

and became an ancestress of David. David, when in difficulty with King Saul, took his father and mother to the king of Moab for his protection (I Sam. 22:3-4).

So Isaiah's heart is touched with this prediction of the desperation of the Moabites. Isaiah paints a picture of thousands of weeping refugees fleeing their homes and cities, carrying what possessions they could hastily snatch up in a moment's desperation. They flee southward for asylum in Edom. The slaughter by the Assyrian armies rampages until the waters of Dimon are stained red with human blood! Those that remain in Moab, and even those that flee, have still more slaughter and destruction to come upon them. God will send "a lion" (probably the Babylonians and Persians to come) to hunt them down. Such is the destiny of proud and inhuman Moab!

QUIZ

1. What is Moab's origin?
2. What dealings did Moab have with Israel in Israel's early history?
3. How do Semitics demonstrate their grief?
4. What ties were there between Moab and Israel?
5. Where did the Moabites flee for refuge at the Assyrian invasion?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. MOAB (Continued)

b. INVITATION

TEXT: 16:1-5

- 1 Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be that, as wandering birds, as a scattered nest,

- so shall the daughters of Moab be at the fords of the Arnon.
- 3 Give counsel, execute justice; make thy shade as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; betray not the fugitive.
- 4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; as for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the destroyer. For the extortioner is brought to nought, destruction ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.
- 5 And a throne shall be established in lovingkindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness.

QUERIES

- a. Why send lambs unto the mount of Zion?
- b. Who is to sit upon the throne in the tent of David?

PARAPHRASE

I counsel you Moab to send to Judah, the daughter of Zion, for help. Send a token of submission, a tribute of lambs, to the ruler of Judah. Unless you get help from Judah your panic and confusion will increase until you are absolutely helpless. You must say to Judah, Give counsel; grant that justice shall be done for us; give us such protection that it will be like a night-shade in the midst of the noonday; hide our outcasts and do not betray our fugitives. You must say, Let my neglected ones sojourn among you. Be a hidingplace for them from before the face of the destroyer. The oppressor and extortioner of Judah has been vanquished out of Judah's land and there is peace there now. And a throne will be established in steadfast love; and a man shall sit on it in truth and faithfulness from the family of David, ruling and judging in justice and eager to do righteousness.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 PREDICAMENT: Moab's predicament is such that she is in a state of panic (Cf. Isa. 15:4). Confusion reigns. Isaiah's compassion for suffering humanity moves him to counsel Moab to plead with Judah for help. When Moab was formerly under the rule of Judah (II Kings 3:4ff) Moab paid tribute to Judah in the form of sheep and lambs. Judah protected Moab as long as this arrangement continued. But Moab revolted from the rule of Judah. Now Moab has suffered invasion and enemies are despoiling its people. Isaiah's advice is for Moab to turn in a submissive attitude, sending a tribute of lambs, to Judah and plead for Judah's help and protection. If Moab does not, her panic and confusion will increase until she is homeless like a bird whose nest is scattered!

v. 3-4 PLEA: Isaiah's advice continues. The prophet suggests even the words Moab is to use in its plea to Judah. Moab should ask Judah to do a risky thing. Moab is to plead with Judah to give asylum to the displaced refugees; hide them; protect them. Moab is to plead with Judah to act toward them as they never acted toward Judah. Moab is to ask for mercy, justice, compassion and sacrificial goodness.

In the middle of verse 4, Isaiah appears to redirect his dialogue from advising Moab to relating a new historical situation that prevails in Judah's case. Something had apparently occurred to relieve Judah (temporarily) of the oppression of the forces of Assyria so that Judah would be well able to give aid to the refugees of Moab. What caused this present availability of Judah is not recorded but the prophet assures Moab it is present.

v. 5 PROMISE: This is a very intriguing verse. It has been considered as a Messianic passage as far back as the time of the *Targum* (Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew texts which date in oral form back to the Persian captivities). Isaiah indicates it was taken for granted that the Moabites had some knowledge of the divine purpose in the nation of Judah. The account of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz confirms this. The Moabites were idolaters but they knew the nature of David's

throne. When a disaster faces men they are able to recall a much more complete knowledge of God's truth than at any other time. Isaiah seems to say, If you come to seek refuge under the wings of Judah we will give you a share even of the best that our heritage has to offer—our Messianic hope. Here is one of the many passages in the prophets where the truth concerning the Christ of the Jews is offered to those of other nations. Israel has a throne with a future, not like the unstable thrones of the most powerful nations round about. This one will be established by virtue of the steadfast love of Jehovah. The throne involves the "tabernacle" (house) of David (Cf. Amos 9:11)—the lineage of David. It involves the rule of One who will judge justly and righteously to a degree never displayed in any earthly ruler (Cf. Isa. 9:6ff; 11:1-10; Micah 5:2ff). The very fact that this Messianic hope was offered to Moab (a nation outside the Hebrew covenant) proves once and for all that the Messianic expectations as expressed by the O.T. prophets were not tenuous and vague—they were specific and clear!

QUIZ

1. Why does Isaiah intercede and direct Moab to seek help from Judah?
2. What are Isaiah's directions to Moab?
3. How is it possible for Judah, at this time, to give help to Moab?
4. What is so intriguing about verse 5?
5. Were the Moabites expected to understand the divine destiny of Israel?
6. How could Isaiah offer Messianic hope to Moab?

c. INSOLENCE

TEXT: 16:6-12

- 6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his wrath; his boastings are nought.
- 7 Therefore shall Moab wail for Moab, every one shall wail: for the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn, utterly stricken.
- 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have broken down the choice branches thereof, which reached even unto Jazer, which wandered into the wilderness; its shoots were spread abroad, they passed over the sea.
- 9 Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest the battle shout is fallen.
- 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the fruitful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither joyful noise; no treader shall tread out wine in the presses; I have made the vintage shout to cease.
- 11 Wherefore my heart soundeth like a harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-heres.
- 12 And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself, when he wearieth himself upon the high place, and shall come to his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Moab display such arrogance and pride?
- b. Who is weeping in verse 9?

PARAPHRASE

The pride of Moab is well known. Moab is very proud, even to the point of arrogance and cruelty. Moab's boastful talk is not right. Moab will wail and mourn his own calamity—the whole nation shall wail bitterly because of this arrogance. Moab will be so utterly stricken down from its self-exaltation its famous raisin-cakes and vineyards will be disregarded by everyone. As a matter of fact, the armies of its enemies will tear down and march over those huge, famous vineyards and completely devastate the land. So I will wail and weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah. My tears flow for Heshbon and Elealeh, for destruction has come upon their summer fruits and harvests with the battle shout. Gone will be the gladness, gone the joy of harvest. The happy singing in the vineyards will be heard no more; the treading out of the grapes in the wine presses will cease forever and the customary shout of *heydad* at the reaping of the vintage will be caused to cease. Mourning for Moab and its people sweeps over my soul like the funeral music that mournfully sweeps across a harp. No last minute appeal to Moab's gods will avert the inevitable judgment of Jehovah upon his arrogance. Even though the whole nation presents itself and cries with much repetition he shall not prevail.

COMMENTS

V. 6-8 ARROGANCE: The haughty pride of Moab was well known. See Isaiah 15:1-9. Moab's pride led to arrogance, ungodly boasting (even to the point of "magnifying himself against the Lord (Cf. Jer. 48:42), and to cruel wrath. Moab evidently paid no attention to the invitation of God's prophet (Isaiah) to call for help from Judah in a submissive penitent attitude. And, in spite of the terrible warnings of complete destruction, Moab refused Judah's help. Moab was also famous for its large and luxurious vineyards. It was famous for a delicacy known as "raisin-cakes" which it exported throughout the world. The

prophet predicts that these things in which Moab gloried and upon which he depended so much, would soon be completely trampled under the feet of enemy nations marching in conquest of their land.

v. 9-12 AGONY: There is in all of us a sentiment akin to agony and horror when we realize there is no hope for the impenitent and rebellious. This was true of Isaiah. Not all Jews hated their enemies! Agony and sorrow swept across the heart-strings of Isaiah with such mournfulness as one hears sweeping across the strings of a lyre played at funerals. Genuine tears of compassion would flow from the eyes of this sensitive man of God for a people about to be debased because of their arrogance. By faith, the prophet could understand God's revelation of the deep pain and suffering that was about to come upon the Moabites. Isaiah knew that all their flippant, boastful rejoicing in prosperity and abundance would be turned into wailing and lamenting. There would be a cessation of the exuberance shown at every harvest of the vintage. In Israel and Moab the *heydad* was the peculiar shout raised by those that trod out the grapes in the wine-press. As each foot stamped into the wine-press, this word gave the accompanying shout, which was quite naturally a joyful and enthusiastic one. In place of the joyful harvest shout will be heard the "battle shout." In their hour of complete devastation the Moabites will go to their pagan sanctuaries and cry out in repetitious prayer to their pagan gods until they are "wearied" with praying, but to no avail. Their wails will be those of those who have no real god, no hope and help.

QUIZ

1. How far had Moab carried its pride and arrogance?
2. What did it have to be so arrogant about?
3. Why was Isaiah agonizing about Moab's fate so?
4. What contrast did Isaiah make about the cessation of joy in Moab?

d. INEXORABLE

TEXT: 16:13-14

13 This is the word that Jehovah spake concerning Moab in time past.

14 But now Jehovah hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account.

QUERIES

- a. What word had Jehovah spoken in time past?
- b. What are the "years of a hireling"?

PARAPHRASE

Jehovah has spoken many times and long in the past the doom of Moab. And now it is about to be fulfilled. Precisely within three years (as precisely as the hired laborer keeps track of his contract) the glory of Moab will be turned into contempt. The once proud Moabites will be a spectacle of defeat and shame. Only a very small and insignificant remnant will be spared.

COMMENTS

v. 13-14 **ABASEMENT:** Isaiah declares that the abasement of Moab spoken so agonizingly in verses 6-12 had been predicted by Jehovah many times in the past. Moab's demise is predicted as far back as the Pentateuch. Now the time limit is precisely ascribed. Three years hence! We do not know exactly when Isaiah made this prophecy. The defeat he refers to was administered at the hands of Shalmaneser IV (727 B.C.) or his successor,

Sargon II (722 B.C.), potentates of Assyria. Moab, after the Assyrian conquests, became a wasteland, inhabited by nomadic tribes of desert-people. It remains so to this day. A very small remnant of Moabite people mixed with other nomadic peoples of that area and became the progenitors of those nomadic tribes inhabiting that deserted area today. God keeps His word!

QUIZ

1. How far back in the past had Jehovah declared Moab's doom?
2. Approximately when did Isaiah write this precise prediction?
3. What happened, eventually, to the Moabites?

- CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

2. DAMASCUS

a. COALITION

TEXT: 17:1-6

- 1 The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.
- 2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.
- 3 And the fortress shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith Jehovah of hosts.
- 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
- 5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the standing grain, and his arm reapeth the ears; yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears in the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet there shall be left therein gleanings, as the shaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost

bough, four or five in the outmost branches of a fruitful tree, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Isaiah pronounce judgment on Ephraim (Israel) along with Damascus?
- b. What relationship did Damascus have to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's pronouncement concerning Damascus, captial of Syria: Behold, Damascus is no longer to be a city. It is destined to become a heap of ruins! Even the cities of Aroer, lying between Israel and Syria, are destined for desolation. They will be so completely deserted that sheep will pasture in their ruins lying quiet and unafraid with no people to chase them away. The combined power of the Israel-Damascus coalition will end. The supposed glory of this godless coalition will fade like that of Israel when she rejected Jehovah. Israel's one-time glory will be a thing of the past, even as a wasting disease may cut down the fatness of a healthy man until he has withered away to skin and bones. Nothing will be left of these two nations. They will be so thoroughly consumed by God's judgment they will be like a wheat field where the reaper is followed by the gleaners picking up every scrap left behind. They will be like the olive tree that is shaken and has its branches beaten with sticks to gather every berry.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 ALLIANCE ANNULED: Damascus was founded some 2,200 years before Christ by Uz, a grandson of Shem (Josh. 1:6; 4:1ff). It is the capital of Syria. Its 2,000 ft. elevation gives it

a delightful climate. Caravan routes from the east, west and south crossed in the city, carrying treasures of silks, perfumes, carpets, and foods. It has always been strategic both militarily and economically. In Isaiah's day, Damascus (Syria) and Israel (the northern kingdom of the Jews) had formed an alliance to go to war against Judah. Ahaz, king of Judah, made an alliance with Assyria (see our comments on Isaiah 7). Isaiah had earlier (ch. 7) predicted the downfall of the Syria-Israel coalition. Now the prophet repeats God's judgment upon it. After the Assyrian conquest of Syria and Israel, Damascus was of little importance until 635 A.D. when it became the seat of the Mohammedan world. It really has never regained the prominence or power it had in the days of Isaiah. The "cities of Aroer" were cities in the far northern reaches of the territory of Israel. They formed a sort of "buffer zone" between Israel and Syria. This is Isaiah's announcement that Israel would be invaded by the same forces about to occupy Damascus. The entire territory of these two nations allied against God's remnant (Judah) was to be made so desolate that sheep would pasture in the ruins of their cities and fortresses. There would be no people in these lands to scare the sheep away.

V. 4-6 AFTERMATH OF THE ATTACK: After the destructive forces of God's judgment have done their work, the glory of these two nations, especially Israel, will be only a shadow and skeleton of its former self. It will vanish as the fatness of a man leaves him when he is wasting away with an incurable disease. All that will be left of the two will be one or two scattered, left-over, insignificant survivors. These two nations will be "picked clean" and left barren like a field gleaned, etc.

QUIZ

1. How old was the city of Damascus?
2. What was the alliance between Damascus and Israel for in Isaiah's time?
3. To what extent was Damascus doomed?

b. CRISIS

TEXT: 17:7-8

7 In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

8 And they shall not look to the altars, the work of their hands; neither shall they have respect to that which their fingers have made, either the Asherim, or the sun-images.

QUERIES

- a. What prompted this contrition by men?
- b. What were the "sun-images"?

PARAPHRASE

When God's judgment begins to fall, men will turn and look for their Maker, and they will suddenly learn to fear the Holy One of Israel. They will no longer seek help from their idols and pagan altars which they made with their own hands. They will renounce their Asherim and sun-images.

COMMENTS

v. 7-8 REFORMATION: Man is prone to disregard God and turn to the gods of his own making when he is prosperous and relatively secure from his enemies. But when calamity or crisis comes man cries out for Supernatural aid. Someone has said, "There are no atheists in foxholes." When men have to face something about to overwhelm them and beyond their own powers to resolve they usually seek their Maker. This is not always repentance in the true sense of the word. Sometimes it is only reformation. This is what occurred in the case of most of the

Jews. They simply reformed some of their behavioral patterns. They reformed by ceasing to do obeisance to statues. But they did not experience real repentance. There is a difference between reformation and repentance. Repentance involves a change of mind, a change of values, as well as changed conduct. Most of the Jews did not really repent—they simply reformed. When they returned from their captivities they made idols of their superholiness. Their new idols were those of Jewish ancestry and Pharisaic self-righteousness. It is true, however, that the Jews were absolutely and thoroughly cured of image-worship. They had fallen into the depths of image-worship at this point in their history (Cf. II Kings 16:10ff). "Asherim" were sacred pillars (much like totem poles) of the pagan "groves" (garden places where pagans gathered to worship idols and engage in lewd, sexual rites of worship). Sun-images were statues of the Phoenician goddess. Her worship was as lewd as that of Baal, with whom she was associated by the pagans.

QUIZ

1. Why were men moved to look unto their Maker?
2. What is the difference between reformation and repentance?
3. How do we know the Jews did not (for the most part) repent?
4. What were the Asherim and sun-images they were worshiping?

c. COLLAPSE

TEXT: 17:9-11

- 9 In that day shall their strong cities be as the forsaken places in the wood and on the mountain top, which were forsaken from before the children of Israel; and it shall be a desolation
- 10 For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength; therefore thou plantest pleasant plants, and settest it with strange slips:

11 in the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in, and in the morning thou makest thy seed to blossom; but the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

QUERIES

- a. What were the "forsaken places in the wood," etc.?
- b. How does the harvest "flee away" in the day of grief?

PARAPHRASE

In that day the well fortified cities where they might think to find refuge from disaster will be useless ruins. Their cities will be like the old, ruined fortresses left behind by the Canaanites when Israel occupied the land. The reason for the collapse of your security is that you have forsaken the true God of your salvation and have not given attention to the Rock upon whom alone it is safe to stand. Although you plant your gardens to your pagan images and tender them the most meticulous care and protection, and although they produce blossoms of loveliness, they will not bring you deliverance. What little satisfaction you may have will disappear suddenly and absolutely in the desperate days of judgment to come.

COMMENTS

v. 9-10a FORTRESSES: "In that day—" when the Damascus-Israel coalition collapses, Israel's defenses and great fortified cities will be as useless as those ruins of the old Canaanite cities still visible in the "woods" and on "mountain tops" in Isaiah's day. When will men learn they can never build any fortress (physical, philosophical or psychological) that God cannot overwhelm and reduce to ruins? Men try to fortify themselves with things or ideas against God's invasion of their selfish goals and

aims. Unless a man surrenders to God's conquest of his heart, man's citadels are inevitably reduced to ruin and the man himself incarcerated in a prison-hell of his own choosing.

v. 10b-11 FLOWERS: The reference to planting "pleasant plants," and setting "strange slips," probably refers to what some ancient writers called little "Adonis gardens." They were little gardens of flower pots or baskets with pleasant plants and slips growing in them in adoration of the Greek Adonis cult. The women of Damascus and Israel were giving these pagan gardens of idolatry their most careful and tender attention. It is suggested they may have been doing this to bring about some magical, mystical resurrection of the dead Baal (who during the dry season had "died"). They even used hothouse-plant methods to promote quick growth and sprouting. They may also have been appeasing the gods of fertility in order to magically insure a good crop at harvest time. Whatever their reasons, Jehovah, through His prophet, predicts that they will not reap what they expect. What they expect to harvest will never materialize. Instead they shall reap days of grief and desperate sorrow.

QUIZ

1. What "day" is referred to in verse 9?
2. What is the comparison used to illustrate the desolation of Israel's cities?
3. Are there other "fortresses" man builds to isolate himself from God besides of stone and wood? What are they?
4. What are the references to "plantings" and "slips"?
5. What is to be the consequence of Israel's idolatry?

d. CHAOS

TEXT: 17:12-14

12 Ah, the uproar of many peoples, that roar like the roaring of the seas; and the rushing of nations, that rush like the rushing of mighty waters!

13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but he shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the whirling dust before the storm.

14 At eventide behold, terror; and before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that despoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Isaiah break into his train of thought with this "ah"?
- b. Who are the "nations" roaring like rushing waters?

PARAPHRASE

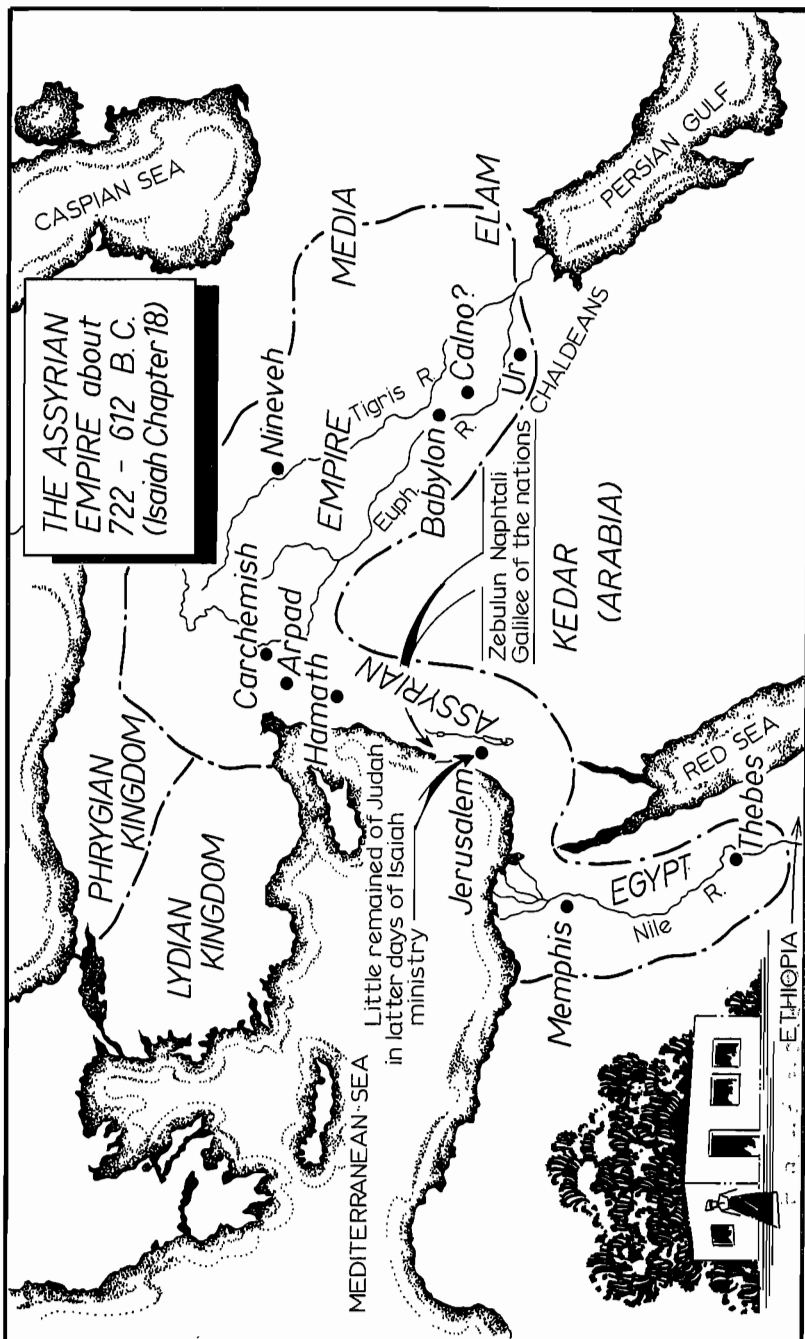
Ah, permit me to pause and tell you of the defeat of the enemies of God's elect. I see multitudes and multitudes of peoples rushing upon God's elect to consume them. They roar with a deafening ferocity, like the roar of the pounding sea. But God will rebuke them and silence their roaring. He will defeat them and they will flee, scattered like chaff by the wind, like whirling dust is blown by a storm. The fear of God's elect as they stand before their enemies will be over in a very short time. Almost overnight they will know deliverance, and their enemies defeated. This is the destiny of those who plunder and destroy the people of God.

