

does not need a Provider, Protector, Guide and Saviour. But he is not free; he hides—one way or another, he hides.

ANIMAL LUSTS OF MEN DECEIVE THEM INTO DELIBERATELY DENYING GOD, THE BIBLE, HEAVEN AND HELL, BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SATISFY THEIR FLESHLY DESIRES . . . THEY DO NOT NEED GOD FOR THEY ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT; THEREFORE THEY "WANDER (deliberately) INTO THE MYTHS OF EVOLUTION, HUMANISM, COMMUNISM, AND JUST PLAIN STUBBORNNESS."

ALL OF US HAVE HEARD PEOPLE SAY, "I KNOW THE BIBLE IS HISTORY AND IT'S TRUE AND I OUGHT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT ITS DEMANDS, BUT I'M NOT READY TO GIVE UP THIS AND THAT, AND SO ON." . . . OR SOME WILL SAY, "I CAN'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS TRUE BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS IT CONDEMNS WHICH I FEEL ARE ALL RIGHT."

C. "they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest the scriptures* unto their own destruction" II Pet. 3:16

1. Unbelief comes to men when they wrest the scriptures.
2. Satan, the father of unbelief, perverted the scripture at the temptation of Jesus (Mt. 4:5-6).
3. Paul had to contend with the Judaizers who corrupted (II Cor. 2:17) and dishonestly handled the word of God deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2).
4. The prejudiced and biased mind is a form of deliberate unbelief (cf. Jn. 8:12; 7:24); so also is the one who allows himself to be influenced by rumor or opinions of so-called intelligentsia (cf. Jn. 7:12; 7:40-43; Jas. 1:6-7; Eph. 4:13-14).
5. Cowardice or conformity also leads to deliberate unbelief (cf. Jn. 12:41-43; Jn. 9).
6. Liberalism, Modernism—a result of men who have deceitfully and dishonestly handled the Word of God—has infected hundreds of thousands of gullible people who feel they must conform in churches all around us and within the Restoration Movement.
7. Existentialism, by deceit, has duped many into unbelief.

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8. Men, by their traditions, have made void the word of God and led many unto unbelief.

THE WRESTING OF THE SCRIPTURES TO MAINTAIN DIVISION WITHIN CHRISTENDOM BRINGS UNBELIEF . . . JESUS PRAYED IN JOHN 17 . . . "THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE, THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME!"

WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES IS CERTAIN EVIDENCE OF DISRESPECT FOR GOD AND, ON THE OTHER HAND PRIDE IN SELF!

WHEN MEN EXCHANGE THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR A LIE, THEY BEGIN TO WORSHIP THE CREATURE RATHER THAN THE CREATOR . . . PERHAPS NOT FROGS AND CROCODILES LIKE THE EGYPTIANS . . . BUT MAN WORSHIPPING MAN IS JUST AS DESPICABLE FOR IT IS CREATURE WORSHIP!

9. The Jews of the Prophet's days wrested the scripture by interpreting the promise of the Messiah and His kingdom as one of fleshly indulgence . . . their hearts were filled with unbelief.
10. The Pharisees wrested the scriptures to declare their goods "Corban" . . . they deceitfully handled the Word of God to take oaths by the gold of the altar rather than the altar itself and robbed people and refused to pay pledges (Mt. 23).

THE SEEMING SLACKNESS OF GOD IN BRINGING JUDGMENT UPON DISOBEDIENCE OR PERVERSION OF GOD'S WORD CAUSES MEN TO FEEL THEY CAN USURP GOD AND DO AS THEY PLEASE WITH HIS WORD . . . WRESTING IT TO SERVE THEIR LUSTS.

It is clear that the evidences for Christianity are of such nature that they bring to the surface what is in a man! If one is unwilling to follow Christ because of the demand which such would make on his life, he can think up "reasons" to justify his unwillingness. The real reason—his unwillingness—will be hidden from others by these "rationalizations" and finally even from himself because he does not think beyond these "reasons."

The fact that one must love the truth indicates that the attitude of heart has something to do with whether or not one will believe. He who wants a careless, immoral life will not

want the faith which is a constant rebuke to such a life.

II. Belief is deliberate.

- A. Saving faith is voluntary. Had the revelation of God been so strong that anyone beholding could not disbelieve, it would have overridden moral freedom and this would be evidence unsuitable to moral subjects.
- B. The true purpose of God is not to produce obedience by force, but to treat men as free moral agents.
- C. Belief comes to an informed mind.
 1. Peter writes to "stir up their mind and to call to remembrance the revealed word of God." II Pet. 3:1
 2. God's revelation was made intelligently, and he expects man to apprehend it with the use of intelligence (Rom. 10:17)
 3. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." I Jn. 1:3

Paul "reasoned" with the Jews from the scriptures about the Christ.

WE MUST DELIBERATELY LEARN AND RECEIVE THE FACTS ABOUT GOD, JESUS AND THE BIBLE, BEFORE WE CAN BELIEVE . . . PETER IS ONE WHO PUTS A PREMIUM ON KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST THROUGH THE WORD FOR HE KNOWS THAT BELIEF COMES THIS WAY! (I Pet. 1:22-25; 3:15; II Pet. 1:3-11; 1:12-15; 1:16-21; 3:18)

B. Belief comes to a submissive will.

1. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Jn. 7:17
2. The Pharisees of Jesus day were filled with unbelief because they would not let the word of Christ "have free course in them." Jn. 8:37
3. THIS SAME STUBBORN UNWILLINGNESS TO DO GOD'S WILL LED THE PHARISEES TO REJECT THE COUNSEL OF GOD, REFUSING TO BE BAPTIZED OF JOHN THE

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BAPTIST (Lk. 7:29-a30).

4. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." I Jn. 2:3
5. GOD GAVE MAN A WILL . . . HE GAVE HIM A FREE WILL . . . MAN IS FREE TO SURRENDER TO WHATEVER HE WISHES . . . BELIEF OR UNBELIEF.
- C. Belief comes to a pure heart.
 1. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Does not Jesus mean believe in God?
 2. The honest and good heart is the soil upon which the seed (the word of God) falls and brings forth much fruit. Lk. 8
 3. "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Jn. 3:21

A HEART CALLOUSED BY IMPURITY, GREED, LASCIVIOUSNESS, AND SIN IS HARDENED AGAINST ANY KIND OF BELIEF EXCEPT UNBELIEF! THE HEART THAT IS PURE, CLEAN, AND WHOLESOME IS MALLEABLE, SOFT, COMPASSIONATE, EASILY ENTREATED, RESPONSIVE TO THE HIGHEST AND NOBLEST . . . RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVINE LOVE LETTER . . . GOD'S BOOK OF LOVE!

CONCLUSION

HOW DOES MAN, SNARED IN THE TRAP OF THE DEVIL, BLINDED BY THE DEVIL, DECEIVED BY THE DEVIL INTO UNBELIEF, COME TO BELIEF??

- I. There must be an *a priori* which must be admitted. Man must admit that he is rational and that there are objects and facts to be known. To deny he thinks he must think. Even to represent himself to be irrational he must think rationally!
- II. Many facts (truths) are MORAL FACTS. That is they exhibit, form or display moral character or attributes. All of God's works (both natural and supernatural) exhibit His moral

attributes and character . . . His wrath upon sin; His love for the sinner (cf. Rom. 1:18-22; Acts 14:15-17; Acts 17:22-31; Jn. 3:16, etc.)

- III. The will or the "heart" or the mind of man must be changed or moved or transformed by a presentation of "moral facts" (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 10:3-5; Rom. 10:17).
- IV. Man then makes a choice or gives assent to what he knows to be true and moral and right. An emotion is "an experience brought about by the prospect of some value's being gained or lost. We become emotional about something after receiving the moral facts and reasoning on them—then we make a choice . . . WHICH IS MOST TO BE DESIRED . . . MATERIAL OR SPIRITUAL?
- V. MAN THEN COMES TO FAITH . . . Faith is trust, love, obedience, commitment. Faith is an experience—based squarely on the foregoing steps.

An infamous woman atheist, speaking on the campus of Drake University, asked why she speaks on college campuses, replied, "To corrupt the youth!"

She said, "I believe this would be the best of all possible worlds if everybody were an atheist or an agnostic or a humanist.

"I don't think the church has ever contributed anything to anybody, any place, at any time. I can't pinpoint a period in history or a place in the universe where religion has actually helped the welfare of man.

"There is absolutely no conclusive evidence that Jesus ever really existed, even as a mortal. I don't believe he was a historical figure at all. Until someone proves otherwise, therefore, these stories about him must be considered nothing more than folk tales consisting in equal parts of legend and wish fulfillment. But there is never going to be any way of verifying them one way or the other.

WOULD YOU SAY THIS WOMAN IS A FREE-THINKER . . . ALWAYS WILLING TO INVESTIGATE EVIDENCE . . . OPEN-

MINDED . . . OBJECTIVE!!!?

"Also, I reject the idea of a life hereafter on the same grounds. Do you know anybody who has come back with a first-hand report on heaven? If you do, let me know. Until then you'll pardon me if I don't buy it.

"I agree with Mark Twain, who wrote about the hereafter, that there is no sex in it ; you can't eat anything in it; there is absolutely nothing physical in it. You wouldn't have your brain, you wouldn't have any sensation, you wouldn't be able to enjoy anything—unless you were queer for hymn singing and harp playing. So who needs it? **SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I'D RATHER GO TO HELL.**"

UNBELIEF CAN'T GET ANY MORE DELIBERATE THAN THAT!

It is a matter of choice! Choose ye this day whom you will serve. Why go ye limp between the two sides, if Baal be God worship him. Jesus depicted life as a choice between two ways—not three (no neutrality).

B. FRIENDS THAT FETTER, CHAPTERS 30-31

1. SHAME

TEXT: 30:1-14

- 1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin;
- 2 that set out to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt!
- 3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, the refuge in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.
- 4 For their princes are at Zoan, and their ambassadors are come to Hanes.
- 5 They shall all be ashamed because of a people that cannot

profit them, that are not a help nor profit, but a shame and also a reproach.

- 6 The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.
- 7 For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still.
- 8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.
- 9 For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah;
- 10 that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits,
- 11 get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.
- 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely thereon;
- 13 therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant.
- 14 And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken, breaking it in pieces without sparing; so that there shall not be found among the pieces thereof a sherd wherewith to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.

QUERIES

- a. What was wrong with going down to Egypt for help?
- b. Why would the people not want "right" things prophesied to them?

PARAPHRASE

I hereby threaten you, you rebellious and stubborn children of mine, says the Lord. You make all your plans without once seeking counsel from Me. You conduct all your business affairs and make political alliances without taking My will into account at all. All you are doing is multiplying your sins against Me. Without seeking the counsel of My prophet you have gone down to Egypt to get aid and security. You think Pharaoh is your friend and is able to help you, but he is neither. In fact, in trusting Egypt and the Pharaoh, you will be disappointed, humiliated and disgraced. Even though Pharaoh's princes and ambassadors are making political overtures and promises to you from Zoan and Hanes, you are involving yourself in useless and unprofitable agreements with them which will only bring shame and reproach upon you. This is My omniscient revelation concerning the Beast of the South: You take big risks going through a dangerous and troubled wilderness, populated by wild and fierce animals and poisonous serpents, carrying your nation's riches by caravan loads in tribute to a government that has not the power to help you! Egypt's promises of help are empty promises because, as much as she pledges to help, she is quite unable to do so. I tell you she is "A Big-Mouth that is a Do-nothing." Now, you Isaiah, go write My revelation concerning Egypt for this people in permanent tablet and book form so that future generations may know of Israel's unbelief and that My word is absolutely true. The people of this generation are rebels, liars and they refuse to listen to the proclamation of My word. They say to the prophets, Don't get any more revelations for us; don't preach your truths to us. If you want us to listen to you, give us what we want to hear—pleasant words, illusions, intrigues. Get out of the way of our dealing with Egypt—leave our path clear. We've heard enough about the Holy One of Israel. Leave us alone!

This is what the Holy One of Israel replies to that! Because you hold My word in contempt and put your faith in force

and intrigue and you are relying on this for your safety, you are going to reap the fruits of such perverseness. Calamity will come upon you explosively and suddenly like a damaged wall falls that has a top-heavy bulge from being breached. The Holy One of Israel is going to smash this nation to pieces like a fragile earthenware pot is shattered when it is broken. God's shattering will be very thorough. Nothing usable will be left when he finishes with this nation.

COMMENTS

V. 1-7 FOLLY OF JUDAH: *Hoy* in Hebrew is sometimes translated *woe* but can also mean *alas*, *ho!*, and generally presages grief and threatening. In this case the idea of threat is prevalent. Jehovah is threatening Judah with grief as a result of her perverse folly. Judah's primary foolishness was in making plans and instituting programs without considering God's advice. God advised His people through His written law and through revelations given through prophets and other messengers. But the people paid only lip-service attention to these. Judah conducted her commercial, social, national and international relations all without knowing or caring what God's will was in any of these areas. She was just like her sister, Israel, a few years before (cf. Hosea 4:1-6; 5:4, 13; 8:1-5; 8:9-10; 10:3, etc.). Israel was like a silly dove, without sense, calling to Egypt and Assyria (Hosea 7:10-11). Now Judah plays the stupid fool calling to Egypt.

The Jews were a specially called society. Their social, political and cultural structure was uniquely structured. They were called to commit their total existence (political, social, cultural international) to the guidance and glorification of Jehovah. When they did not do so, they forfeited their reason for being. Actually, all human governments are ordained by God in order to serve and minister to His divine purposes in the earth (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). When they refuse to know and be guided by God's will in their national and international

relationships they also forfeit their reason for approval by God. So, we have here a revelation through Isaiah of divine principles for all, both citizens and leaders, concerned with human governments. Governments wishing to have God's approval today must conduct their national affairs and international agreements according to peace with liberty, justice, compassion, truth, righteousness for all men for these are principles for which God ordains human government.

The second violation Judah made of her divine destiny was, having refused the guidance of God, turning to Egypt for help against her enemies. Judah was to find her help in Jehovah. Jehovah had given her plenty of evidence not only of His ability to help, but of His eagerness to help. Egypt would only volunteer to help Judah in order to later exploit Judah for Egypt's profit. However, as willing as Egypt might be to help, she was powerless to do so! Egypt was a "paper tiger."

Egypt's greatness was millenniums old. The Great Pyramid (the greatest and most accurate structure the world has ever known) was built about 4750 B.C. (Abram was not even called by God to begin the Hebrew race until 2700 years later). Probably the most magnificent era of Egyptian culture and power was the 18th Dynasty (1587-1328 B.C.) when Moses and the Hebrew people were there as slaves. Having experienced first hand the imperial power and greatness of Egypt for so many years of her own history (Abraham, Joseph, Moses) Judah would think of Egypt as invincible.

But around 1100 B.C. (near the time of Saul and David), under a succession of Ramessides rulers, Egypt began a cultural and political decline. The self-indulgence and ineptitude of its rulers was mainly responsible for the decline. Ethiopians gained control of all Egypt. For several decades (715-663 B.C.) Egypt was dominated by Ethiopian rule. These new rulers followed ancient political custom of agitating border-states (like Palestine) to revolt against their Mesopotamian overlords. Assyria, which controlled Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and all the territory to the Egyptian

borders had her hands full squelching one revolt after another. In 720 B.C. the Assyrians appointed Akhimiti governor of Ashdod. In 711 Ashdod revolted against Assyria and deposed Akhimiti and made a Greek mercenary its ruler. Sargon, king of Assyria, dispatched an army to besiege Ashdod and overrun the city. Hezekiah was on the throne of Judah—a good man but not the strongest ruler Judah ever had. He was inclined to listen to those who favored the Egyptian philosophy of revolting against Assyria. Isaiah warned Hezekiah and the nation then (Isa. 20:1ff) that following Egyptian policies would be disastrous. Sargon's annals indicate Judah was a party to the revolt of Ashdod. Sargon writes that the Greek ruler of Ashdod tried to persuade the rulers of Judah, Edom and Moab to join his revolt and also invoked the aid of "Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them." The Assyrians were as accurate in their evaluation of Egyptian powerlessness as Isaiah was! The Greek ruler of Ashdod fled to Egypt when Sargon overran the city—but the Egyptians thought it politically expedient to deliver him up to the Assyrians. Judeans were fools to think they could trust the Egyptians to save them from the Assyrians!

Sargon died in 705 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. As usual, the death of one emperor and the coming to the throne of a new one touched off widespread political revolt among tributary nations. Merodach-baladan returned to Babylon from exile and reclaimed rights to the rule of that area. He also began a program of inciting other tribute-paying nations to revolt against Assyria. He sent an embassy to Hezekiah to prod him into joining the revolt. At the same time Egypt was also busy with her usual promises to help Judah throw off the Assyrian yoke. So our present chapter is a warning from the prophet of God that Judah is not to listen either to Merodach-baladan or the Egyptian king Shabaka, but to God.

But the princes of Judah had already made contacts. They had gone to Zoan, in the northeastern part of the Nile delta and to Hanes (which may have been the Heracleopolis Magna,

fifty miles upstream from Cairo), to meet with Egyptian ambassadors and plot against Assyria. But they are simply tightening the Assyrian noose around their own necks as they discover in a few short years (Isaiah, chapters 36-39). They are going to suffer humiliation and embarrassment when Egypt proves impotent to help them!

They will not heed the prophet's warning. They are obsessed with dependence upon Egypt. They send ambassadors, messengers and caravans laden with Judah's treasures (v. 6) through wild, dangerous, beast-infested country to work out alliances with a decadent, pagan, powerless people. Their troubles and treasures will all be for nothing!

Isaiah calls into play both humor and sarcasm. His oracle ("burden") concerns the *behemoth* (great beast) of the South (Egypt). But in verse 7, he calls Egypt "Rahab that sitteth still." *Rahav* in Hebrew means, *big mouth*, or *puffed up—arrogant*. The Hebrew word that is translated "sitteth still" is *shavvath*, or *sabbath* which means, of course, *rest, inactivity*, etc. So the pretended behemoth is really a big mouthed, do-nothing. Egypt is a "paper tiger." Judah will seek her help in vain.

V. 8-14 FURY OF JEHOVAH: In this section the Lord expresses through the prophet His righteous wrath against a nation deliberately refusing to accept His guidance and deliverance. First, the Lord directs the prophet to make a permanent record of His revelation concerning Egypt's helplessness and Judah's folly. Isaiah is to write this revelation on *lukha*, a tablet of stone or wood (probably wood), and then he is to write it in a *sepher*, a ledger, a book, in epistolary form. This emphasizes two things: the seriousness of the message and the need for its permanency. If Judah will not listen now, as Isaiah is giving the message orally, perhaps future generations will read of Jehovah's guidance, Judah's folly and Egypt's failure, in written form, *after the fact of its fulfillment*, and repent of their attitude toward Jehovah. Written testimony of supernatural revelation, tested through centuries of attack and investigation are much more conducive to creating faith

than experiencing the supernatural events as eyewitnesses (e.g., the difficulty of many of the Jews in believing in Jesus while He was alive, but turning to Him many years after the events of His life were recorded in the Gospels).

Second, Jehovah delivers through Isaiah the indictment He has against Judah. Judah is rebellious, deceitful, and unheeding. A grateful son is expected to be obedient to the Father's guidance, but Judah is an ingrate and a stubborn rebel. She not only refuses to hear the word of God, she presumes to instruct God's messengers what to say to her. They blatantly announce their refusal to want to hear "right" things and their desire to hear *khalag* (smooth, flattering, slippery) things, and *mehathaloth* (lofty, illusory, deluding) things. It is almost incredible that a people who had vowed so emphatically under Moses, Samuel, David and other leaders, to adhere to the law of God, chose to set themselves so emphatically against His law. It is difficult to believe that a majority of the Hebrew people would instruct their prophets to flatter and delude them. Isaiah is not the only prophet to record such a perverse attitude (cf. Micah 2:6-11; Jer. 6:10-19; Ezek. 2:3-7; 3:4-11, etc.). But the prophet of God was not held responsible for their hearing—only for his preaching (cf. Ezek. 2:5). In verse 11 the people are represented as commanding the prophets to give up walking in the way of Jehovah (the ancient paths, cf. Jer. 6:10-19). And the prophets are commanded to cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from their presence. The word translated *cease* is *hasheveethu* and is another form of the word *shavvath* used in verse 7. They want Isaiah to put the Holy One of Israel to rest. They want a do-nothing God. They are especially agitated at the repeated emphasis on the *holiness* of God. It is a constant stabbing at their consciences to hear of the *Holy* One of Israel.

