- b. Why was God displeased with the finery of the women?
- c. Why would seven women plead with one man to become his wife?

PARAPHRASE

In addition to the foregoing judgments, Jehovah will judge the haughty women of Judah who walk along with their noses in the air, looking suggestively and seductively at men with their eyes; mincing and affecting their steps so that the tinkling bracelets on their ankles will direct attention to them. Because of their unashamed haughtiness, the Lord will strike them with repugnant scabs and wounds to ornament their heads, and those who delight in immodest exposure the Lord will permit to be immodestly exposed at the hands of vile men. No longer shall they call attention to themselves by tinkling as they walk. For the Lord will strip away their facade of beauty when He takes away their anklets, amulets, crescents, pendants, bracelets, veils, headdresses, armbands, sashes, perfume boxes, charms, rings and nose jewels, holiday dresses, overtunics, cloaks, ornate purses and combs, mirrors, lovely lingerie, beautiful dresses and veils. Instead of smelling of perfume, they shall stink; for sashes they shall wear ropes like prisoners and slaves; their well-kept

hair will begin to fall out; they will wear sackcloth instead of robes. Their beauty will be marred with the branding iron of their captors. Their husbands shall die in battle; the women, alone and helpless, shall mourn. The city herself shall be desolate and alone and have nothing left to do but sit and mourn. At that time so few men will be left alive that seven women, all fearing childlessness, will all fight over one man and say, Let us all become your wives! We will furnish our own food and clothing—only give us a name and children.

COMMENTS

v. 16 THE REASON: Wantonness (i.e., undisciplined; unruly; unchaste; lewd; licentious; extravagant; arrogant recklessness) of the women. "The daughters of Zion" means the women of the covenant nation. The women were haughty and proud and concerned with luxurious adornment of themselves in order to bring attention to themselves. This is immodesty! They copied every fad and fashion of their heathen neighbors. "Outstretched necks" probably means walking with the "nose in the air." "Mincing steps" means to walk with short little steps so as to affect primness or daintiness. It was all exaggeration in order to draw attention to themselves. Fabulous amounts of money were spent on adornment. Many hours of each day were wasted by these women primping and beautifying themselves. When women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay has begun to consume a nation or a people. Proper adornment and true beauty in women should never call attention to themselves but should direct the beholder's attention to God and His Son. When women cultivate beauty only for itself, they are infringing upon and detracting from the glory of God. Such vainglory might be expected in women of the world, but "the daughters of Zion" (which today is the church) must exemplify the beauty of holiness!

Is Isaiah, or the Bible, against all feminine or masculine adornment? Hardly! It is the misuse of adornment against which

the Bible speaks. In fact, God has made certain parts of the human body to be alluring and attractive. The Song of Solomon gives a great deal of detail about both natural beauty of the human body and the adornment of it. But the Song does not indicate such beauty and adornment should be used for prideful purposes, rather for God-ordained purposes of love.

When one pauses to consider the disparity between the billions of dollars spent each year by American females (and males) on vain and selfish cosmetics and clothing and the few dollars given each year to the work of the Gospel which transforms men and women into the beauty of holiness, one wonders what God must think!

v. 17-24 THE JUDGMENT: They will reap what they sow. Those who delight in immodest exposure will be rewarded with immodest exposure at the hands of vile men. Why are those women who delight in overtly attracting men by their immodesty always so shocked and offended when immodest and vulgar men demonstrate their attractions?! "Laying bare their secret parts" probably means they will be raped by pagan soldiers. Their indulgences will inevitably result in physical afflictions and loss of real beauty. There will be a loss of their luxury when their pagan neighbors, attracted by their exaggerated showiness, will plunder their jewels and finery.