COMMENTS

v. 12-13a THE BATTLE: This is rather like a soliloquy by Isaiah. He is talking as if to himself. It is a predictive pause. Its initial fulfillment probably occurred at the onrushing tide of Assyrians as they invaded first Syria, then Israel, then Judah, in the days of Isaiah, Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Jerusalem was surrounded and besieged. Jehovah's angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night and the Assyrian's left in defeat. However, it is our judgment that the soliloquy finds its ultimate fulfillment in the victory God wrought at the death and resurrection of Christ. No greater battle was or ever will be fought than the battle between heaven and hell when Christ came to earth to conquer sin in the flesh. That night in Gethsemane the destiny of righteousness, justice and mercy hung in the balance. That struggle of Jesus with Himself and with the devil's temptations was the ultimate struggle between the forces of God and the forces of the devil. When sinful men (agents of Satan) crucified the Son of God, they calculated they had defeated God's attempt to regain His rule over men. What more could Satan do in his warfare against God! We believe the historical event at Calvary and the Empty Tomb is what the prophets (Joel, Ezekiel, Zechariah) are predicting with their highly figurative (and literally impossible) great battles between God and the nations (valley of Jehoshaphat; Gog and Magog, etc.). One, great, complete, decisive victory of God over His enemies and the enemies of His people is predicted.

v. 13b-14 THE VICTORY: Psalms 2:1-6 depicts the "nations" raging against God. But God defeats them through His Son. Daniel's interpretation of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar has the "stone" (God's kingdom) crushing the four great empires of man into dust and the wind blowing them away! Colossians 2:15 tells us that the atoning death of Christ was the moment when God "*disarmed* the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, *triumphing* over them in him." Hebrews 2:14-18 tells us that Jesus' substitutionary death "destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and

THE ASSYRIAN
EMPIRE about
722 - 612 B.C.
(Isaiah Chapter 18)





"In the days of Pekah king of Israel, came Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria . . ." (II Kings 15:29).

An Assyrian artist has given us on a relief this portrait of the fierce and inexorable Tiglath-Pileser III. It comes from his ancient capital at Nimrud. When this terrifying monarch, the real founder of the Assyrian Empire, ascended the throne in 745 B. C. it was the beginning of the end for the northern kingdom of Israel.

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES
By Werner Keller - Wm. Morrow Co.

delivered all those who through *fear* of death were subject to lifelong bondage” etc. So you see, God has rebuked His enemies, He has defeated them and scattered them and, like whirling dust before a storm, they are no longer to be feared. What God has actually accomplished (victory) and what we appropriate by faith and obedience, awaits only the consummation at the end of time.

QUIZ

1. What is probably the initial fulfillment of these verses?
2. What is their ultimate fulfillment?

C. INCESSANT EGYPTIANS - CHAPTERS 18-20

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. ETHIOPIA

TEXT: 18:1-7

- 1 Ah, the land of the rustling of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;
- 2 that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people terrible from their beginning onward, a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide!
- 3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers on the earth; when an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye; and when the trumpet is blown, hear ye.
- 4 For thus hath Jehovah said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling-place, like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
- 5 For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the

flower becometh a ripening grape, he will cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and the spreading branches will he take away and cut down.

6 They shall be left together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the ravenous birds shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

7 In that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts from a people tall and smooth, even from a people terrible from their beginning onward, a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount Zion.

QUERIES

- a. Why were the ambassadors told to "go"?
- b. Why is Jehovah going to "be still"?
- c. Who is going to bring a "present" to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

Ah, yes, O distant and enchanting land of Ethiopia, land beyond the upper reaches of the Nile where winged sailboats glide, which sends its ambassadors in fast boats! Go, you swift messengers from Ethiopia. Return to your homeland, a land of supple, bronze-skinned warriors, feared far and wide, a conquering, destroying nation whose land the upper Nile divides. Go with this message: Jehovah-God has said, Let all the world look and listen when God begins to raise up the sign of His mighty work in the earth. Jehovah has decreed, Let my enemies now advance against my land. I will watch quietly and serenely from my place, as unperturbed as one does on a pleasant summer day or a lovely autumn morning watching the grain field mature unto harvest. I have everything under control, says Jehovah. My enemies are like a field ripening unto harvest. But before they

have begun the attack, and while their plans are ripening like grapes, I will cut them off as though with pruning shears. I will snip the spreading tendrils. Their armies will be left dead on the field for the mountain birds and wild animals to eat; the vultures will tear bodies all summer, and the wild animals will gnaw bones all winter. But the time will come when that strong and mighty nation, a terror to all both far and near, that conquering, destroying nation whose land the rivers divide, will bring gifts to the Lord of Hosts in Zion, where He has placed His name.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **TERROR:** Ethiopia was noted far and wide for the abundance of insects populating its territories. "Beyond" means the land extending far to the south which is bordered by the great rivers of Egypt (the White Nile, the Blue Nile and the Atbara) which is Ethiopia. Ethiopia had apparently sent envoys (ambassadors) to Judah. They had come in boats constructed of papyrus, a famous reed which grew in abundance along the Nile. This reed was light and would be very bouyant as well as pliable. The craft would probably be made watertight with pitch. The word "saying" in the text is italicized indicating that it is a word supplied but not a part of the original text. It was not the Ethiopians who said to the ambassadors, "Go," but Isaiah the prophet who was saying, in effect, "Go back home!" The Ethiopians were little known to most of the world in Isaiah's day. There was an aura of mystery about them which tended to make them feared. Their bronze, sleek physique and their efficiency (swift messengers) all contributed to the stories told about their fearsomeness. But why would Isaiah tell them to "Go back home"?

v. 3-6 **TRIUMPH:** Apparently Ethiopia had sent ambassadors to Judah to offer treaties of alliance with Judah against her immediate foes, the Syria-Israel coalition, or perhaps, Assyria. Such treaties of alliance would involve some form of compromise by Judah to Ethiopia's demands. It would probably involve Judah in pagan practices. An alternative suggestion is that the

ambassadors were sent with threats to Judah from Ethiopia herself. Whatever the case, the prophet of God, as much for the benefit of the people of God as for the Ethiopians, bids them "Go home" and watch and listen for a signal announcing that Jehovah God, the God of Judah, was entering into battle with His enemies. The warning is to the whole world that Jehovah will, in due time, take the situation in hand. There were those of God's people who probably were getting impatient with Jehovah's postponement of disaster upon their enemies. Twice before the prophet Isaiah had predicted Jehovah's judgment upon Assyria (10:5-34; 14:24-27). The Lord was apparently doing nothing about all those massive empires threatening Judah on all sides except predict their overthrow. Isaiah portrays Jehovah dwelling quietly, serenely, observing unperturbed as His enemies prepare for the attack. What else befits the Sovereign God of Creation! He has all things completely under His control. He is simply allowing all circumstances to ripen unto His harvest. He is allowing these circumstances and purposes of men to come to fruition in order better to serve His own omniscient purposes. As men prepare their schemes to carry out their own evil purposes, God waits. He wants to give men time to repent. But when they deliberately exchange the truth of God for a lie and deliberately refuse to have God in their knowledge, He gives them up to their own self destruction. What else can He do. They are "cut off." They become carrion. They reap what they sow. Almighty God triumphs over them just as He warned He would.

v. 7 TREASURE: This verse is futuristic. As usual the future is not defined whether it be the immediate future or the remote. More than likely both are thought of as involved. We have here another of the manifold instances of "shortened perspective" where the prophet sees the mountain peaks of God's redemptive activity but he does not see the valleys in between the peaks. Those "valleys" unexplored (centuries of time elapsing between great events) by the prophet's eye must also remain unexplored by the reader's mind. Isaiah may have reference initially to the more immediate future when some in Ethiopia watched developments as they took place round about Jerusalem, and when the

disastrous defeat of the Assyrians occurred, this news penetrated to Ethiopia and induced some to acknowledge Jehovah (Cf. II Chron. 32:23). However, one has only to remember the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) to realize this prediction also has a distant future fulfillment and focuses on messianic times. In a context definitely messianic (Zeph. 3:10) Ethiopia is depicted bringing offerings to the Lord. Zion is symbolic to designate the dwelling place of God and the church of Christ is His ultimate dwelling place (Cf. Heb. 12:18-24; Eph. 2:11-22). This verse parallels the many predictions of Isaiah and other prophets that in messianic times (the church) God and/or God's people will possess peoples (as treasure) from every nation of the world. Isaiah portrays the future glorious Zion (kingdom of God) to be a universal kingdom. All the nations will flow to it (Isa. 2, etc.). This is another expression of the universality of the messianic kingdom (the church). The treasure is the people themselves, converted to Jehovah.

QUIZ

1. What is the reference to the "rustling of wings"?
2. Who is saying "Go" to the ambassadors?
3. What are they to wait to see and hear?
4. Why is God not dealing with His enemies immediately?
5. What N.T. incident may be referred to in verse 7?
6. What are the "presents" brought from Ethiopia?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

2. EGYPT

TEXT: 19:1-15

- 1 The burden of Egypt. Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall

- tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.
- 2 And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.
- 3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.
- 4 And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.
- 5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and become dry.
- 6 And the rivers shall become foul; the streams of Egypt shall be diminished and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither away.
- 7 The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile, and all the sown fields of the Nile, shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more.
- 8 And the fishers shall lament and all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.
- 9 Moreover they that work in combed flax, and they that weave white cloth, shall be confounded.
- 10 And the pillars of Egypt shall be broken in pieces; all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul.
- 11 The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the counsel of the wisest counselors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?
- 12 Where then are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now; and let them know what Jehovah of hosts hath purposed concerning Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Memphis are deceived; they have caused Egypt to go astray, that are the

cornerstone of her tribes.

- 14 Jehovah hath mingled a spirit of perverseness in the midst of her; and they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.
- 15 Neither shall there be for Egypt any work, which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do.

QUERIES

- a. When did the Egyptians fight against one another?
- b. What caused Egypt's economic downfall?
- c. Why did Egypt's wise men cause her to go astray?

PARAPHRASE

This is the destiny of Egypt. Behold, the Omnipotent God descends from heaven surely and swiftly upon Egypt. Egypt's gods and her religion will be impotent to help her. Her whole populace will be gripped with paralyzing fear and confusion. I, God, will cause them to fight against each other—brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city and province against province. The national spirit of Egypt will be broken. I will cause all her plans to be frustrated. They will run in utter helplessness and confusion to their stone and wooden gods, to their magicians and sooth-sayers and to their sorcerers. But it will be useless for I will give them over to be ruled by a cruel despot. A fierce king will rule them. Furthermore, the waters of the Nile shall fail to inundate the fields and will practically waste away. The irrigation channels will become foul and useless; they will dry up and the reeds and rushes will wither away. The pasture-land along the Nile and all the grain fields will dry up and their soil will be blown away and they will not be cultivated any more. Fishermen will weep for lack of fish to catch. Those who fish with hooks and those who fish with nets will all be unemployed. Weavers of cloth will find their industry in a state of

collapse for the crops of flax and cotton will disappear. The rich and influential and the wage earners will be frustrated and dismayed. What fools the princes of Zoan will be shown to be when this happens. The wisest counselors of Pharaoh will be shown to be as dumb as animals. Will all those wise men then dare to tell Pharaoh about the long line of wise men they have come from? Where are the wise men of Egypt? If they are so wise, let them predict what is going to be the destiny of Egypt. The leadership of the country in Zoan are acting foolishly. The leaders in Memphis are deceiving themselves. Those men who are the cornerstones of the nation have duped the whole country and given it stupid counsel. The Lord has caused a spirit of arrogant perverseness and warped judgment to pervade the land of Egypt. This has brought confusion and failure in every attempt of Egypt to perpetuate her world supremacy. She staggers stupidly and mindlessly as a drunken man staggers in his own vomit. No plan or program Egypt can devise will save her. No person, neither high nor low will be able to save her.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 CIVIL DISORDER: Egypt was a constant and powerful enemy of the Hebrew people. In Isaiah's day, however, there were Jews advising the kings of Israel to form political alliances with Egypt and thus gain protection against Israel's enemies on the other side of her in Mesopotamia (Assyria, Babylon, etc.). So, whether the threat of Egypt toward Israel be invasion or alliance, Isaiah was warning his people that they should trust God. God is going to execute His justice and judgment upon an idolatrous nation. God's first step in judgment will be civil strife within Egypt herself. Governments founded on falsehood in any form, have the seeds of instability and self-destruction sown within them. Where there is falsehood there will be injustice. Where there is injustice there will be civil strife. These are divine moral laws which govern in the affairs of men. Only when a nation is governed by the principles of truth, honesty, justice

and human dignity can there be national unity. This prophecy was fulfilled many times over in Egypt. Herodotus states that there were civil wars in the days of Psammetichus (cir. 655 B.C.). Daniel predicts periods of civil strife, brother against brother and brother against sister, in the days of the Ptolemies (cir. 300-200 B.C.) (Cf. our comments on Daniel 11). There is still much civil strife in Egypt.

The "giving over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king" may parallel Ezekiel 30:13 where the prediction is that there shall no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt. Ezekiel's predictions of Egypt's downfall are found in Ezekiel chapters 29-31. There it is said Egypt would be ruled by strangers. Since the days of Assyrian domination (722 B.C. following) Egypt has been ruled (or at least dominated) by a succession of foreign powers or persons. It has been subjugated by Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, English and Arabs. Even today the political ruler of Egypt is an Arab.

Now when a nation's leadership is engaged in civil war and when its counselors turn to wizards and magicians for advice, that nation's spirit is broken. False religion and false philosophy makes all standards of human conduct relative. There can be no absolutes built on a basis of falsehood. When relativism reigns, social structures disintegrate.

V. 5-10 COMMERCIAL DEPRESSION: God has both spectacular and non-spectacular ways of bringing about the demise of civilizations. When He would obliterate the Edomites He simply had to re-route the great caravan route from east to west around Edom. Edom soon disappeared. God, in a non-spectacular way, gradually reduced Egypt to an insignificant and lowly people by drying up her great "sea" (the River Nile). The Arabs today still call the Nile the "sea" (probably because of the way it used to inundate so much of the valley). In the great days of Egypt's glory (3,000-1,000 B.C.), she was the "Breadbasket of the world." It was a highly developed civilization in the sciences of medicine, architecture, art and commerce. It was a powerful, world-controlling empire. They made linen so fine that there

were 540 threads to the inch. They knew secrets of manufacturing glass still unknown today. They practiced dentistry, treatment of the eyes, brain surgery and other medical skills. Their astronomers and mathematicians were familiar with principles which would do credit to mathematicians of today. Their mechanical skills are unparalleled even today!

Once again the reader should refer to Ezekiel's parallel passage on Egypt (Ezek. 29-31). There it is predicted that Egypt would become desolate in the midst of desolations. The River Nile is far from being completely dried up. However, for many centuries now it has not produced the massive flooding of the Nile valley which was so necessary in ancient times to prepare the lowlands for pasture and crop. Windblown sand dunes and stony, sandy plains comprise 90% of Egypt's land. The government fights a constant battle with the slowly creeping, encroaching Sahara desert. Tiny plots of vegetation are worked today with tools differing little from those of Pharaoh's time. Today the foliage of reeds and rushes have, compared with ancient time, almost disappeared. This was one of Egypt's largest industries in ancient times. Another of the chief industries of Egypt was its fisheries. Down to the time of the Roman invasion they had lost none of their productiveness. Today the fisheries have ceased to be important, and the fish in the river are few. Before the Russians supplied Egypt with some weapons of war, they were so powerless that a small, Israeli army could defeat them totally in a six-day-war!

The irrigation system, in spite of all the modern attempts to restore it to its former glory and efficiency, carries water to only a small fraction of the former territory served by the ancient canals. Many of those canals of ancient Egypt are today only soggy, foul-smelling bogs, unusable. Egyptians today attempt to irrigate using hand-made, wooden, water-screws—a method out of the ancient past. Over-population and superstition and absence of mechanization intensifies and increases Egypt's desperation generation after generation. The "pillars" of Egypt, the men of influence and wealth, as well as the common wage earner, will grieve in their soul over Egypt's humiliation to a

lowly, grovelling, emaciated people from such a powerful and glorious past.

But God said it—and it is so!

v. 11-15 COUNSELING DISASTERS: Zoan was an ancient city, near the mouth of the Tanis branch of the Nile River (probably synonymous with Tanis), built seven years after Hebron (Num. 13:22). It was the capital of the 21st and 23rd dynasties of Egyptian history. Israelites who sought alliances with Egypt would probably have entered into negotiations with these princes. But the point is they gave Pharaoh “stupid” “brutish” counsel. They were as dumb as animals. How could they be expected to know any wisdom from Jehovah? Evidently God’s divine power and deity are clearly enough seen “in the things that have been made” (Cf. Rom. 1:18-23) that all men may have enough knowledge of Him to conduct the affairs of human and social relations wisely. But when men do not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, they become futile in their thinking and their senseless minds are darkened. Although they claim to be wise with human philosophies, they are fools. Their stupidity is seen in their exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Isaiah represents the stupidity of men who will take a tree and cut it in half, use half of it to build a fire and cook their meal and take the other half, carve a face on it and set it up as a god and worship it (Isa. 44:9-20). The remaining verses of Romans 1 show what happens when they exchange the truth of God for a lie (Cf. Rom. 1:24-32). The word *perverseness* in the English translation would better be rendered from the Hebrew as *dizziness*. When men deliberately and persistently believe and practice falsehood there is an inevitable stupor which settles into all human and social structures. God gives them up and they “receive in their own persons the due penalty for their error,” (Cf. Rom. 1:27). Men who cannot govern their own lives cannot govern a nation. Men who do not wish to practice truth and justice for themselves cannot legislate it for others. The princes of Zoan were drunk with the wine of rebellion against truth and morals. Sooner or later, however, the wine of rebellion and falsehood is vomited up and those

who have drunk it are forced to stagger in the regurgitation of the filth they have swallowed. There is nothing that either "head" or "tail" of the nation can do. Social and national structures will cease to function properly. One is reminded of the disintegration of Germany after World War II. Totally helpless to function after defeat by the allies, she was saved only by the "Marshall Plan." God's moral principles remain true in every age.

QUIZ

1. Why does idolatry inevitably result in civil and social disorder?
2. How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in the case of Egypt's civil disorders?
3. How "developed" was Egypt's civilization in Isaiah's day and earlier?
4. Describe the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of Egypt's economic disasters.
5. What causes national leaders to give foolish leadership?

3. EGYPT

TEXT: 19:16-25

- 16 In that day shall the Egyptians be like unto women; and they shall tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts, which he shaketh over them.
- 17 And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto Egypt; every one to whom mention is made thereof shall be afraid, because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts, which he purposeth against it.
- 18 In that day there shall be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan, and swear to Jehovah of hosts; one shall be called The city of destruction.
- 19 In that day shall there be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah.

- 20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they shall cry unto Jehovah because of oppressors, and he will send them a savior, and a defender, and he will deliver them.
- 21 And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto Jehovah, and shall perform it.
- 22 And Jehovah will smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto Jehovah, and he will be entreated of them, and will heal them.
- 23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.
- 24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth;
- 25 for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

QUERIES

- a. What is the language of Canaan and why would the Egyptians speak it?
- b. In what way would the Egyptians "worship" Jehovah?
- c. Why does Isaiah predict that Assyria and Egypt and Israel will someday be united?