But the Holy One of Israel is going to act. And He is going to act according to His holiness! Because they have held His word in contempt and trusted in *'asheq* (fraud, violence, injustice, oppression) and in perverseness (ability to deceive, manipulate, despoil) He is going to bring them down. They

had gone so far as to *rely* on these machinations. These evil ways became the base and structure of their whole existence! God is going to allow them to reap the fruit of their evil thinking and doing. A society of moral, conscionable beings cannot hold together on a base of such moral perversity. Human social structures, whether small (as a home) or large (as a nation) must be conducted on a modicum of trust, honesty, purity, truth, respect for authority, compassion. If such values are held in contempt and perverted that social structure will disintegrate of itself. It will become a raging jungle where all inhabitants prey on one another. When the rulers and political leaders of a nation despise and pervert these principles it becomes a "breach" in the wall and soon the whole wall is weakened and falls. The "breach" is unnoticed by many, at first, but it gradually does its weakening work until the wall falls suddenly and everyone wonders why, all of a sudden, the wall falls. Jehovah will also exercise direct judgment upon Judah and smash her into fragments like a broken potter's vessel (cf. Jer. 19:1ff). What a picture of the future of Judah!—smashed and scattered into pieces, good for nothing!

QUIZ

1. How did Judah copy her sister, Israel, in conducting her business?
2. How did the Jews forfeit their reason for being a special nation?
3. Why couldn't Egypt help Judah against Assyria?
4. How intense was Judah's appeal to Egypt for help?
5. How is Egypt characterized by God?
6. What are the instructions of the people to Isaiah and other prophets of God about their messages?
7. Upon what base were the people building their society?

2. SALVATION

TEXT: 30:15-33

- 15 For thus said the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.
- 16 But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
- 17 One thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.
- 18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him.
- 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee.
- 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers;
- 21 and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
- 22 And ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven images of silver, and the plating of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as an unclean thing; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.
- 23 And he will give the rain for thy seed, wherewith thou shalt sow the ground; and bread of the increase of the ground, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
- 24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the ground shall eat savory provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and the fork.

- 25 And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon every high hill, brooks and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.
- 26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the hurt of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.
- 27 Behold, the name of Jehovah cometh from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is as a devouring fire;
- 28 and his breath is as an overflowing stream, that reacheth even unto the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction: and a bridle that causeth to err shall be in the jaws of the peoples.
- 29 Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel.
- 30 And Jehovah will cause his glorious voice to be heard, and will show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and the flame of a devouring fire, with a blast, and tempest, and hailstones.
- 31 For through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be dismayed; with his rod will he smite him.
- 32 And every stroke of the appointed staff, which Jehovah shall lay upon him, shall be with the sound of tabrets and harps; and in battles with the brandishing of his arm will he fight with them.
- 33 For a Topheth is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is made ready; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

QUERIES

- a. How will they be saved by rest? v. 15

- b. When would they "cast away" their molten images of gold?
- c. What does Assyria (v. 31) have to do with this context?

PARAPHRASE

This is what the Holy One of Israel, the One from whom you wish to hear no more, says: In turning again unto Me in humility you will find salvation; in calm trust in Me you will find power—but you refuse to do so. You actually said, No, we will find our safety in fleeing to Egypt upon fast horses. Our salvation will be in our swiftness. Yes, if it is swiftness you wish to see, you shall see it, but it will be the swiftness of your enemies coming upon you. If it is fleeing you wish to see, you shall see that also. Indeed one thousand of you shall flee at the threat of just a very few of your enemies. There will be so few of you left after the fleeing before your enemies, those few will be like the solitary mast pole of a ship—standing all by itself. So, because of your attitude, the Lord will wait to show mercy to you until He has first completed His work of judgment. The Lord is a Lord of justice, and therefore He must uphold His exalted name in judgment before He can be gracious. All who wait with endurance upon the Lord to fulfill His purposes will find blessedness. Indeed, you who wait upon the Lord will dwell in Zion, even in the Holy City, where My presence is. There shall be an end to your weeping. The Lord will be gracious to you when He hears your cry to Him. As soon as He hears your cry of repentance and turning to Him, He will answer you. Although the Lord is going to give you a diet of adversity and affliction for awhile, the time will soon come when your God-sent teachers will no longer have to hide from threats to their lives. You will once again be able to see and hear true teachers from God calling you back to the true way where God wants you to walk. They will keep you from erring in walking on the wrong way. And in that day you will despise your expensive and precious idols as repulsive things and cast them away, saying, Good riddance, away with you! Then God

will make you prosperous. He will bless you with rain at planting time and make what you plant produce abundantly and bring forth broad pastures for your flocks. Your livestock will eat the best kind of feed. In that day, when God defeats your enemies, He will give you refreshment like cool, clear streams of water flowing down every mountain and hill. In that day, when the Lord treats the illness of His people and heals them, the glory of God and the abundance of His blessings upon His people will be so magnificent it will be like a sevenfold intensification of the shining of the sun and moon. Behold, the Lord, who before removed Himself because of the sins of His people, will come in the day of their repentance, aflame with wrath, lips filled with fury, consuming His enemies by His word. His wrath will pour out upon them and sweep them away like a flood which drowns; they will be destroyed like chaff from a sieve; they will be led by their errors to their doom as a horse is led by its bridle. But the Lord's people will have a festive song to sing like the songs of their holy feast days. The same kind of gladness of heart exhibited when worshippers go up to the mountain of the Lord playing on their flutes and other instruments will be the gladness that the Lord's people will have at that time. The Covenant-God will cause the majesty of His voice to be heard in the deliverance of His people. He will exhibit the power of His arm to save His people and destroy His enemies. His destruction will be terrible and complete. By the power of the word of God His enemies, the Assyrians, will cease to exist. Every stroke with which the Lord smites His mighty rod of punishment, the Lord's people will rejoice at their deliverance with music and song. In wars of heavenly power God will shake down His enemies to destruction. For ages and ages a cremating of His enemies has been prepared by the Lord. Jehovah has prepared a massive funeral pyre for the ruler of His enemies. Like brimstone which set on fire Sodom and Gomorrah, the breath of the Lord will consume His enemies.

COMMENTS

V. 15-22 REPENTANCE: It is interesting to note how often Isaiah uses the phrase, "the Holy One of Israel," to henceforth refer to God. It is undoubtedly deliberate on the prophet's part to rebuke and bring to repentance those who earlier (30:10-11) insisted they did not want to hear any more of "the Holy One of Israel." The most used Hebrew word for repentance in *nahkam* but in verse 15 the word describing the action involved in repentance, *beshoovah* or, "in turning," is used. The word *nahkath* which means "bring down, or humble" is also used but translated "rest." Isaiah is really saying that the salvation of this proud and rebelling people is to be found in returning to the Lord in humility and penitence. It is going to take drastic action on their part. Isaiah uses the words *sheket*, quietness, and *batahk*, trust, confidence, to inform his people where strength is to be found. The clamness which comes from trust in the Lord is the strength they will need to save their nation from its present corruption and inevitable disintegration and defeat. Judah's rulers are presently in a state of turmoil, indecision, conflict and strife about going to Egypt or not going to Egypt for help against Assyria. Proud and haughty, self-sufficient and carnal-minded, they refuse to trust in the Lord's way because His way demands trial, testing and discipline (cf. Heb. 3:7-19). Christian discipleship is difficult. Jesus always taught those who would follow Him to "count the cost." Few enter because the "way is strait." The majority of people in Isaiah's day deliberately chose to reject God—they "would not" turn and humble themselves (cf. Jer. 6:16-19; Ezek. 2:1-7; 3:6-11).

Quite the contrary to humbling themselves and turning to the Lord, the majority of people are confident in their preparations to flee from the Assyrians on swift horses. People then put their trust in horses (cf. Gen 50:9; Ex. 14:6ff; 15:1; II Chron. 12:3; Jer. 46:4; II Kings 18:24; Deut. 17:16) like people today put their trust in military weapons. Isaiah predicts they will see some swift horses, but they will be the swift horses of the

Assyrians who pursue them. Isaiah's people will also do some fleeing! Their enemies will be so terrible and awesome it will only take a few of them to put hundreds of Jews to rout. There will be so few people left when the Assyrians come, what remains will be so alone they will look like a lonely signal fire in the night—like a solitary flag pole on a hill. This probably refers to the days of Hezekiah when the Assyrians had overrun and devastated all of Palestine except the city of Jerusalem and they had laid siege to that!

Isaiah continues to tell his audience what their relationship to the Holy One of Israel ought to be—repentance. Jehovah is going to “wait” awhile before He has mercy upon His people. Jehovah's “waiting” period will involve an exhibition of His justice in judging the enemies of His people, the bread of adversity and water of affliction for His people, the crying of His people unto Him, their paying heed to their teachers and casting away of their idols. This “waiting” period of Jehovah is His program to work repentance in His people. His people must be prepared to receive His mercy. In their rebellious, ungodly attitude they do not even desire His mercy. They must see His judgment upon themselves and their enemies, cry to Him, listen to His teachers and purge themselves of false gods. Then they are ready to want and appreciate His mercy. Verse 21 seems to indicate that the attitude of the people of Isaiah's day toward their teachers was one of malice and hate. The prophets often were obliged to hide lest the people kill them for declaring the word of God. There must be a complete change of attitude toward who God is and what He says through His teachers, before they are ready for God's great blessings.

This section probably refers initially to the captivities of Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians and the restoration under Ezra and Zerubbabel. It is true the Jews learned their lesson about idolatry in the captivity. They never again worshipped images. However, in Jesus' day the Pharisees had made an idol of their traditions. It is our opinion that the ultimate fulfillment of this passage and the verses that follow

is found in the Messiah and His kingdom, the church.

V. 23-26 **RESTORATION:** These verses are figurative hyperbole to describe the great way in which God will prosper His people upon their repentance and turning back to Him. It does not seem to be intended to be understood literally. There are things which, so far as history knows, have never happened literally—and should they happen literally they would bring an end to life on our planet, i.e., the moon becoming as the light of the sun and the sun's light increasing sevenfold! It is even doubtful that animals ever ate as well as they are described to eat in verse 24. It is also a matter of record that Palestine has never known literally a time when there were brooks and streams upon every lofty mountain and every high hill! It is apparent that Isaiah is talking in "times coloring" of the great spiritual blessings that are to come as a result of the repentance of God's covenant people when God "binds up the hurt of his people, and heals up the stroke of their wound." It is the binding up and healing that is to come through the Messiah (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). It is through the Messiah God's people are to prosper (cf. Isa. 53:10-12).

V. 27-33 **REJOICING:** After repentance and restoration comes rejoicing. The Lord's people are portrayed as rejoicing when they see the all-powerful deliverance given to them by Him. He is coming from His place, burning with His anger and He will destroy His enemies with the word of His mouth. If God can bring the universe into existence by His word, He can destroy His enemies by the word of His mouth. His defeat of His enemies is inevitable and all consuming. Their defeat will be complete. Jehovah is going to bring this judgment upon the *goyim* (Gentiles, nations). The nations are brought to Him to be judged as beasts compelled by a halter or bridle are led to sacrifice. God will bring His enemies to judgment even against their will to be brought. When this great victory of God occurs it will result in a great deliverance for His people and this will cause His people to sing and rejoice at their redemption. God's people do not rejoice in a malicious attitude at the destruction of others—they are praising God for His

glory and faithfulness. Their deliverance will be like a great feast!

Verse 30 indicates that the main purpose of judgment and deliverance is to cause God's voice to be heard and His power to be exhibited. The initial focus of this judgment and deliverance will be upon Assyria. God will defeat the Assyrians in a stupendous, miraculous way when they surround Jerusalem in the day of Hezekiah (cf. Isa. 36-39). But it seems to refer to a much greater and more complete victory of the Lord over "the nations" and Assyria is its beginning.

The word *battles* in verse 32 is *tenoophah* which means more precisely, *shaking*. God is going to shake all the nations. All kingdoms of men oppose God's kingdom. He is going to shake them all down and establish a kingdom that cannot be shaken (cf. Heb. 12:25-29). God is going to thoroughly destroy His enemies. He is going to bury them. Topheth was located in the valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem and was the place where unbelieving Israelites offered up their sons and daughters to Moloch. Here, too, the refuse of the city was deposited and burned; the fires burned continually. Thus the place came to take on the name Gehenna, i.e., the valley of Hinnom, and was a symbol of the place of eternal destruction.

The point of all this is found in the key words we have used in each section: Repentance, Restoration, Rejoicing. The Hebrew people had decided to find deliverance from their enemies (Assyria) in human governments and earthly programs (Egypt). Isaiah declares that the true people of God find their deliverance in turning to Him, because God is going to completely destroy all the nations, beginning with Assyria. Daniel symbolizes this so clearly in the vision of the great image (Dan. 2) and the vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7). The ultimate fulfillment of all this is accomplished in that great victory of God at Calvary, the Empty Tomb and Pentecost when God defeated man's greatest enemy, Satan, and established His kingdom on earth, the church.

QUIZ

1. Why does Isaiah begin by mentioning the Holy One of Israel?
2. Name the four things associated with their salvation?
3. How had the people decided to save themselves?
4. Why was Jehovah determined to wait?
5. Why are verses 23-26 probably not literal?
6. What is the point of all this section?

SPECIAL STUDY

OLD TESTAMENT NAMES FOR GOD

by Robert D. Stacy

INTRODUCTION

Hardly has there been a time in which mankind did not seek after a god of some kind. As far back as the eye of history looks, it sees man worshipping. He may be worshipping the heavenly bodies. He may be worshipping the rushing sea or mighty mountain. He may be worshipping another man or even himself. But man is inherently a being who seeks something to worship.

As the eye of history focuses on the small nation of Israel, however, it sees a type of worship which is quite unique. The One God, whom Israel claims to worship, is invisible. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life, the Ruler of the universe. And He cannot be represented by wood or stone images. Before Him there is no other god.

The God of Israel was essentially (1) personal, (2) spiritual (3) sole and supreme, (4) of an inapproachably lofty ethical character. . . . Personality . . . is a distinctive feature of the God of the Old Testament throughout.¹

¹ W. T. Davison, "God," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (London: T. & T. Clark, 1914), VI, 254.

To Israel the name of God was of major importance. It was in the name of God that Israel walked. It was in His name that she worshipped. In His name she spoke, and to His Name she attached special reverence and significance.

When God is in communication with men, they must have a name for Him. For the Hebrews . . . a name is no colourless appellation serving merely for use. It must be more; it must really express the character of the person indicated and his real importance; or it must embody a declaration of faith, a hope which those who give the name connect with the person named.²

But it is vital to understand, too, that

since God far transcends all human comprehension, He can, strictly speaking, have no name—He is “Nameless,” “Unutterable,” . . . The divine names then are but attempts to express certain facets of God’s being; they teach us what concepts Israel had regarding God.³

One name could never have adequately described the many aspects of God’s nature and personality. And thus it is necessary that the student of the Bible discover the meanings of the most important names given to God in the Hebrew Scripture.

YHWH

There is no name given to God which occurs more frequently in the Old Testament than the personal name, YHWH. This is the name translated LORD in the Authorized or King James Version of 1611 and Jehovah in the American Revised Version

² Hermann Schultz, *Old Testament Theology, The Religion of Revelation in Its Pre-Christian Stage of Development*, trans. J. A. Patterson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), II, 13.

³ Paul Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. William Heidt (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1950), 48.

of 1901. This name "occurs more than twice as often as the generic term, *Elohim*."⁴ In all, YHWH occurs 6,823 times in the Hebrew Scriptures.⁵ By far, it was "the favorite name for devotion and worship"⁶ among the Hebrew people. The books of prophecy and the books of wisdom and poetry regularly employ this name for God.⁷

The origin for this name is a cause for great disagreement among the etymologists. Though the majority of scholars agree that this is the "... proper personal name of the God of Israel, as contrasted with strange gods. . . .,"⁸ they cannot reach unanimity of opinion regarding its origin. There are those who claim that "... this name was known at Ras Shamra, where it stood in the form of *YW the son of El*."⁹ Very little consideration is given to this opinion, however, in most scholarly circles. Others contend that the Kenites were the first to worship YHWH. Since Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, is identified with the Kenites and is conjectured to have been a high priest of YHWH, it is thought that this accounts for the introduction of the name into the Israelite community.¹⁰ Of this explanation, one author states that it "... is more than dubious."¹¹

The best explanation of the name is found in the Bible account of the burning bush (cf. Exodus 3:1-15) and in the words of God, Himself, revealed in Exodus 6:3, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to

⁴ H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Characteristic Doctrines," *Record and Revelation Essays on the Old Testament by members of the Society for Old Testament Study*, ed. H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1938), 321.

⁵ Nathan J. Stone, *Names of God in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1944), 19.

⁶ Robinson, 322.

⁷ Richard Lewis Farnell, *The Attributes of God* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952), 106.

⁸ Schultz, 125.

⁹ Stone, 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Davison, 254.

them."¹² It is quite obvious from these Biblical passages that this was the official introduction of this name into the Hebrew faith. There are some who would dispute this contention, however, on the grounds that the name, YHWH, is found in Genesis. When this name does occur in Genesis, however, it is the author's intent to show that the same God who manifested Himself to Moses "... had directed the destinies of mankind from the beginning."¹³ Because the name appears in Genesis is not proof that the patriarchs were acquainted with the name, or at least with the full significance of the name. "In any case, the fundamental point is that the new name received a very special significance"¹⁴ from the time of Moses onward.

There is as much disagreement among Old Testament scholars concerning the derivation of the name as there is concerning its origin. Some attempt to explain the meaning as derived from the Hebrew root meaning "to fall." According to these scholars, it would then indicate "... some sacred object, such as a stone fallen from heaven."¹⁵ Another group holds to the theory that the name is from the same root, also, but this school favors the meaning "to blow." YHWH then would be the god of the wind and the storm. The greatest majority, however, contend that the root of YHWH is *hayah*, meaning "to be." Within this majority there is a division of opinion regarding the verb stem from which the name is derived. One group believes that the form is the hiphil, a causative construction. Thus the name would mean "he who causes to be" and would designate YHWH as Creator.¹⁶ It is held by the other division that "... the Hiphil of ... is very rare ...,"¹⁷ and these scholars believe that YHWH is the Qal, imperfect,

¹² Scriptural quotations are from American Revised Version unless cited.

¹³ Heinisch, 53.

¹⁴ Heinisch, 53.

¹⁵ J. F. McLaughlin, "Names of God," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1905), IX, 161.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis with Introduction and Notes* (London: Methuen and Company, 1904), 408.

third person, singular of the verb. If this view be correct, then the name emphasizes the existence in His various relationships to Israel as the covenant nation. It can be said with reasonable certainty that the idea of a Being who manifests Himself is to be found in this name. "There is no doubt that the idea of life was intimately connected with YHWH from early times."¹⁸

YHWH is referred to as the "ineffable name" because at some time in the history of Israel the name became too holy to be pronounced. Substituted for the name (in reading) when it stood alone in the Hebrew text was Adonai. When YHWH was compounded with Adonai, however, Elohim became its substitute. The common English pronunciation, Jehovah, is considered a mispronunciation by most scholarship. It arose through pronouncing the vowels of Adonai with the consonants, YHWH. ". . . there is no authentic information"¹⁹ concerning the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton (so called because of its four consonants, YHWH).

Although the other names of God may have been derived from the character or work of God, YHWH is the name that expresses His personality. There is no other YHWH. In this name is revealed to man an eternal God, one who is wholly self-existent, one who is righteous and holy in every aspect of His relationships, one who ". . . stands in special covenant relation to Israel,"²⁰ and one who possesses moral and spiritual attributes. YHWH is ". . . the cause and the ground of all being, faithful to His promise, and constant in His relationship with His people."²¹

ELOHIM

The general term for deity in the Old Testament is Elohim, and it is used for foreign gods as well as for the God of Israel.