- a. anklets: ornamental chains with bangles attached which made a tinkling sound when they "minced" along.
- b. cauls: front-bands, head-bands, amulets
- c. crescents: some sort of metallic jewelry in the shape of moons
- d. pendants: like small pearl earring, or tear-drop shaped earrings.
- e. bracelets: decorated bands to fit about the arms (or necks)
- f. mufflers: or veils, to muffle the face
- g. headtiars: diadems, or circlets of gold or silver
- h. ankle chains: may have been chains designed to force short steps
- i. sashes: wide, gaudy, expensive bands of cloth around the waist

- j. perfume boxes: probably like the alabaster boxes of Lk. 7:37 etc.
- k. amulets: charms, probably inscribed with incantations.
- l. rings: finger rings with jewels, etc.
- m. nose jewels: nose rings, (Cf. Esth. 3:12; Gen. 41:42; 24:22, 47).
- n. festival robes: festal robes, state gowns, holiday dresses
- o. mantles: overtunics
- p. shawls: cloaks
- q. satchels: purses
- r. hand-mirrors: small metallic mirrors, highly polished metal
- s. fine linen: lingerie, undergarments of expensive cloth
- t. turbans: head wrappings, head garments
- u. veils: same as mufflers

Isaiah predicts that all this finery will be replaced with ugliness because of their selfish, haughty, unbelieving perversion of it all. Instead of rich sashes, they will wear the ropes of captivity and slavery around their waists; instead of intricately coiffed hair-dos, their hair will either fall out or be cut off by their enemies; instead of rich garments, they will be wearing the sack-cloth of mourning; instead of beauty marks, they will wear the ugly scars of the branding-irons, (it was a practice of pagan armies in that day to brand or disfigure slaves—especially by castrating men and using branding-irons on women— to forever mark them as slaves).

V. 25—4:1 FINAL DEGRADATION: With the moral decay of womanhood comes the weakening of all the fibres of the nation—including its men. When its male leaders become morally weak the nation becomes filled with rebellion, anarchy and conflict. War is a consequence. The male population will be destroyed in war (Cf. Lam. 2:21). A great disproportion between the sexes will appear. Instead of the God-intended ratio of one woman for one man, there will be seven or more women for every male.

The great curse of the Hebrew female was to be unmarried and childless. (Cf. Sarah and Abraham, Hannah, etc.). It was the fear of a lack of seed that had led the daughters of Lot to act in

the shameful manner described in Gen. 19:32ff. Women to whom Isaiah preached would some day no longer live as normal women—they would have no offspring since their husbands would be slain in the wars. For this reason they would abandon their natural modesty and take the initiative in a bold and shameful way, openly asking a man to marry them. Thus the order instituted in Eden is reversed. No longer is man the head of the wife. He does not seek her, but she him.

And so, womanhood, always the last stronghold of a people's morality, strength of character, and hope for the future, crumbles and falls into decadent disarray. With it goes the whole nation. God-fearing women have always been the handmaidens of the Lord (Moses' mother; Samuel's mother; women judges; Ruth; Esther; John the Baptist's mother; Jesus' mother, etc.). God-fearing women have wrought salvation of whole nations through their faith. But when women go bad, their degradation can cause such an upheaval in society that the very foundations of that society are destroyed.

QUIZ

1. Why did the prophet condemn the women for adorning themselves?
2. What is "mincing"?
3. What is the meaning of "laying bare their secret parts"?
4. Is adornment categorically condemned by all the Bible?
5. Why mention "branding"?
6. Why were seven women concerned to marry one man?
7. How important is God-fearing womanhood to any nation?

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE VICTORY OF THE CLEANSED 4:2-6

TEXT: 4:2-6

- 2 In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.
- 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem;
- 4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of justice and by the spirit of burning.
- 5 And Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a covering.
- 6 And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "branch" of Jehovah?
- b. Why is Jehovah going to create a "cloud" and a "flaming fire" over Zion?
- c. What is the pavilion?

PARAPHRASE

In those latter days when the glorious future of the mountain of the house of the Lord comes to pass, the Messiah, the Branch

of the house of David, will bring God's people their true beauty and glory; this Branch in His humanity will be the offspring of Israel and will exhibit the true beauty and godliness which only God's saved-ones recognize as the true glory of humanity. And all those who have escaped the wrath of God and have found salvation in Zion will be named holy. These have their names written down in God's book of life. This will all be done for God's people when God has brought about a washing away of the filth of sin like that which has contaminated the women of Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit of God will accomplish this through a judgment and purging. Then the Lord will create over the whole covenant people, wherever they may assemble, divine guidance, divine protection and divine access. Over all of His saved people God will create a shelter which will afford them divine protection and refreshment sufficient to meet every danger and need.