PARAPHRASE

When Jehovah culminates His judgment upon Egypt she will be humbled. Her great and powerful men will be as timid as women and be afraid at the evident hand of the Lord in her judgment. Just the mention of the name Judah will remind Egypt

of Judah's God and cause Egypt to remember that Judah's God keeps His word. In the day that Egypt is brought to such a humble relationship to the God of Judah great portions of the people of Egypt will speak the language of faith and allegiance to Jehovah. Some portions of the people, however, will remain in rebellion against Jehovah and thus destined for destruction. In that day Jehovah shall be worshiped in Egypt's midst and a sign of His presence there will be manifested. He will make a witness to His presence there as He defends and delivers those oppressed Egyptians which have become His through a savior He will send them. God will make Himself known to the Egyptians and they shall know Him in that day. Indeed, they will worship Jehovah in truth and they will do so willingly and freely. They will make commitments to Jehovah and keep them. Jehovah will alternately chasten these Egyptian worshipers of His and heal them. In that day also there will be a peaceful unity accomplished between peoples formerly at enmity with one another. Believers from Egypt and Assyria shall worship together as one people. And even believers in Israel, a major bone of contention between Egypt and Assyria, will be joined with believers of Egypt and Assyria and this united people will be a blessing in the midst of the earth, because Jehovah has united them as one people—His people.

COMMENTS

v. 16-17 **PERSUADED:** These verses are transitional. They form the bridge between the former predictions of Egypt's judgment and the following predictions of Egypt's turning to Jehovah. In other words, when the day comes that some of the Egyptians realize that Judah's God is the only true God, as a result of "receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error," they will begin to seek Jehovah's purpose in their lives. The time will come, says Isaiah, when the mere mention of Judah will remind Egypt of Judah's God and cause some of her people to remember that Judah's God keeps His word. They will fear Him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Egypt's wisdom had evaporated. But it will come back when they fear Jehovah. At last, some Egyptians will be persuaded of the sovereignty of Judah's God.

v. 18-22 PENITENT: Persuaded of Jehovah's sovereignty, many Egyptians will some day ("In that day") repent, change their minds and actions, and worship Him. *In that day* can only, as we shall develop, refer to the Messianic age, the church. "Five cities" is probably a figure of speech meaning a considerable number of people. Amos uses the phrase, "For three transgressions, yea for four," and does not intend to say Israel had committed only four transgressions. Isaiah does not mean to say only five cities. While there are five cities speaking the language of Canaan, a sixth city shall be called "destruction." In other words, there will still be some in Egypt who will not repent just as the "rest of mankind did not repent" after the judgments portrayed in Revelation 8:20ff. Speaking "the language of Canaan, and swearing to Jehovah of hosts" is to speak the language in which the God of the Israelites is worshiped. That, of course, does not mean the Egyptians would speak Hebrew any more than it means they would speak Greek (the language of the New Testament). It means they would speak truth as opposed to falsehood. It means they would give allegiance to Jehovah—they would come into covenant relationship with Him. They would become citizens of Jehovah's kingdom (the church). It is doubtful that it could mean great numbers of the Egyptians would become Jewish proselytes.

We take the "altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt" to be prophetic of the worship of the one true God being established when the gospel was preached there and people became Christians in the first century A.D. The statement that sacrifices (v. 22) will be offered does not limit the meaning of this passage to Old Testament practices for there are certain sacrifices to be offered in the New Testament church (Cf. Heb. 13:15-16). The "pillar" is in Hebrew *matztzevah* which is a stone pillar resembling an obelisk. Such a "pillar" was erected by Jacob (Gen. 28:16-22) to memorialize the presence of God. The

"pillar" in Egypt is figurative of saying that when one approaches the border of Egypt he comes to a land that is also the Lord's for the presence of Jehovah is here (in the church). This is an especially vivid figure for Isaiah's Jewish audience. It is being predicted to them that one day Palestine will not be the only land where the presence of Jehovah dwells. The universal kingdom of Jehovah (the church) will extend into Egypt as well as Palestine!

The Jews who wrote the Septuagint (cir. 300 B.C.) thought this prophecy of Isaiah (and Ezekiel and Jeremiah) against Egypt was fulfilled in the days of Onias, a Jew of great distinction and a high priest. In 160 B.C. Onias IV, was compelled to flee Palestine. He fled to Egypt and sought and received permission from the Egyptian monarch, to build a temple like that in Jerusalem and even pointed the king Ptolemy to this passage in Isaiah for authority to build it. Josephus, the Jewish historian records this for us. Titus Vespasian destroyed this temple in Egypt in 70 A.D. when he destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. We believe this passage has a much larger and grander fulfillment than that, as subsequent verses will show.

Whatever the language of Canaan, the altar, the pillar, they were to "be a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt." These things were to signify and testify that these Egyptians were God's people and He was their God. For now, as God's people, they who were formerly oppressors would become the oppressed. As Jesus said, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (Jn. 15:19). But now these Egyptians are in covenant relationship to Jehovah and they may "have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19ff) and cry unto God and He will strengthen them, save them and deliver them.

Jehovah shall be known to Egypt and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah, "in that day." Their relationship shall be experiential as well as mental. They will enter into a life-style of belief. It will be done willingly. The offering of vows is done not by way of obligation or legislation but by willingness (Num. 30:1ff). Furthermore, since these Egyptians are true children of God,

they will be treated like His children. "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens, etc. . . ." (Heb. 12:3-17). If God does not chasten, they are "illegitimate" children. Jehovah will smite and heal in order to turn them constantly to Him.

v. 23-25 **PEACEFUL**: Now we have portrayed in figurative language the consequences of God's redemptive work in Egypt. Egypt and Assyria were inveterate enemies for many centuries. But when the universal kingdom of God is established (the church) men out of every tribe and tongue will join together in peace and unified worship of Jehovah. The reference is not to any literal highway or literal Egypt and Assyria. These two nations stood at opposite poles geographically and opposed each other politically. They represent or symbolize the conversion of all the heathen and the formation of those converted into a kingdom of peace. What God will accomplish in His redemptive work, in establishing His kingdom of peace, will be a divine reversal of what occurred at Babel. At the tower of Babel the world was dispersed, and a division of mankind occurred. Languages were confused. Ideologies grew and competed and opposed one another and wars ensued. This divided mankind fought to maintain individuality and rebellion against God, each nation characterized by this in common, that it did not know nor worship Jehovah. Many nations fought one another proposing that their ideology was what would be best for the whole world and so empires rose and fell in attempting to unify the world under one human ideology. Jehovah called out a people (the Jews) and began His work of redeeming and unifying all who would in a kingdom of men once again be ruled over by God and Truth. But even this "called out people" (for the most part) rejected God's Messiah and His Messianic kingdom. But God's new kingdom of unity and peace was intended to be universal from the very start. And so the prophets, especially Isaiah, predicted it. We believe Ephesians 2:11-22 are the precise fulfillment of this passage as well as that of Isaiah 2:1-4 (see our comments there) and many other "universalized" passages of the O.T. Prophets.

If this be the proper application of this passage, then the "Israel" joined as a "third" party with Egypt and Assyria in

verse 24 is "the Israel of God" of Galatians 6:16 which is none other than the New Testament church. It would take a Jew who is one "inwardly" (Cf. Rom. 2:28-29) to ever agree to a unity such as is described in verses 24-25.

The ultimate fulfillment of this passage is, therefore, Messianic. It has to do with Christ and the Church. This has come to pass and they who were strangers and foreigners in Egypt and Assyria, and yes, even in Israel, will be found in that building, "fitly framed together, which groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:11-22).

It is interesting that these three areas, Egypt, Israel and Assyria are the three areas where we find some of the earliest of the missionary endeavors of the infant church. At the beginning of the 4th century (300-400 A.D.) parts of the Scriptures had been translated into more than one of the Egyptian vernaculars and the foundations had been laid of a native Egyptian church known as "Coptic." By the end of the 5th century the Christian faith had become rooted among native Egyptian stock and in time was the dominant religion of the land. The Coptic church, numbering 22,000 members at the turn of the 20th century, still flourishes in parts of Egypt and Ethiopia.

At Dura-Europos, on the river Euphrates (where ancient Assyria was located) on the great road between Antioch and Ctesiphon, 20th century excavation has revealed a building which was used as a Christian church as far back as the year 232 A.D. There are still many Christians in Armenia (Assyria).

There were people from Egypt and parts of Libya and Mesopotamia in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-13) and some of them were converted. Here the seeds were sown in the hearts of men who returned to their homelands with the gospel of peace and thus the prophecy of Isaiah came to pass (see also the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:26-40).

QUIZ

1. In what way do verses 16-17 form a transition from one section of this chapter to the other?
2. Why does Isaiah say "five cities" will "speak the language of Canaan"?
3. What is the "altar" and "pillar" that is to be found in Egypt?
4. How will Jehovah "smite" and "heal" the Egyptians?
5. How will the Egyptians and Assyrians worship Jehovah together?
6. In what way is Israel included with Egypt and Assyria in blessing the earth?
7. Why is it apparent that this section of Isaiah is Messianic?
8. What are Coptic and Armenian Christians and where may we trace their beginnings in the New Testament?

CHAPTER TWENTY

4. EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

TEXT: 20:1-6

- 1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it;
- 2 at that time Jehovah spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.
- 3 And Jehovah said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia;
- 4 so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.
- 5 And they shall be dismayed and confounded, because of

Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

- 6 And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape?

QUERIES

- a. Did Isaiah go completely naked for three years?
- b. What does "buttocks uncovered" mean?
- c. Who are the inhabitants of "this coastland"?

PARAPHRASE

In the year when Sargon, king of Assyria, sent his commander-in-chief of the army against the city of Ashdod and captured it, the Lord told Isaiah, son of Amoz, to take off his outer clothing, including his shoes, and to walk around barefoot clad only in his under-tunic. And Isaiah did so. And the Lord said, My servant Isaiah has walked barefoot and stripped shamefully to his underclothing for three years symbolizing the awesome troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia. Just so, the king of Assyria will take away the Egyptians and Ethiopians, young and old, as prisoners, defeated, stripped of their possessions and shamed in their wretched condition. And the inhabitants of this Palestinian "coastland" will be depressed and confused because they had expected to get help from Egypt and Ethiopia. So the people of Palestine will say in that day, Look! If this is what the king of Assyria does to Egypt and Ethiopia, what hope do we have to escape from him?

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 SIGN: The year Sargon II subdued Ashdod was 711 B.C. *Tartan* is not the name of a person but a title of office. It is probably from the Akkadian word *turtanu* which was the title of one of three great officers of state in Assyria. He was the king's viceroy, probably commander-in-chief of the army. Isaiah is probably writing this after the event but employing it, as directed by Jehovah, as a prophetic sign of events to come. In addition to the defeat of Ashdod (a city on the Philistine plain), Isaiah employs a personal exhibition as a symbol of Egypt's imminent humiliation. The Lord told Isaiah to take his *saq* (a hairy mantle sometimes worn by prophets to give proof of the fact that they were not men to pamper their bodies, Cf. Zech. 13:4; Mark 1:6) off and his sandals off and go about stripped. This disrobing would still leave Isaiah clad in the typical undergarment, a kind of linen tunic. Out of doors and in public men were not accustomed to go about dressed so unconventionally. To go clad thus did not offend all moral decency but did bring offense against customary modesty. It symbolized shame and said, "After mourning (sackcloth) comes disgrace (underclothing)."

Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) was an Assyrian king who is mentioned by name in the Bible only in Isaiah 20:1. Up to a century ago, no evidence of the existence of such a king had been found in any other available historical records. Destructive critics of the Bible stoutly maintained the Bible was in error in Isaiah 20:1. Some even insisted that there had been deliberate falsification of the biblical text here in order to give the Bible "historical flavor." In 1843, Botta discovered the ruins of Sargon's palace, in Khorsabad, on the north edge of Nineveh, with treasures and inscriptions showing him to have been one of Assyria's greatest kings. In recent years the ruins of Sargon's palace have been excavated by the Oriental Institute. From inscriptions it is learned that Shalmaneser died while besieging Samaria, and that he was succeeded by Sargon, who completed the capture. Furthermore, an inscription of Sargon, verifying the statement in Isaiah 20:1, was found: "Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to

pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual bodyguard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab." The spade of the archaeologist has authenticated the veracity of the Bible and stopped the mouths of the critics! Sargon was murdered in 705 B.C. and succeeded by his son Sennacherib against whom Hezekiah revolted.

v. 3-6 SIGNIFICATION: The defeat of Ashdod and Isaiah's humiliating appearance were to signify to the inhabitants of Palestine (the Jews) that Assyria was about to defeat Egypt and Ethiopia and that only mourning and shame would come to the Jews should they continue to hope in their alliances with them. Evidently the people of Judah had been solidifying political and economic alliances with Egypt against Assyria for years (II Kings 18:21). But they had also been making alliances with Assyria against Syria and Israel (Cf. II Kings 16:8ff). They tried to play both ends against the middle. Egypt and Ethiopia, in whom the people of Judah had built such high hopes will be openly reduced to impotency, disgrace and shame. Egyptians and Ethiopians, whose glory and power had continued for centuries, would be taken captive and exiled, and all of them will be stripped of their outer garment and be barefoot, as was proverbially the case with captives and exiles. Those too young and too old for military service will be taken as well. Some will be stripped even of their undergarment (leaving perhaps some kind of loin cloth) so that they went with "buttocks uncovered"—involving the highest measure of disgrace for this once proud and arrogant people. This took several decades to see its fulfillment, but it did come to pass.

All this is to make the people of Judah dramatically aware of the folly of placing any trust in Egypt and Ethiopia as a protection from Assyria. "The Egyptians are men, and not God"; (Cf. Isaiah 31:3). But what success did Isaiah have? Whatever it was it was only temporary for we find a very strong and pervasive movement in Judah for Egyptian alliance in Jeremiah's day (Cf. Jer. 44:24-30). The people of Judah put so much reliance on

Egypt and Ethiopia on account of their armies and horses and chariots. Judah took no account of the fact that it is righteousness, truth and justice that makes a nation strong. These are the inner strengths of societal structure that protect nations against their worst enemies—their selves.

QUIZ

1. Who is "Tartan"?
2. What was Isaiah told to remove? What clothing did he have on?
3. What was Isaiah's condition to symbolize?
4. Who was Sargon? How has his existence been verified?
5. Whom had the people of Judah allied themselves with?
6. What was to happen to Egypt and Ethiopia?
7. What lesson should nations and peoples learn from this?

D. IRREVERENT ENEMIES - CHAPTERS 21-23

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. BABYLON, EDOM AND ARABIA

a. BABYLON

TEXT: 21:1-10

- 1 The burden of the wilderness of the sea. As whirlwinds in the South sweep through, it cometh from the wilderness, from a terrible land.
- 2 A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous man dealeth treacherously, and the destroyer destroyeth. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.
- 3 Therefore are my loins filled with anguish; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman in travail: I am pained so that I cannot hear; I am dismayed so that I can-

not see.

4 My heart fluttereth, horror hath affrighted me; the twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me.

5 They prepare the table, they set the watch, they eat, they drink: rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield.

6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; Let him declare what he seeth:

7 and when he seeth a troop, horsemen in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he shall harken diligently with much heed.

8 And he cried as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time and am set in my ward whole nights;

9 and, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs. And he answered and said, Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.

10 O thou my threshing, and the grain of my floor! that which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "wilderness of the sea"?
- b. Who is preparing the table and eating and drinking?
- c. Who is the "watchman"?

PARAPHRASE

This is the message of Jehovah concerning Babylon, that city sitting in a wilderness of waters. A storm of devastation is roaring down upon her from the territory of terror, like the cyclone sweeps out of the southern deserts of the Negev. I see a vision that makes me grieve. Babylon has deceived and exploited many peoples. So I command the Elamites and Medes to besiege her and bring her oppressions to an end. This will give peace and

healing to those she has oppressed. When I see what God has planned for Babylon I am overcome with horror and feeling for them. My stomach cramps and churns with sharp pain like that of a woman giving birth to a child. The awesomeness of it consumes all my senses so that I do not hear or see anything else around me. My mind reels; my heart palpitates; I am overwhelmed with the terror of it. The night—once affording me relaxation and rest and pleasure—has now become long hours of restless trembling. Look! They are engrossed in banqueting, watching their enemy approach. They are oblivious to their danger because they are reveling with eating and drinking. Suddenly, their enemy upon them before they know it, they will be crying, Quick, quick, grab your shields and anoint them for battle! We are being attacked! And the Lord told me, Put a watchman there to observe. Let this watchman tell what he sees. When this watchman sees soldiers, cavalymen in pairs, troops of donkeys, troops of camels, tell him to pay diligent attention to everything he sees and hears. So I put the watchman to watch and eventually he cried, O Sovereign Lord, I have been standing continually in my place of watching day after day and night after night, and suddenly troops of soldiers come, including troops of cavalymen. And the watchman reported what he had beheld, Fallen, fallen is Babylon and all her false gods lie broken on the ground. O my oppressed people, that which I, Isaiah, have heard from Jehovah, the God of Israel, I declare to you to comfort you and strengthen your faith.

COMMENTS

v. 1-5 VISION: That this is Babylon is evident from verse 9. Babylon was situated in the Mesopotamian lowlands, in the Euphrates River valley. In fact, the Euphrates River cut through the center of the great city. Hundreds of canals branched off the River into all the areas of the city making it literally a “wilderness of seas.” It is not unusual for a river to be called a “sea” (Cf. Isa. 19:5). A cyclonic force of humanity from a “terrible land”

is to swoop down upon Babylon at some future time. If Isaiah made this prediction of Babylon's fall near 706-705 B.C. it would anticipate the actual historical event by approximately 170 years! Babylon did not win domination of the world until about 612 B.C. (at the battle of Carcemish). The Jewish captivity of Babylon began about 606 B.C. The conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians took place about 538 B.C. (See our comments on Daniel, chapter 5, for details on the conquest of Babylon by Medo-Persia). Why Isaiah deals with an empire yet to be born so many years in advance of its birth we shall speak of later. In verse 2 the prophet characterizes his feelings and the personality of the Babylonian empire. The vision grieves the prophet. The Babylonians will be deceitful and devious and a people who will despoil and exploit the whole world. It is nothing short of amazing that Isaiah should know 170 years in advance the very people, by name, who would conquer this unborn Babylonian empire! It can only be explained by supernatural revelation. The Elamites and the Medes (later to become the Medo-Persian amalgamation) were the very ones history records as Babylon's conquerors. This territory now belongs to Iran.

Isaiah was overwhelmed with grief at this vision. He writhed in anguish like a woman giving birth to a child. He could concentrate on nothing else. Its horror consumed him. Its awesomeness made his mind reel and his heart palpitate. He could not sleep at night. Why was he so gripped with its horribleness? Edward J. Young writes, "From this it appears that the prophet experienced deep emotion not merely over his own people, but even over the enemy. He was a man of tender compassion, and the news that stark events were to overcome the world brings upon him painful anguish. Perhaps if we knew today of the future catastrophic and cataclysmic upheavels in national and international structures we would be overwhelmed with grief and anguish. Any man of God grieves over the tribulation and oppression of others any time it occurs. Most Americans who can remember the atomic holocaust over Hiroshima, Japan, and its consequences, even though Japan was at the time America's enemy, remembers his horror and compassion for those Japanese

who suffered in it. Perhaps the stupidity and gross sensuality of the Babylonians visualized by Isaiah even as their enemies marched toward their city, also caused the prophet to be upset. Again, amazingly, Isaiah predicts the exact situation among the Babylonians upon the night of their downfall (Cf. our comments in Daniel, chapter 5). Belshazzar was eating and drinking with his noblemen when the handwriting appeared on the wall and Cyrus and the Medes appeared inside the city. The Medes were upon them so suddenly the Babylonians hardly had time to prepare ("anoint with oil from their pagan altars") their shields for war. This "anointing" was probably some superstition seeking the aid of their gods in battle.

V. 6-10. VERIFICATION: Who is this watchman? It is our opinion that God was instructing Isaiah to appeal to those who believed his prophecy to pass along this prophecy to future generations who would "watch" diligently as historic events fulfilled and verified Isaiah's predictions. These future generations of a "faithful remnant" would then read and remind all who would hear that Isaiah's prophecies were sure and certain. God would chasten His people, but He would also deliver them. Joel bids those who witnessed the locust plague to pass on the information from one generation to another in order to interpret God's actions of chastening in the world. Jeremiah predicted the death of Hananiah. Hananiah's death verified Jeremiah's authenticity as a prophet (Cf. Jer. 28:5-17). The Elamites used asses and the Medes used camels as animals of warfare. When the Judeans of the future should see this great mass of mounted warriors approaching Babylon they should know their deliverance from Babylon's captivity was near. All their songs and sighings of oppression in captivity would cease. The Persians in two short years would begin (536) the restoration of the Jews to their land. The word "lion" is not in the best, most ancient, Hebrew texts. It is not in the Isaiah manuscript of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The cry of those with faith to take Isaiah at his word and "watch" is: Fallen, fallen, is Babylon! Babylon's gods are impotent and they are ground into the dust of destruction.