¹⁸ McLaughlin, 161.

¹⁹ Kaufmann Kohler, "Adonai," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, I, 201.

²⁰ Stone, 59.

²¹ W. T. Davison, 254.

Used to refer to such foreign deities as Dagon, Beelzebub, and Chemosh, it is also the name by which God is introduced in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." From this verse through Genesis 2:4, Elohim is employed thirty-five times. In all, it occurs 2,570 times in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The peculiar aspect of this word, Elohim, is its plural number. It is a masculine plural noun in the original language. Various explanations are given as solutions to this peculiarity. It is quite generally acknowledged by scholars that this plural is a plural of majesty which would indicate eminence and supremacy or ". . . fullness and abundance of power and resources."²² This plural, they agree, also may indicate unity. The plural number then, according to this opinion, ". . . helps to increase the significance of the word, and to express the fulness of power and majesty which is exclusively connected with the unity of person."²³

Others reject this explanation stating that ". . . such use of plural was not known then."²⁴ This school of thought holds that Elohim is ". . . a name usually given in the Scriptures to the ever blessed Trinity by which they represent themselves as under the obligation of an oath to perform certain conditions. . . . Elohim covenanted not only with the creation but, as the Godhead, within itself, concerning the creation."²⁵ Those holding this position believe the plural to be a plural of unity, also, but in this unity, they claim is the Holy Trinity. Pointing to Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7, they find proof in the plural "us" that Elohim refers to the three distinct personalities of the Godhead. They further claim that the singular verbs and adjectives used when Elohim refers to the God of Israel point to the unity of the Godhead, the Trinity.²⁶ Many conservative

²² Davison, 254.

²³ Schultz, 126.

²⁴ Stone, 16.

²⁵ Stone, 14.

²⁶ Heinisch, 49.

scholars, as well as liberal scholars, have found it necessary to reject this explanation because it is based, for the most part, on conjecture.²⁷

Regarding the derivation of this word, there are at least two major explanations. There are, on the one hand, those who hold that Elohim “. . . is derived from the shorter word, ‘El,’ which means mighty, strong, prominent.”²⁸ The name, in that case, would emphasize the great strength and power of God. Recognizing that power and strength are root meanings of this word, it is also believed that Elohim “. . . contains the idea of creative and governing power”²⁹ (cf. Genesis 1:1—2:4 where Elohim is used thirty-five times). There are others, however, who believe this name is derived from the root, “alah,” which means “to declare or swear.”³⁰ This derivation implies a covenant relationship (cf. Genesis 6:18, 50:24, Jeremiah 31:33). Still others believe Elohim is derived from an Arabic verb, “alih,” which means “to seek refuge because of fear.” If this explanation be true, then Elohim would be the God to be revered or feared.³¹ Whatever the correct explanation, Elohim is “more a philosophical than devotional term and corresponds to our term, Deity. . . .”³²

SHADDAI

The name by which God first made Himself known to the Patriarchs was Shaddai. In Exodus 6:2, 3 are recorded these words: “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto Him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ McLaughlin, 161.

³² John McClintock and James Strong (ed.), *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), III, 901.

unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." Often the name appears as a compound expression, El-Shaddai. It is used for the first time in Genesis 17:1, 2 where these words are recorded: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Altogether it appears forty-eight times in the Old Testament Scriptures.³³

The derivation of this name is as vague and obscure as are the derivations of YHWH and Elohim. When compounded with El, it is translated God Almighty and when standing alone, it is translated simply, Almighty. There are some who believe Shaddai is derived from "sadam" which means to be powerful. From this comes the translation, "almighty" or "all-powerful one."³⁴ At the same time, there are scholars who ". . . align it with Accadian *sadu*, mountain, and see in the name the meaning, sovereign, lord, highest."³⁵ According to one author, "the studies of Albright, Burrows, and others have definitely established that Shaddai is somehow to be related to the cuneiform *sadu*, 'mountain.' "³⁶ There are some who believe Shaddai is derived from the word meaning, "breast." "Connected with the word for God, El, it then becomes the One mighty to nourish, satisfy, supply . . . the One who 'sheds forth' and 'pours out' sustenance and blessing. . . ."³⁷ The Septuagint translates the Hebrew word, Shaddai, with the Greek, *hikanos*, all-sufficient.³⁸ Whichever root is decided upon as correct, it is true that Shaddai depicts a mighty God, high and lifted up, who is able to supply every human need.

³³ Stone, 31.

³⁴ Heinisch, 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Herbert Gordon May, "The Patriarchal Idea of God," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LX (June, 1941), Part II, 122.

³⁷ Stone, 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

ADONAI

The name, Adonai, appears some 300 times in the Old Testament. It is used for the first time in Genesis 15:2, "And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" In various places, as here, the name appears in a compound form. For instance, "in the prophecy of Ezekiel the name Adonai Jehovah appears some 200 times."³⁹ After the Hebrews became fearful of uttering the personal name of God, YHWH, Adonai became the chief substitute in the spoken language. To this day it is used in place of YHWH in speaking.

Adonai is derived from 'adun, which means "to judge."⁴⁰ It is the intensive plural and possessive, which according to some, suggests the Trinity even as Elohim may.⁴¹ In the Septuagint the common *kurios* is used in place of the Hebrew, adonai.⁴² This name describes God as the Judge or the Master to whom man is subservient. It "signifies ownership or mastership. . . ."⁴³ And it is evident throughout the Old Testament that those who accepted Adonai as Master acknowledged that they were His slaves. It is important to understand, however, that the relationship was not that of a taskmaster over his slaves, but rather it was the affectionate relationship of a loving master who took care of his servants. The use of this name makes clear that which God expects of His creatures. In Genesis 15:2, for example, ". . . Abraham understood what this relationship meant; . . . Lordship meant complete possession on the one hand and complete submission on the other."⁴⁴ This name emphasized, more than any other, the responsibility of the individual to his God.

³⁹ Stone, 51.

⁴⁰ Heinisch, 50.

⁴¹ Stone, 46.

⁴² Robinson, 322.

⁴³ Stone, 46.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 48.

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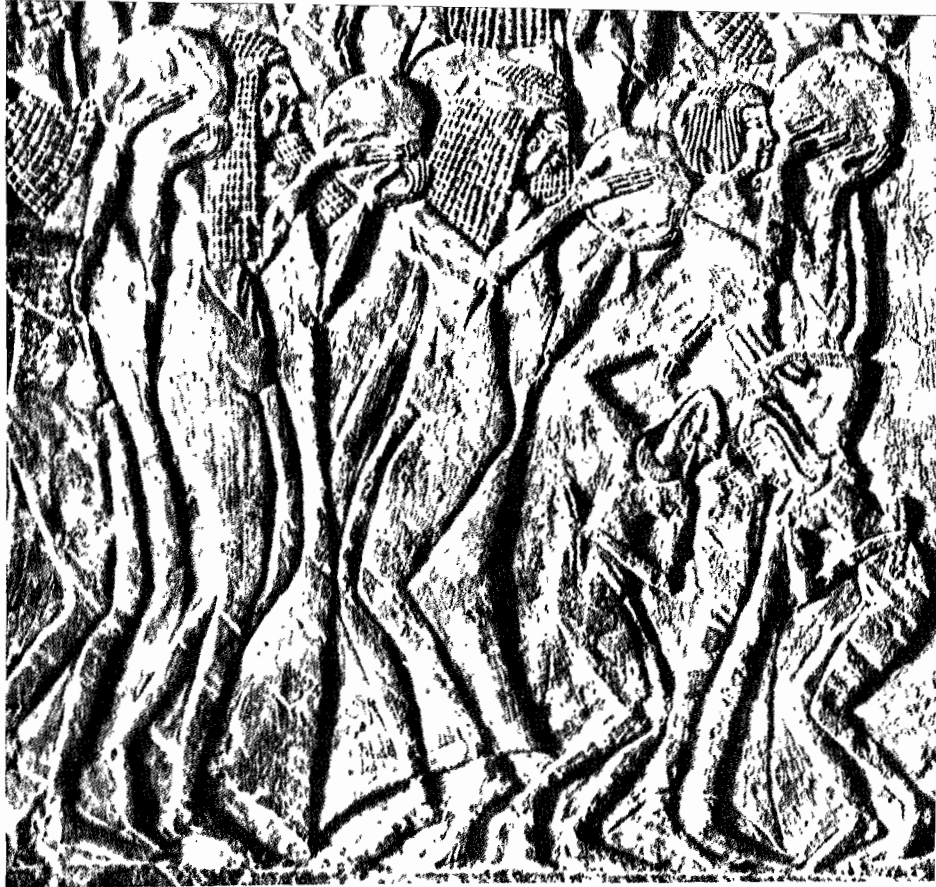
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3. SWORD

TEXT: 31:1-9

- 1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!
- 2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.
- 3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.
- 4 For thus saith Jehovah unto me, As the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so will Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof.
- 5 As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it.
- 6 Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel.
- 7 For in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.
- 8 And the Assyrian shall fall by the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become subject to task-work.
- 9 And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.



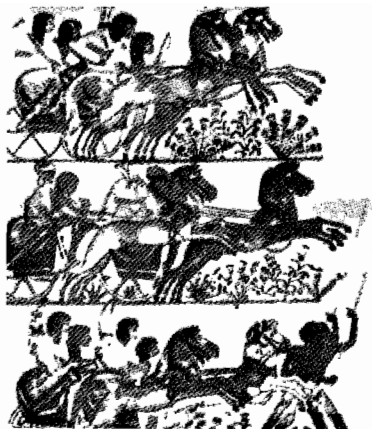
"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea"
(Exodus 15: 20-21).

The timbrel or tabret, here seen being played by Egyptian dancing-girls, was a kind of tambourine, a wooden framework covered with hide. It was used to provide a rhythmic accompaniment for the choral dance which was led off by the prophetess Miriam as an expression of joy and thanksgiving for the miraculous escape of Israel from destruction at the hands of the Egyptian army. Later on, King Saul is greeted joyfully in this manner after the slaughter of the Philistines: "... the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets . . ." (I Samuel 18:6).

"And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them" (Exodus 14:7).

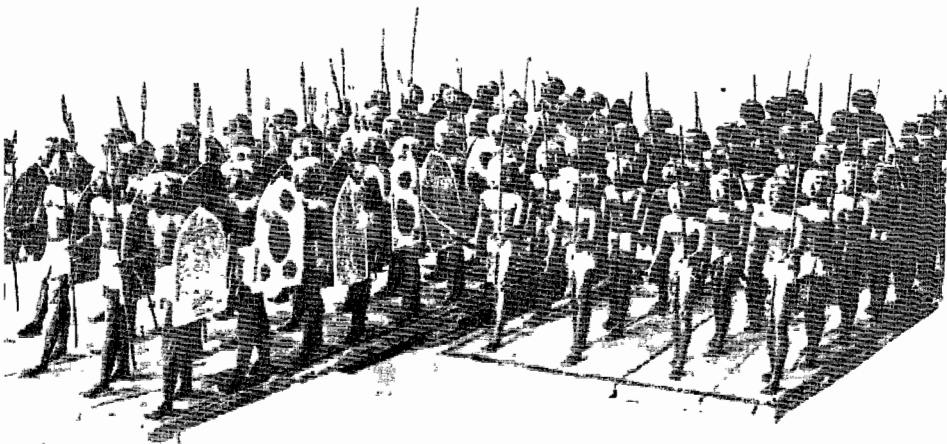
Egyptian war-chariots careering through meadows thick with flowers. Since ever the Hyksos introduced the horse into Egypt about 1700 B.C., the light two-wheeled chariot played an increasingly important role in Egyptian strategy. The chariot corps became a powerful striking force, operating in sections of twenty-five machines. Each car had a driver and a fighting-man, who was armed with bow, spear and shield. The quiver was fixed to the outside bodywork (as illustrated).

Chariot units of the type seen in this Egyptian picture pursued the people of Israel, according to the biblical record.



"But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army" (Exodus 14:9).

Forty soldiers on the march in four columns of ten (left). Each of them holds a six-foot lance in his right hand and a leather-covered shield in his left. Marching beside them, likewise in four columns of ten, is a company of Nubian archers (right). Each archer carries an unstrung bow in his left hand and a bundle of arrows in his right. This wooden model reproduces accurately what the Bible calls "Pharaoh's army".



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

QUERIES

- a. What "words" would God not call back?
- b. When would Jehovah come down to fight upon mount Zion?
- c. How would the young men of the Assyrians become subject to taskwork?

PARAPHRASE

Cursed are those who run to Egypt for help, relying on Egypt's great numbers of horses, chariots and cavalrymen. Woe to them because they do not turn to the Holy One of Israel, Jehovah, for their help. Jehovah's word is wise and His word is faithful—He is going to keep His word and bring evil upon the evil-doers and upon those from whom they seek help. Let me remind you, these Egyptians are mere men, not God; and their horses mere flesh, not spirit. When Jehovah stretches forth His omnipotent hand against them, both you and your helpers will fall and be consumed. But God has told me this: Just like a lion growling over his prey is not frightened or cowed even when many shepherds shout at him, so the Lord will come down upon Zion and fight against her enemies, the Assyrians, and He will not be frightened or cowed by them. As birds hover over their young to protect them, so Jehovah of hosts will hover over Jerusalem to protect her. He will shield, deliver, pass over and preserve her. Turn back, therefore, O Chosen Nation, to Him from whom you have so completely strayed. The day is soon coming when some of you will indeed recognize that you have rebelled and you will cast away your idols—images made by your own hands which reveal the sin of your hearts. In that day the Assyrians will be destroyed—not by human swords but the sword of God will pursue them and scatter them. The Assyrians, who have laid tribute on so many others will one day have their young men taken in tribute and made slaves. The real strength of the Assyrian nation will be so terrified and its leaders so cowed by fear they will desert

their battle-flag in panic. This is a pronouncement of Jehovah whose fire is in Jerusalem ready to devour His enemies.

COMMENTS

V. 1-3 FEEBLENESS OF EGYPT: The flatness and scarcity of trees in the land of Egypt made it ideal for vast armies of horses and chariots. Classical writers attest to the abundance of horses in Egypt as well as the bas reliefs on ancient Egyptian ruins. Chariots were as awesome against foot soldiers then as tanks and armored vehicles are today. Egypt, with thousands of horses and chariots, would appear to Judah as invincible. Isaiah continues his warning in the strongest and plainest language possible against turning away from Jehovah and seeking help in pagan Egypt.

Judah thinks she is wise in trying to get help from Egypt. But Jehovah is also wise. He is wise enough to know what evil is—going to Egypt; He is wise enough to know who the evil-doers are—Judah; He is wise enough to bring woe upon the evil-doers to try to turn them from their evil; He is wise enough that He never needs to retract His words! God always abides by what He has spoken. He always speaks with full knowledge and perfect foreknowledge (cf. Num. 23:19, etc.).

The prophet may have put some irony or sarcasm into his tone when he spoke these words, "Now the Egyptians are men; and not God. . . ." The great war machine of the Egyptians and all their riches made them appear invincible to tiny Judah! However, Judah is reminded, the Egyptians are merely men—not God. They are not invincible. One is reminded of the people of the Roman empire of the first and second centuries. In that day "the whole earth wondered after the beast" (the Roman emperor), and they made images of the beast and worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" But the apostle John, author of the Revelation to the churches of Asia Minor, told the church that the "beast" was not invincible—in fact

John said he had the beast's number; it was 666, the number of a man. The beast is not invincible, he is human! (cf. Revelation 13:1-18). Isaiah said, Egypt is not God, but man!

The Hebrew word *ruahk* translated *spirit* is also translated *wind* and symbolizes the mighty penetrating power of the Invisible God. The horses and horsemen of the Egyptians are flesh, subject to all the feebleness of flesh, and not spirit! Spirit is a synonym for power. God is *all* power. When He stretches out His hand they will see power like their forefathers witnessed at the parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian army. There may be a veiled reference here to that great wonder of the past. This time, both Egypt (he that helpeth) and the rebellious Israelites (he that is helped) shall fall, and they shall all be consumed together.

V. 4-9 **FEROCITY OF GOD:** The power of God is as awesome as that of a lion devouring a sheep. Call all the shepherds of the land and have them shout at the lion—he will show no fright. Let the Assyrians surround Jerusalem (as they did in Isaiah 36-39) and let them shout at the Lion of the Tribe of Judah—He will show no fright nor will he be cowed by them. In fact, He will pounce upon the taunting Assyrians and devour them (185,000 of them in one night).

The power of God to destroy His enemies will, at the same time, protect and deliver those who put their trust in Him (instead of putting it in Egypt). God will hover over them like a bird hovers over its young. Jesus said He would have gathered Jerusalem under His wings as a hen gathers her chicks, but Jerusalem would not! (cf. Mt. 23:37-39). God is going to protect Jerusalem every way possible. He will protect, deliver, pass over and preserve it. There is no way the Assyrians are going to overrun Jerusalem, if Judah will repent of its haughty and rebellious determination to seek Egypt's help. It seems from the historical record (II Kings 18-20; II Chron. 32; Isa. 36-39) that Hezekiah probably decided initially to seek Egypt's help but then he, and others of Judah, repented and Jerusalem was saved.

But Judah, God's Israel (chosen), must turn back to Him

from whom they had so completely departed (Heb. *saroh*). The Hebrew word translated *deeply* is *aemiyq* and sometimes means *to conspire*. The combination of words *aemiyq saroh* emphasizes the deliberate, almost premeditated, nature of Judah's rebellion against God. The prophet continues by informing the people that the evidence of true repentance will be total renunciation of their idols. These idols were not borrowed or forced upon them by someone else—they were made with their own hands! They are images of the rebellion that is really in their heart. This would be costly, since the images were of gold and silver. Repentance and discipleship unto the Lord which does not cost is not true!

When they repent, the Lord will cause the Assyrian to fall. He is going to fall, not from some military action of man, but from some mysterious, non-human power, (cf. Isa. 37:36). Yet in the latter half of verse 8, the Assyrian is said to flee from the sword. This is probably the sword of Babylon, a hundred years later (612 B.C.), when Assyria was destroyed at the battle of Carchemish and Assyria's young men were probably captured and sold as slaves as was customary in those days. Even the defeat of Assyria by Babylon was permitted by God (cf. Jer. 27:1-11). Isaiah predicts that the mighty Assyrian, whose very name struck terror into the hearts of all men of that day, would some day be terror stricken himself. The "rock" of verse 9 probably refers to the cruel, blood-thirsty, destructive army upon which the Assyrian empire was built. It fled in terror from the Babylonian attack upon Nineveh (cf. Nahum). The beginning of its downfall was when it attacked Zion, the penitent people of God. The remnant of God was protected and delivered from what seemed an invincible enemy. God has been delivering His church from its enemy for centuries (cf. Revelation). And some glorious day the struggle will be over, for God is going to banish His arch enemy, the devil, to eternal death in the lake of fire and brimstone.