COMMENTS

v. 2 THE MESSIAH: "In that day," is a flashback to chapter 2:2, ". . . in the latter days." Israel and Judah have been punished 2:6—4:1; a remnant has escaped; out of that remnant another day (far in the future) a better day, has come. This "branch" has to be The Branch, The Messiah (Cf. Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12) if the context is to be taken into account. The Branch, Jesus Christ, is to come and demonstrate the true beauty and glory of Israel. The "fruit of the land" probably refers to the Messiah's humanity having its connection to the nation of Israel (Cf. Num. 13 for "the land of Canaan," which God gave to Israel). The writer of Hebrews probably had this prophecy in mind when he wrote, "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah . . ." (Heb. 7:14). Edward J. Young points to four reasons "the fruit of the land" refers to the Messiah: (a) The parallelism between branch and fruit (Cf. Jn. 12:24); (b) In many passages of Scripture there is reference to the fruitfulness of the Messianic age; (c) The text provides no contrast between fruitfulness and barrenness; (d) Only when the phrase

“fruit of the land” refers to the Messiah is there a satisfactory connection with what follows. It might be, however, that the “fruit of the land” is the product of the Branch, and not the Branch Himself. In this case it would be the redeemed community, the church, Christians.

v. 3 MESSIANIC PEOPLE: In those “latter days” the people who have escaped the wrath of God and have had their names recorded in God’s book of life will have done so because they have been washed and cleansed (v. 4). An important parallel to this whole context is the passage in Joel 2:28—3:3 where practically the same figurative language is used to describe the Messianic age. Those “left in Zion” will be truly called holy in contrast with those of Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day who were claiming to be holy but were filthy. The apostle Paul leaves no doubt that the “Zion” of prophecy is the New Testament church (Cf. Heb. 12:22ff).

v. 4 THE MESSIANIC CLEANSING: The Lord Himself will take action to cleanse “Zion” of the filth of sin such as the women of Jerusalem were guilty. The only point at which God could have brought about cleansing, in any ultimate sense, through perfect justice was at the cross of Christ (Cf. Romans 3:21-26). God punished man’s sins in Christ and was perfectly just in keeping His word of judgment upon sin, while at the same time He was perfectly merciful in imputing to man the righteousness of Christ (Cf. II Cor. 5:14-21). Zechariah proclaims this great cleansing (Zech. 12:10—13:9). This spirit of “burning” is portrayed in Malachi as taking place when the Messiah came to purge “the sons of Levi” (Cf. Malachi 3:1-4). All this cleansing began to take place when Jesus came and offered Himself as both the divine agent to satisfy God’s demands and the divine power to meet man’s needs for purification. It is still taking place through the work of the Holy Spirit as His message of conviction (Jn. 16) is preached and men respond in faith. But it will find its consummation in God’s great and final Day of Judgment and Salvation.

v. 5-6 THE MESSIANIC PRESENCE: It is significant that the word “create” is from the same Hebrew word, *bara*, used in Genesis 1! That which is to come to pass will be brought into

being exclusively by the personal and direct power of God. When the future glory of Zion comes, God is going to "create" a new Jerusalem (Cf. Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-23, etc.). The "cloud" and the "flaming fire" are figures borrowed from the wilderness wandering of the covenant people. They depict Divine guidance, protection and access to God's presence. Over the whole redeemed community of the new "Zion" God is going to spread a canopy. Just as over the Jewish wedding ceremony there was a protective canopy, so here there will also be one to protect God's bride, the church. There will also be a "booth" (pavilion) for refreshing shelter and rest and a refuge from the storms. The booth was a small, protective structure, such as was used by Israel in the wilderness at the Feast of Booths. The "covert" is a hiding place. There are so many New Testament figures brought to our mind here—Jesus speaks of the man who builds his house upon the rock for protection from the storms; our life is said to be hid with Christ in God, etc.

It is reassuring to listen to these sweet words of hope from the prophet squarely in the midst of his thundering of the judgments of God upon sin. It reminds us that the message of God is always two-fold; judgment upon sin, but salvation for faith and repentance.