Fallen Babylon proclaimed the defeat of the great enemy of

God's people and their deliverance. In a certain sense, this is the basic theme of the entire book of Isaiah. It is the prelude to the triumphant messages of conquest and joy found in chapters 40—66. It is the same message John the apostle sees in a vision concerning the Roman empire in Revelation 18, which is symbolic of God's final defeat of His enemies and the deliverance of His people. Babylon was symbolic of all the forces opposed to God and His redemptive work in the earth. Especially did she symbolize the forces of sensuality and worldliness as they oppose God and His kingdom in luring humanity to commit "adultery" with the gods of carnality. That is why Babylon is called a "mistress" and a "whore." The overthrow of Babylon in the book of Revelation is a prelude to the joyous conquest of Revelation 21-22.

Isaiah's heart goes out to God's people, so long threshed by their oppressors. They have been ground into the earth as grain on a threshing floor, but the precious grain is God's. He will separate the wheat from the chaff by the Babylon captivity. And when the Medes have delivered Judah from Babylon, the wheat-seed will produce a harvest in the Messiah. What the aged prophet had heard from Jehovah, he tenderly but forthrightly declared to all who would listen and believe.

QUIZ

1. Why was Isaiah grieved at this vision?
2. How many years before the actual downfall of Babylon is Isaiah probably predicting it?
3. How would Isaiah know it?
4. In what detail does Isaiah predict it?
5. Why would Isaiah be told to set a watchman to tell of these events when they began to be fulfilled?
6. What does Babylon symbolize in the redemptive working of God?
7. Who is his "threshing"?

b. EDOM AND ARABIA

TEXT: 21:11-17

- 11 The burden of Dumah. One calleth unto me out of Seir,
Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?
12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night:
if ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, come.
13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye
lodge, O ye caravans of Dedanites.
14 Unto him that was thirsty they brought water; the inhabi-
tants of the land of Tema did meet the fugitives with their
bread.
15 For they fled away from the swords, from the drawn sword,
and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.
16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according
to the years of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar shall fail;
17 and the residue of the number of the archers, the mighty
men of the children of Kedar, shall be few; for Jehovah, the
God of Israel, hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Why is someone asking the "Watchman" of the night?
b. What is the "caravan of the Dedanites"?
c. What are "the years of a hireling"?

PARAPHRASE

The message of God for the land of deathly silence, Edom: Someone from among you keeps calling, calling to me, Prophet-watchman, What part of the night is it? Prophet-watchman, What part of the night is it? Will the morning of relief never come? The Prophet-watchman replies, Yes, there will be a morning of relief to those who take refuge in the Lord, but the night of death and destruction also comes to those who do not

see Him. If you wish to know the meaning of God's message to you, His command to you is turn from your rebellion and come to Him.

The message of God for the land of Arabia. Your land will be occupied by your enemies and be so dangerous that caravans from Dedan will have to hide for their lives. Travelers will have to be secretly given food and water by the people of Tema. The people of the land of Arabia will be fugitives in their own land from the swords and bows of war. An exact time has been fixed for the destruction of Arabia—like employers fix a definite time of hiring laborers. One year and the fame of Kedar shall disappear, and her once mighty fighting men will be reduced to only a handful of nomadic tribesmen. This will surely come to pass because Jehovah, the God of Israel, has said it.

COMMENTS

v. 11-12 DEATH: *Dumah* is probably the Hebrew word *A-dom* (Edom—"red") which the prophet has used as a pun by removing the *a* sound from the beginning of the word and placing it at the end—*dum-A*. *Dumah* means "stillness" like the silence of death. Edom is the subject of some of the severest judgments of the Old Testament, (Cf. Isa. 34:5ff; Jer. 49:7ff; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1-21, for examples). Edom is the only neighbor of the Israelites who was not given any promise of mercy from God. She was a nation descended from Esau, brother of Jacob, and thus the Edomites were brothers of the Jews. Esau was a "profane" person who irreverently sold his birthright for pottage. But Edom was haughty, insolent, irreverent, insensitive and implacable. She not only applauded every tribulation that came upon the Jews, she exploited their misfortunes to her own gain. (see our comments on Obadiah in *Minor Prophets*, College Press). God pronounced Edom's obliteration. They disappeared as a nation in about 70 A.D. So "silence of death" fell upon the region of Mt. Seir, Edom's ancient stronghold.

"Watchman, what part of the night is it?" would be a more

literal translation of that phrase. The idea is like that of an ill person suffering through a long night of affliction, repeatedly asking, "How long until morning?" The question is, "Will the night of judgment you pronounce upon us ever break with the dawning of a morning of relief?" The watchman (Isaiah) answers, "Yes, morning will come—relief comes, but so does the night." In other words, relief comes to those who "turn" and seek the Lord, but night continues to come to those who do not. That this is the answer is apparent from the phrase, "if ye will inquire . . ." That is, "If you are really inquiring, Edom, then make your inquiry in the form of a penitent turning unto the Lord, and the morning will come to you. If you do not, then the night comes."

V. 13-17 DESTRUCTION: The Arabians were descendants of Ishmael, half brother of Isaac. Esau married Ishmael's daughter so the Edomites and Arabians were related. Kedar was one of the 12 sons of Ishmael. Arabia was therefore closely related to the Jews. Ishmael began mocking the Jews when he was 16 (Gen. 21:9). Their hatred for the Jews was, like Edom's, born of envy, and nurtured over many centuries. Jeremiah tells us something of their desert, nomadic existence (Jer. 49:28-33). Their territory was (Kedar) in the northern part of the Arabian desert. The prophet Isaiah describes their coming judgment. Their land will be so thoroughly overrun and occupied by enemy troops that caravans will be unable to travel in safety. They will have to hide in the forests. They will be fugitives in their own country. They will be fed and given water secretly. They will be outlaws in their own land. They will be out numbered and "out-gunned." Those mighty archers and horsemen of Arabia, those fierce fighting nomads of the steppes will have to flee from the superior forces of an enemy occupying their lands. Their number will be reduced to "few." It is not difficult to see the fulfillment of this. There has long been a darkness over this land with the false religion of Islam. They have been a weak, nomadic, disunited people warring against one another for centuries. This has been due to their irreverence for the deity and exclusiveness of God's True Prophet, Jesus Christ. "Morning" can never come to these

two brothers of Israel until they “turn” to God’s Messiah. The Edomites had the audacity to put forth Herod, the Idumean as “king of the Jews.” The Herod family, in its insolence toward Jehovah, contributed to the crucifixion of Christ. The Arabians had the audacity to declare that Mohammed was a Prophet equal to Jesus. Whoever does not “kiss the son” will die (Psa. 2:11). The insolence and irreverence of these two peoples is the cause of their judgment. Haughtiness toward God’s covenant people is haughtiness toward God Himself. God’s faithful servants are “the apple of His eye.” Love God, love His children. Those today who haughtily despise the church of Christ will reap God’s judgment.

QUIZ

1. What does “Dumah” mean?
2. What is the watchman’s answer about the night?
3. What relationship did Edom and Arabia have to the Jews?
4. What is the main cause of their judgment?
5. How have these prophecies been fulfilled?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

2. JUDAH

a. IRREVERENT ATTITUDES

TEXT: 22:1-14

- 1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?
- 2 O thou that art full of shoutings, a tumultuous city, a joyous town; thy slain are not slain with the sword, neither are they dead in battle.
- 3 All thy rulers fled away together, they were bound by the

archers; all that were found of thee were bound together; they fled afar off.

- 4 Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people.
- 5 For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity, from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, in the valley of vision; a breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the mountains.
- 6 And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen; and Kir uncovered the shield.
- 7 And it came to pass, that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots and the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.
- 8 And he took away the covering of Judah; and thou didst look in that day to the armor in the house of the forest.
- 9 And ye saw the breaches of the city of David, that they were many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.
- 10 And ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and ye brake down the houses to fortify the wall.
- 11 Ye made also a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye looked not unto him that had done this, neither had ye respect unto him that purposed it long ago.
- 12 And in that day did the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:
- 13 and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.
- 14 And Jehovah of hosts revealed himself in mine ears, Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you till ye die, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

QUERIES

- a. Where is the "valley of vision"?
- b. Who is going to "weep bitterly"?
- c. Why would they say, "let us eat and drink . . . etc."?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's message concerning Jerusalem, the place where God's word goes forth. What is the matter with you? Why are you all running up to the housetops? You are all consumed with the madness of revelry and irresponsibility. There is nothing to celebrate in your dead for they have not died honorably on the field of battle. Your leaders tried to desert you, but they were captured and taken prisoner. Everyone who tried to escape was either slain or captured. Some of you tried to console me, but I said, Do not try to console me, this is not a time for consoling but a time for weeping. I cannot be consoled when I see my people bring upon themselves inevitable destruction. No, these are days of confusion and affliction from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts. In the place where God's word is supposed to reside, an enemy is breaking down Jerusalem's walls and the enemy's cries of success echo among the mountains. The expert warriors of Elam came in wagonloads and warriors from as far away as Kir took up arms against you. Your finest and most strategic lands were filled with wagon-loads of these warriors. The enemy had you completely besieged occupying even the city gates. The enemy exposed your decadence and your foolishness. And where do you look for help? To man-made weapons you run for deliverance. You thought you could deliver yourself. You saw the walls of your city in disrepair. You saw that you would need water for a time of siege. So you calculated what you thought it would take to fix all your defences and tore down houses and repaired your wall; and you made a reservoir between the two walls for an increased water supply; but not once did you ask for help from Him who lets this come upon you. He is the One who planned

it long ago and you do not know it. When this was happening to you it was the Lord calling you to repent. His call to you is to weep, to mourn, to shave your heads in contrition, and to put on the sackcloth of penitence. But instead, you sing and dance and play, and feast and drink. You fatalists! You say, Let us eat and drink—what's the difference, for tomorrow we shall die. The Lord of hosts has revealed to me that this sin will never be forgiven you, not even when you die.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 FRIVOLITY: The events of this chapter apparently are those events surrounding the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib about 701 B.C. According to II Kings 18:14-16 Sennacherib had advanced against Jerusalem and demanded a heavy tribute, which somehow Hezekiah was able to amass and so buy off the attacker. For a while Sennacherib respected the terms of the tribute and withdrew his forces from Jerusalem. This first part of chapter 22 reflects the frivolity permeating the whole city after Sennacherib's withdrawal.

The "valley of vision" refers to Jerusalem and Judah as the repository of God's revealed word which came so often in olden times by vision. The prophet rebukes the people's irreverence and frivolity when they should have been solemnly and faithfully seeking God's direction by asking, "What is the matter with you?" The people were running up to the tops of houses, gawking, shouting gleefully to one another, and all over the city there was a frivolous holiday spirit. In spite of all the warnings of the prophets they could not seem to grasp the impact of what had just happened. They did not understand the Assyrian siege as a warning from God that they should repent. They were shouting and reveling as if their armies had been victorious in battle. But their dead had not died honorably on the field of battle—they had died of starvation and pestilence which always follows a siege. In fact, their rulers had deserted their posts of leadership and tried to escape. They were captured and carried off by the

enemy. Evidently someone had tried to console Isaiah and gain-say his interpretation that the Assyrian siege meant repent. Someone suggested Isaiah join in the shouting and frivolity. Isaiah's reply was, "Do not look toward consoling me. This is the time for weeping bitterly. I cannot take comfort in the impenitent self-destruction of my people."

v. 5-7 **FOREBODING**: The prophet proceeds to retell the foreboding events of the siege. He interprets it as a day of discomfiture, of affliction, of confusion. Its source, he says, is the Lord, Jehovah of hosts. Joel interpreted the locust plague as "a Day of Jehovah." Joel even called the locusts God's army. God works through natural phenomena to call the world to repentance (Rom. 1:18-20; Acts 14:15-18); He warns the world to repent by allowing reprobate sinners to "receive in their own persons the due penalty of their errors" (Rom. 1:26-32); and He calls the world to repentance and salvation through the preaching of the Word (Acts 17:22-31). In Jerusalem's case God was using at least two of these methods of calling. The Assyrians had broken down parts of Jerusalem's walls. Their shouts of encouragement to one another in attacking Jerusalem were reverberating through the hills and valleys surrounding the city. The Assyrians brought with them expert soldiers by the wagon ("chariot") load from as far away as Elam (Persia) and Kir (Armenia). This massive army inundated the peaceful valleys around Jerusalem. Those choice valleys where all their fertile farm lands lay were bivouac areas for teeming masses of men, chariots and horses. The Assyrians had the city so well trapped in a siege they could safely occupy the city gate areas.

v. 8-11 **FOLLY**: Apparently the veil of frivolity was ripped from the faces of the people momentarily as they contemplated what the Assyrians had done. Somehow they began to take a serious look at things. They could see the situation called for help. But where did they go for help? They went to their own devices. They went to the armory of the forest. This armory had been built by Solomon with cedars from Lebanon (I Kings 7:2-6). Among other things it contained the golden shields which Solomon had made (I Kings 10:17), and was one of the objects

later shown by Hezekiah to the envoys of Merodach-baladan (Isa. 39:2). They were proud of their own abilities to prepare for war. They built water reservoirs to store up water for the siege. They calculated how many house-bricks it would take to repair the breaches in the walls and tore down the houses and repaired the wall. Leupold says, "But in their mad haste to get everything done in quick order, no time was left for looking to Him who controls situations like this and alone can extricate those that have become entangled in their complications. The prophet's way of stating the case indicates how strongly he believes in the total control of the Almighty in every human situation, and that faith demands that his help be earnestly sought." Jeremiah would say, ". . . my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

V. 12-14 FATALISM: A second look at their situation caused them some soberness. But the tragedy is it did not lead them to repent—they responded with a foolhardy fatalism. Their reaction was to engage in hedonism. God was calling to repentance. Their reaction was reasonable enough. If one does not believe in One God, The God of Truth and Justice, a sort of epicurean fatalism is all that is left. "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." When men deny the historical realities of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ today the only alternative is epicurean fatalism. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:30-34) that he would not be "playing Christian martyr" if there was no resurrection. To the contrary, the only sensible alternative to life hereafter is hedonism in the here and now! Liberal theologians who deny the authenticity and credibility of the New Testament and who refuse to accept the deity of Jesus Christ and the historicity of His resurrection, are schizophrenic ostriches with their heads in the sand. They are living in a world of make-believe when they "pretend" there is something to Christianity. Those who deny the existence of God, the authority of His Word, and still try to "play at the game of Churchianity" are obscurantists par excellence! The mixture of liberal theology and existential

philosophy has produced a generation of hedonistic fatalists. Their shibboleth is "Meaning is found only in meaninglessness." This brand of fatalism has been preached by Sarte, Camus, Hemingway, Scheslinger and a host of others. It has fathered a generation of "do-your-own-thing" hedonists, since, "tomorrow we die" and "life is never more absurd than at the grave." So, you see, modern existential-fatalism is not new! There is nothing new under the sun! Unbelief will produce the same moral anarchy in one generation after another.

QUIZ

1. What historical events do these verses probably refer to?
2. What was the first attitude of the people of Jerusalem?
3. How did Isaiah interpret these events?
4. Where did the people turn for solutions to their circumstances?
5. Why were the people so fatalistic?

b. INSOLENT AGENT

TEXT: 22:15-25

- 15 Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, and say,
- 16 What doest thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre? hewing him out a sepulchre on high, graving a habitation for himself in the rock!
- 17 Behold, Jehovah, like a strong man, will hurl thee away violently; yea, he will wrap thee up closely.
- 18 He will surely wind thee round and round, and toss thee like a ball into a large country; there shalt thou die, and there shall be the chariots of thy glory, thou shame of thy lord's house.
- 19 And I will thrust thee from thine office; and from thy station

shalt thou be pulled down.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

21 and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house.

24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the cups even to all the flagons.

25 In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall the nail that was fastened in a sure place give way; and it shall be hewn down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for Jehovah hath spoken it.

QUERIES

- a. Who is Shebna?
- b. Whose "house" was he over?
- c. Who is Eliakim?

PARAPHRASE

The Lord, Jehovah of Heaven's armies, said to me, Go, find this insolent Shebna, the king's chief administrator, and say to him, Who do you think you are and what do you think you are doing by building this magnificent monument to remembrance? Who told you to perpetuate your memory in such a high-handed fashion as to have a burying place hewn out for yourself up among the kings? Look! Jehovah, the Strong One, will hurl you

away with great force. Indeed, Jehovah will wind you up like threads are wound into a ball and throw you into a country of vast proportions. In this far off place you will die, you who have brought shame to your king, and all the power you gloried in shall become shame. Jehovah says, I will thrust you out of your office and pull you down from your high position. And then I will call My servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, to replace you. I will give him your robes and I will turn over to him your office. He will humble himself before Me and be a real benefactor to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. I will give him authority in the king's government. Whatever he says will be done. He shall be second to none save the king himself. He will become a strong and steady support upon which much of the responsibility of government shall hang. There will be this danger for him. Many, especially all his family and relatives, will seek patronage, position and power from him. If he uses his office for nepotism or other forms of partiality, his office will crash down upon his head to the ruin of all those that sought to attach themselves to him, as well as to his own ruin. Jehovah has spoken!

COMMENTS

v. 15-19 REJECTION: This "treasurer" or "steward," which is a more literal rendering of the original language, one Shebna by name, was an outstanding example of the irreverence and insolence of many of the people. "Over the house" is an indication that Shebna was probably the king's "chief of staff." He was the chief administrator of the king's governmental policies. Edward J. Young points out that this office was never legislated by God when the kingdom was begun under Saul and David. Solomon seems to have had a "chief steward" (I Kings 4:6). Why Isaiah was commanded to denounce him, publicly, by name, is not clear at first. Some commentators suggest he may have been leading the "look-to-Egypt" party which was such an abomination to Jehovah. Others suggest that he may have been an Aramaean (as the name Shebna hints) usurper who had

worked his way into the government of the covenant people. However, God's main indictment appears to be that Shebna is exploiting his position and office for his own selfish aggrandizement and not to serve and "be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" as Eliakim will (v. 21). Shebna is oblivious to the needs of the people. He thinks his position is to be served rather than to serve. So he is having an expensive and prestigious burial vault hewn out for himself. He is even having it hewn out "on high" which probably means up where the kings are buried. This would be an especial irreverence toward God. The whole tenor of this chapter is to point out the almost complete disregard both the people and the leaders of Judah have for directing the kingdom in Jehovah's paths. Judah is almost totally immersed in its own plans and pleasures. Shebna is concerned only with perpetuating his own name and glorifying himself. These people are very little different from all those pagan nations which have come under the judgment of God in this section of Isaiah (chapters 13-23).

By way of later history we find Shebna appearing again (Isa. 36:3; 37:2). He is still holding office in the government but not nearly so high as "over the house." Leupold points out that it is possible Shebna took this rebuke of Isaiah's to heart, was demoted, but still was found worthy to occupy a lower post of honor at court. Whatever the case, God brought him down.

v. 20-25 REPLACEMENT: We also learn from Isaiah 36:3, 22, etc. that Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, had become "over the household." Eliakim was chosen by God to replace Shebna as "chief of staff" to the king. Eliakim was God's "servant" and a "father" to the people. He evidently fulfilled in a humble manner what the office was intended to fulfill. He was given an authority so graphically described as could be second only to that of the king himself. He was apparently a good administrator and a "peg" upon which much weight and responsibility of government was fastened. He was evidently trustworthy and stable.

Verses 24 and 25 appear to indicate that within a very short time Eliakim, the "peg" was hewn down. It is not necessary, however, to read these verses as having already happened. They

may be read as conditional clauses (a construction that the Hebrew syntax very definitely allows) and then they become warnings for Eliakim concerning a danger that he will soon face in his new office. His relatives and friends shall swarm in upon him seeking special favors and patronage. *If* he yields to nepotism and partiality, his office will crash down upon his head to the ruin of all those that sought to attach themselves to him, as well as to his own ruin.

So, in spite of the fact that most of the people of Jerusalem and Judah were irreverently and insolently plunging headstrong in their own directions and violently using the kingdom of God to serve their own selfish ends, there were a few, like Eliakim, Hezekiah, Isaiah, and others, who hearkened to the call of Jehovah. While the majority demanded to be served, a faithful remnant surrendered to serve. None of them were perfect and sinless (e.g. Hezekiah, Isaiah). They were faithful. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner like Hezekiah and Isaiah who repents, than over ninety-nine who need no repentance.

QUIZ

1. How important a figure was Shebna?
2. Why was Isaiah told to pronounce God's judgment on Shebna?
3. Where do we learn of Shebna other than this passage?
4. Why was Eliakim called to replace Shebna?
5. How great would Eliakim's power and influence be?
6. What is the prophet's warning to Eliakim?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

3. TYRE

a. SPLENDOR

TEXT: 23:1-7

- 1 The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Kittim it is revealed to them.
- 2 Be still, ye inhabitants of the coast, thou whom the merchants of Sidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.
- 3 And on great waters the seed of the Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue; and she was the mart of nations.
- 4 Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea hath spoken, the stronghold of the sea, saying, I have not travailed, nor brought forth, neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up virgins.
- 5 When the report cometh to Egypt, they shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.
- 6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; wail, ye inhabitants of the coast.
- 7 Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days, whose feet carried her afar off to sojourn?