QUIZ

1. Why would Judah be tempted to rely on Egypt's horses and horsemen?
2. How does Isaiah emphasize God's wisdom?
3. How does Isaiah 31:3 compare to Revelation 13?
4. How is God going to be like an unfrightened lion?
5. What does God's "hovering" over Jerusalem remind one of in Jesus' words?
6. How emphatic is Isaiah about the Israelite's revolt?
7. When did Assyria "pass away by reason of terror"?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS THIRTY THROUGH THIRTY-ONE

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>burden</i> of the beasts of the South | 7. a <i>Topheth</i> |
| 2. <i>Rahab</i> that sitteth still | 8. the <i>lighting down</i> of his arm |
| 3. <i>returning</i> and <i>rest</i> | 9. horses <i>flesh</i> , and not spirit |
| 4. <i>quietness</i> | 10. as birds <i>hovering</i> |
| 5. ye be left as a <i>beacon</i> | 11. subject to <i>taskwork</i> |
| 6. a <i>bridle</i> that causeth to err | 12. his <i>rock</i> shall pass away |

MEMORIZATION

"Now go, write it before them on a _____, and inscribe it in a _____, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For it is a _____ people, _____ children, children that will not _____ the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See

_____; and to the prophets, Prophecy _____ unto us _____ things, speak unto us _____ things, prophecy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the _____ of Israel to cease from before us." (30:8-11)

"Woe to them that go down to _____ for help, and rely on _____, and trust in chariots because they are _____, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they _____ not unto the _____ of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!" (31:1)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain why Egypt could be of no help to Judah. (30:1-7)
2. Explain how the people of Judah would one day defile their graven images. (30:22)
3. Explain how the Assyrian would fall by the sword not of man. (31:8-9)

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. Why was Judah foolish in making political plans without consulting God's advice and how may this warning be applied to nations today? (30:1-7)
2. Why did the people of Judah wish to hear no more of the Holy One of Israel and what application may be made of this same attitude today? (30:8-17)
3. Why was Judah placing so much reliance on Egypt's horses and what application may be made of such an attitude today? (31:1-3)

C. FUTURE THAT IS FRUITFUL, CHAPTERS 32-33

1. SOVEREIGN

TEXT: 32:1-8

- 1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice.
- 2 And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land.
- 3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
- 4 And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.
- 5 The fool shall be no more called noble, nor the churl said to be bountiful.
- 6 For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise profaneness, and to utter error against Jehovah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
- 7 And the instruments of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the meek with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.
- 8 But the noble deviseth noble things; and in noble things shall he continue.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "king"?
- b. What is a "churl"?

PARAPHRASE

Behold, a king who will reign righteously. His entire kingdom will be characterized by the administration of righteousness

and justice. The man on the throne will be a refuge from danger, a source of life and a resting place. When He comes things will be as they actually should be—people will see as they should see and hear as they should hear; confused men will understand clearly and men will speak the things of God clearly and boldly. In His reign a man will be acknowledged for what he actually is and not for what he appears to be—a fool will not be called a great leader nor will a deceitful man be called noble. The fool will be shown to be what he really is, dedicated to opposing God's will and doing harm to man. And the crafty man, despite all his cunning, is evil because he is dedicated to the exploitation of his fellow man. The truly noble man is one that advises true and pure ways and lives that way also.

COMMENTS

V. 1-2 RULER: Who is the king predicted? Our view is that it can only refer to the Messiah. He will rule in righteousness. The Messiah is the only one who truly reigns in righteousness. We do not think Isaiah is talking about a relatively righteous rule—rather he is predicting a rule that is completely righteous. Furthermore, this king (or perhaps citizens of his kingdom) will become a refuge, a source of life and a rest. Certainly no human king is intended here. What Isaiah is predicting is that sometime in the future (Isaiah does not say exactly when), as a result of God's judgment upon Judah and her consequent repentance, Jehovah is going to send a king to rule in righteousness and be a spiritual benefactor. This king's kingdom will consist of citizens fully converted. The "princes" might be a reference to the apostles whom Jesus said would sit on twelve thrones and judge Israel (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30) which meant the apostles would preach the gospel to the Jews and in so doing give Israel the divine criteria by which God will judge all men. "Princes" might, on the other hand, be merely an adaptation to the mentality of people

used to a monarchy and not intended to refer to any particular person or office in the messianic kingdom.

V. 3-8 RULED: Isaiah wants it understood that when the king reigning in righteousness comes things will be as God wishes them to be. The contrast between this new kingdom and the kingdom of Isaiah's day will be as different as daylight and darkness. Men will see as they should and hear and obey (which is what "hearken" means) as they should. The Hebrew word *mohar* is translated *rash* in verse 4 and could also be translated *hasty* or *impetuous* with the connotation of the confusion resulting from impetuosity and impropriety. In this new kingdom men will not act rashly or out of confusion as the people of Isaiah's day were acting in turning to pagan gods and pagan kings for help. They will not have their minds stupefied by drunkenness so they stammer as they were doing in Isaiah's day (cf. Isa. 28:7-8; 29:9). The Hebrew word *nokal* in verse 5 is translated *churl* in the ASV and *knave* in the RSV. It means someone who is *miserly*, *deceitful*, *crafty* or *fraudulent*. In the messianic reign a man will be known for *what* he is, not *who* he is as was the case in Isaiah's day. In the messianic reign God's covenant people, Christians, are the true realists! They not only see men as they are but as they may potentially be should the power of God's gospel be permitted to make them new creations. Christians "regard no one from a human point of view" (II Cor. 5:6-21) but as they are looked at from God's perspective! The value judgments of the worldly-minded man may cause him to call a man "smart," and "good" when God calls such a man a "fool" (cf. Lk. 12:13-21). Or the worldly-minded man may call the godfearing, Bible-believing person a "fool." But with God's revelation to guide him, the Christian has a set of values that tells him who is the fool and who is the noble man.

But Isaiah reveals in verses 6 and 7 what these people really are who were held in such esteem in his day. The man who profanes God by rebelling against God's law and teaches error against God's word in order to exploit others for his own ends, this man is a fool. There will be none of those in

God's new kingdom. The man who knows the plight of the needy and plots and deceives in order to exploit such a situation is a churl, a knave, and there will be no such people in God's new kingdom. Those who are to be ruled by the king who reigns in righteousness will be noble people. The word used for *noble* in verse 8 is *nediyviym* which connotes *willingness* as opposed to stubbornness, or *liberality* as opposed to obstinancy. It means *noble-mindedness*. This characterizes the attitude and the actions of the citizen of God's new kingdom which is to come.

QUIZ

1. Why is the "king" undoubtedly the Messiah?
2. What is to be the nature of those ruled over by the "king"?
3. Why will the citizens of this "king's" kingdom be realistic?
4. What does "noble" mean in verse 8?

2. SECURITY

TEXT: 32:9-20

- 9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease, and hear my voice; ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech.
- 10 For days beyond a year shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; for the vintage shall fail, the ingathering shall not come.
- 11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones; strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.
- 12 They shall smite upon the breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
- 13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

- 14 for the palace shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be deserted; the hill and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;
- 15 until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest.
- 16 Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness; and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field.
- 17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever.
- 18 And my people shall abide in a peaceable habitation, and in safe dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.
- 19 But it shall hail in the downfall of the forest; and the city shall be utterly laid low.
- 20 Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

QUERIES

- a. Why appeal to the women?
- b. When will the Spirit be poured?
- c. What "city" shall be laid low?

PARAPHRASE

Get up from your lounging around in luxury, you women who have the "I could not care less" attitude, and pay attention to what I have to say to you. In just a little more than a year you are going to change your attitude to that of caring immensely because the vintage which gives you the wine from which you get so much pleasure will fail—there will be no harvest of grapes. You should be trembling now instead of lying around in luxurious ease. You had better strip off all the luxuriant clothes and frivolous dress and put on sackcloth and repent now than wait until you are driven to smite upon

your breasts in mourning for the desolation of judgment that will surely come. When this judgment comes it will turn the land of my people into fields of thorns and briers. Thorns and briers will engulf the whole land, grow up over the houses, and over the palaces, for they will all be deserted. The cities will be empty and wild asses and goats will roam through the ruins of walls and watchtowers, sleeping in them and pasturing in the city gardens. This desolation of His people shall continue until the Spirit is poured down on us from heaven. Then desolation will be turned into abundant blessing. Justice and righteousness shall be sown among His people. Peace and rest and security will be harvested from the sowing of righteousness. My people will have a safe and restful place to dwell. But for my enemies I will rain down a hail-storm of judgment that will sweep them away. But whatever my people do will be prospered with all abundance.

COMMENTS

v. 9-14 WARNING PRONOUNCED: Once again the prophet appeals to the women to repent (cf. Isa. 3:16—4:1). Womanhood is the adhesive fibre of any society. They are the earliest teachers of each succeeding generation; they are the motivators of men; they are keepers of the home which is the essential element of all other social structures. When womanhood becomes decadent or deserts its God-ordained calling the last stronghold of societal cohesion is gone. Isaiah challenges the women of his day, lying around in luxury and self-indulgence, to “rise up” and listen to his warning. The women of Isaiah’s country were probably much like the women of Israel in Amos’ day, revelers, drunkards, greedy and careless (cf. Amos 4:1-2; 6:4-6). The word *careless* in v. 9-10 is from the Hebrew, *betahk*, which means *safe, secure*. Thus, they were “at ease in Zion” with the *false* sense of security brought on by the deceitfulness of sin. The prophet is trying to startle them from their luxurious, indulgent lethargy. Isaiah predicts that in just a little

over a year they will be brought up short because the ingathering of the vintage (the annual grape harvest) will not come as usual and their supply of wine and other luxuries will be unavailable. When the Assyrians swept down through Israel (722 B.C.) and on through Judah (cir. 704-700 B.C.) they practiced the "scorched earth" policy of warfare. Most ancient armies burned and destroyed all fortifications, cities and farmlands as they went so their enemies could not use them. Isaiah is probably writing here about a year before the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (cf. Isa. 36-39). At that time Assyria had conquered and plundered most of Judah with the exception of Jerusalem, and Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were "caged like a bird" by the Assyrian army. All those so safe and secure would tremble then!

Now is the time to tremble, says Isaiah. Repentance now will save you from the judgment of God that will surely come, and its beginning will be in little more than a year. The prophet predicts that unless they have a change of mind and heart about their rebellion and sin, and tremble, the Lord is going to make their once fruitful land a desolate "ghost town." Thorns and briars will grow up and over houses; the palace of the king will be forsaken and Judah's teeming cities will be deserted. Why? Because the people will all be taken captive. Judah was not taken captive for another 100 years after Isaiah's prophecy here, but the judgment of Judah began with Assyria and continued through Babylon until its restoration in 536 under the Persians. During that period Judah was continually plundered and exploited by pagan empires and her people were being taken into captivity until the final captivity and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Judah was restored to her land beginning in 536 B.C. (70 years after Nebuchadnezzar's first assault upon Jerusalem in 606 B.C.). She enjoyed a relatively peaceful existence for 200 years until Alexander the Great came conquering the world (cir. 332 B.C.) and his successors, the Seleucids, occupied Palestine. Then from about 165 B.C. until 64 B.C. Judah was free of foreign occupation for another 100 years

during the times of the Maccabeans. But Pompey occupied Palestine (64 B.C.) for the Romans. Then in 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and scattered the Jews to the ends of the earth. When Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one (cf. Dan. 9:24-27) came, the Jews were offered their final overture from God to receive the blessings promised through the prophets. The blessings of the prophets all focus on the first coming of the Messiah. He is the only way left for anyone to repent toward God. There will be no other way (cf. Heb. 6:1-8; 10:1-31). A reinstituted Judaism with a reinstituted Hebrew priesthood and a rebuilt Jewish temple is not promised anywhere in the N.T. or the O.T. for that matter. For people to return to Judaism, in the light of the finality of the sacrifice of Christ, is apostasy, and it is impossible to renew anyone to repentance through law, Jewish law, or any other law. This leads us to our next section.

V. 15-20 WEALTH PROMISED: This desolation of Judah, which at its very core was spiritual, would continue (cf. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi to see the spiritual destitution of this people even after their restoration to their land) until the Spirit was poured out from on high. This evidently has reference to the accomplishments of the Messiah (cf. Dan. 9:24-27) in redemption and establishment of the church (Acts 2:38). The agricultural setting of this prophecy should not confuse the careful student of the New Testament since there are some specific keys in the N.T. which provide clues to proper interpretation of such passages. Consider the following passages:

Isaiah 61:1-4 compare with Luke 4:16-30

Isaiah 55:1-5 compare with Acts 13:26-41

Amos 9:11-12 compare with Acts 15:12-21

See also our list of "key" New Testament passages in *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press, pages 25-27.

The essential nature of the future fruitfulness which Isaiah is predicting is to be "justice" (true relationship between man and man) and "righteousness" (true relationship between man and God). These proper relationships are accomplished only through the agency of the Spirit of God, at first incarnate

in the Son, then dwelling in believers through faith and the agency of the Word. When these relationships are accomplished, peace, rest and safety are the results. This is exactly what the Messiah brought to the world and gave to all who will receive it by faith (cf. Mt. 11:25-30; Jn. 14:27; 15:11; Eph. 1:14; 2:11-22). For the true Jew in the eyes of God is one who is one inwardly (Rom. 2:28-29); indeed the promises made to Abraham's progeny was intended to be found by anyone who would become one of his children by faith in the one "seed," Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:6-9; 3:15-18); and all who are new creatures by faith in Christ are the Israel of God (Gal. 6:14-16). One thing is certain; the promises of Isaiah here in verses 16-18 have not found fulfillment in the Jews or in Palestine to this point in history. And to hold out a special dispensation for the Jews in some future age seems to us to disparage the finality and completeness of the New Testament, to say the least.

Verse 19 seems to indicate a prediction of the defeat of all that opposes this future Messianic purpose of God. Enemies of God are likened unto forests in Isa. 10:18-19; Jer. 46:23; unto images and beasts in Daniel 2-8; unto dragons and beasts in Revelation 12-13. God will overcome all opposition as He completes His work of redemption and establishing a place of peace, rest and safety on earth. What God will do on earth will last forever (v. 17). The kingdom of God established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) is an eternal kingdom.

Those who by faith become citizens of this kingdom will enjoy God's blessings in abundance (Jn. 10:10; I Cor. 3:21-23; Eph. 1:3; Rom. 8:17-18; Rom. 8:32; II Cor. 4:16-18). Whatever they do, wherever they sow, wherever they work, it will prosper.

QUIZ

1. What kind of women were prevalent in Isaiah's day?
2. How would the vintage fail?

3. How long did the spiritual destitution of the Jews last?
4. What is the pouring out of the Spirit to bring with it?
5. Name some N.T. scriptures where we may find the fulfillment of these promised blessings.
6. Who are the true people of God?
7. When did God defeat the ultimate opposition of the forces of evil?

3. SUBJUGATION

TEXT: 33:1-12

- 1 Woe to thee that destroyest, and thou wast not destroyed; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou hast ceased to destroy, thou shalt be destroyed; and when thou hast made an end of dealing treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.
- 2 O Jehovah, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou our arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.
- 3 At the noise of the tumult the peoples are fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations are scattered.
- 4 And your spoil shall be gathered as the caterpillar gathereth: as locusts leap shall men leap upon it.
- 5 Jehovah is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with justice and righteousness.
- 6 And there shall be stability in thy times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge: the fear of Jehovah is thy treasure.
- 7 Behold, their valiant ones cry without; the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.
- 8 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: the enemy hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth not man.
- 9 The land mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is confounded

and withereth away; Sharon is like a desert; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.

10 Now will I arise, saith Jehovah; now will I lift up myself; now will I be exalted.

11 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath is a fire that shall devour you.

12 And the peoples shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "destroyer" of verse 1?
- b. Why the prayer v. 2-9?
- c. What is the answer to the prayer?

PARAPHRASE

Woe is coming to you, you who destroy and never feel destruction. Judgment is coming to you, you who deal deceitfully and never seem to suffer being deceived. Your days are numbered—your time to destroy and deceive will soon be over, and you are going to be destroyed and deceived. O Lord, I pray, have mercy upon us. We have been hoping in You. We want You to be our source of strength for every-day life as well as saving us from the great crises of troublous times. We know that at the sound of Your thunder the enemy nations flee and when You stand up to take action your enemies disappear as if scattered. And, Lord, Your people will gather spoil or booty from Your vanquished enemy like the caterpillars and locusts leap upon vegetation and devour it quickly. Jehovah exalts Himself by His omnipotent power to deliver and by His power to fill His covenant people, Zion, with justice and righteousness. And He shall be the source of our constancy in these changing, chaotic times. In fact, He is a treasure for us filled with salvation, wisdom and

knowledge. The reverent fear of the Lord is the door to that treasure house. Behold our present circumstances, O Lord; sturdy soldiers, in the anguish of heart, cry out with a loud shriek of pain. Our ambassadors are not ashamed to be seen out on the streets shedding bitter tears. They know how desperate our situation is now. Our highways lie untraveled like deserted wastelands; covenants made with Assyria which so many had hoped in are treacherously broken, and Assyria has shown itself to be an enemy instead of an ally. Our enemy has plundered our cities and human life is cheap to him. The whole land of God's people is suffering; Lebanon is in a state of confusion and is about to pass out of existence; the territory of Sharon is like a deserted no-man's land; Bashan and Carmel are as barren as trees with all their leaves shaken off. But, says the Lord, I am going to stand up to take action, and when I do My power and might will be demonstrated against My enemies. Assyria, you are pregnant with grandiose plans, but all that shall come of them will be uselessness, and your plans will be blown away like chaff and stubble. The hot breath of war and aggression with which you pant after My people will be the very means of your own destruction. Your nation will be completely destroyed like a body burned down to lime or thorns burned into ashes.

COMMENTS

V. 1-6 PROSPECTS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE: This context (ch. 33) is closely connected to Assyria's almost total domination of Judah in Hezekiah's day. Almost all the cities and villages of Judah had been overrun and plundered except Jerusalem. But, in spite of appearances, God's people had a glorious future. To this Isaiah speaks. He begins by warning Assyria that her time for world conquest will someday come and then she shall be destroyed. One is reminded of Isaiah's earlier prediction of this (Isa. 10:5-34). Assyria was renowned for its destructive cruelty. F. W. Farrar gives a vivid description of Assyria's

general character:

Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed on the way to ruin. The kings of Assyria tormented the miserable world. They exult to record how "space failed for corpses"; how unsparing a destroyer is their goddess Ishtar; how they flung away the bodies of soldiers like so much clay; how they made pyramids of human heads; how they burned cities; how they filled populous lands with death and devastation; how they reddened broad deserts with carnage of warriors; how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders as with chaff; how they impaled "heaps of men" on stakes, and strewed the mountains and choked rivers with dead bones; how they cut off the hands of kings and nailed them on the walls, and left their bodies to rot with bears and dogs on the entrance gates of cities; how they employed nations of captives in making brick in fetters; how they cut down warriors like weeds, or smote them like wild beasts in the forests, and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs.

This terrible destroyer, Assyria, was herself destroyed (see *Isaiah, Vol. I*, pgs. 188-190). Isaiah predicts it here again to encourage a faithful remnant of believers in his own day.

In verses 2-6 Isaiah seems to be voicing the prayer of the remnant. The prayer is interesting because it is more a prayer of praise for what they believe God can and will do than it is a request. The prayer does begin with a request for God's mercy. Judah's present circumstance is beyond human solution, so the prophet prays for God to act. Judah has no merit to claim God's action so Isaiah prays for God's mercy. His prayer is also that God might act to "exalt" His own name. This prayer is an abbreviated parallel to Daniel's great prayer for the exiles (Dan. 9:3-19). The remnant, being represented by Isaiah, "waited" upon the Lord. This is a word to describe

patient, enduring trust. The remnant did not try to take matters into its own hands and seek help from Egypt as did the majority of the people. They patiently waited upon the Lord to accomplish His purposes in His own good time. The remnant occupied themselves with being the kind of people God wanted them to be and left the matter of Assyria to God.

How could the remnant be so patient with God? Because they knew from God's past deeds, demonstrated in history, when He "thundered" His enemies were scattered (v. 3). They knew from their own history when they depended on God to give them victory, eventually they conquered their enemies and gathered the spoils of their conquest to His glory (v. 4). They knew that when God's people filled God's land with justice and righteousness—when Jehovah was exalted above all—there was stability. They knew it from past history, and so they prayed that it might come again. They knew the real treasure of Judah, the real and valuable currency of the Chosen was the fear of Jehovah. This brought true salvation, wisdom and knowledge. Perhaps there is a pointed exhortation to Hezekiah here who succumbed to the temptation to boast and show off the worldly treasures of Judah to the Assyrians (cf. Isa. 39:1-8), and even to pay tribute from it to them (II Kings 18:15-16) as if that kind of treasure would deliver them. When will men ever learn that aggressors and those who would destroy society or enslave people can never be appeased with "things," but that trust in God, moral uprightness, justice and self-sacrifice is the only deliverance from evil. In times of political and moral chaos such as those in which Isaiah lived the only stable, constant, secure position is trusting the Lord to exercise His sovereign purposes and actions in His own time, because we have evidence that He has always done so to the glory and victory of His people in the past.