QUIZ

1. What "day" is referred to in verse 2?
2. Who are those that "are escaped of Israel"?
3. How are they to be named holy?
4. What is the "spirit of justice"? — the "spirit of burning"?
5. How does the N.T. become the fulfillment of all these figures of protection?

CHAPTER FIVE

C. THE IMPRECATION OF ABANDONMENT 5:1-30

1. THE WORDS OF ACCUSATION

TEXT: 5:1-7

- 1 Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:
- 2 and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.
- 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
- 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?
- 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:
- 6 and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
- 7 For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.

QUERIES

- a. Did Isaiah actually put this in the form of a song?
- b. What are the "wild grapes" brought forth?

c. Why use the figure of a "vineyard"?

PARAPHRASE

Now I shall sing indeed of my Beloved a song of my Beloved about His vineyard. My Beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He plowed it carefully and took out all the rocks and planted His vineyard with the choicest vines. He built a sturdy watchtower in the middle of it to aid in its protection and cut a permanent wine-press out of the solid rock. Then He patiently waited anticipating a bountiful harvest of sweet grapes. But the grapes that grew were wild and putrid. Now, men of Jerusalem and Judah, you have heard the case! You be the judges! What more could I have done? Why did My vineyard give Me wild grapes instead of sweet? Now I would indeed have you to know what I am about to do to My vineyard; I shall remove the fence of hedge and the vineyard shall be consumed by predators and I shall break down its wall of stone and it shall be trampled down by wild beasts. I will not prune it or cultivate it any more. Briers and thorns will grow up and strangle the vines; I will command the clouds not to rain on it any more. I have been giving you the case of God's chosen people. They are the vineyard I have been speaking about. Israel and Judah were His pleasant plantings. He expected justice, but they produced bloodshed instead. He expected righteousness, but the cries of deep oppression came to Him.

COMMENTS

v. 1 POSSESSOR OF THE VINEYARD: The vineyard belongs to The Beloved, God. Even the song about the vineyard is *of* the Beloved—that is, originates with the Beloved. The prophet sings the song on behalf of the Beloved. This seems to be a song composed rather like some of our contemporary folk-songs—by on-the-spot improvisation. Whether sung to the accompaniment of

an instrument or not is immaterial. This song was intended for teaching, not entertainment! The vineyard was a favorite subject for parabolic instruction, both in the O.T. and the N.T. (Cf. Psalms 80:8ff; Hosea 10:1; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:6; 17:1ff; 19:10ff; Matt. 20:1-16; 21:33-43; Jn. 15:1-11).

V. 2 PROVISION FOR THE VINEYARD: It is God's vineyard by absolute right. He planted it upon land which was His. He planted it in a very productive, conspicuous place in the midst of civilization (on a fertile hill); He cleared it of all hindrances of foreigners (gathered out the stones); He built protective fortresses within it (watchtower); He made provisions to use the fruits of the nation (built a winepress). Then with Divine patience and long-suffering He cultivated this nation with great blessings of deliverance and chastening. He sent His servants the leaders and prophets to tend it. He had every right to anticipate an abundant harvest of sweetness; instead it produced wildness, putridness and rottenness.

V. 3-4 PETITION AGAINST THE VINEYARD: It is the very essence of the righteous dealings of God with man that such dealings, when perverted, bring inevitable self-condemnation upon the perverters. Here, the guilty are petitioned to make a judgment as to where justice lies between the Owner and His vineyard. It reminds one of Jesus asking the Jews to make such judgments upon themselves (Cf. Matt. 21:28-32; 21:33-43, etc.). There comes a point in God's dealing with man beyond which God can do no more to produce good fruit in man's life. There is a point where God is forced, by the very nature of the moral being of man, to give up. Man, left to his own devices, falls into complete ruin.

V. 5-6 PUNISHMENT OF THE VINEYARD: Really all that God has to do is withdraw Divine protection and sustenance and leave men to their own selfish, evil devices, and that would be punishment enough (Cf. Romans 1:18-32). When God withdrew His protection from Judah, the "wild bull" of Assyria (Isa. 10:13) and the "lion, bear, leopard and iron beast" of the book of Daniel all trampled the "vineyard" down. When God withdrew His sustenance from Judah, she suffered famine and hunger