QUERIES

- a. Why is Jehovah about to bring about Tyre's downfall?
- b. What is the "seed of Shihor"?
- c. Why was Egypt pained at the report of Tyre?

PARAPHRASE

This is God's message to Tyre: Weep, O merchant-ships of Tyre, returning home from distant lands! Weep for your harbor,

for it is gone! The news that you heard in the islands of the Aegean are all true! A shocked silence is everywhere! Stillness reigns where once your bustling port was full of ships from Phoenicia, bringing merchandise from far across the great sea, grain from the fertile Nile delta. You were the market place of the world. So, hang your head in shame, Phoenicia, for formerly Phoenician traders and merchants were children of the great sea and were strewn all over the Mediterranean, but now they are so few, the sea claims she never had any such children. There will be great distress in Egypt, also, when the news of Tyre's downfall reaches there. You may flee as refugees to one of your colonies such as Tarshish, but you will find the whole world of coastal trade wailing Tyre's demise. Is this silent ruin all that is left of your once proud, wealthy and historical city? Think of all the great colonies your merchantmen have founded!

COMMENT

V. 1-3 WORLD'S MARKET PLACE: Tyre was a city on the coast of Phoenicia. The oldest part of the city lay on the mainland; but the main seaport part of the city was located on two rocky islands about a mile off the coast of Phoenicia. Herodotus claims that Tyre was founded about 2740 B.C. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets contain an appeal from the ruler of Tyre, dated 1430 B.C. (just after the Exodus), imploring help from Amenhotep IV against the invading Habiri (Hebrews). Joshua assigned Tyre to the tribe of Asher, but in all probability the city was not occupied by the Hebrews (Cf. Josh. 19:29). II Samuel 24:7 shows that the border of the Israelite kingdom extended to Tyre; and David's palace was constructed with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre (II Sam. 5:11; I Chron. 14:1). Hiram also furnished Solomon with cedar and cypress wood in exchange for wheat and oil (I Ki. 5:1; I Chron. 22:4; II Chron. 2:3-18). Later, Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, and priest of Astarte, married Ahab, king of Israel (I Ki. 16:31), and sought to introduce the Baal worship into Israel. Tyre grew in wealth and power through international

trade. It exploited the cedar forests of the Lebanon mountain range. Tyrian purple, the product of the murex shellfish, was also a famous export. The cedar forests provided material for the famous Phoenician galleys, and, accepting the challenge of the sea became her way to wealth and fame. She exported her pagan religion along with trading her commerce. In 876 B.C. Tyre began to pay tribute to the king of Assyria and suffered some plundering in the battle of Qarqar, 853 B.C. But she still was able to assert independence. Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser both laid siege to the city. For five years she was under siege, but in 722 B.C. she made a treaty with the Assyrians. Finally her king was deposed by Sennacherib and she began to lose more of her independence. We shall continue with the history of Tyre's demise at the end of this chapter.

Whether Isaiah's prophecy of Tyre's downfall is intended to be in the distant future or whether it will be some immediate downfall is not easy to determine. Historically speaking her complete downfall did not come until Alexander the Great was able to conquer it in about 332 B.C. Her glory began to fade, however, with the Assyrian invasion of Phoenicia and Syria and northern Palestine in 722 B.C. We assume then that Isaiah is predicting Tyre's demise not intending that it is to happen immediately but gradually.

The message of the prophet is that Tyre's merchantmen and seamen who travel as far away as Tarshish (probably on the eastern coast of Spain) should look forward to a time of mourning over her. The time is coming when her famous ports will not be available for them to enter and sell their cargoes. Tyre's final downfall is going to be international news! Men on her ships will be hearing it, when it happens, as far away as Kittim (islands in the Aegean sea). An old, established, international institution which no one thought would ever disappear, will fail. It will cause consternation throughout the world. There will be a shocked silence. People will be struck dumb momentarily by the news. Her fame was world-wide. She traded in an immense grain supply from the ancient granary of the world, Egypt. The grain "of Shihor" (Shihor literally means "black") came from

the fertile, black-dirt, fields of the Nile delta. Tyre was the "middleman" between the Egyptian grain resources and the nations much in need of grain. Tyre was actually the market place of the world.

V. 4-7 WASTED MEMORY: Sidon is here used metaphorically to represent the whole region of Phoenician coast to be affected by the coming destruction. The Phoenicians were "sons of the sea." They were great seafaring men. The sea is metaphorically their father. But after the future desolation of Phoenicia, the sea will have no more "sons" from that area. The great fleet of ships and navy of mariners which was once Tyre's pride and joy will only be a matter for dejected shame. Tyre's death will affect the whole world! Egypt, who depended on Tyre for trading, will suffer distress at the news. The citizens of Tyre are told that should they even flee to Tarshish they would find much mourning among the coastal cities of the Mediterranean at the downfall of Tyre. The whole Mediterranean and Aegean coast felt the blow. So the question comes—Is this the great wealthy and proud Tyre? Tyre had exerted profound influence on the world. The great city of Carthage, on the coast of north Africa, was one of Tyre's colonies. The feet of her merchantmen traversed the whole known world. Now, what is she to be? Only a wasted memory!

Why was this judgment to come upon Tyre? Isaiah does not give us much light on the reason for judgment here. If we turn to Ezekiel chapters 26, 27, and 28, however, we find statements of the causes for her judgment. Tyre evidently took advantage of some calamity that befell Jerusalem and exploited Jerusalem's affliction for her own advance (Ezek. 26:1-2). She was also proud and self-exalting (Ezek. 27:1-3). Tyre's king uttered blasphemies against Jehovah (Ezek. 28:1-10).

QUIZ

1. About how old was the city of Tyre?
2. What relationships had Tyre with Israel in the past?

3. What was Tyre's great influence on the world of that day?
4. Give three reasons for God's judgment upon Tyre.

b. SHAKEN

TEXT: 23:8-14

- 8 Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth?
- 9 Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.
- 10 Pass through thy land as the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no restraint any more.
- 11 He hath stretched out his hand over the sea, he hath shaken the kingdoms: Jehovah hath given commandment concerning Canaan, to destroy the strongholds thereof.
- 12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon: arise, pass over to Kittim; even there shalt thou have no rest.
- 13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not; the Assyrians founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness; they set up their towers; they overthrew the palaces thereof; they made it a ruin.
- 14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for your stronghold is laid waste.

QUERIES

- a. Why the question about the author of Tyre's judgment?
- b. Who were the people who "were not" (v. 13)?
- c. Where is Kittim?

PARAPHRASE

Who has the power to plan such a thing against Tyre, the founder of so many colonies and crowner of so many kings, whose merchants were equal in influence to princes, and whose traders were honored throughout the world. The Lord God Jehovah has planned it to desecrate the most magnificent pride and show His contempt for all the haughty greatness of proud men everywhere. Now, O people of Tarshish, you may flow over the world and trade as you like for there is no longer a restraining force in Tyre. The Lord God Jehovah stretches out His hand over the seas; He shakes the kingdoms of the earth; He is not a provincial God—He is God of all creation and judge of all men. Therefore, He has spoken out against Phoenicia and her strongholds will be destroyed. Furthermore, He says, You will never again rejoice, O Tyre, you raped virgin, daughter of Sidon. Even if you flee to Cyprus you will find no rest. It will be the Babylonians, not the Assyrians, who will make the territory of Tyre a habitation for wild beasts! They will besiege it, tear down its palaces and make it a heap of ruins. Wail, you ships that take trade to Tarshish, your home port is destroyed!

COMMENTS

V. 8-11 **AUTHOR OF JUDGMENT:** How shall the great fall of Tyre be explained? It will be of such magnitude and so far-reaching in its consequences something beyond what the eye can see must be the cause. Tyre, market place of the world, hub of the world's commerce, builder of colonies, destined to be reduced to almost nothing? Impossible as it appears to the human eye! Tyre became a "bestower of crowns," through founding of other city-colonies such as Carthage, etc. She also built up quite an "aristocracy of merchants" known throughout the world as princes-of-all-traders. It would appear nothing human or natural could so completely erase Tyre's hold on the commerce of the world. The answer comes from the prophet who asked the

question. The answer is—"Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it!" The Lord God of Israel is the God of all nations. He is King of all kings. He "purposed" it. Tyre's destiny is controlled not by chance, fortune, accident, coincidence, but by the will of the Omnipotent Creator of all mankind. It is one of the main emphases of the prophets that Almighty God enthrones and dethrones earth's rulers in all ages. Jehovah, in His own good time and according to His eternal wisdom and purposes, permits nations and races to flourish and diminish. He governs the ups and downs of potentates and populations according to certain standards of justice, righteousness, morality and truth. In other words, His governing principles are not capricious or frivolous. Any ruler or people or nation who will make their main concern human dignity, freedom and justice will find God's approval. But of course, human dignity, freedom and justice cannot be built on any foundation other than truth—truth about God, His identity, His nature, His revealed will. Any nation accepting falsehood about God as a national policy will find all other national structures crumbling into ruin upon such a ruinous foundation. This was the cause for the judgment of God upon one pagan ruler and nation after another. This was the cause for the judgment of God upon Israel and Judah. They did not govern themselves according to divine principles because they denied the Divine Author of those principles. Jehovah brought Tyre down for her pride. When the successful grow proud, they grow contemptuous and corrupt. Inevitably the exploitation of human beings by one another follows pride. So God has chosen to govern the world by bringing the proud down—by humiliating those who exalt themselves.

Tyre's colonies (such as Tarshish) would be hampered in their own freedom by the mother city as long as she maintained such a "strangle-hold" on their economy. But when Tyre is defeated, Tarshish will be free of her restraint and will be able to expand its trade. Tarshish will be able to flow through her own territory as the Nile inundates the valley of Egypt. Isaiah emphasizes again in verse 11 that this great, world-shaking upheaval was from the "hand of the Lord." God creates both weal and woe

(Isa. 45:7). Evil does not befall a city unless the Lord does it (Amos 3:6).

v. 12-14 AGENT OF JUDGE: Jehovah is the author of Tyre's destiny but He usually employs human agents in carrying out both His deliverances and His judgments. When Tyre's great devastation comes it will be as shocking and traumatic as a virgin ravished (raped). Even if she flees to Cyprus (Kittim) she will find no relief from the pain of her experience. But who shall ravish her? It will be the Chaldeans! The Babylonians are predicted to be Tyre's assailants. When Isaiah first made the prediction of Tyre's downfall the Assyrians would seem to be the most likely agents of God's judgment but the prophet makes it clear the Chaldeans are to execute His punishment. So it was in 585 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, emperor of Babylon, laid siege to Tyre. The siege lasted 13 years and in 572 the city was overrun. From that time her stranglehold on the world's trade was broken. However, her citizens escaped Nebuchadnezzar and fled to the islands a mile or more off shore and formed a new colony. The Babylonians, without much of a navy, could not conquer that stronghold. So Tyre remained at least a fortress protecting any advance of conquering armies down through Phoenicia enroute to Egypt and other points south. Alexander the Great, on his way to conquer the world in 322 B.C., conquered Tyre once and for all. His conquest fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28, and Zechariah 9, in minute detail, as follows:

1. He used the captured fleets of other cities and attacked the new island city by taking the ruins of the old city "Its timbers and stones" and casting them into the sea and building a causeway out to the island.
2. Other neighboring cities were so frightened they opened their gates to Alexander without opposition.
3. The old city site was scraped flat "like the top of a rock" and today you may go there and find fishermen spreading their nets on its ruins.
4. There are great artesian wells there that would supply a city with water (10 million gallons daily) yet the city has never been rebuilt on the old location. Sidon, a city just

a few miles from Tyre, has been destroyed and rebuilt many times over!

There remains a small city of no international significance (not on the original site) on the island. Travelers today may walk over the very causeway Alexander's armies constructed to give them access to the once proud and internationally powerful Tyre. God said it, and it was so! The mills of God's justice may grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine! God oft-times uses human agents to execute His judgments (Cf. Isa. 10:5-19; Isa. 44:23—45:7; Jer. 27:1-11).

The English translation of our text makes it appear almost as if Isaiah were looking back on an event that has already transpired. However, the use of the past tense in the Hebrew language often is what we call the "prophetic perfect"—a past that is the equivalent of a very assured future. Tyre's destiny is certain—so certain it may be looked upon as having already happened. So, though the past tense is used, this whole passage should be regarded as a prophecy which tells of the future overthrow of Tyre.

QUIZ

1. Who is the author of Tyre's destiny?
2. What are God's principles of governing rulers and peoples?
3. What means does God usually employ in executing His principles of human government?
4. Tell some of the subsequent history of Tyre.
5. What do we mean by the "prophetic perfect"?

c. SUBMISSION

TEXT: 23:15-18

15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after

the end of seventy years it shall be unto Tyre as in the song of the harlot.

- 16 Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.
- 17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Jehovah will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.
- 18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

QUERIES

- a. How are the "days of one king" related to Tyre's 70 years?
- b. Why does Tyre return to harlotry after 70 years?
- c. When does Tyre's merchandise become holiness to Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

And it will come to pass in the day of Tyre's downfall, she shall lie waste till her devastation has achieved its purpose in the divine disposition of things. This state of affairs will remain constant with her, like the affairs of one king's tenure, for a long period of years symbolized by the number seventy. After this "seventy" years of forgottenness she will resume her former life just like the story told in the lyrics of the Song of The Harlot. So, Tyre, you have been forgotten. Take up the harp and play sweet melodies, sing many songs, perhaps you may bring yourself to the attention of your former customers and be remembered. Yes, after your long time of forgottenness the Lord will allow you to be restored but you will be no different than you were before; you will return again to prostituting yourself with the

nations of the world for money. Yet, the time will come when she shall make contributions to the kingdom of Jehovah. Tyre's greatest treasures will not be hoarded silver and gold but will be the food and clothing of righteousness for those who dwell in the presence of Jehovah.

COMMENTS

v. 15-16 **SUBJECTION:** Alexander the Great took the city killing 8000 and selling 30,000 into slavery. He imported many foreigners into the ruined city to colonize it and left it after spending seven months to subdue it. After Alexander's death, Tyre passed into the hands of Ptolemy Lagi, and when Antigonus, in 314 B.C. took Phoenicia from him, Tyre resisted and he had to blockade it 15 months before it would yield, showing how quickly it had recovered from its previous disaster.

The period "seventy years" might refer to the 70 years of the Babylonian empire when Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Tyre. However, we think the number "seventy" is being used to denote a period of time whose completeness is determined by the divine purposes and known only to the divine Person. Seven is the Divine, Perfect, Complete number of the Bible. Ten signifies also a measure of completion. Seven multiplied by ten then means a period during which God will have achieved His purpose in a given direction. Tyre will be "forgotten" or lie devastated until God is ready for her to be remembered again. It is too difficult to pinpoint an exact 70 years.

"Like the days of one king" probably refers to the idea that while one king reigns there usually is no major changes in policy, things remain static. Tyre's God-destined period of forgottenness will remain static for as long as God wishes it to be so.

The "Song of the Harlot" suggests a song whose lyrics tell the story of how a forgotten, derelict, old harlot might seek to rehabilitate herself in her old occupation. She might take up a harp and start strumming an accompaniment to her little

piece. She might wander up and down the streets advertising her wares. Perhaps she could bring herself to the attention of her former customers.

v. 17-18 SALVATION: Tyre became a part of the Seleucid kingdom when Antiochus III drove the Ptolemies from Syria (198 B.C.), and the Seleucid kings regarded the city of importance and gave it the right of asylum, and it was allowed the status of a free city by the Romans, Antony recognizing the magistrates and council of Tyre as allies. When the Parthians attacked and took Syria, in 40 B.C., Tyre would not submit and was left untouched, being too strong for them. Tyre is mentioned in the New Testament several times; Christ visited its territory (Matt. 15:21; Mk. 7:24), and people from there came to hear Him (Lk. 6:17). Herod Agrippa I had trouble with Tyre, and a deputation came to visit him at Caesarea (Acts 12:20). Paul visited Tyre on his journey from Asia to Jerusalem (Acts 21:3-7). Christianity was accepted by the people of Tyre, so that the 2nd century A.D. saw a bishopric established there, and in the 4th century a council was held there to consider charges against Athanasius, by the party of Arius; he was condemned, a decision which brought the Tyrian church into disrepute. Tyre was already obnoxious to Christians because the anti-Christian philosopher Porphyry was from there. Tyre continued to be a commercial center, and Jerome says that it was the noblest and most beautiful of the Phoenician cities and an emporium of commerce for almost the whole world. It was of considerable importance during the Crusades and continued so until toward the end of the 13th century, when its trade declined, and it is now a small city of approximately 5000.

Verses 17 and 18 seem to indicate a two-fold result of God's permitting Tyre to be restored after a period of forgottenness. First, a part of her will return to her former ways of prostituting herself before the world for commercial purposes. Second, a part of her will become a treasure, not selfishly hoarded, but put to use as holiness (dedicated) to Jehovah. This second has its beginning, no doubt, in Ezra 3:7 when she supplies goods to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple after the captivities.

But we believe the ultimate fulfillment is in those people converted by the gospel and become precious jewels, the wealth, of the kingdom of God. The conversion of Gentiles and their incorporation in the kingdom of Jehovah through the preaching of the gospel is symbolized and prefigured in just this manner in Isa. 60:1-14; 61:1-9; Hag. 2:7-9, etc. In spite of what should happen to Tyre's physical glory or her commercial prowess, her greatest remembrance for all eternity will be those precious saints (like the Syro-Phoenician woman who believed Jesus, Matt. 15; Mk. 7) who are the jewels of the kingdom of God, and who have supplied "food" and "clothing" to many hungry and naked sinners through the ages.

QUIZ

1. What do the 70 years of Tyre's history most likely refer to?
2. What is the Song of the Harlot?
3. What two-fold consequence comes as a result of God's "visiting" Tyre again?
4. How does Tyre's merchandise become "holiness" to Jehovah?
5. How does it "feed" and "clothe" those who dwell before Jehovah?

EXAMINATION

1	2
Medes	Spain
Day Star	Hezekiah
Philistia	Jotham
Nebo	Phoenicia
Damascus	Nathan
Hivites	Elam
Ethiopia	Armenia
Nile	coast of Palestine
Pharaoh	king of Babylon

EXAMINATION

Memphis	mountain of Moab
Negeb	Canaanite
Seir	capital of Syria
Shebna	land of whirling wings
Kir	river
Tyre	mountain of Edom
Tarshish	desert region
	steward over the king's palace
	king of Egypt
	city in Egypt
	sea

MEMORIZATION

How are thou fallen from _____, O day-_____, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the _____, that didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into _____, I will exalt my _____ above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the _____; I will make myself like the _____. Isa. 14:12-15.

In that day shall _____ be the third with _____ and with _____, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them saying, Blessed be _____, my people, and _____ the work of my hands, and _____ mine inheritance. Isa. 19:24-25

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how the Lord would eventually make Himself known among the Egyptians. Isa. 19:19-22
2. Explain how Israel would be able to take up a taunt against Babylon and cry "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star," etc. Isa. 14:1-32
3. Explain why Tyre's downfall was so significant for the world

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of that day. Isa. 23

APPLICATION

1. How may we apply the predicted inter-relationships between Israel, Egypt and Assyria, in Isaiah chapter 19:16-25?
2. What application may be made for the Christian today of the account of Sargon's exploits in Isaiah, chapter 20?
3. What application may be made for Christians of Isaiah's denouncement of Shebna in Isaiah 22:15-25?

SPECIAL STUDY

PROPHECY OF THE GRACE THAT WAS TO BE . . .

**A Series of Four Outline-studies on Christ, the Church
and Salvation From the Old Testament Prophets**

by Paul T. Butler

O.T. PROPHECY — A PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

I. O.T. PROPHETS — A UNIQUE PART OF GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO MAN

- A. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets . . ." Heb. 1:1
1. Actually, a prophet was anyone who spoke God's message to God's people.
 2. Moses was a prophet.
 3. In the Hebrew way of classifying their Bible, the books

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from Joshua to Kings are called "The Former Prophets." So prophecy is more than prediction . . . it might even be history.

4. But a prophet was primarily a preacher.
- B. The N.T. emphasizes the significance of O.T. prophecy
 1. Jesus said that He came to *fulfill*—not abolish the law and the prophets Matt. 5:17.
 2. He told two on the way to Emmaus that if they did not recognize in Him all the fulfillment of the O.T. prophets they "were foolish men and slow of heart to believe." Lk. 24:25 ;
- C. N.T. writers (apostles) make frequent use of O.T. prophecy in their messages.
 1. Not just direct quotations, either, but just as significant is the way in which the very language (figurative) and thought of the prophets are appropriated and made a part of the Christian message.
 2. Even more significant is the basic premise of the N.T. that there is a *total fulfillment* of the O.T. in the N.T. (the books of Galatians and Hebrews are prime examples).