V. 7-12 PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PEOPLE: Is Isaiah still praying? Verses 7-9 seem to be the conclusion to his prayer. He is pouring out his heart and the heart of the remnant for their beloved land just as Daniel did (Dan. 9:12, 16, 18) for the pitiful state of the exiles. And their prayers are not so

much for the people as for the vindication and exaltation of the name of God!

Apparently the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib had already begun. Judah's "valiant ones" (probably soldiers) cried out in fear. Her ambassadors, having experienced the total frustration of being deceived by the Assyrians and unable to negotiate a withdrawal of Assyrian troops, weep openly. Every bit of news seeping into the besieged city of Jerusalem tells of death, destruction and desertion in the cities and villages of Judah. The highways of the land are no longer traveled. The Assyrians, after taking Hezekiah's tribute (II Kings 18:15-16), reneged on their treaty and attacked Judah, plundering its cities and killing its people without regard to human life at all. Thousands are killed, other thousands are taken captive and still other thousands flee. There is nationwide mourning; large sections of the land is in paralyzing fear and confusion; other large sections are so completely deserted they are like vast wastelands; the land is stripped bare of its inhabitants like a tree is completely barren of its leaves in wintertime. Verses 10-12 are God's prediction that He will stand against Assyria to dissolve and annul its plans against Jerusalem. Assyria apparently made great plans to do away with Judah and Jerusalem, but God says its plans will amount to no more than refuse—chaff and stubble. Very rarely did a project so auspicious ever turn out as adversely for the planners as did Sennacherib's plans against Jerusalem.

Isaiah predicted, II Kings 19:32-34, ". . . thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come to this city nor shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city, says the Lord, for I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

The Biblical and the Assyrian accounts of Sennacherib's campaign in Palestine are in general agreement. The fact that the Assyrian texts as well as the Bible make it clear that Sennacherib did not occupy Jerusalem is particularly significant.

This is the Assyrian account of the Judean campaign:

"As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth) ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near (to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle, beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate . . . Hezekiah himself, . . . , did send me later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver . . . his (own) daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger."

from *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., Princeton University Press, 1955, pg. 288

Biblical history records that 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp perished as a result of God's intervention on behalf of His people (II Kings 19:35). Secular history and biblical history both record that Sennacherib returned to Nineveh and was assassinated by two of his sons in 681 B.C. (II Kings 19:37; Isa. 37:38) and that Esarhaddon, his son, ruled in his place. The last quarter of the seventh century B.C. (625 B.C. - 612 B.C.) saw the decline and fall of the Assyrian empire and its subjugation by the Chaldean conquerors of Babylonia, with the Medes. Nineveh was conquered 612 B.C. and in 605 B.C. at Carchemish the Assyrian government-in-exile was finally wiped out forever. So Assyria disappeared from the face of the earth "as thorns cut down and burned in the fire." Nineveh, Assyria's capital city, was forgotten so com-

completely that Alexander the Great on his way to conquer the world, walked upon the very earth that covered it without knowing it. It was not unearthed until about 1845, nearly 2400 years after its demise.

QUIZ

1. Characterize the Assyrians in their methods of conquest.
2. How does Isaiah's prayer compare to that of Daniel's (Dan. 9:19)?
3. Why could believers in Isaiah's day "wait" for the Lord?
4. What is the overriding purpose or end of Isaiah's prayer?
5. How extensive was the Assyrian occupation of Judah?
6. How do the Biblical accounts compare with secular accounts of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem?

4. SERENITY

TEXT: 33:13-24

- 13 Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.
- 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling hath seized the godless ones: Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?
- 15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from taking a bribe, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil:
- 16 he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.
- 17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold

a land that reacheth afar.

- 18 Thy heart shall muse on the terror: where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute? where is he that counted the towers?
- 19 Thou shalt not see the fierce people, a people of a deep speech that thou canst not comprehend, of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand.
- 20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.
- 21 But there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
- 22 For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us.
- 23 Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not strengthen the foot of their mast, they could not spread the sail: then was the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame took the prey.
- 24 And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

QUERIES

- a. Who are the "sinners" in Zion?
- b. Who are the "people of a strange tongue"?
- c. When will the inhabitants *not* say, I am sick?

PARAPHRASE

Pay attention to what I, Jehovah, have done. Acknowledge My might, all you nations of the earth, both far and near. The sinners among My covenant nation are filled with fear, the godless are paralyzed with terror. Who can live here, they cry; Our God has become a consuming flame in bringing this

judgment upon us. I will tell you who can live here: All who live honestly and speak truthfully, who abhor making profit by fraud, who wave aside the temptation to take a bribe, who refuse to even listen to plots for bloodshed, who refuse even to look at anything which appears to be evil. Such a man shall live above evil and its consequences. He will dwell securely like a fortress built upon a rocky mountain. He will be sustained with all the food and water he needs. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty. You will look out upon a land of far-away horizons where the land meets the sky, and think back to this time of terror, wondering, Where are those Assyrians who counted our people, estimated how much of our treasure they would plunder and analyzed our military fortifications. You will see no more of these violent and insolent people with their jabbering, incoherent language. Soon they will all be gone. Instead you will see Jerusalem, the festival city, at peace. It will be secure, like a tent that never has its stakes pulled up, its ropes broken and is never moved from place to place. Jehovah will dwell with us in all His majesty. The protection He shall give us will be greater than the wide rivers surrounding cities like Thebes. No ships of war shall sail across this river. The Lord Jehovah is our judge; the Lord Jehovah is our lawgiver; the Lord Jehovah is our king; He will save us! Right now the ship of Zion's tackle is not ship-shape. Everything is not taut and strong like it should be. The masthead wobbles on an unsure footing and the battle ensign is not hoisted. However, in a short time Zion will be dividing the treasure of its enemy in great abundance; even the lame will be in on the plundering of the enemy. Then those on board the ship Zion will not say, I am ill, for they will be healed—their iniquity will have been forgiven.

COMMENTS

v. 13-16 PERSONAL: There is a serenity which is a result of righteous living. Isaiah promises that in these verses. First,

the prophet describes the distress of the people. The whole world is called to attention to watch the change that is about to take place in Zion (Jerusalem). Presently she has a seizure of terror and shakes like a person in shock. The godless in Jerusalem who had taken so much comfort in believing Egypt would help against Assyria are horrified at what Assyria has done and is about to do! They have given up all hope of survival! They are finally at the point of asking God what can be done instead of telling Him! God speaks through His prophet—repent! Walking righteously might be defined as doing everything from the attitude of desiring it to be right, good, true, just. Speaking uprightly means to say what is true, honest, pure, upbuilding and helpful. Gain of oppressions is money or profit made through taking advantage of someone by force or fraud or some other injustice. Shaking hands from taking a bribe probably means waving aside any invitation or temptation to render an illegal or unjust judgment or transaction by receiving a bribe. And the last two, stopping the ears and shutting the eyes indicates the attitude mentioned in the New Testament, “abhorring the very appearance of evil” (Rom. 12:9; II Thess. 5:22; see also Psa. 15:1-5; 24:3-10). Such personal righteousness do not of themselves produce serenity, but they do make it possible for the Lord to enter into such a penitent heart and give it serenity. God cannot give the impenitent, rebellious sinner serenity simply because the sinner refuses to have it! He is determined to direct his own life and achieve serenity on his own. But the godly man who walks righteously dwells in the heights. The word *munitions* is from the Hebrew word *metzouroh* which literally means *citadel*. The godly man is like the man who has a safe refuge high in the inaccessible mountains, a fortress well stocked with all that is needed to sustain him against the siege of his enemy. He is secure and serene.

V. 17-22 PROVISIONAL: When man gets his life right with God then God has opportunity to provide what He wishes to provide always. God created man to live in perfect serenity, peace and harmony. God is able to provide that state for man

but man is also created with the power to refuse such a state. When man trusts God enough to obey God, God provides it. The land of Judah had been almost totally occupied by Assyrians. Everywhere the people of Jerusalem looked their land no longer belonged to them. On every horizon there were Assyrians. But soon, because they now want Him, they shall see the King (Jehovah) in all His beauty. We think this refers to the manifestation of God's majesty and beauty in the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib and not the Messiah because of verses 21-22. When Jehovah-King comes and the Assyrians retreat in disgrace, the people of Jerusalem will once again look upon a land belonging to them as far as the eye can see—their horizons will once again extend to where the land meets the sky.

Not only that, but when the Lord drives the enemy from their land they will retrospectively give much time to wonder and amazement at the miraculous deliverance wrought for them. They will remember the great and ferocious army of the Assyrians camped for miles around their city. They will remember the magnificence and pompousness of the Rabshakeh. They will remember all the foreign officials of the Rabshakeh as they counted the Jews in Jerusalem, counted the treasure of the Jews, counted the fortifications of the city as if they were coolly estimating exactly the amount of plunder they would soon be taking. They will remember the utter horror they felt as they reminded one another of the cold-blooded cruelty of the Assyrians. All this remembering will impress more intensely in the minds of the people of Zion the divine nature of their deliverance. They will know it was provided by Jehovah and not by their own schemes. They will look back and remember the ferocity and insolence of the enemy that had surrounded them and come into their city to negotiate with their king. Their appearance was barbaric; their language was completely foreign and non-understandable. This writer remembers serving with the occupation forces in Japan immediately after World War II and the fear and suspicion felt when listening to the Japanese speak or whisper

in their tongue while looking at him. One usually suspects, in those circumstances, a plot against him or a slur upon his character. This occupation by hundreds of thousands of foreigners jabbering in incomprehensible tongues will have completely vanished and Isaiah says the people of Zion will remember and marvel at it.

The prophet continues his prediction of the serenity God is going to provide. He predicts the people of Jerusalem will soon see their city peaceful and stable. When God sends the Assyrian away peace will return to Jerusalem and her political stability will be restored. This is predicated upon the continued repentance of the people. No long treatise is needed here to establish the fact that God's promises of blessing or judgment are always conditional. That is a doctrine made abundantly clear in the Bible. Isaiah uses "times coloring" figures of speech (terminology contemporary with his own culture) to describe the stability that will come to Zion with the people's repentance. He describes it as a tent which is not moved. In the culture of the Hebrew nomad—the herder of sheep and goats—they pulled up the stakes and untied the ropes and moved their tents from day to day. Jerusalem's position was secure so long as its inhabitants trusted God. We know, from subsequent history (Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel), her inhabitants did not continue to trust God. Jerusalem had her "stakes" pulled up and her "ropes" cut by Nebuchadnezzar and her inhabitants taken away to Babylon.

The prophet then turns to another figure of speech easily understood by his contemporaries. He likens Jerusalem's security to a city surrounded by "broad rivers" which some ancient cities enjoyed as natural moats making them secure from attack by armies and, when attacked by navies, could be easily defended. The ancient cities of Thebes (Nahum 3:8; Ezek. 30:16) and Tyre (Isa. 23:1ff; Ezek. 26:1ff) were such cities. In Jerusalem's case, the majestic power of Jehovah will be her moat.

v. 22-24 PERVASIVE: The serenity provided by God and appropriated by man's penitence pervades the whole experience

of man. These verses show Jehovah's influence in every area of man's nature. Man needs an arbiter (judge) to tell him what is right and wrong; man needs a lawgiver to give him a divine codification of behavior; man needs a ruler to be sovereign over all his aspirations, choices and motives. Only then can man be saved from destroying himself. Jerusalem needed to recognize her "tacklings were loosed" and her "mast" was so insecure she could not set "sail." The ship of Zion was unseaworthy (as an old "salt" would say). She needed a "shake down cruise" to make her a taut ship again. She was a "sick" and ailing ship. When repentance came, she would be fitted to sail the stormy seas of life again with her captain at the helm steering her to safe harbors. Repentance makes forgiveness possible and forgiveness produces serenity within even though the storms rage without. Jerusalem would enjoy this serenity. She was also promised victory over her enemies (v. 23). She would have complete victory—even the lame would be able to join in the spoils of victory.

This serenity and victory apparently did come in the latter days of Hezekiah's reign when the rulers and the people finally turned to Jehovah instead of Egypt for help against their enemies. But it did not last long for they were soon led back into sin and rebellion by Manasseh (son of Hezekiah) and eventually into captivity in Babylon.

QUIZ

1. What does personal righteousness have to do with bringing serenity?
2. What does the trembling of the sinners in Zion indicate about their relationship to God?
3. What are the "munitions of rocks"?
4. Why would "musing" on the terror bring serenity?
5. Why mention the "strange tongue" that would soon be gone from the land?
6. Why liken Jehovah unto a "broad river"?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS THIRTY-TWO AND THIRTY-THREE

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. a <i>man</i> shall be as a hiding-place | 6. be thou our <i>arm</i> |
| 2. <i>churl</i> | 7. as <i>locusts</i> leap |
| 3. <i>careless</i> ones | 8. Ye shall <i>conceive</i> chaff |
| 4. <i>Spirit</i> | 9. <i>munitions</i> of rocks |
| 5. <i>hail</i> in the downfall of the forest | 10. a people of <i>deep speech</i> |
| | 11. <i>broad</i> rivers and streams |
| | 12. Thy <i>tacklings</i> are loosed |

MEMORIZATION

“Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, _____ my might. The _____ in Zion are afraid; trembling hath seized the _____ ones: Who among us can dwell with the devouring _____? who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh _____, and speaketh uprightly; he that _____ the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from taking a _____, that stoppeth his _____ from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon _____: he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the _____ of rocks; his _____ shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” (33:13-16)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain why the “king” reigning in “righteousness” is the Messiah (32:1-2).

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2. Explain how Judah's enemy broke its covenant? (33:7-8)
3. Explain why the inhabitant of Jerusalem shall not say, I am sick. (33:24)

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. How does the discussion of the fool no longer being called noble and the churl bountiful apply to the Messianic age? (32:1-8)
2. How does the faith of the remnant in Jehovah's arm bring stability to the nation and how does that lesson apply today? (33:1-6)
3. What three attitudes or areas of human relationship to God expressed in 33:13-24 brings serenity? How does this still apply to the believer today?

SPECIAL STUDY

KINGSHIP OF GOD

by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTION

I. SCRIPTURES

A. O.T.

1. The Lord is king for ever and ever, Psa. 10:16.
2. He is the king of glory, Psa. 24:7-10.
3. He is the king of all the earth, Psa. 47:7.
4. The Holy One of Israel is our king, Psa. 89:18.

B. N.T.

1. The Magi came seeking the One born King of the Jews.
2. Mary's son was to receive the throne of David and

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reign forever.

3. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem brought forth the prophecy from Zech. "Behold thy king cometh unto thee . . ."
4. The people shouted, Blessed be the king who comes in the name of the Lord.
5. Pilate's first question to Jesus was: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus' answer: "You have said so."

II. AMERICANS CANNOT APPRECIATE KINGSHIP

A. It means *absolute* rule.

1. Simeon, holding the baby Jesus in his arms, said, "*Lord*, now lettest thou thy servant depart . . ." Lord is a translation of *despotes*, from which we get the English word *despot*.

2. It is allegiance to a MONARCH!

B. The church is a kingdom, not a democracy.

1. Its citizens have no authority in formulating its laws, covenants, means of administration.
2. Its citizens can only decide whether they shall accept and respond to its rule or whether they will rebel and refuse to have its King rule over them.

III. THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGSHIP OF GOD

A. Justice

B. Beneficence

C. Glory

DISCUSSION

- I. JUSTICE (The ONE thing man needs above everything else is a Divine Dispenser of Perfect Justice; man is a moral being and morality demands not only a knowledge of right and wrong but a Divine enforcement of right and

wrong; this is the very essence of the power necessary to motivate man in all his moral potentialities such as love, holiness, etc.)

A. *The King's Actions in Justice* are twofold.

1. *Punishing the Rebel*

- a. Christianity is a moral religion; it is moral life itself. Whenever we talk about anything moral judgment necessarily enters into it.
- b. If there is any difference between right and wrong, God in His perfect Justice and Righteousness must be hostile to the wrong.
- c. Hebrews 1:9 says of Christ the King, "But of the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness . . ." GOD HATES REBELLION AND LAWLESSNESS AND WILL PUNISH IT!
- d. God is the Judge who in any transaction decides who is in the right and who is in the wrong.
It is God who allots to each man his reward.
God's judgment falls upon the arrogant, the insolent, and the oppressor.
- e. God's methods of punishment and judgment are many:

He has built some of his judgments into the natural laws of our physical existence. If we violate physical right, we will suffer the consequences.

He has built some of his judgments into the conscience of man. If we violate the mental and spiritual right, we will suffer guilt, spiritual disorientation and disintegration.

He has built some of his judgments into the social structures necessary for this existence. If we violate them we shall suffer chaos, anarchy, frustration.

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- f. BUT HE HAS RESERVED HIS PERFECT WRATH FOR THE NEXT LIFE, THE FUTURE EXISTENCE.

2. *Protecting the Righteous*

- a. A corollary of JUSTICE is that God the Judge-King protects the rights of the defenseless.
- b. He delivers the one who believes and trusts and obeys Him.
- c. God's justice will vindicate the righteous and obedient.
- d. God has punished all sin, potentially, in Jesus Christ's death on the cross. He has carried out His justice and has, by grace, offered to justify all guilty sinners who accept Christ's death in their place by faith and obedience (Rom. 3:21-26).

B. *The Citizen's Reaction to the King's Justice*

- 1. *Fear* (Reverence and Awe); one of the three meanings of *phobos* is reverence and awe.
 - a. This fear is the source of the chaste life, I Pet. 3:2.
 - b. This fear is the source of holiness, II Cor. 7:1.
 - c. This fear is connected with the godly sorrow that brings repentance, II Cor. 7:11.
 - d. This fear is the source of Christian effort . . . "working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling . . ."
 - e. This fear is the basis of mutual respect and service which Christians are bound to render to each other, Eph. 5:21.
 - f. This fear can be the motive power of persuasion. Christianity always comes to men with a promise and an offer, but any promise can be disbelieved and any offer can be refused, and there is a necessary consequence of disbelief and refusal.
 - g. Christian discipline is to be publicly exercised that others may see it and fear (I Tim. 5:20). It is an interesting thought that Christian discipline is to be exercised not only for the sake of the man

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who has sinned, but also as a means of warning the man who has not sinned to abide in the right way.

In the N.T. *phobos* is one of the great words. There can be no religion at all without the awe of the creature in the presence of the Creator. The feeling of reverence, the awareness of God, is at once the prophylactic against sin, the dynamic of the Christian life, and the mainspring of the Christian effort.

2. *Faith* (obedience, trust); reverence (*phobos*) must turn to faith and not fear in the lower, paralyzing sense.
 - a. Faith in God's fairness
 - b. Faith in God's mercy
 - c. FAITH IN GOD'S HOLINESS. Those who rebel against God's Kingship are really those who disbelieve in God's righteous and holy wrath. THEIR FAITH IS FANCIFUL AND NOT BASED ON THE FEAR OF GOD!

II. BENEFICENCE (It is evident from the failing attempts of human governments and other human institutions that man needs a benefactor, a Divine Supplier; man doesn't even know *what* he needs, let alone being incapable of supplying his needs.)

A. The King's Actions

1. *Provider* (physical necessities)
 - a. He provides physical well-being; health, safety, a world full of challenge in which to work.
 - b. He provides friends and loved-ones to help us.
 - c. Seed-time and harvest are controlled by Him.
 - d. It is all His domain; He is king of the earth, of the universe.

It is His by right of creation, but He sees fit to share it with us.

- e. He could take it all away with merely a word; He could banish us from its boundaries by merely wishing it to be so.

2. *Pilot* (spiritual necessities)

- a. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.
- b. He supplies the water of life that quenches the eternal thirst of the soul which dries, withers and dies without it.
- c. He supplies the bread of life that fortifies, edifies and energizes the soul—which starves, sickens and dies without it.
- d. He is chart and compass, He is the Way, the Truth and the Life giving direction to life—which is directionless, chaotic, stormy and lost without it.
- e. He supplies light to life, dispelling the darkness of ignorance, illuminating the ugliness of sin, beaming the brightness of holiness to man.