II. O.T. PROPHETS — PART OF GOD'S REVELATION WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND

- A. "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Rom. 15:4
"Now these things (history of Israel's sins and God's judgments) happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come." I Cor. 10:11
- B. Prophecy is so grossly perverted by false teachers.
 1. All too often prophecy is so perverted as to make it completely misunderstood—the Word of God is actually made void by misuse of O.T. prophecy

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2. There are preachers and students of prophecy who seem to delight in playing on the fears and anxieties of people.
 - a. They like to prophesy war but say little of the things that make for peace.
 - b. They are much concerned to identify men and nations and focus attention on "antichrists" rather than on Christ.
 - c. They are more concerned to prove what prophecy says about Russia or about Israel, than to proclaim what it says about the kingdom of God.
3. SUCH EMPHASIS IS NOT ONLY WRONG, IT IS A PERVERSION BECAUSE ATTENTION IS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON TRANSIENT EVENTS INSTEAD OF ON THE REDEMPTIVE ACTIVITY OF THE LIVING GOD.

III. OUTLINE OF O.T. PROPHETIC COMMUNICATION

- A. Aim
- B. Approach
- C. Application

DISCUSSION

I. AIM (Purpose)

A. Reveal

1. The "prophetic word is a lamp shining in dark place" to which Christians are to give heed (II Pet. 1:19); Christ expected Jews of His day to understand O.T. prophecy as being a revelation of His Person and His Work and to believe it (Lk. 24, etc.) BUT THE WAY IT IS TREATED BY MOST PREACHERS TODAY IT IS USED MORE TO OBSCURE AND HIDE THAN IT IS TO REVEAL.
2. The nature and person of God is revealed in O.T. prophecy.

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- a. His wisdom; His holiness; His love; His justice;
 - b. His power to know men and nations as they are and as they will be
 - c. His power to overcome and use the evil actions of world empires to serve His purposes of bringing about redemption
 - d. His goodness and love to deliver man when men trust Him and live by faith in Him
 - e. His absolute faithfulness and trustworthiness to keep His word; to judge sin and rebellion; to reward faith and good works.
3. The potential of man is revealed
- a. His potential to be what God intended—holy, true, good, helpful, as exemplified by men like Hosea, Daniel, Jeremiah, etc.
 - b. His potential to be what the devil can make him; perverse, insensible, cruel, unjust, inhuman, as exemplified by the nations of Israel, Judah, Babylon, Persia, etc.
4. The plan and program of God for the redemption of man is revealed
- a. The coming of a King-Shepherd to rule in justice, righteousness, victory, wisdom, understanding, one like David (Isa., Jer., Ezek.)
 - b. The establishment of an everlasting kingdom in which everyone will be secure, peace-filled, blessed with abundance of the good things of God; this kingdom will be universal; it will conquer people of all nations (Isa., Dan., Joel.)
 - c. Restored fellowship on a personal basis with God (Hosea, Isa., Ezek., Zech.). A new covenant relation with God.
 - d. A reborn people in this kingdom; with a new name; a new language; a new heart and spirit; a new priesthood; a new temple; (Isa., Jer., Ezek., Zech.)
 - e. During the time of the prophets God is working to “finish the transgression, put an end to sin, atone

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for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal both vision and prophet, and anoint a most holy place." Dan. 9:24—GOD SUMMARIZED HIS WHOLE WORK OF REDEMPTION AS HE WAS GOING TO FINISH IT FROM THE TIME OF DANIEL ON TO CHRIST. . . . THIS IS WHAT ALL THE PROPHETS PREACHED AND WORKED FOR . . . TO REVEAL THIS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THEIR DAY.

B. Relate

1. The aim of God was to bring sinful man and the holy God into a confrontation and so He spoke through the prophets.
2. Language makes the communication of minds possible. By language it is possible for one person to superimpose his will and personality upon another.
3. Man cannot relate to God unless man knows first that God exists and what kind of God He is (Heb. 11:6).
4. God must show man and tell man . . . CONFRONTATION INVOLVES THE MEETING OF MINDS IN TRUTH! LANGUAGE CONVEYS TRUTH (or falsehood).
5. By means of verbal communication, one mind can make contact with the mental world of another mind and thus a relationship.
6. The aim is to get the covenant people to relate to God in a person to Person relationship. This could only be done when the truth concerning God's Person was communicated. As long as they continued to conceive of Him (sin darkened minds) as less than personal (like the heathen gods about them), there could be no personal encounter.
7. Without communication there is an impenetrable boundary to personal encounter. Human language forms the limitation of man's ability to send or receive communication. In fact, language is necessary even for the mind of man to communicate with himself. Man's finite experience is the totality of his experience. He knows not how to communicate except by using words

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to symbolize his own experiences.

8. God spoke to man in man's experiences with man's language.
9. It is our privilege and responsibility to study, assimilate and appropriate the personality of our Creator as He communicates through the prophetic message.

C. Redeem

1. God is not just talking to man to be talking. He is not just talking to man for some selfish, egotistical reasons; or because He is lonesome.
2. He is telling men of His nature and His plans for them in order to change them.
3. He wants to change their minds and actions toward Him and thus to change their minds and actions toward others and toward themselves.
4. He knows that men, created moral beings, inevitably take on the character of that which they love (Hosea 9:10; Psa. 115:3-8).
5. God wants to bring men into a personal relationship to Himself so intimate that only the marriage relationship on earth can provide a meager human representation. . . . God wants to be provider, lover, protector.
6. He wants to deliver man from his enemy who enslaves man with false information and false actions; to deliver man from the tyranny and misery of hate, envy, pride.
7. He wants to make man over into a person of reason, love, truth, selflessness, happiness, peace and faithfulness, FIT TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY OF OTHER SUCH PERSONS.
8. This is the ultimate aim of God's prophetic communication.

II. Approach

A. Educate

1. Sermons

- a. The primary way in which the prophets communi-

cated to the people was in preaching.

- b. This often took the form of recounting the history of the nation and the miraculous deeds of God in dealing with the people in matters of judgments and deliverances (sermonizing on the various times their ancestors were punished for sin and various times they were delivered by God's overcoming their enemies).
- c. At other times their sermons expounded the law of Moses, reminding the people of its commandments and interpreting its spiritual meaning.
- d. At other times their sermons were composed of expositions of current events.
- e. Sermons were always intended to communicate by appealing to the minds, the intellect, the reasoning powers of the people.
- f. The prophets expected the people to, first of all, think, **BECAUSE REPENTANCE IS A MATTER OF CHANGING THE MIND BEFORE ANY OTHER EFFECT CAN BE PRODUCED!**

2. Signs

- a. The prophets were great educators. They knew that 80% of the learning process is done through the "eye-gate."
- b. They were convinced that symbolism and object-lessons were needed to communicate to a people whose minds had built-in resistance to any kind of spiritual message.
- c. More often than not their signs were primarily designed to confirm that their message was from God (Jeremiah and Hananiah, Jer. 28).

3. Stunts

- a. Jeremiah (waistcloth rotted; the potter and spoiled vessel; the broken vessel; the yoke; the purchased field)
- b. Ezekiel (scratching a picture upon a brick; lying on his sides 390 days and 40 days; shaving his head;)

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- c. One prophet was told to walk through the streets clad only in his underclothing.
- d. Many prophets put their sermons into song form.
- e. One prophet was forbidden to marry; one was forbidden to mourn when his wife died.
- f. IT IS EASY TO SEE THAT WHEN WE READ THE PROPHETS, WE ARE NOT READING ORDINARY LITERATURE!

B. Electrify

1. It takes more than mere relating of facts and ideas to communicate. Especially is this true with people so materialistically oriented as the Jews of the prophet's day.
2. Somehow these facts about who God is and what He does and the ideas of what He is going to do (about the Messianic kingdom) must be made to register on sin-calloused minds—the impression of God's nature must be imprinted there—the expectation of His program for the world must be etched on their souls.
3. They must be made to feel, to know, to think, to participate.
4. The prophets were actually called upon to be creative artists . . . they must use words in such a way as an artist uses paints or a musical genius uses tones and sounds. They must actually deliver their message in such a way as to involve their audiences intellectually, emotionally, willingly, spiritually . . . they must ELECTRIFY!
5. They must be poets, orators, dramatists, story-tellers; they must use every type of figure of speech available—vision, type, metaphor, parable, parallelism, hyperbole, personification, fable.
6. IT WILL BE APPARENT TO ANYONE WHO STUDIES THE PROPHETS VERY LONG THAT MUCH OF WHAT THE PROPHETS SAID MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS SYMBOLIC TYPICAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE!

C. Eventuate

1. Because God's plan for the redemption of man was to

be fulfilled many centuries future to the time of the prophets, they had to speak of what God was GOING TO DO (through the Messiah and His kingdom) in terms the people of their day would understand!!

2. Much of the predictive element of the prophets is couched in figurative language; types, symbols, metaphors, etc.
3. Their mission was to call the covenant people back to renewed faith in the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promises God had made with their forefathers (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.).
4. THAT COVENANT WAS TO FIND ITS FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (we know this from the N.T., Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.). BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETS DAY MUST HAVE THESE GLORIOUS EVENTUALITIES COMMUNICATED IN ELECTRIFYING, SYMBOLIC TERMS THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND . . . THIS IS WHAT WE CALL "TIMES-COLORING." IT IS A METHOD WE USE EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES TO COMMUNICATE IN VIVID, ARRESTING WAYS!

III. Application

A. Relevancy

1. The basic issues of life are the same today as they were in the days of the prophets.
 - a. Where did I come from, why am I here, where am I going?
 - b. What is life all about, is life worth living, is Anyone in control of events, where is everything headed?
2. Men still trust in material strength and delight in wealth and luxury while they forget God. There is nothing particularly new about lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery.
3. Oppression and injustice are rampant. Men still tend to heed the politician or leader who presents the pleasant message and assures them that their deeds are satisfactory.

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4. Men prefer to make amends by ritual and lip service rather than self-denial and moral purity.
5. The prophets, properly interpreted, speak to these issues as though they were among us today . . . presenting their thoughts in unforgettable figures of speech.
6. With crime, injustice, immorality, international conflict on every hand . . . with gigantic powers populated by hundreds of millions of pagans threatening to destroy everything that resembles godliness . . . THE PROPHETS DEFINITELY ARE RELEVANT TO ALL WHO WILL GIVE HEED!

B. Realism

1. The electrifying, vivid, symbolism and typical figures used by the prophets gives them a REALISM that is especially needful in our day when there is so much that is unreal.
2. There is a tone and flavor of spirituality and reverence for that which is good and true and pure that is needed in our day.
3. The figures of speech, the associations of truth with the common experiences of man, give a needed realism to the message of God as the prophets proclaimed it.
4. The scope of history dealt with, the working of God in these great spans of history, the reactions of men to God's involvement in men's affairs . . . all give us a perspective that is desperately needed.
5. THE PROPHETS HAD AN UNCANNY, PERCEPTIVE WAY OF RELATING THE UNEXPERIENCABLE TO THE EXPERIENCABLE . . . AND THIS IS THE VERY SUPREME NEED OF MAN (as witness the current popularity of occultism). The prophets received their information from the Supernatural God . . . this they proved by demonstrations of the miraculous.

C. Renewal

1. The whole counsel of God for the renewal of man was proclaimed by the prophets.
2. A message and a demonstration of God the Savior;

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about redemption; about God's Messiah and Servant who would accomplish His work; about salvation and redemption originating in the grace of God; about man appropriating that salvation through faith, repentance, obedience to the revealed will of God. This was God's plan of salvation; it is God's plan of salvation. Covenant terms are made surer; covenant requirements for appropriating it are changed; but the plan is basically the same.

3. There has never been more than one Savior, and that is God. In the fullness of time, God manifested Himself in the flesh in Jesus Christ, but He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
4. There has never been more than one way of salvation, the way of faith in the person and promises of God and repentance toward the will of God.

CONCLUSION

I. Good News

- A. The prophets did not have the fullness of the gospel in the sense in which it was actualized in Christ.
- B. They predicted it, promised it and did so graphically.
- C. The prophets had all the particulars, but they just did not know what person it would be or when it would be . . . but God even revealed that to them. (I Pet. 1:10-12)
- D. The good news is this: "What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord . . ." (Acts 3:18-19)
- E. These days of the New Testament dispensation are the days that "all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterward" predicted. (Acts 3:24)

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II. All things are yours.

- A. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: "... All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" I Cor. 3:21-22.
- B. All the glorious things promised by the prophets in such glorious, exciting, expectant terms, belong to Christians. Everything they said about Zion, the church (Heb. 12); about victory; about peace; about the presence of the Holy God; about security; about abundant prosperity (spiritual prosperity—which, after all, is the only lasting, satisfying prosperity)... ALL BELONGS TO THE CHRISTIAN.

III. Conditioned upon your acceptance

- A. How do we accept them?
- B. By believing...
- C. By repenting...
- D. By obeying the covenant terms...

O.T. PROPHECY — A PREDICTION OF THE CHRIST

"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness." (Jer. 23:5-6)

INTRODUCTION

I. Give us a king.

- A. Thousands of years ago in the days of Samuel, God's

chosen nation cried for a king.

1. Samuel was told by God, "They have not rejected you, they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." (I Sam. 8:7)
 2. They wanted a "king like the nations."
 3. Ever since the Garden of Eden men have been rejecting the kingship of God in favor of earthly kings.
 4. And they have been doing it for the very same reason; **THE DEVIL HAS DECEIVED THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT THIS CARNAL WORLD IS ALL THE WORLD THERE IS.** The devil has deceived man into thinking that man can be his own sovereign and rule the world.
- B. So God gave them a "king like the nations" SAUL (handsome, proud, personable, magnetic, a leader of men).
1. But he was also vain, jealous, headstrong.
 2. He refused to submit to the will of God as preached through God's prophet.
 3. He made a mess of the kingdom; he tyrannized the people with taxes and other oppressive measures; he led the people into sin; he becomes insane and helpless; the nation is helpless.

II. God is King.

- A. God can be rejected, but He cannot be dethroned. They have rejected God from being King, but they never dethroned Him, and He is still ruling.
1. God appoints another king—David. Now, God says, I have chosen ME a king—not from outward appearance, but I have looked upon his heart.
 2. Whatever we may think about David—in the matter of Kingship of God, he always recognized it. Whether in victory or defeat, or in sin or repentance, there is not a single sentence or act in which he either ignores or forgets the Kingship of God.
 3. God is attempting to call His people back to submission to Divine sovereignty as He rules through David—

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but David is human and cannot rise above his humanity. He fails and falls.

- B. But David serves as a type of The King, who is to come.
 - 1. As shepherd of the people; as deliverer; as just judge; as builder of God's house—David served as a picture of the King God was going to send.
 - 2. And so the prophets predicted that The Ultimate King God would send would be of the lineage and family of David.

III. Man cannot be his own king.

- A. Proven from history and experience
 - 1. Other men are inadequate to lead their fellowmen.
 - 2. Man cannot govern himself as he should (provide, control, secure, etc.).
- B. But man is a creature.
 - 1. And will surrender to some sovereignty or other.
 - 2. Rom. 6 (we will obey whomever we yield ourselves to as servants).

DISCUSSION

VI. Chronology

- A. Jesus expected the Jews of His day to have some knowledge of the *time* the Messiah was to appear.
 - 1. "And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, When it is evening, you say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be stormy today for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."
 - 2. As thoroughly as the rabbis and scribes studied the

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- O.T. prophets they should have known almost the very year when the Messiah would appear (anointed one).
- B. Daniel 9:24-27; "Seventy Weeks of Years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy thing or one (place)."
1. These 70 weeks of years are to begin "from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem" 457 B.C. (Artaxerxes' decree for the Jews to rebuild their commonwealth).
 2. 7—7's (or 49 years later) 408 B.C. the Jewish commonwealth was restored officially.
 3. 62—7's (or 434 years later) we come to the year 26 A.D. when Jesus Christ was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.
 4. This is the 70th week. In the midst of this 70th week the anointed one is to be "cut off."
 5. Christ was crucified in the middle of the last prophetic week or $3\frac{1}{2}$ years after the beginning of His public ministry.
 6. For $3\frac{1}{2}$ years after the death of Christ the gospel privileges were confined to the Jews by reason of providence.
 7. The prophecy that 490 years (70 weeks of years) would be allotted to the Jews for completing God's redemptive work with them was finally fulfilled for after that $3\frac{1}{2}$ years Paul took the gospel to the Gentiles.
- C. The Jews should have been watching their prophecies and they should have known almost the very year in which the Anointed One of God was to appear.
1. I believe some of the more spiritual-minded Jews were aware that He was to appear when He did (Joseph of Arimethea, Mk. 15:43).
 2. Simeon the old prophet in Luke 2, "was looking for the consolation of Israel." Of course, the Holy Spirit had

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revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ.

3. When John the Baptist began preaching like he did, it appears that multitudes of people had already been in expectation, and they questioned in their hearts whether perhaps he was the Christ. Lk. 3:15
- D. They knew well what the O.T. prophets said about *where* the Messiah was to be born . . . Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; Cf. Matt. 2:1-6)
- E. These prophecies (and scores of others) can find their fulfillment only in Jesus of Nazareth, born 4 B.C. in the days of Caesar Augustus; Quirinius, governor of Syria; Herod the Great.
 1. These prophecies can find fulfillment only in a Person; never in a nation.
 2. IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON (KING, ANOINTED ONE).
 3. When there was a universal language; when there was political stability; when the Jews had been dispersed over the world GOD PREDICTED IT 600 YEARS EARLIER . . . THEN FULFILLED IT EXACTLY ON TIME.

II. Character

A. Man

1. Promise was made to David that his house and throne would be established forever. (II Sam. 7:16)
2. That promise is repeated over and over again through the Psalms and the Prophets. Amos 9:11-12 speaks of raising again the "tabernacle" (household) of David in the last days (fulfilled in Acts 15).
3. Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . ."
4. Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots . . ."
5. Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear

a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

6. On first consideration it may not seem important that God's Messiah-King should come as a man.
7. But I think this is why they rejected God as their King in the first place. God was off in heaven, far removed from their experiences and problems (they thought)—HOW COULD GOD KNOW HOW TO RULE OVER THEM, LIVING OFF THERE IN HEAVEN—WHAT WE NEED, THEY FOOLISHLY REASONED, IS A HUMAN KING, ONE LIKE THE NATIONS, ONE TOUCHED WITH OUR INFIRMITIES.
8. Jeremiah 33:14-16: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our righteousness."
9. Zechariah 6:12: "Behold, the *man* whose name is the Branch . . ."
10. In Daniel 7:13ff Daniel is given a vision of one coming with the clouds of heaven—one like a *son of man*, who came to the Ancient of Days, to whom was given glory and dominion and an everlasting kingdom. . . . THIS IS SPEAKING OF THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

B. God

1. If there is one thing emphasized by the prophets it is that in the "last days" when God restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem . . . when the kingdom of God is established on the earth . . . THEN GOD WILL RULE AS KING IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE.
2. Isaiah calls Him, Immanuel (God with us); Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
3. Ezekiel closes his great vision of the glorious future kingdom of God (the church) by saying, "And the

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name of the city henceforth shall be, The Lord is there." Ezek. 48:35

4. Joel writes: "So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain . . . for the Lord dwells in Zion." Joel 3:17, 21
5. Obadiah says, "Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Obad. 21
6. Micah: "And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
7. Zephaniah: "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more. . . . The Lord, your God, is in your midst . . ." Zeph. 3:15, 17
8. Zechariah: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you says the Lord." Zech. 2:10ff (see also 8:1-8; 13:9)
9. Malachi: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming . . ." Mal. 3:1

C. God-Incarnate

1. Since no mortal sits "in a house by the side of the road" and watches all of history pass by, no one, from a human viewpoint can answer the question, "Where is history going? —What is life all about?"
2. What man needs is someone from a suprahuman sphere who knows the historical process in its entirety.
3. Such a supernatural person did invade the human sphere in the Person of Jesus Christ—revealed to men the nature and significance of history and human life and brought men into contact with eternal values.
4. This Person was born in a stable in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago. He was born when God said He would be; He was born where God said He would be born.
5. He was Who God said he would be.

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth,

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a man attested to you by God with mighty works and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ. . . ." Acts 2:22, 36

6. Mankind constitutes a kingdom which has been invaded by a rebel—a usurper—the devil.
 - a. The devil is called the ruler of this world, Jn. 12:13; 16:11.
 - b. He is called the god of this world, II Cor. 4:4.
 - c. Men are said to be in a great battle against the wiles of the devil . . . against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:12
 - d. Man gets himself into this kingdom of darkness which is ruled by the prince of darkness when man "walks and follows the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. . . ." Eph. 2:2
7. God condescended to man's weakness and man's need to be delivered from the devil's rule.
 - a. So God became man and as Man conquered the devil.
 - b. Now if man willingly surrenders to the victorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords, man may be "delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son." (Col. 1:13)
 - c. Jesus Christ was God-Incarnate, "partaking of the same nature as man, that through death he might destroy him (the devil) who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Heb. 2:14-15

THE GREATEST BATTLE EVER FOUGHT WAS FOUGHT AT CALVARY AND AT THE GARDEN TOMB. THE TWO KINGS OF ETERNITY MET HEAD-ON AND HAD IT OUT IN EVERY ULTIMATE SENSE.