B. *The Citizen's Reaction*

1. *Stewardship*

- a. Jesus taught more on stewardship than any thing else!
- b. A steward is one who tends to another's property or affairs.
- c. A steward is one who works!
- d. The king has provided, but we are to work.
- e. We hear a great deal these days about helping the helpless, and I believe it to be the very nature of a Christian to do so, for after all God helps each of us in our helplessness. BUT IT IS JUST AS GOD-LIKE AND CHRIST-LIKE TO CONSIDER THE MATTER OF STEWARDSHIP, WORK, LABOR. GOD WORKED SIX DAYS. JESUS WORKED.
- f. The apostles taught that the Christian community was not to tolerate the shiftless, lazy, parasite

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who could work. The apostles practiced what they preached—they worked.

- g. If such is the norm for the Christian, certainly we ought not to think we are doing the non-Christian a favor by condoning laziness.
- h. Stewardship implies wise judgment and forbids indiscriminate pampering or perpetuation of either social or spiritual laziness.

2. *Discipleship*

- a. Jesus, the King, has beneficently provided our spiritual life also.
- b. Here again, WE ARE TOLD TO WORK.
- c. "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life . . ." Jn. 6:27.
- d. "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." Jn. 6:29.
- e. It is well for us to remember that all our spiritual life comes by grace, but that grace has to be SOUGHT AND BOUGHT WITH THE SACRIFICE OF SELF AND THE DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE!
- f. Jesus said the kingdom is "like a man going on a long journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch." Mk. 13:34
- g. The Pearl of Great Price, when found (note the man was searching to find it), demands a cost, a trade.

The Field with Buried Treasure, when discovered (God's beneficence is sometimes discovered and sometimes searched for), demands cost.

III. GLORY (Man will glorify someone or something. Man, whether he admits it or not, inherently and inevitably

worships some other than his own person. He has demonstrated time and again that he must glorify some other outside his own individuality, even if it is mankind in general he glorifies.)

A. *The King's Acting Glory*

1. His *Greatness* (His Creative Power)

- a. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork, *Psa. 19.*
- b. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! *Psa. 24:8.*
- c. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. *Isa. 6:3.*
- d. “. . . myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing . . .” *Rev. 5:12.*
- e. The word *Glory* literally means, “to be heavy or laden with riches, power and position.”
- f. NO HUMAN BEING WILL BE EXCUSED FOR FAILING TO SEE THE GLORY OF THE IMMORTAL GOD IN NATURE AND MAKING SOME RESPONSE.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men . . . For what can be known about God is plain to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse . . .” *Rom. 1:18ff.*

2. His *Goodness* (His Moral Beauty)

- a. Perfect in Holiness; Perfect in Love; Perfect in Humility; Perfect in Wisdom; Perfect in Consistency (Unchangeableness) Perfect in Justice; Perfect in Power.
- b. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance.

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- c. Moses had a craving to come to grips with God as he was in himself. In reply, God emphasized his goodness . . . His moral beauty (Ex. 33:19).
- d. Oh, the ineffable worth of God's moral richness.
- e. We glorify the wisest of men—the powerfulest of men—the most charitable of men—the most consistent of men—the purest of men—the richest of men—the most just of men BUT GOD EXCEEDS THEM ALL AS A MILLION MT. EVERESTS EXCEED ONE GRAIN OF SAND!
- f. And all His glory was exhibited to men in a Man, Christ Jesus. "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." "In him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily . . ."
- g. And look how Jesus exhibited the GLORY of God to men. . . . as a servant, as a redeemer, as a sinless, holy, powerful, compassionate, KING WHO CAME TO WOO AND WIN A THRONE IN MAN'S HEART!

B. The *Citizen's Reacting Glorification* of the King

1. *Worshipping His Glory*

- a. Praise, adoration, honor
- b. Preaching His ineffable character — OUR PREACHING IS TO GLORIFY GOD AND HIS SON CHRIST, AND HIS CHURCH.

We have no reason to praise men, except as their lives exemplify and glorify God.

- c. This can be done by writing books to glorify His name, by composing and singing music to His adoration, by giving of our means to honor His name throughout the world.

2. *Walking In His Glory*

- a. He made us in His image and glory, BUT WE HAVE FALLEN SHORT!
- b. He wants us to be changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another. . . . THIS IS DONE BY BEHOLDING HIS GLORY.

I S A I A H

- c. Beholding His glory means to imbibe of it . . . to wrap ourselves in it . . . to assimilate it into our nature.
- d. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of *him who called us to his own glory* and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature" II Pet. 1:3-4.
- e. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So *glorify God* in your body. I Cor. 6:19-20.
- f. Remember the definition of glory? TO BE HEAVY. . . . GOD WANTS US TO WALK AROUND LADEN DOWN WITH HIS RICH CHARACTER OF MORAL PURITY AND GOODNESS.

Instead of Jesus people, we might call ourselves GOD HEAVIES!

CONCLUSION

PAROUSIA: THE ARRIVAL OF THE KING

In the papyri and in Hellenistic Greek, parousia is the technical word for the arrival of an emperor, a king, or a ruler, into a town or province.

For such a visit preparations had to be made. All things had to be readied. New coins were always struck to commemorate the visitation of a king. It was as if with the coming of the king a new set of values had emerged.

One of the commonest things is that provinces dated a new

era from the parousia of the king. A new section of time emerged with the coming of the king.

WHEN OUR KING COMES HE BRINGS WITH HIM HIS JUSTICE, HIS BENEFICENCE, HIS GLORY.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. II Cor. 4:16-18

D. FOES WILL FALL, CHAPTER 34

1. SLAUGHTER

TEXT: 34:1-7

- 1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye peoples: let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof; the world, and all things that come forth from it.
- 2 For Jehovah hath indignation against all the nations, and wrath against all their host: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.
- 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and the stench of their dead bodies shall come up; and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
- 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig-tree.
- 5 For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

- 6 The sword of Jehovah is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for Jehovah hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
- 7 And the wild-oxen shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be drunken with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

QUERIES

- a. Who are the "nations" Jehovah will slaughter?
- b. How are the "heavens to be rolled up"?
- c. When did Jehovah's sword "drink its fill in heaven"?

PARAPHRASE

Come close and listen to me, all you nations of the world. All of creation had better pay attention to what I have to say! For the Lord of Creation is filled with wrath against the whole world because it has schemed to usurp His sovereignty by human governments. Because human empires are in rebellion against God's rule of man, God has marked them for utter destruction. Their destruction will not only be total, it will be humiliating and horrifying. It will be as when a city is conquered and its slain are cast out into the streets and left unburied and the stench of rotting flesh permeates everything. The destruction of the world empires will be so complete it could furnish enough blood to wash away the mountains. When God finishes His destruction of all that oppose Him, even the material world will be dissolved. The planets of the heavens will be dissolved, the skies will be taken away just like the scroll is rolled up and put away, and the stars will go out of existence like leaves dying and dropping from a fig-tree. My sword of wrath in heaven is filled to staggering. It is going to stagger forth upon Edom, one of those kingdoms opposing My

sovereignty, as an example of the inevitable judgment that is to come upon all kingdoms opposing Me. This sword of the Lord is about to be saturated with blood and gorged with flesh like the sword used to slay lambs and goats. It is Edom that will come under Jehovah's bloody, sacrificial sword. The small and the great, weak and powerful, rich and poor alike are going to be slaughtered in Edom. The land will stagger and reel with blood like a drunken man reels from wine. Their whole land will be saturated with dead bodies.

COMMENTS

V. 1-4 JUDGMENT ENVISIONED: Once again Isaiah is bringing a section of his written prophecy to a climactic conclusion. He has done so before in chapters 6, 12, and 23. These two chapters (34 and 35) are the climactic conclusion to the section warning Judah not to seek help from Egypt (28-35). Chapters 34 and 35 summarize the reasons Judah should not seek help from pagan, worldly, God-opposing governments: (1) because God has decreed their doom; (2) because God has a glorious future planned for Zion.

What God is going to do will involve the whole cosmos (creation) so (v. 1-2) He calls, through the prophet, the whole creation to attention. What God is going to do involves not only the earth but heaven. He is going to defeat all the "principalities, powers, world rulers of this present darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places . . . and disarm them, and make a public example of them, triumphing over them in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). God is not going to "utterly slaughter" all the power that opposes Him in Isaiah's day. Furthermore, the *total physical* destruction of the world is probably not even intended here. The defeat of the spiritual power that opposes God and enslaves men is much more imperative and cosmically significant than the physical destruction. In other words, the victory Christ accomplished over the world, the flesh and the devil, on the cross and at the

resurrection was the great slaughter probably referred to here. Of course, God destroyed His enemies, the great world empires that were possessed by the devil to attempt to thwart God's redemptive program in the earth. He destroyed them one by one. And, God will ultimately destroy all physical kingdoms with the destruction of the universe, and He will create a new heaven and a new earth (II Pet. 3:8-13). But all that would be of little consequence without the once-and-for-all defeat of Satan and his hosts at the cross. It was at the cross (and the empty tomb) that God "brought to nothing things that are," destroyed the wisdom of the wise, (I Cor. 1:18-31), cast out the ruler of this world and destroyed his power (Jn. 12:31; 16:11; Heb. 2:14-15; I Jn. 3:8). Now this work, culminated in the cross and resurrection, began as God took the people of Isaiah's day and destroyed their pagan enemies, one by one, and delivered a faithful remnant through which God brought the Messiah into the world in order to "deliver them from their enemies" (cf. Luke 1:67-79). Isaiah is predicting the same great overthrow of the world-opposition as Joel predicts (Joel 2:28—3:21; see our comments, *Minor Prophets*, College Press). It is the same overthrow of world-opposition Isaiah predicted earlier (Isa. 13—23; see our comments, *Isaiah, Vol 1*, College Press). It is the same overthrow of world-opposition Ezekiel predicts (Ezek. 38—39) and Daniel predicts (Dan. 2—11) and Zechariah predicts (Zech. 9—14). It was accomplished in the cross and resurrection when Christ "took captivity captive" and will be consummated at His second coming.

The Jewish prophets portrayed the end of the Jewish dispensation and the beginning of the new era (the Messianic age) as a Day of Jehovah, a great judgment and redemption. The Messianic age was portrayed in eschatological, cataclysmic, cosmic figures of speech. It is even referred to in the New Testament in somewhat the same way: (Just to list a few)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Joel 2:28—3:21 | 5. Luke 4:16-29 |
| 2. Malachi 3:1-5 | 6. Matthew 23:37—24:35 |
| 3. Ezekiel 38:1—39:29 | 7. Colossians 2:14-15 |
| 4. Daniel 9:24-27 | 8. Hebrews 12:18-29 |

Much modern-day interpretation of O.T. prophecy alleges the main function of the prophets was to predict the so-called "rapture, tribulation, millennium," and the Second Coming of Christ. It seems totally incongruous to us that the prophets would devote as much detail as is alleged to the end of the so-called "church age." Their main *predictive* function, as the New Testament *plainly* points out, was to proclaim the *First advent* of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, the church (cf. I Pet. 1:10-12; II Pet. 1:12-21; Luke 24:25-27; 24:44-49, etc.).

If modern readers of the Bible could project themselves back into the days of the prophets or the apostles, or if they could assimilate the Jewishness of those Jews, they might easily understand how eschatological, cataclysmic and cosmic it would seem to talk of the abrogation and abolition of a religious system (Judaism) with 1400 years of heritage. It was their whole existence, politically, socially, religiously. To predict a New Era which would completely replace the Old would seem like a prediction of the end of the world-order. And the prophets were called upon to portray the New Era in just those figures.

Of course, there is always the typical element in every Day of the Lord, which points to God's ultimate Day, the literal, actual consummation of judgment and redemption. And that is probably the case with our text here in Isaiah. Even God's awful judgment of sin in the crucifixion of Christ and God's glorious act of redemption in Christ's resurrection is, in addition to being His literal, historical work of salvation, a prophecy, promise and type of the final, consummating work at Christ's Second Coming.

V. 5-7 JUDGMENT EXEMPLIFIED: Edom is now cited as a representative of the God-opposing human governments. Edom was one of the first human governments to oppose God's redemptive work in placing His covenant people in the land of Canaan. The covenant people were later opposed by Ammon, Moab, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. All these, and others, were, in their own times, condemned

by the prophets and judged by God. Even the sinful covenant peoples (Israel and Judah) were condemned and judged because they chose carnal, human systems of government rather than government by the rule of God's word. Probably the most graphic symbolism of God's defeat of the attempt by human government to overthrow the rule of God in men's hearts (the establishment of God's kingdom among men) is the symbolism in the book of Daniel—in the great image (ch. 2) and the four beasts (ch. 7).

The sword of the Lord in heaven is filled with blood. In other words, the wrath of God has been accumulating (cf. Rev. 15:7), and it is symbolized by a sword poised to vent its full fury on God's enemy. God is longsuffering but He will not be opposed forever. The judgment of God is portrayed as a great sacrifice. This is a figure used elsewhere in the Old Testament (Zeph. 1:7-18; Jer. 46:10; 50:27). Sacrifice was worship of the Lord. Slaughtering of animals was never very pretty to behold. In fact, it is always rather revolting. But in spite of the revolting and almost sickening splashing of blood and burning of flesh, God was glorified. The punishing of sin in the innocent and perfect Jesus is an idea both revolting and repulsive to the human ego—nevertheless God is exalted in it. So, God will be glorified in the slaughter that is necessitated at the judgment of human, God-opposing governments. Edward J. Young considers the "lambs and goats" of v. 6 to be figurative of the general citizenry of Edom and the "wild-oxen and bulls" of v. 7 to symbolize the leaders of the nation. Whatever the case the point being made is the awfulness and completeness of judgment upon those who have so persistently opposed God's redemptive work in the world by opposing His people. This should be a graphic warning to all governments in any age opposing God's people in any way.

QUIZ

1. Why do chapters 34 and 35 seem to form a climax in Isaiah's book?

2. Cite N.T. passages to show that God defeated His opposition at the cross.
3. Why do we think Isaiah is predicting the cross and empty tomb accomplishment?
4. What other O.T. prophets predicted God's defeat of His opposition at the cross and establishment of the church?
5. Why would the Jewish prophets speak of God's victory as if it were the end of the present world-order?
6. What N.T. passages confirm this?
7. Why is it most probable that the O.T. prophets spoke mainly of Christ's first coming?
8. What part does Edom play in this drama?

2. SHAMBLES

TEXT: 34:8-17

- 8 For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
- 9 And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
- 10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.
- 11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and he will stretch over it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness.
- 12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there; and all its princes shall be nothing.
- 13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of jackals, a court for ostriches.
- 14 And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster

shall settle there, and shall find her a place of rest.

- 15 There shall the dart-snake make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shade; yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate.
- 16 Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read: no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth, it hath commanded, and his Spirit, it hath gathered them.
- 17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

QUERIES

- a. How could the smoke of Edom go up forever?
b. What is a "night-monster"?
c. What is the "book of Jehovah"?

PARAPHRASE

Yes, the Lord will bring Zion its day of recompense. Edom has had its day opposing Zion, but the Lord will bring vengeance upon Edom at the proper time. Edom's streams will be fouled with tar and pitch and her soil turned into sulphurous dust and her land into burning, smoldering pools of tar, not fit for habitation. This desolation of Edom will never end. It will be an uninhabited kingdom forever, from one generation to another. It will never again be made a habitable place. The only creatures inhabiting this territory henceforth will be wild, unclean creatures of loneliness and desolation—pelicans, porcupines, owls and ravens. God has measured that kingdom by His standards of righteousness and justice, and it is found to be fit only for destruction and desolation. They shall call it, No Kingdom There, and its princes shall soon all be gone. Thorn bushes and weeds will grow up inside its palaces and

mansions; its fortresses will fall into complete disuse and be the haunts of wild jackals and ostriches. The animals of the desert will forage there along with wolves and wild goats. The screeching night-thing will settle there and build her nest. The dangerous darting snake and the scavenging vulture will settle there and reproduce their young. Search what the Lord has caused to be written in His book; not one of these predictions shall go unfulfilled because the Lord who revealed the predictions through my mouth is the same Lord whose Spirit will cause the wild animals to inhabit the desolation of Edom. The Lord of Creation has set this territory aside and marked it off to be given to those doleful and despised wild creatures from one generation to another.

COMMENTS

V. 8-10 WASTE-LAND: The vengeance of the Lord serves also as a recompense for Zion. Edom has vented its age-old hatred (which began with the family feud between Esau and Jacob) upon Zion with an unrelenting passion (cf. Obadiah). Edom "stood aloof," "rejoiced," and "joined in" when other pagans plundered Jerusalem. God's sovereignty and His sovereign program cannot go on being thwarted forever. If His sovereignty is to be verified, rebellion must be punished. Edom's time has come, or is very near. When it happens, Zion's cause will be vindicated.

Malachi 1:3, 300 years after Isaiah, says the mountains and the heritage of Esau (Edom) were laid waste and left to the jackals of the desert. Then Malachi 1:4-5 represents the Edomites vowing they will rebuild and the Lord vowing He will tear down again. The territory of Edom was made desolate by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks (Seleucids) in succession. However, there was a brief period of recovery in the time of the Maccabeans, and Edom once again appears as an adversary of Israel of some importance. Gradually, however, Edom had to yield to the superior power of the

Romans and was later overrun and conquered by the Mohammedan Arabs who completed the ruin of the land. It is now, and has been for more than a thousand years, one of the most desolate territories of land upon the face of the earth. Isaiah would hardly seem to demand a literal turning streams into pitch. The present land of once ancient Edom has no perennial rivers. It has numerous "wadis" (dry stream beds) which sometimes run with torrents when the winter rains flood them. Isaiah's intent, no doubt, is that Edom should be visited with a destruction and desolation so complete it could be likened unto that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24; Jer. 49:18). Men have passed through this area again and again since those days and still do, though they all testify to its utter desolateness. The word "forever" must be understood as hyperbole here.

V. 11-15 WILD-LIFE: There is some disagreement among translators as to the exact identification of the animals in these verses. The only one generally agreed upon is the raven. The *kooth* is translated, cormorant, pelican or hawk. The *kipod* is translated, bittern, hedgehog or porcupine. Whatever their specific genre, the intent of the prophet seems to be to describe only animals that inhabit desolate, deserted places not inhabited by human beings. These forlorn beasts of the desert nights will move in and make this territory their possession. No other creatures will want it. God has measured off this territory for this specific group of unclean animals. The measuring-tape and the plumb-line are *tohu* and *vohu* and are the same two words used in Genesis 1:2 and translated waste and void, or confusion and emptiness. In other words God has marked Edom for systematic or planned reduction to chaos. All the nobles (rulers by birth) of Edom will disappear, and none will remain to constitute a kingdom. So the territory will be called, No Kingdom There. Its palaces and cities will be deserted and overgrown with brush and thorns. In verse 14 the word in Hebrew *lyilyith* is translated *night-monster* in the ASV and *satyr* in the RSV. Some say it is a word with Akkadian root meaning some kind of "storm-spirit." Most Hebrew lexicons define it as "screech-owl." *Lilit* was the name of a female

demon or wicked fairy, in whom the Assyrians (Akkadians) believed—a being thought to vex and persecute her victims in their sleep. The Hebrew word for *night* is *layeloh*. Whatever the case, the night-monster or screech-owl is added to the arrow-snake and vulture to indicate a place where dwells every odious, despised, scary creature known. The prophets were poets and used imagery. When so doing they were free to use even the beliefs and superstitions of their contemporaries to intensify the force of their messages.