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This is the way the coming of God's Messiah is pictured in the O.T.—He is coming to wage a great and final battle with the enemies of God's people. . . . He will be victorious and God's people will be delivered from their enemies.

Colossians 2:8-15 refers to the fact that God triumphed over the powers of darkness in him (Christ).

EVERY MAN HAS AN OPTION TO EXERCISE. EVERY MAN MAY CHOOSE WHICH KINGDOM HE WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN IN. OF COURSE IT MEANS A MAN MUST SUBMIT TO THE RULE OF THE KING OF HIS CHOICE!

III. Commission

A. Rule

1. "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be *ruler* in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." Micah 5:2
2. Isaiah 9:6-7 ". . . and the government will be upon his shoulder . . . of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
3. How does a King really rule? Only by the consent of the governed! A rule sustained only by sheer force is not a rule in reality . . . but only in appearance. Bodies may be controlled and manipulated by sheer force, but minds, real personality, is ruled by ideas— either by true ideas or false ideas.
4. God's King will rule by persuasion, by truth, by justice, by righteousness.
"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." Jer. 23:5
". . . this is the covenant which I will make with the

house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:33-34

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch. . . . It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both. . . . And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord." Zech. 6:12-13, 15

5. ". . . and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come and say: Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. . . ." Isa. 2:3

GOD WANTS TO REGAIN HIS RULE OVER MEN BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT ONLY AS HE RULES WILL THAT WHICH IS TRUE, REAL, GOOD AND ABIDING BE ACCEPTED AND ASSIMILATED BY MAN.

GOD WANTS TO RENEW HIS OWN NATURE IN THOSE WHO WILL SUBMIT TO HIS RULE. AND SINCE HE IS THE GOD OF TRUTH, HE SEEKS TO RULE ONLY BY MEANS OF TRUTH. HE WILL RULE WHEN MEN ACCEPT HIS WILL AND WORD TO BE WRITTEN ON THEIR MINDS AND HEARTS.

B. Provide

1. "And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken." Ezek. 34:23
2. The rest of that chapter (Ezek. 34:25-30) speaks in glowing, figurative language of all the blessings God,

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their King-Shepherd, is going to shower down upon them . . . "showers of blessing." THE PROPHET USES PHYSICAL, CONTEMPORARY TERMINOLOGY, BUT THE N.T. SHOWS THAT THE ESSENTIAL MESSIANIC BLESSINGS WERE SPIRITUAL. (Acts 3:26; Eph. 1:3-10)

3. Amos 9:11-15 "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old . . ."

The remainder of this chapter describes again in PHYSICAL, AGRICULTURAL TERMINOLOGY, the future glorious providence of the Ruler of Israel for His subjects. Again, Acts 15:12-18 is conclusive that Amos' prophecy was fulfilled in the church and the spiritual blessings of redemption and salvation.

4. "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3:5
5. Micah 4:1-8 is one of the loveliest of all the Messianic contexts. Actually the whole 4th and 5th chapters of Micah are Messianic. It is a picture of God ruling in Zion, peace and security and prosperity. ". . . they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . . and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore."
6. So the Messiah is pictured in the O.T. Prophets as the Shepherd-Provider. Isaiah 61:1-7—Cf. with Lk. 4:18-19

JESUS CHRIST CAME AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD . . . HE CAME BRINGING THE BREAD OF LIFE . . . THE LIVING WATER. The food Jesus used to sustain Himself was "to do the will of His Father." (Jn. 4:34) "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6

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THE REAL THINGS THAT SATISFY AND GIVE PLEASURE ARE NOT MATERIAL THINGS . . . THEY ARE AT BEST ONLY TEMPORARY, JUST AS THE PHYSICAL BODY IS. . . . BUT WHAT REALLY SUSTAINS US . . . WHAT REALLY GIVES US LIFE . . . A LIFE WORTH LIVING . . . IS TRUTH, LOVE, PEACE, JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS. . . . IF WE DO NOT HAVE THESE, ALL THE MATERIAL THINGS IN ALL THE WORLD WOULD NOT SATISFY!

C. Protect

1. "And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth." Micah 5:4. This is the ruler to be born in Bethlehem.
2. Micah chapter 4 also speaks of the security of God's people under the coming Messiah.
3. "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion . . . the Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more." Zeph. 3:14-20 (Read the whole context.)
4. Zechariah 12:7—13:1
5. Malachi 4:1-6
6. There are so many great passages in the Prophets describing the victory and security that will be won by the coming Messiah. We cannot list them here. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHEN THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF GOD'S VICTORY OVER NATIONS CONTEMPORARY WITH THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS THESE VICTORIES WERE TO TYPIFY THE GREAT VICTORY OF HIS MESSIAH OVER THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. Often when the prophets spoke of future victories over all the nations of the world, they were predicting that time when the Messiah would come and win the ULTIMATE victory which would provide security and safety for God's people (the church).
7. Jesus, the Messiah, clearly promises that protection and security. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know

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them, and they follow me; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." Jn. 10:27-28

8. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:35-39
9. "Put on the whole armor of God . . . above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. . . ." Eph. 6:10-18
10. ". . . your life is hid with Christ in God . . ." Col. 3:3
11. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" I Jn. 5:4-5

CONCLUSION

I. Behold Thy King Cometh.

- A. Jesus, entering Jerusalem for the final showdown, rode on a colt. This reminded the gospel writer Matthew to remark that it was a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 9:9).
 1. This was His public announcement to the nation of Israel that He was the promised Messiah.
 2. They had been trying desperately to get Him to announce that He was.
 3. However, they expected Him to substantiate His claim with some stupendous, spectacular economic or military victory over their hated conquerors, the Romans. He came, as He had in the past three years, meek,

humble, seeking to rule their minds and morals.

- B. Just prior to this triumphal entry into Jerusalem . . . as He drew near the city, he told his disciples a parable about a nobleman who went into a far country to receive kingly power and then return. (Lk. 19:11-27)
 - 1. But the citizens of this country hated the nobleman and sent an embassy after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.
 - 2. And so it was true of the majority of the Jews even then. . . . THEY REJECTED HIS KINGSHIP BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE THEIR ANCESTORS WHO WANTED A KING LIKE THE NATIONS.
 - 3. They were convinced that this world was all that counted and they wanted a king who would deal with the here and now—AS THEY WANTED HIM TO DEAL WITH IT . . . THEY WOULD TELL HOW TO RULE!
 - 4. Just a few days later they would cry out, "He is not king of the Jews. . . . We have no king but Caesar . . . away with him . . . crucify him . . . his blood be upon us and upon our children."

II. Behold, Thy King

- A. When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate asked Him, Are you the King of the Jews?
 - 1. Jesus said, My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews: but my kingship is not from the world.
 - 2. Jesus went on to say to Pilate, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."
- B. Friend, you will be ruled over by some spiritual power or another.
 - 1. There are two kingdoms into which all moral beings are divided—light and darkness; truth and falsehood;

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righteousness and sin.

2. Paul exhorted the Roman Christians, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions." Rom. 6:12
3. Paul exhorted the Colossians, "Let the peace of Christ *rule* in your hearts . . ." Col. 3:15
- C. You have a throne-room within you. It is your mind, (heart, the Bible usually calls it.)
 1. Here is where Christ must rule in truth and goodness, if you want to reach the high and holy spiritual potential for which God made you.
 2. How does Christ rule?
 3. Paul says just a verse later in Colossians 3:16— "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly. . . ." Earlier in that chapter he wrote, ". . . seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth." Col. 3:1-2
 4. We must surrender our thoughts, ambitions, desires, motives to His revealed will and Word. We must let Him capture our thinking. "For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war. For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and *take every thought captive to obey Christ.*" II Cor. 10:3-5
 5. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST REPENT . . . CHANGE HIS MIND!

"Repent and be immersed, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For unto you is the promise and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

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O.T. PROPHECY — A PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

I. Disciples understood that the Messiah's work was to *restore* kingdom.

A. "So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
Acts 1:6

1. Jesus answered by telling them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:7-8

2. A few weeks later they received this power and the church was established (Acts 2) on the Day of Pentecost.

B. Why would they understand this?

1. Because they were well studied in the O.T. prophecies

2. Because John the Baptist taught some of them concerning this

3. Because Jesus taught this concept constantly by precept and parable

II. The Kingdom of God and The Church are one and the same.

A. This is a necessary fundamental to be understood if we are to understand that O.T. prophecy is a prediction of the church.

1. The prophets were *not* predicting some far off rebuilding of the Jewish political—national—geographical kingdom.

2. If they were then Christ was mistaken, the apostles were fooled and duped, and the church for 2000 years has been a meaningless attempt to do something

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God never intended!

B. Impossible in this sermon to make an in-depth study of the kingdom-church concept but a few scriptures should suffice.

1. Colossians 1:13 "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. . . ."
2. Hebrews 12:28 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. . . ."
3. Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
4. Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. . . ."
5. I Thessalonians 2:12 ". . . we exhorted each one of you . . . to lead a life worthy of God, who *is calling* (pres. act. participle *kalountos*) you into his own kingdom and glory."
6. Matthew 16:18-19 "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . ."

III. The promises (most of them) to Israel by the O.T. prophets were to be fulfilled in the Church.

- A. Paul's great treatise on this subject is in Romans 9-10-11 . . . these chapters must be read as one context!
- B. He definitely says that just being a Jew according to the flesh is no guarantee that one will receive the blessings promised to Abraham's seed!
- C. In Galatians 6:16 Paul calls the church, "The Israel of God."
- D. In Hebrews 12 Paul tells the church that it has come to Mt. Zion which shows that much of the glorious things

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said of Zion in the prophets was intended for the church of the N.T.

DISCUSSION

I. Chronology

- A. We have already mentioned Daniel 9:24-27 and shown:
 - 1. They refer to the Messiah and His work.
 - 2. The Jews should have been able to determine very precisely and exactly what year this would take place (see our notes in sermon in this series on Christ).
- B. Daniel 2:44
 - 1. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever."
 - 2. There can be no mistaking *which* kings.
 - a. The kings of the fourth world empire—Rome.
 - b. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of the dream about the great image—Nebuchadnezzar was the first part of the image and there were three succeeding empires to follow him—Persian, Grecian, and the one of iron (Rome).
 - 3. This vision of the great image is paralleled by the vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7. The lion is Babylon; the bear is Persia; the leopard is Greece; the terrible and dreadful iron beast is Rome; then the vision of the son of man coming to the Ancient of Days being given dominion and glory and kingdom.
- C. Joel 2:28, 32
 - 1. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. . . . And it shall

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come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. . . ."

2. All the context of Joel 2:28—3:21 should be understood as speaking of the establishment of the church and all that intervenes between the Day of Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ.
3. In other words, it is a prophecy of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth and its victory.
4. We can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Peter, the inspired apostle, declared its fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2.

D. Isaiah 61:1-4 (actually the entire 61st chapter is in the context).

1. Someone is to be anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
2. At this time the ancient ruins will be rebuilt; the former devastations of many generations would be repaired.
3. Again, we can be absolutely sure of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus said in a synagogue in Nazareth, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:20

"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching, the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:14-15

"I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos. . . ." Rev. 1:9

THE KINGDOM/CHURCH ARE ONE AND THE SAME. GOD PLANNED THE CHURCH/KINGDOM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. GOD PREDICTED THE KINGDOM'S COMING WITH THE MESSIAH.

THE CHURCH IS NOT AN AFTER-THOUGHT OF GOD. IT IS NOT A PARENTHESIS! IT IS GOD'S FINAL STAGE OF REDEEMING MAN

WHILE TIME CONTINUES. IT IS THE ONLY STAGE LEFT!

II. Character

A. Triumphant

1. If there is one thing emphasized in the O.T. prophets concerning the glorious future of God's rebuilt kingdom under His Messiah-King, it is TRIUMPH, VICTORY.
2. Victory over demonic forces of evil
 - a. These forces attempted to thwart the purpose of God to redeem man by use of force, sensuality, false teaching.
 - b. These forces manifested themselves in the form of pagan governments, pagan materialism, pagan religion and false prophets.
 - c. So God's prophets predicted the eventual triumph of God's kingdom over these forces. When they made their predictions they made them in verbal forms the people of their day would understand and related everything they predicted to nations and circumstances of their own day ("times coloring").
 - d. The Book of Revelation, so parallel to O.T. prophetic symbolism, also declares the victory of God's church over force, sensuality and false teaching (beast, harlot and false prophet).
 - e. Some great figurative passages about God's future victory for His kingdom are:
 - (1) Joel 3:1-21—God will judge all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. All that the pagan forces can muster will be defeated by God when He restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (read the whole context).
 - (2) Isaiah 60:1-22
 - (3) Daniel 2:44—in the vision of the great image a stone cut from a mountain by no human hand represents the kingdom of God which is to strike

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the great image (representing world pagan power) knock it down, grind it to dust and the wind comes and blows it away. This stone (God's kingdom) triumphs over the image (pagan evil).

- (4) Micah 7:11-20—the nations shall be humbled and in fear turn to the Lord when God fulfills His covenant to Abraham in forgiving sins (this can only refer to the work accomplished in Christ—the seed of Abraham; Cf. Romans and Galatians).
- (5) Zephaniah 3:8-20
- (6) Zechariah 2:6-12—God will give His people victory over those who formerly plundered them, for in touching His people they touched the “apple of his eye.” He will dwell in their midst and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be His people.
- (7) Zechariah 13:1—14:21—A great battle of the Lord against the nations when He stands on the Mt. of Olives, etc.

- 3. All these and many others refer very simply to God's great triumph over the absolute worst that the forces of Hell could do in their attempt to thwart God's purpose to redeem man—when these evil forces succeed in crucifying the Lord of Glory—**GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, INSTITUTED HIS CHURCH, AND SENT THE CHURCH MILITANT OUT TO BRING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST!**

When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, the devil was cast out, judged, and his power (the fear of death) was destroyed. (Jn. 12:16; Heb. 2) When Christ was crucified and raised from the dead, He led captivity captive. . . . At the cross God “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, *triumphing* over them in him.” Col. 2:15. The preaching of the cross destroys the wisdom of the world (I Cor. 1:18-25). **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH, THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH. . . . WE ARE MORE THAN**

CONQUERORS. . . . WE AWAIT ONLY THE FINAL VICTORY SUPPER WITH THE LAMB AT THE CONSUMMATION. . . . BUT EVEN NOW VICTORY IS A REALITY . . . THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD . . . EVEN OUR FAITH!

B. Peaceful

1. The picture of God's future kingdom is portrayed by the O.T. prophets as one of peacefulness and tranquility.
 - a. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. . . . He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." Isa. 40:1, 2, 11.
 - b. When the Messiah brings in the new kingdom, men will be at peace with God and He with them.
2. "And a highway shall be there and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:8-10
 - a. The member of God's future kingdom will be at peace with all of God's creation.
 - b. The peace and tranquility and harmony and dominion man enjoyed in the garden of Eden is *potentially* restored to man through Christ's meritorious work (Heb. 2:5-9).
 - c. All of God's creation becomes a storehouse of things able to be used by the Christian to glorify God in this new relationship. EVERYTHING IN GOD'S CREATION IS AVAILABLE FOR GOD TO USE TO WORK FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM (Rom. 8:28).

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- d. Even those things which test us and try us become stepping stones to steadfastness and hope. (Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4)
- 3. Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-10; Micah 4:1-7
- 4. "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." Ezek. 34:25-26
 - a. This is in the same context as Ezek. 34:20-24 concerning the "one shepherd, David," who is to come and feed God's flock. I think it applies to none other than the Good Shepherd of John 10.
 - b. Consider along with this Psalm 23.
- 5. "... and he shall command peace to the nations; . . ." Zech. 9:10 Remember this is in the same context as "Lo, your king comes to you. . . . etc." Zech. 9:9 fulfilled at Jesus' triumphal entry.

NO STUDENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOULD HAVE TO BE REMINDED THAT PEACE IS THE GREAT RECURRING THEME OF THE CHURCH. (Ephesians 2:11-22) (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 4:7) The peace of God is to rule in our hearts, Col. 3:15; Christians are to follow peace with all men (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:18); Christians are called to peace in marital relationships (I Cor. 7:15).

IN GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM, AS THE PROPHETS PORTRAYED IT, MEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES, MEN OF ALL SOCIAL STRATA, DIFFERING CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, INTELLECTUAL STRATA WOULD BE UNITED IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

Christians are to be so oriented to peace they will not even need to use civil courts when one has a grievance against a brother. . . . They will settle it between themselves, fairly, justly and peaceably. (I Cor. 6:1-11) THE LAW OF GOD, THE VERY NATURE OF GOD, WILL BE WRITTEN ON THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS AND THEY WILL IMITATE HIM!

C. Righteous

1. One of the very definite characteristics of the future kingdom of God predicted by the prophets was **RIGHT-EOUSNESS**. The kingdom of God as it was during the days of the prophets was almost totally unrighteous. There was injustice, unholiness, unfaithfulness, falsehood, exploitation and sin and crime of every description and degree rampant! Immorality, inhumanity and indecency were the common practices. **THOSE VERY FEW FAITHFUL PEOPLE OF GOD CRIED OUT FOR RIGHT-EOUSNESS. THE PROPHETS PROMISED THAT GOD'S FUTURE KINGDOM WOULD BE ONE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
2. Justice is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. Isaiah 9:7 "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with *justice* and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore."
 - b. Isaiah 11:3-4 "He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth."
 - c. In the kingdom the prophets predicted, all dealings of God with men and men with men would be done justly, fairly and without partiality. "Truly, I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" Acts 10:34-35. Paul to Timothy concerning his ministry . . . "I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality." I Tim. 5:21. See also James 2:1-7; 3:17.
3. Holiness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. "Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the *holy* mountain." Zech. 8:3
 - b. "Behold the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the

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earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken." Isa. 62:11-12

- c. Holiness, separation from worldliness, is what God intended for the Hebrew people when He first chose them. But they became so worldly-minded and worldly-acting that they actually became worse than the heathen nations surrounding them.
- d. The prophets predicted that God's new kingdom under the Messiah would be holy—separated from worldliness.

This would involve purging God's people of idolatry and false prophets.

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. And on that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit." Zech. 13:1-2

- 4. Faithfulness is a necessary element of righteousness.
 - a. The main characteristic of the rebellious and stubborn Israelites was unfaithfulness to covenant relationship with God.
 - b. God's new kingdom which the prophets predicted would be characterized by God demonstrating once and for all His absolute faithfulness (Heb. 6:13-20; II Cor. 1:20-21) and man's responding by faithfulness in keeping covenant with God.
 - c. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." Isa. 11:5
 - d. "And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, My husband. . . . And I will betroth you to me for

ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord." Hosea 2:16-20 (In its context, this has to be Messianic.)

- e. Perhaps the most significant prediction of the nature of faithful covenant relationship in the future kingdom of God is that prediction in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (quoted as fulfilled in the N.T. in Hebrews 8:8-12).

The Lord will make a new covenant, not like the one their fathers broke, it will be written on their hearts and minds, God will be their God and they shall be his people.

Also, Jeremiah 32:37-40 "Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, *that they may not turn from me*. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in *faithfulness*, with all my heart and all my soul."

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY RIGHTEOUSNESS. WHEN GOD SHOULD SEND HIS MESSIAH-KING TO RULE, HE WOULD RULE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

OUT OF RESPONSE, MEMBERS OF THIS KINGDOM WOULD CHARACTERIZE THEIR CONDUCT BY JUSTICE, HOLINESS AND FAITHFULNESS.

In this new kingdom there would be judicial and experiential righteousness. God would judicially cleanse and pronounce men

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righteous through the sufferings of His Servant (Isa. 53). Then those cleansed would respond with righteous living.

RIGHTEOUS IS SOMETHING WE ARE, FIRST OF ALL. GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ATONING, JUSTIFYING, SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF HIS SERVANT, THE MESSIAH. BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ALSO SOMETHING WE DO!