V. 16-17 WORD OF THE LORD: Some have said the “book of Jehovah” was a volume collected of the works of Moses, some of the prophets before Isaiah, and the psalms of David. But there is no evidence of such a collection then. It is better to understand the book to be that of Isaiah’s own writings up to that point. Nothing contained in his writings shall fail of fulfillment is the prophet’s warning, for his writings are the work of Jehovah. Every utterance of his, even in the minute detail of the animals marked to possess Edom’s territory, will come to pass, for although the predictions come through the mouth of Isaiah, it shall be the Spirit of the living God which shall bring them to pass. The Lord allots to all the nations of the earth their boundaries (cf. Jer. 27:5ff). He has now allotted Edom to the unclean beasts and birds which are mentioned. He has marked it desolate (cf. Mt. 23:38). All kingdoms which oppose God are marked for destruction (cf. I Cor. 15:24-28, 50). Edom is here typical and representative.

QUIZ

1. How will Edom’s judgment be recompense for Zion?
2. Were Edom’s streams literally turned into pitch?
3. What does the list of these particular animals portray about Edom?
4. What is the territory of ancient Edom like today?
5. How could Isaiah be certain his predictions would be fulfilled?

ISAIAH

SPECIAL STUDY

THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
IS THE GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

by

Seth Wilson

GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
AS LOVING GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOD OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13) Anger forbidden: Psa. 37:8; Prov. 14:17; 16:32; 27:4. "The thought of foolishness is sin; the scorner . . . an abomination" Prov. 24:9.
2. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Ex. 20:14. "Lust not" Prov. 6:25; "he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" Prov. 6:32, 33. Thoughts of the wicked, abomination; words of the pure, pleasant. Prov. 15:26. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" Prov. 23:7.
3. "Thou shalt not swear by my name falsely, neither profane the name of God" Lev. 19:12.

THE GOD OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The teaching of Jesus on killing. Mt. 5:21-26. Hatred forbidden: I Jn. 3:15.
2. The teaching of Jesus on adultery. Mt. 5:27-32. Works of the flesh: Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:15:20.
3. The teaching of Jesus on oaths. Mt. 5:33-37. Jas. 5:12.

GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

4. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear grudge against children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" Lev. 19:18. "Say not that I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord and he will save thee" Prov. 20:22; also 24:29.
5. Do good unto enemies: "If thou seest the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt surely help him" Ex. 23:45. "If thy enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" Prov. 25:21. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth" Prov. 24:17.
6. "But because the Lord loved you and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt" Deut. 7:8.
4. The teaching of Jesus on revenge. Mt. 5:38-42. I Pet. 2:19, 20; Rom. 12:19-21.
5. The teaching of Jesus on the treatment of enemies. Mt. 5:43-48.
6. The love of God. Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8.
7. The prodigal son. Lk. 15:11-32.
8. The woman of Samaria. Jn. 4:1-42.
9. The sinful woman. Jn. 8:3-11.
10. The robber on the cross. Lk. 23:39-43.
11. The gracious invitation. Mt. 11:28-30.
12. Love the supreme ideal of life. I Jn. 4:17-21; I Cor. 13.

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth

them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow" *Psa.* 146:8, 9.

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them." *Isa.* 63:9.

"Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth: keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." *Ex.* 34:6, 7.

The entire book of Hosea especially *ch.* 11:1-4: "When Israel was a child . . . I loved him . . . Yea, I taught Ephraim to walk . . . I drew them with the cords of a man, with hands of love."

7. "Jehovah will smite Egypt . . . they shall return unto him . . . and he will heal them" *Isa.* 19:22. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved" *Isa.* 30:15. "Let the wicked forsake his way and return unto Jehovah . . . for he will abundantly pardon" *Isa.* 55:7.

"O Israel, return unto thy God . . . I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely *Hosea* 14:1, 4a; the entire chapter deals with return of the prodigal nation. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you saith the Lord of hosts" *Mal.* 3:7.

8. "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of the Law" *Deut.* 31:12.
Miraculous blessings given to Gentiles: the widow of Zarephath (*I Kings* 17:16) and Naaman the leper (*II Kings* 5:1-15).

9. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth

GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

in mercy" Mic. 7:18.

"But he, being merciful, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea many a time turned he his anger away" Psa. 78:38.

"It is of Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" Lam. 3:22.

10. "He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" Mic. 7:19.

"But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes . . . he shall not die. None of his transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him" Ez. 18:21-22.

11. "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters and he that hath no money, come ye . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price . . . incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live. Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and return unto our God for he will abundantly pardon . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" Isa. 55:1, 3, 7; 1:18.

12. "Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins" Prov. 10:12. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with thy mind, and with all thy strength" Deut. 6:5. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" Lev. 19:18.

GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN JUDGMENT AS GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. God cursed Adam, Eve,

1. John the Baptist an-

ISAIAH

- | | |
|---|---|
| and the serpent. Gen. 3: 9-21. | nounced the coming of the kingdom but also of judgment and punishment by fire. Mt. 3:8-12. |
| 2. God cursed Cain. Gen. 4:9-15. | 2. Unbelievers condemned: 3:18; Rev. 21:8. |
| 3. God destroyed man with the flood. Gen. 6 & 7. | 3. Jesus pronounced judgment on Chorazin and Capernaum, predicting a worse fate for them than that of Sodom. Mt. 11:20-24. |
| 4. God ordered capital punishment. Gen. 9:46. | 4. "Woe to the Pharisees and lawyers" Lk. 11:42-54. |
| 5. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen. 19. | 5. Jesus taught the coming of torment in fire after death—the rich man and Lazarus. Lk. 16:19-31. |
| 6. God plagued Pharaoh and slew the first born. Ex. 12. | 6. This punishment Jesus promised is without end. Mt. 25-46. |
| 7. God destroyed the Canaanites. Josh. 23:5-9. | 7. As they were destroyed by flood in Noah's day, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man |

GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

8. The bears destroyed children. II Kings 2:23-25.
 9. Saul was commanded to slay the Amalekites. I Sam. 15.
 10. God punished Israel and carried his people into captivity. II Chron. 36:16-20.
 11. God is a God of vengeance. Psalms 94:1.
-
9. Peter quoted and approved Moses' saying, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts 3:22, 23.
10. "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." Quoted from Deut. 32:35 in Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30.
 11. Ananias and Sapphira slain for lying. Acts 5:1-11.
 12. "For if the Word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" Heb. 2:2, 3.
 13. "For if we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness

is revealed" Lk. 17:28, 29.

8. God spared not the ancient world, but saved Noah, burned Sodom and delivered Lot; he shall still deliver the godly, but the blackness of darkness is reserved for false teachers and other sinners. II Pet. 2:9—"to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

of fire that shall devour the adversaries" Heb. 10:26. Those disregarding Moses' Law "died without compassion"; how much more shall one suffer who spurns the new covenant. Heb. 10:28, 29.

14. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Heb. 10:31.
15. "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. 12:25, 26. "For our God is a consuming fire" Heb. 12:29.
16. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, blinded Elymas. Acts 13:8-12.
17. Herod was smitten by "an angel of the Lord" eaten of worms and died. Acts 12:22-24.
18. "Behold then, the goodness and severity of God" Rom. 11:22.
19. The devil, the beast, and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Rev. 20:10.
20. Anyone not written in the Book of Life is to be cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:15.

E. FREEDOM WILL FLOURISH, CHAPTER 35

1. STRENGTHENED

TEXT: 35:1-7

- 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.



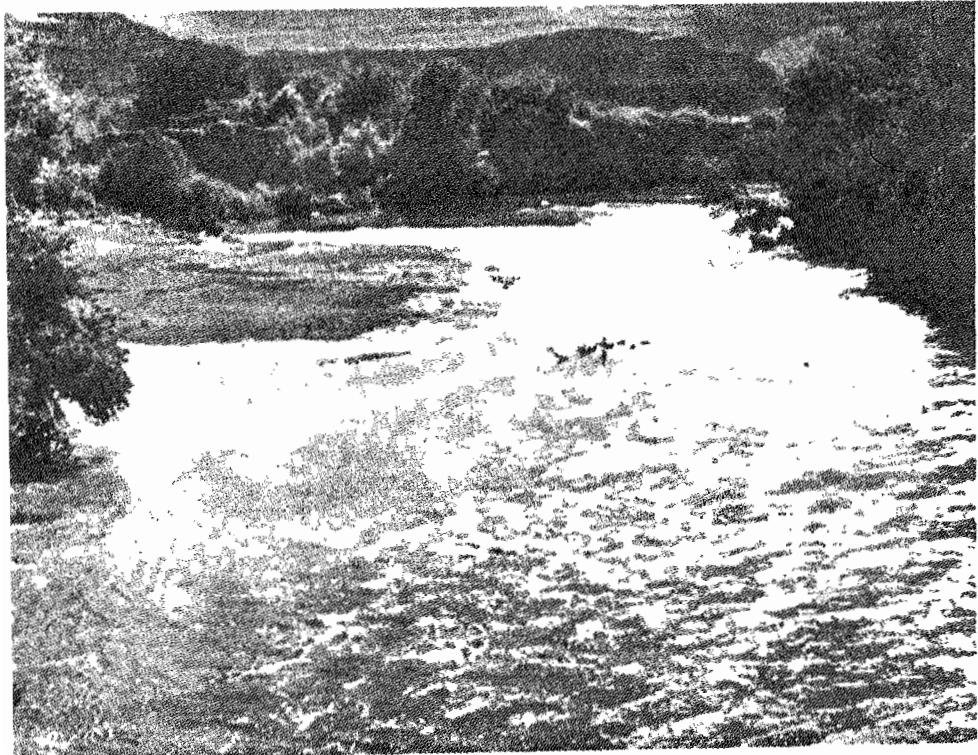
"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over" (Joshua 3:1).

From their last camping ground on the "plains of Moab" the route taken by the Israelites lay across the Arabah (Deuteronomy 1:7; 4:49—*R.S.V.*) the name given in the Bible to this area north of the Dead Sea on either side of Jordan. It is a desolate expanse of limestone through which the Jordan has cut a gorge half a mile wide.

In the background, to the west of the depression, the hills of Judah rise above Jericho.

It was here "in the plains of Jericho" that the Babylonians later captured King Zedekiah of Judah when he fled from Jerusalem (Jeremiah 39:5).

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



"And the people passed over right against Jericho . . . and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:16-17).

Near Jericho the river is almost twenty feet deep and is fringed by a narrow, sub-tropical thicker, the "jungle of the Jordan", which at one time harboured lions (Zechariah 11:3-R.S.V.). It is on record that several times when the river has been in spate masses of marl have crashed down the banks and temporarily stopped up the channel. According to the Arab historian, al-Nuairi, the river was completely dammed for ten hours on 8th December 1266 near the confluence of the Jabbok, a striking reminder of the biblical story. Similar occurrences have been reported in more recent times, as in October 1914, when the Jordan was blocked for twenty-four hours at the Jericho bridge.

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- 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God.
- 3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; he will come and save you.
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- 6 Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
- 7 And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

QUERIES

- a. Why will the desert blossom and sing for joy?
- b. How shall the weak be strengthened?
- c. When will all the infirm be healed?

PARAPHRASE

While the glory of the God-opposing world empires will be changed to wastelands and desolations, the desolation of God's people is only temporary. Yes, their wastelands will someday be filled with gladness and their unproductiveness will be turned into beauty and fertility. There will be great joy and singing in that day. The majestic glory and beauty of Lebanon's mountains, the verdant lushness of Mount Carmel and the fertile productiveness of Sharon's plain will be faint comparison with the glory and excellency of the Lord which they shall enjoy in that day. On account of this promise let those of God

who are afraid be valiant and walk on in God's way with confidence. Tell those who are apprehensive to be courageous and strong. Your God is coming to destroy your enemies and save you. When He comes the blind will be made to see and the deaf made to hear. When he comes the crippled will be made as agile as the deer and those who cannot speak will be enabled to shout and sing. Refreshing and life-giving water will gush forth in the arid places and turn into running streams. That which is parched and dried up will be made into an oasis for the thirsty. Even that which normally would never be fertile and refreshing shall be so.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 SAVED: Chapter 35 stands in direct contrast to chapter 34. These two chapters conclude or summarize the two propositions of this section (28-35): (a) World governments cannot help God's people (especially Egypt) for they oppose God's sovereignty; (b) God will keep His promise to deliver from eternal destruction all who believe and trust Him.

This chapter finds its ultimate fulfillment in the messianic kingdom (the church). Just as the God-opposing world governments were defeated and judged at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (see comments ch. 34), so the great deliverance and productiveness portrayed in vivid landscape scenes refer to the same climactic event in history. It would seem evident to us that all the predictions of the prophets concerning the rejuvenated *land* of Israel or the restoration of the *people* of Israel to the land must either be fulfilled in a literal (though hyperbolic) way after the captivity, or in a spiritual sense in the establishment of the church—or both. We cannot abide the idea that the prophetic predictions concerning the land and the people will find their fulfillment in a literal restoration of the Jewish economy (dispensation) at some time future to the church.

a. So far as we are able to discover, the New Testament says

nothing of literal, genetic Israel's reoccupation of Palestine and restoration of a Jewish system.

- b. Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple but He said nothing of its rebuilding for the restoration of a Jewish system.
- c. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."
- d. Paul told the Gentile Ephesians they were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the church.
- e. Paul told the Gentile Galatians that all who were in Christ were heirs of Abraham and the *promise* made to Abraham.
- f. To restore a Jewish system would invalidate the credibility, authenticity, finality and superiority of Christianity as revealed in the book of Hebrews.
- g. To establish again the kingdom of Israel of the Old Testament would be to establish a kingdom conceived in disobedience, born in rebellion and perpetuated in apostasy. That is exactly what the O.T. kingdom of Israel was.

Matthew Henry says, "Under the Gospel the desert land of heathenism becomes blooming. The flourishing desert shall have the glory of Lebanon given to it, which consisted in the strength and stateliness of its cedars; and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, which consisted in corn and cattle. All the beauty of the Jewish economy passed into the Christian and appeared in its perfection, as the apostle shows in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whatever is valuable in any institution is brought into the gospel."

In the Messianic age the best of every pagan kingdom will be blended with the best of God's chosen people to form the beautiful, productive, joy-filled new kingdom of God. Isaiah amplifies this thought with vividness when he speaks of the "wealth of the nations" being brought into God's Messianic kingdom (cf. Isa. 60:8-22; 61:1-11, etc.). The wealth of any nation is, of course, its godly people—not its silver and gold. God's great universal kingdom (the church) is to possess the glory of every nation on the earth. And so it has; and so it shall continue to do. These prophecies began to be fulfilled.

when the gospel began to conquer and possess people from the regions of Tyre, Sidon, Antioch (all in Lebanon) (Acts 11:22, 26; 13:1, etc.); by the gospel capture of people from Caesarea (at the foot of Mt. Carmel) (Acts 8:40; 10:24, etc.).

The prophecy has a far greater range than that, of course. Wherever the gospel is preached and men surrender to the rule of God in Christ, there the glory of "Lebanon" is blended with the excellency of "Carmel and Sharon." There rejoicing and singing take place. There beauty and productiveness become the new order.

Verses 3-4 are apparently paraphrased in Hebrews 12:12-13. Perhaps the idea of Isaiah in this whole section (vs. 1-7) is appropriated by the Hebrews 12:12-13 passage. Hebrews 12 is the chapter in which the Mosaic dispensation is contrasted with the Christian dispensation (Zion) and the Hebrew Christians are exhorted to cling to the kingdom which cannot be shaken (Christian) because this was God's goal in the Old Testament. This seems to indicate the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is saying the Christian dispensation is the fulfillment of the promises made in Isaiah 35, and "therefore" the messianic age is the point upon which God's people are to focus for "strengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees." One thing is certain, the coming of God with vengeance, recompense and salvation should provide strength. What God is going to save from is the unbelief and perversity of carnal, satanic opposition to His redemptive work. That salvation has nothing to do with a particular land, race, people, circumstance or social class. It was accomplished by Christ *once* for *all*. Of course, we look forward to a new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But glorified circumstances or environment are irrelevant without glorified people. Heaven without sanctified people would be Hell. So it is not a land God is primarily interested in—it is a people!

V. 5-7 SLAKED: The first step in the process of sanctifying a people is a renewal of spiritual discernment. The "eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be

unstopped." This reminds us of Jesus' application of Isaiah 61:1-4 to His redemptive work in the synagogue in Luke 4:16-30. (cf. also Jn. 9:35-41) Spiritual sensibility will replace carnal dullness, and spiritual ability will replace debilitating sin. There was more *seen* by those whom Jesus cured of physical blindness than was seen by many of those who had perfect eyesight. Verse 5 was fulfilled in Christ in much more than a physical way and is still being fulfilled today. Men are constantly recovering their spiritual sight and hearing. Lame and dumb regained more than physical well-being when Jesus healed them. It was by being brought to faith in Him they were saved from sin.

It is sin that opposes God. All men are sinners and enemies. Men are deceived by sin. Sin is the great mirage. The great Liar, Satan, deceived man with the great lie and deceived man into opposing God's sovereignty. False philosophies, false religions and carnal political schemes form the great mirage out in the desert of sin. Men think they see life, refreshment and sustenance in the mirages. Isaiah says, when the Messianic age comes, instead of a mirage there will be real water for thirsty souls. There will be a beautiful, green, cool, satisfying oasis in the midst of the arid, false, killing wilderness of sin. The Living Water would come (Jn. 4:1-42; 7:37-39) and all who believe in Him become "rivers of living water," oases in the desert of sin. Before the gospel the nations wandered like travelers in the desert, allured and disillusioned by shadows and mirages and dreamlike phantoms of truth in the false religions and human political systems. But in the gospel of Christ they have pure fountains and calm lakes of living water which refresh them in their weary pilgrimage home.

That which was once desolate and barren will become lush with an abundance unheard of. This is the meaning of the reference to jackals, normally animals of the desert who have no vegetation in which to lie, finding tall grass, reeds and rushes in which to lie. It is an added figure of speech describing the verdure of the messianic age.

QUIZ

1. Give at least six reasons the prophetic predictions concerning the land of Palestine cannot find their fulfillment in a restored Jewish dispensation.
2. How is the glory of Lebanon given with the excellency of Carmel and Sharon to the "land"?
3. Where is the passage concerning strengthening weak hands and feeble knees paraphrased in the N.T.?
4. What was the Lord's main purpose in opening the eyes of the blind and restoring hearing in the N.T.?
5. Who is the Living Water in the desert of sin, and who become "rivers of living water"?

2. SANCTIFIED

TEXT: 35:8-10

- 8 And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed; the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein.
- 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:
- 10 and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

QUERIES

- a. What is the highway and The way?
- b. When is the everlasting joy to come?

PARAPHRASE

And a main thoroughfare shall be there in that rejuvenated wilderness. It shall be a road leading the redeemed directly to their destination. This will be called The Way of holiness, and sinners will not walk in this Way. It is reserved for those who desire to be sanctified unto the Lord. It will be a Way so clearly built and recognizable that even the inexperienced and those who have not known this Way before may not fail to comprehend it if they wish to learn of it. All dangers involved in traveling through the wastelands will be eliminated on this Way. Those whom the Lord purchases with a ransom-price will return to Him and to Zion rejoicing with songs about their redemption. Everlasting joy will crown their whole lives. They shall finally find the refreshment of their souls for which they have longed. All that would frustrate or hinder their travel will be made to disappear.

COMMENTS

v. 8-9 THE WAY: Isaiah continues to wax eloquent concerning the great work of redemption Jehovah is going to bring to a climax in the Messianic age. Redemption-opposing, enslaving ideologies are going to be defeated by one great judgmental act of God from heaven (Isa. 34). This occurred at the cross of Christ as we have already demonstrated from the N.T. God is going to take the desolation and waste caused by carnal, unbelieving programs of man and turn them into a blooming flowergarden. God will provide an oasis of living water in the midst of this world-wide desert (Isa. 35:1-7). Furthermore, as the text now being considered continues, God is going to provide a Way through this desolate wasteland of carnal confusion and chaos. The Hebrew word for *way* used here is *maselul*, which means "a raised way." The "roads" in ancient times were mere trails for the most part. But a "raised way" would be a main thoroughfare—distinctly a

road as compared to a path or trail. Instead of the wild confusion and chaos of human philosophies and schemes, God will provide His Way. It is the only Way characterized by holiness. Its uniqueness is that of the separateness of those who walk upon it. They are separated from uncleanness (spiritual and moral uncleanness). The spiritually stained and morally soiled will not travel this Way. Their exclusion will be of their own choice (Mt. 7:13-14) because Jesus is The Way (Jn. 14:6). Jeremiah speaks of this Way (Jer. 6:16-17). This Way will be so unmistakably demonstrated or marked out by God that even the man who has never seen God's Way before will recognize this as His Way. The one with no experience in the Way of God will be able to comprehend and walk in it. It will not be complex or confusing. The "Way" became a favorite synonym for the Christian life in the early church (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; 24:22). This Way would be one of safety, security and peacefulness. No dangerous "beast" (which, by the way, is a figure in Daniel and Revelation to symbolize human governments opposing God's redemptive work), nothing predatory would prey upon those who choose to walk in This Way.