"Little children, let no one deceive you, He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous. . . . By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother." I John 3:7, 10 So, AS DANIEL PREDICTED, 490 YEARS WERE ALLOTTED FOR THE HEBREW PEOPLE OF OLD "TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, TO PUT AN END TO SIN, AND TO ATONE FOR INIQUITY, TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SEAL BOTH VISION AND PROPHECY, AND TO ANOINT A MOST HOLY PLACE." Dan. 9:24

III. Commission

1. Militant

- a. Being triumphant, this kingdom will also be militant in that it will "possess" all the nations.
- b. Now it should be readily apparent that this was never intended to be literal and absolute in the sense of some physical, worldwide political kingdom. IT IS REFERRING TO GOD'S SPIRITUAL RULE IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE.
- c. It is true that the kingdom of God through the church has a universal dominion. There are members of every nation under heaven who have been "possessed" by God's kingdom. Many of these have been some of the greatest "jewels" of the different races and nationalities of men.
- d. The O.T. prophets definitely portrayed the future kingdom of God as a militant, evangelistic, conquering kingdom. It was not one that would just be defensive. . . . IT WOULD GO ON THE OFFENSE,

DOING BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL, CAPTURING (OR DELIVERING) MEN FROM THE DOMINION OF THE DEVIL WHEREVER THEY WERE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

- e. This definitely is what is meant by Amos 9:12 . . . "that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this." BECAUSE AMOS 9:12 IS IN THE VERY CONTEXT WITH AMOS 9:11 WHICH THE APOSTLES QUOTED AS FULFILLED IN ACTS 15:15-18 WHEN THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO THE GENTILES AND THEY BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE GOSPEL!
- f. There are other references, too numerous to list them all, which portray the future kingdom of God, as the prophet saw it, possessing all the nations of the world. (1) Obadiah, verses 17-20 (2) Zechariah 8:20—9:8 (3) Isaiah 55:4-5

2. Prosperous

- a. The prophets spoke of the future kingdom of God as one of glorious abundance and prosperity. THEY SPOKE IN PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL TERMS. BUT THEY MEANT SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY AND ABUNDANCE. WE KNOW THIS FROM WHAT THE N.T. SAYS ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF SOME OF THE PROPHETIC PASSAGES.
- b. Micah 4:4 . . . "but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree . . ."
- c. Isaiah 25:6 . . . "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for *all* people a feast of fat things. . . . etc."
- d. Isaiah 55:1-3 ". . . he who has no money, come, buy and eat! . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price . . . eat what is good . . . delight yourselves in fatness . . . I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. . . ." THIS IS SAID TO BE FULFILLED BY THE

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PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE IN ACTS 13:34ff.

- e. Amos 9:13-15 another description in physical terms of the coming spiritual prosperity in the prophetic kingdom of the future.

JESUS LIKENED THE KINGDOM UNTO GREAT FEASTS AND CELEBRATIONS IN HIS PARABLES. IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, PETER EXHORTED THE PEOPLE TO "REPENT . . . AND TURN AGAIN, THAT TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. . . . FOR GOD HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT, SENT HIM TO YOU FIRST, TO BLESS YOU IN TURNING EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR SINS." (Acts 3:17-26)

Paul wrote, "He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3); "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours. . . ." (I Cor. 3:21-22); Christians have "a better possession and an abiding one. . . ." (Heb. 10:34) CHRISTIANS HAVE INHERITED THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS! SO THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF GOD OF THE FUTURE WAS PORTRAYED WITH A COMMISSION OF MILITANCY AND PROSPERITY (BLESSING).

IT WOULD GO INTO ALL THE NATIONS AND RACES OF THE EARTH, DOING BATTLE AGAINST THE WORLD POWERS OF DARKNESS THAT HOLD MEN UNDER THE DOMINION OF SIN. . . .

IT WOULD SHED ITS LIGHT OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DELIVER AND CAPTURE MEN AND WOMEN FOR GOD.

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, MEN WOULD BE FILLED. THEY WOULD BE INVITED TO THE KING'S FESTIVE TABLE OF GOODNESS AND REFRESHMENT WOULD COME TO THEIR VERY LIVES. LOVE, JOY, PEACE, GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, MEEKNESS, SELF-CONTROL, FREEDOM, FRUITFULNESS, SATISFACTION. . . ALL THESE WOULD BE SPREAD OUT BEFORE THEM IN THIS NEW KINGDOM!

CONCLUSION

I. The Kingdom of God has come!

- A. The angel promised to Mary that her virgin-conceived son would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord would give to him the throne of his father, David and he would reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there would be no end. Luke 1:32-33
 - 1. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, announced the same news in predicting the mission of his son John as the forerunner of the Messiah, Luke 1:67-79.
 - 2. Simeon the aged and devout man in the temple when Mary went for purification announced the same news, Luke 2:25-35.
- B. It was predicted even to the exact year; to the exact place; including the exact phenomena that would accompany it.
 - 1. Passage after passage in the N.T. confirms without room for doubt that the founding of the church on the Day of Pentecost was the official establishment of that kingdom.

II. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of men.

- A. the kingdom and the church are synonymous. But that does not mean that mere nominal church membership and citizenship in God's kingdom are synonymous.
 - 1. The kingdom is not provincial. It is not *merely* outward. It is in one sense a visible kingdom (the church), but it is not *just* visible.
 - 2. When the peace of Christ *rules* our hearts, when Christ is *Lord* of our minds and deeds, then the kingdom is in us and we are in the kingdom.
 - 3. Because when Christ is *Lord*, we will obey His commands.
- B. His kingdom is not "of" this world.

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1. It is not worldly—It does not force citizenship. Men and women become citizens by choice.
2. It is not worldly—It does not operate on pride and ambition. Men and women are servants, sheep, brethren, children.
3. It is not worldly—It is not satisfied with mere fleshly indulgences. It seeks the real and lasting values that are the very essence of life such as peace, joy, truth, justice, love, self-control.

III. THERE ARE TWO KINGDOMS THAT WILL LAST ETERNALLY . . . GOD'S AND THE DEVIL'S. GOD'S KINGDOM HAS WON. . . . THE DEVIL'S KINGDOM IS ETERNAL INCARCERATION AND IMPRISONMENT IN FALSEHOOD, UGLINESS, BITTERNESS, REBELLION, EXPLOITATION, GUILT, TORMENT. . . . GOD WILL TRANSFER YOU INTO WHICHEVER KINGDOM YOU DESIRE!

O.T. PROPHECY — A PLEA FOR CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION

- I. Basically, the pleas of the O.T. prophets is for personal conversion.
 - A. This is what the Messiah was to come to Israel for.
 - B. This is what the character of the kingdom of the future would be.
 - C. The prophets were sent by God to call the *people of their day* to repentance in preparation for the messianic age—so that the messianic program could be worked out through their people.
 - D. The prophets told the people of their day what the new messianic kingdom would be like in order to motivate their generation to repent and be the kind of people the Lord could use for redeeming the whole world.

II. The Prophets predicted that the coming Messianic Age would produce converted men.

- A. Man's problem from the sin of Adam in the garden up to the days of the prophets is one long story of rebellion against the knowledge of God and refusal to walk in the way of the Lord.
- B. After God destroyed the world, having saved one man and his family, God began to prepare a people (descendants of Abraham), instilling in them the knowledge of His will (the law) and teaching them by discipline and miracle to walk in His way.
- C. The people had good intentions and made many promises but their own willful desires to indulge themselves added to the attractions of sin plus the power of the devil to deceive led them progressively downward into unbelief and paganism.
- D. Their downward plunge reached the very bottom in the days of the writing prophets, in the days of the divided kingdom.
 1. God already knew that the majority of the Jews would never turn back to him without some drastic chastening.
 2. God sent the prophets to warn the whole people (both Israel and Judah) of the impending judgment-captivity—and to call a righteous remnant to faith and endurance.
- E. There are thousands of passages in the prophets which graphically describe the hard-heartedness and rebelliousness of the people toward God (Cf. Ezek. 3:1-27; Jer. 1:16-19, etc.). But two special passages portray the attitudes of the people with preciseness:
 1. "There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land. . . . My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." Hosea 4:1, 6

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2. "Thus says the Lord: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it. I sat watchmen over you saying, Give heed to the sound of the trumpet! But they said, We will not give heed. . . . Hear, O earth; behold I am bringing evil upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it." Jer. 6:16-19

NO MORE PROMISES TO FOLLOW THE LORD. NOW THEY OPENLY REBEL! SO THE PROPHETS ARE SENT TO DECLARE THAT GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES (MADE TO THEIR FOREFATHER ABRAHAM) WILL BE FULFILLED IN A NEW KING, A NEW KINGDOM, AND WILL BE RECEIVED BY CITIZENS WHO ARE CONVERTED, MEN OF FAITH, TRUE SONS OF ABRAHAM, THOSE WHO KNOW GOD AND WALK IN HIS WAYS!

DISCUSSION

I. Know the Lord

A. It was not God's fault that men did not know Him.

1. "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, Here am I, here am I, to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices"; Isa. 65:1-2
2. God delineated His nature in His law; God demonstrated His nature in miraculously sustaining the people. There were great men of faith who did know God (Abraham, Moses, David) but they were few.
3. Even in nature there is enough of the nature of God revealed that all men may know Him if they wish (Cf. Rom. 1:18ff). MEN SIMPLY REFUSE TO HAVE GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE!

- B. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wish to be God's people would know Him.
1. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest . . ." Jer. 31:34
 2. "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken." Ezek. 39:7-8 THIS IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREAT BATTLE OF GOD AND THE FORCES OF GOG-MAGOG WHICH I BELIEVE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE BATTLE IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT AND THUS SPEAK OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY. . . . Then will the Lord be known by true Israel and this includes Gentiles.
 3. There are other messianic passages depicting this (Isa. 59:20-21; Habakkuk 2:14; Isa. 52:1-15; 60:16).
- C. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would know Him INTIMATELY—SO THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE LIKE THAT OF A BRIDE TO HER HUSBAND.
1. Isaiah 62:4-5 "You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."
 2. See also the whole context of Hosea 2-3.
 3. It hardly needs to be said that the N.T. refers to the church as the bride of Christ—to Christ as the

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bridegroom. (Eph. 5:21-33, etc.)

4. This is the ONENESS THAT IS TO BE KNOWN BY THE CHRISTIAN . . . LIKE THAT OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE!
 5. That kind of ONENESS can only be built upon knowing and trusting . . . knowing and trusting God to be faithful, just, loving, fair.
- D. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM, DEPEND UPON HIM, AND CALL UPON HIS NAME.
1. The people of the prophet's day had devoted their energies to calling on the names of pagan gods. They had taken to worshipping idols of every description—even to worshipping the sun, moon and stars.
 2. They also were busy making military, political and economic treaties with pagan powers, hoping to call on their pagan "friends" in times of trouble. GOD TAUGHT THEM THAT THEIR WORLDLY FRIENDS COULD NOT SAVE THEM. SO GOD'S PROPHETS PREDICTED THAT IN THE FUTURE MEN'S MINDS AND HEARTS WOULD BE CONVERTED ABOUT THIS ATTITUDE.
 3. In the future time they would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Cf. Joel 2:30-32; Isa. 65:24)
- E. The prophets promised that in the future, those who wished to be God's people would KNOW HIM AND WALK IN HIS NAME.
1. Isaiah 2:3 ". . . and many peoples shall come, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he teach us his ways and that we may *walk* in his paths."
 2. Ezekiel 36:27 "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to *walk* in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."
 3. Micah 4:5 "For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever."
 4. The promise of the prophets is that men and women will be converted and walk in the way of the Lord. MEN

ISAIAH

WILL KNOW GOD NOT ONLY MENTALLY, BUT EXPERI-
ENTIALLY. THEY WILL HAVE A DAY BY DAY FELLOWSHIP
WITH GOD AS THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO
HIS DIRECTIONS!

5. "He who says, I know him, but disobeys his command-
ments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever
keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected.
By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who
says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in
which he (Christ) walked." I John 2:4-6

LET NO MAN SAY HE IS CONVERTED IF HE IS NOT WALKING AS
CHRIST WALKED. LET NO MAN SAY HE KNOWS CHRIST IF HE IS
NOT WALKING AS CHRIST DIRECTS.

II. Be renewed.

A. New Covenant (Jer. 31)

1. God and man will be in a new covenant relationship
in the messianic kingdom.
2. God will cleanse men completely of their guilt.
 - a. "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the
house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to
cleansing them from sin and uncleanness." Zech. 13:1
 - b. "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the
sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and stead-
fast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our
fathers from the days of old." Micah 7:20
 - c. AND, OF COURSE, THE GLORIOUS ISAIAH 53 PASSAGE
IS TO BE INSERTED HERE.
3. The relationship between God and man will be
RENEWED. Man will keep God's new covenant.
 - a. "... everyone who . . . holds fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make
them joyful in my house of prayer; . . . for my house
shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.
Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of
Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those

already gathered." Isa. 56:6-8

B. New Heart and New Spirit

1. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. . . . My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes . . . and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant. . . . My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . ." Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:24-28
2. Actually, the whole latter half of Ezekiel, from chapter 34 through 48, is messianic, basically. And it's message is concerning the new nature of the individual citizen of the future messianic kingdom.
3. To the Hebrew, heart meant the whole personality . . . mind, soul, spirit, being. **THE NEW CITIZEN OF GOD'S KINGDOM WOULD HAVE A NEW NATURE!** He would be as "dead, dry bones, raised from the grave."
4. **THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN AS GIVEN IN THE N.T.**
 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15 **IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOW, AND FOREVERMORE, NATIONALITY, RACE, CULTURE ARE IRRELEVANT. . . . IT IS THE NEW NATURE THAT GOD IS INTERESTED IN!**
5. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son to die in our

place and to be raised from the dead, that by faith in Him and obedience to His will we might be born anew. For only those who are born again are given authority from God to become citizens of the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:3-5)

- a. "Of His own will he begat us (brought us forth) by the word of truth that we should be a king of first fruits of his creatures." Jas. 1:18
- b. "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. . . . That word is the good news which was preached to you." I Pet. 1:22-25

C. New Speech

1. "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:12-13
2. One of the glaring characteristics of wickedness of the people of the days of the prophets was their "unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) Not necessarily foul and obscene (although I'm sure that is involved) but false, unjust, slanderous, deceitful, proud and haughty and vain.
3. Their total and constant devotion to idolatry necessitated that they speak lies and falsehoods, because they were living a lie in their unbelief.
4. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that "evil talk (homilia) corrupts good morals." This he said in the context of discussing their "talk that there couldn't be a resurrection." In other words, false doctrine preached and taught and spoken soon leads to corruption of morals. FRIEND, THIS IS THE CAUSE FOR

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THE BREAK DOWN IN THE MORALS OF AMERICA! FALSE DOCTRINES, THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS, UNBELIEF, LIBERAL THEOLOGY! The most evil speaking ever done is not foul language—but the subtle half-truths and half-lies of unbelieving preachers. When Jesus said, “. . . on the day of judgment men will render account for every idle (careless, vain, void) word they utter . . .” Matt. 12:36, He was not talking about profanity so much as He was the words of unbelief the Pharisees had just uttered about Him.

5. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God's messianic kingdom would be of “pure” speech. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor . . . let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” Eph. 5:25, 29

CITIZENS OF GOD'S NEW KINGDOM ARE PEOPLE OF TRUTH. TRUTH IN SPEECH, TRUTH IN LIVING, TRUTH IN DOCTRINE—AND TRUE DOCTRINE MUST COME FIRST!

D. New Name

1. “The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give. . . . You shall no more be termed Forsaken . . . but you shall be called My delight is in her and your land Married . . .” Isa. 62:2-4
2. “You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth. . . .” Isa. 65:15-16
3. *Name* is a term used to signify or designate one's progenitor or institutional association. When a woman marries she takes a new name.
4. The prophets predicted that the citizens of God's messianic community or family would be such a

completely NEW people, they would have a NEW NAME.

5. This name would be held in honor throughout the world. It would not be a name denoting any physical, fleshly origin or association. It would be UNIQUE.

WHY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND THE BIBLE WOULD WANT TO BE KNOWN BY ANY NAME OTHER THAN CHRISTIAN, I DO NOT KNOW. WHY WOULD ONE THINK GOD APPROVES OF ALL THE DIVIDING NAMES MEN HAVE CLUTTERED UP CHRISTIANITY WITH?! THERE JUST ISN'T ANY NEED FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO WANT TO SET THEMSELVES OFF AS SPECIAL KINDS OF "CHRISTIANS."

E. New Strength

1. "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not!" Isa. 35:3-4
2. "... but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
3. "... and the lame I will make the remnant; and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore." Micah 4:7
4. Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus, "... that they might be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Eph. 3:16ff
5. He prayed for the Colossians, "May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. . . ." Col. 1:11
6. THE NEW STRENGTH AVAILABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN IS THE DELIVERANCE CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED WHEN HE DESTROYED FOR MAN THE POWER THE DEVIL HAD OVER MAN THROUGH THE FEAR OF DEATH (Heb. 12:14-15). MAN CAN BE DELIVERED FROM THIS WEAKENING, PARALYZING, SHATTERING BONDAGE—FEAR OF DEATH! This is the very crux of man's

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- problem—the absurdity of life in the face of the hopelessness of the grave! THE UTTER FRUSTRATION AND MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE IF THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAPPING ALL THE MORAL, SPIRITUAL STRENGTH ANY MAN MIGHT HAVE!
7. Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” (II Tim. 1:10)

III. Live rejoicing.

A. Rejoicing through worship.

1. A magnificent picture of God’s covenant people worshipping Him in spirit and in truth is portrayed concerning the messianic times. The passages in the prophets are many.
2. This worship will be done in singing NEW songs of God’s deliverance and God’s grace and God’s glory. (Isa. 25:6—26:6) (Zeph. 3:14-20)
3. This worship will be done in giving of thanks. (Isa. 12:1-6)
4. This worship will be done through ministering. (Isa. 61:6)

B. Rejoicing through serving.

1. The great closing passage of the book of Isaiah is a picture of the messianic kingdom serving the Lord by evangelizing the nations and bringing men from all nations to worship the Lord. (Isa. 66:18-23)
2. There are numerous passages depicting God’s new covenant people “building up” the ruins and walls. “They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” Isa. 61:4 Cf. also Amos 9:11 “A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. . . .” Micah 7:11ff
3. This is exactly what the writer of the N.T. book Hebrews is talking about in Hebrews 13:8-16 . . . that

the N.T. church is the fulfillment of the O.T. law and prophets "For here (in O.T. practices and covenant) we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. Through him (Jesus) then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

C. Rejoicing through suffering.

1. "And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, They are my people; and they will say, The Lord is my God." Zech. 13:9
2. "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming. . . . But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years." Mal. 3:1-4

THE CITIZENS OF GOD'S NEW MESSIANIC KINGDOM WILL BE SO THOROUGHLY CONVERTED THEY WILL NOT MURMUR AND COMPLAIN AND TRY THE LORD WHEN TESTED AND TRIED AS DID THOSE OF OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

CHRISTIANS WILL COUNT THEIR TRIALS AS BLESSINGS. (Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 5:1-5; II Cor. 1:3-11; Heb. 12:1-17)

Christians know, as the writer of Hebrews says, "For you have need of endurance, that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised." Heb. 10:36

CHRISTIANS LIVE REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR WORSHIP A MEANS OF REJOICING. THEY MAKE THEIR SERVICE A MEANS

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OF REJOICING. THEY EVEN MAKE THEIR SUFFERING A MEANS OF REJOICING.

CONCLUSION

- I. SO GOD'S PLAN FOR ALL MANKIND . . . SINCE ADAM AND EVE REBELLED AGAINST HIM . . . HAS BEEN CONVERSION.
- II. AND THE PROPHETS HAVE GRAPHICALLY PORTRAYED, IN TERMS PEOPLE OF THEIR DAY WOULD UNDERSTAND, WHAT THE CONVERTED MAN WOULD BE LIKE WHEN GOD SHOULD FULFILL OR FINISH HIS WORK OF REDEEMING MAN.
 - A. This converted man would KNOW the Lord.
 1. Know the Lord so intimately it would be a marriage. In fact, the word for *know* in Hebrew is *yadha* and is often used to mean the most intimate relationship of all—sexual intercourse in marriage.
 2. Know the Lord so fully that there is a oneness with the Lord to the extent that His mind becomes our mind—His will becomes our will—His desire and nature become our nature.
 - B. This converted man would be RENEWED.
 1. New relationship or covenant with the Lord
 2. New heart and mind from the Lord
 3. New speech—TRUTH
 4. New name
 5. New strength
 - C. This converted man would live REJOICING.
 1. Through worship
 2. Through service
 3. Through suffering
- III. THIS IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH MOST OF THOSE TO WHOM THE PROPHETS PREACHED.

ISAIAH

- A. They did not know the Lord. They did not want to know the Lord. They mocked God's law; they persecuted God's preachers; they filled their hearts with the knowledge of idolatry and paganism.
- B. In so doing they found abomination and decadence instead of renewal. Men become like the thing they love. (Hosea 9:10)
- C. And instead of rejoicing, they lived in hate, jealousy, envy, greed, chaos.

IV. NOW GOD HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO TURN AGAIN (WHICH IS CONVERSION) TO GOD AS MAN WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING.

- A. God has confronted man face to face on man's own level.
- B. God became man and dwelt among us.
- C. God, in Jesus Christ, came and conquered all that stands in man's way of turning back to God.
- D. Now man can regain his lost destiny, his lost companionship with his Creator, his lost dominion, his lost purpose.
- E. In other words, man turning back to God, finds himself.

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