V. 10 THE WAYFARER: Those who travel this "raised way" will be the redeemed (Heb. *goal*) and the ransomed (Heb. *padah*). This certainly indicates the traveler on this way has been purchased with a price. The purchase or ransom occasions *everlasting* joy and results in sorrow and sighing *fleeing away*. The emphasis is on everlasting. It cannot, therefore, have its ultimate fulfillment in anything transitory or temporal such as a land or physical nation/kingdom. It is associated with coming to Zion. Zion, in its spiritual focus, is the church, not a mountain (Heb. 12:22). Those who walk upon this Way are those purchased by the blood of Christ. The joy that shall be the crowning factor of their lives (upon their heads) is the joy Jesus brought (cf. Jn. 15:11; 16:22-24; 17:13; Rom. 14:17; I Jn. 1:4, etc.). Walking on this Way of holiness, which is both clear and safe, will eliminate the need for sorrowing and sighing. Frustration is eliminated and hurt

or damage is impossible (in the eternal sense) inasmuch as the traveler has been assured of reaching his destination because his price has been paid by Jehovah.

It is interesting that this glorious chapter, describing all the beauty, glory and gladness that is to come to the redeemed, is followed (after the historical interlude of chapters 36-39) by the introduction of Isaiah's great "Servant" section (chapters 40-53). All that is to come to the redeemed is a result of the work of the "Suffering Servant" of God (Isa. 53), the Messiah.

This chapter brings to an impressive climax the whole section warning that emancipation for God's people is not from union with Egypt. Egypt, in reality, is in opposition to God's redemptive work, as are all human ideologies. Emancipation for God's people will be accomplished by God Himself in ransom and redemption. It is appropriated by those who wish it in traveling on God's Way.

QUIZ

1. What is the literal meaning of "highway" in v. 8?
2. What connection does this section have to 35:1-7?
3. Where in the N.T. is the "Way" referred to?
4. Why does the fact that the traveler upon this Way will be redeemed and ransomed point to a fulfillment in the N.T.?
5. What "joy" is referred to in v. 10?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS THIRTY-FOUR AND THIRTY-FIVE

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>host of heaven</i> | 7. <i>wilderness</i> |
| 2. <i>sword of Jehovah</i> | 8. <i>glory of Lebanon</i> |
| 3. <i>Edom</i> | 9. <i>streams in the desert</i> |
| 4. <i>line of confusion</i> | 10. <i>highway</i> |
| 5. <i>night-monster</i> | 11. <i>fool</i> |
| 6. <i>book of Jehovah</i> | 12. <i>Zion</i> |

MEMORIZATION

And a _____ shall be there, and a _____, and it shall be called _____; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the _____: the _____ man, yea fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any _____ go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the _____ shall walk there: and the _____ of Jehovah shall return, and come with _____ unto Zion; and everlasting _____ shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and _____, and sorrow and _____ shall flee away. (35:8-10)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain why the prophets spoke of the coming Messianic age in terms of cosmic cataclysms?
2. Explain the practice of using Edom to represent all God-opposing human governments.
3. Explain why the prophets used figures of speech depicting a rejuvenated land to portray the Messianic age?

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. What application may be made in proper Bible study today of the evident prophetic manner of depicting the Messianic age by cosmic upheaval?

2. What application may be made of God's attitude toward Edom in today's world of God-opposing human ideologies?
3. What application may be made in teaching today what God's Way is like from Isaiah's description of the Way in chapter 35?

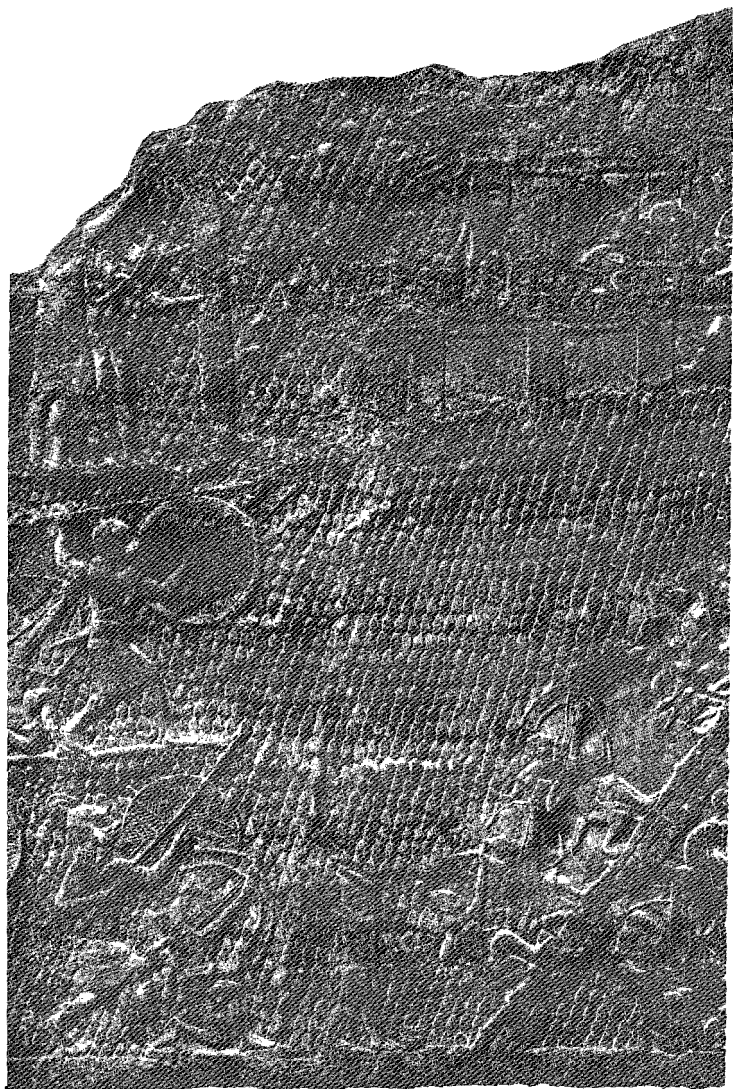
VI. CHASTENING THROUGH CAPTIVITY CHAPTERS 36 - 39

A. PRESSURE, CHAPTER 36

1. PREDICAMENT

TEXT: 36:1-12

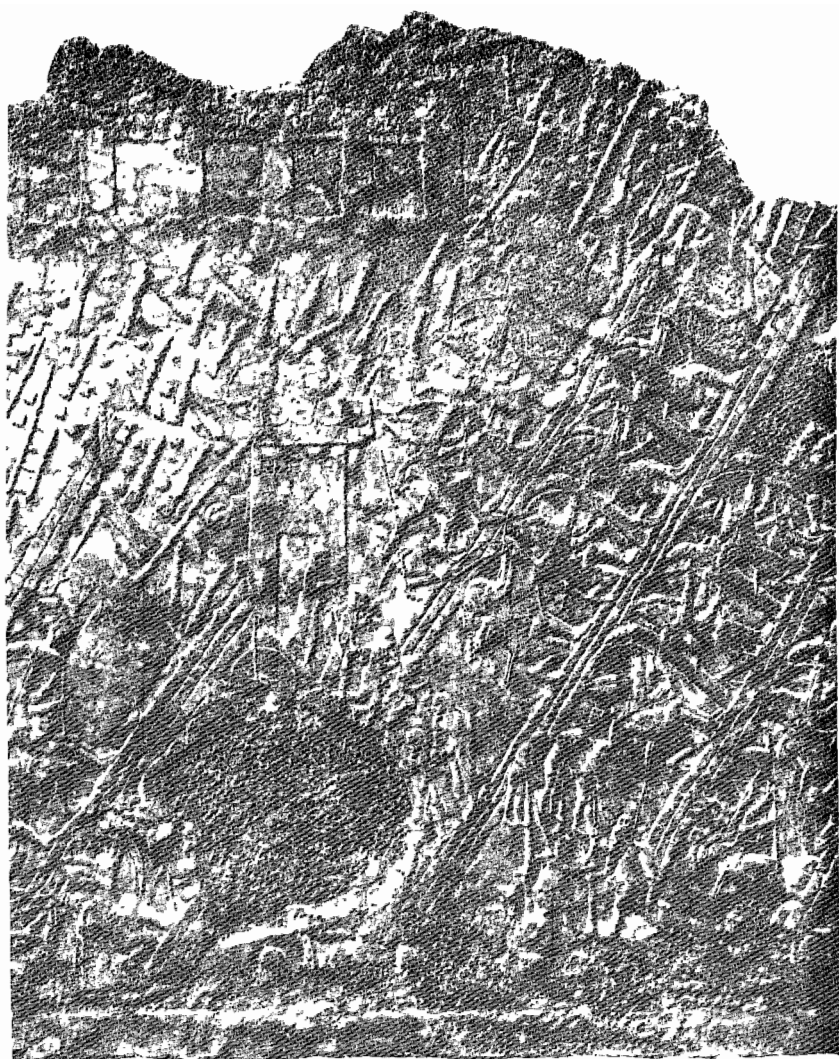
- 1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib, king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them.
- 2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.
- 3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder.
- 4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trusteth?
- 5 I say, thy counsel and strength for the war are but vain words: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me?
- 6 Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust on him.



"Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them" (II Kings 18:13).

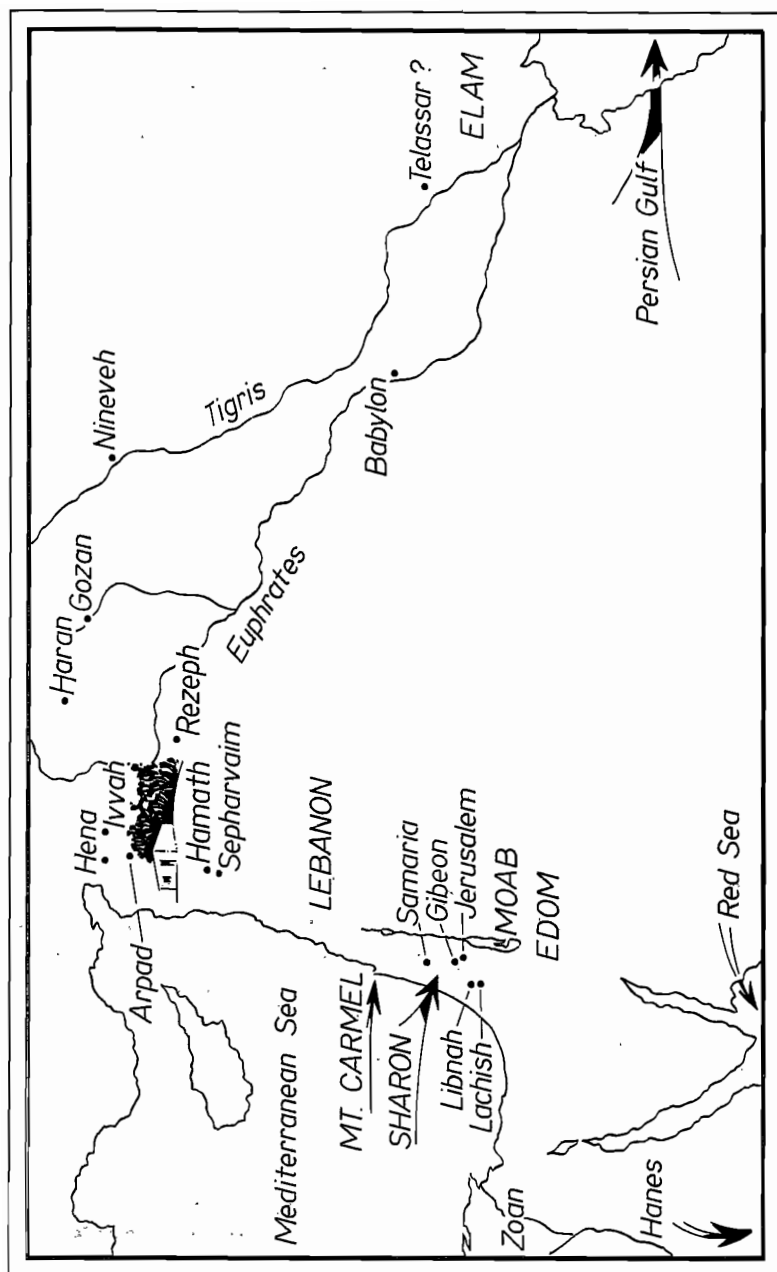
After more than two thousand five hundred years this relief from Nineveh reproduces for us the attack of Sennacherib's army upon the biblical city of Lachish, with overwhelming force and with all the techniques of war. The defenders fight desperately from the towers, protected by shields between the battlements—"like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men" (Song of Solomon 4:4). They are shooting arrows, slinging stones or throwing them with their bare hands and hurling firebrands down upon the enemy.

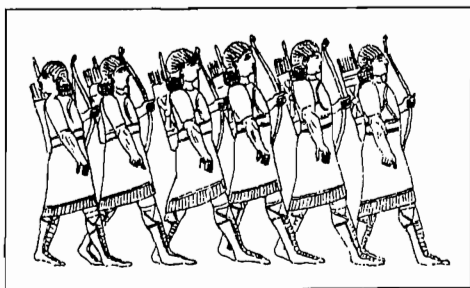
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They wear pointed helmets like the Assyrians or close-fitting caps with chin-straps. Assyrian sappers have built a series of sloping brick ramps on which the siege-engines are pushed up the hillside against the fortress walls. The battering-rams are fitted with a long shaft in front, the purpose of which was to gouge stones out of the masonry. A soldier was posted in the front of the machine to keep throwing ladlefuls of water on the flying firebrands, thus preventing the flames from spreading. The archers advance under cover of the battering-rams. Behind them come the spearmen with large round shields. Captives, both men and women, are already leaving the city, passing three impaled victims.

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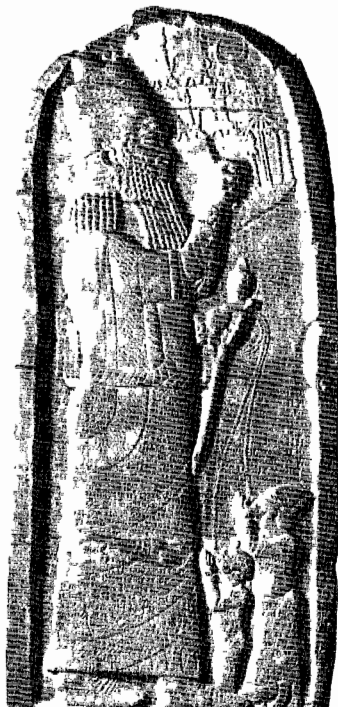




"And it came to pass, as he (Sennacherib) was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword"

(II Kings 19:37).

Sennacherib was assassinated in 681 B. C. These men formed part of the palace guard and private bodyguard of the great Assyrian monarch. They were obviously not very efficient.



"And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead" (II Kings 19:37).

This short matter of fact statement in the Bible is amplified by Esarhaddon himself, the son of Sennacherib, who succeeded the murdered king. He describes these turbulent days in Nineveh: "Disloyal aspirations overpowered my brothers . . . they rebelled. To seize the kingdom they killed Sennacherib. I became a raging lion, I was consumed with fury . . ."

On this victory monument King Esarhaddon stands over two of his vanquished foes, Usanahuru, son of Taharka of Egypt (kneeling) and King Abdimilkutti of Sidon. He has these dwarf-like princes roped through the lips like wild beasts. "Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips . . ." (Isaiah 37:29).

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- 7 But if thou say unto me, We trust in Jehovah our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?
- 8 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.
- 9 How then canst thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?
- 10 And am I now come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.
- 11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.
- 12 But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you?

QUERIES

- a. Who is "Rabshakeh"?
- b. At which altar did Hezekiah tell Judah to worship?
- c. Did Rabshakeh threaten Jerusalem by Jehovah's command?

PARAPHRASE

It was in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib, king of Assyria, made military expeditions against many of the fortified cities of Judah and conquered most of them. While he was occupied with the siege of Lachish, the king of Assyria sent his commander-in-chief with a great

number of troops to deliver an ultimatum to Hezekiah. When the king of Assyria's commander arrived at Jerusalem, he set up camp with his troops by the conduit of the upper pool along the road going down to the bleaching field. A trio of high officials from Hezekiah's court went out to where the Assyrian troops were to confer with their leader: Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah, chief administrator; Shebna who was formerly chief administrator but now serving as a scribe; Joah, son of Asaph, an official chronicler, all went out to talk to the Rab-shakeh. The Assyrian official said to them, Go tell this Hezekiah that the great king of Assyria wants to know what kind of a fool he is for thinking the king of Egypt will help him? The great king of Assyria wishes to inform Hezekiah of the uselessness of his strategies and conferences on war. Who in the world will be able to help him now that he has rebelled against the great king of Assyria? Egypt is not just a useless ally, she is a dangerous one. She is like a broken but sharp stem of the reed—she will pierce your hand if you lean upon her. Now before you say to me, We are trusting in Jehovah our God, let me ask you, is not this the God Hezekiah defied by tearing down all the altars you people built to your God in the high places and groves and made everyone worship only at the altar in Jerusalem? My master, the king of Assyria, wants to make a wager with you—that you don't have 2000 cavalymen in your whole army. If you do, the king of Assyria will give you 2000 horses for them to ride on! Now with a tiny army like that, how do you propose to make war on even the smallest and worst section of my master's army? With so little to offer, how do you expect to get help from Egypt? Furthermore, do you think I have come here without the help of your own God, Jehovah. Let me tell you, your own God, Jehovah, spoke to me and told me to make war on this land and destroy it. Then the three Hebrew men representing king Hezekiah said, with much consternation in their voices, Speak, O Rab-shakeh, I beg you, in the Aramaic language; we understand it. Please do not continue to speak these threats in Hebrew because our countrymen there on the city's walls will hear and chaos will fill the

city. But the Rab-shakeh said, Do you think my master has sent me just to threaten Hezekiah? I was sent to threaten the whole Jewish nation and warn them they will suffer atrocious and inhuman degradations if they do not surrender. They will eat their own dung and drink their own urine if they force my master to war against them.

COMMENTS

v. 1-5 **RABSHAKEH'S INQUIRY:** This section of Isaiah is one of three different historical records of these events. The other two records are II Kings 18 and 19, and II Chronicles 32. These three records do not contradict, but supplement one another. Chronicles seems to be, in these events, as it is in so many other parallel events, a condensation of what actually took place because Chronicles is the "theological" view of the theocracy while Kings is the "historical" view.

One might wonder why Isaiah would insert an historical narrative squarely in the middle of a series of grandly soaring and majestic prophecies. Without doubt his purpose is to give *proof* of his prophetic call and mission. The rapid fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction concerning the deliverance of Jerusalem, the restoration of Hezekiah and the death of the Assyrian king would prove conclusively that he was sent from Jehovah and spoke Jehovah's word!

There is a minor problem with the year of Hezekiah's reign. The campaign of Sennacherib against the cities of Judah took place from 703 to 701 B.C. This would at first glance indicate Hezekiah's reign to begin about 717-715 B.C. According to II Kings 18:1-2 it began in the 3rd year of Hoshea of Israel and lasted for 29 years. Hoshea was king of Israel when Shalmanezar began his siege of that kingdom. That was in Hoshea's seventh year and Hezekiah's fourth. Three years later Hoshea was carried captive (cf. II Kings 18:9-10). Israel fell to Shalmanezar in 722-721 B.C. (II Kings 18:9ff). This means that Hezekiah began to reign six years before the downfall