

to believe Jehovah is speaking again, openly, plainly and purposefully.

## QUIZ

1. What connection does this text have with what has been said before about Cyrus and the exiles?
2. Why is the statement about the "labor of Egypt" etc. to be understood figuratively?
3. How may God "hide" Himself and "reveal" Himself at the same time?
4. How will Cyrus' work result in demonstrating the futility of idolatry?
5. What kind of coherence does God seek in His creation?
6. How will God bring about that coherence?

## d. OUTREACH

TEXT: 45:20-25

- 20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that carry the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.
- 21 Declare ye, and bring it forth; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath showed this from ancient time? who hath declared it of old? have not I, Jehovah? and there is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me.
- 22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.
- 23 By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
- 24 Only in Jehovah, it is said of me, is righteousness and

strength; even to him shall men come; and all they that were incensed against him shall be put to shame.

25 In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

### QUERIES

- a. Why direct the “escaped of the nations” to gather?
- b. When shall every “knee bow,” etc.?
- c. Who is “incensed” against Jehovah?

### PARAPHRASE

When this work, begun by Cyrus, resulting in a new Israel shall have culminated, all you Gentiles who wish to escape the judgment of Jehovah gather yourselves together and draw near. Those who worship idols are ignorant and lost; they pray to gods that are unable to save. Let all idol-worshippers who wish to contest My sovereignty combine all their wisdom and power and try to keep My predictions from coming to pass! After all, who has made such prophecies and had them come to pass—one of your idol-gods? No! Only Jehovah knows the future with certainty. I am the Only God there is! I am absolutely just and faithful to keep My word and I am the only Saviour there is; Let all the world turn to Me and be saved, for I am the only God there is; there is no other Savior! Since I am the only Absolute, I have sworn by My absolute sovereignty. I have spoken in these prophecies on the basis of My absolute faithfulness; they will come to pass! Indeed, every human being will ultimately acknowledge My sovereignty; every knee will bow and every tongue will confess some day that I am Lord. Some, who say, Only in Jehovah may we have real righteousness and strength, will come to Me and be saved. Those who continue to hate Jehovah will eventually acknowledge His sovereignty, but in disgrace. Through Jehovah’s grace and power

all the spiritual offspring of true Israel will be vindicated and justified because they have put their trust in Him, and Jehovah will give them of His glory.

## COMMENTS

v. 20-21 INDICTMENT: These verses continue and amplify the train of thought that has gone before concerning the long-range, culminating result of Jehovah's redemptive work begun with Cyrus' freeing of the Jewish exiles. This redemptive work of God will have a world-wide outreach. All those Gentiles who repent of their idolatry and acknowledge, in faith, the sovereignty of Jehovah will be saved. The Hebrew word *hikavetzu*, translated "assemble yourselves," is stronger than merely "assemble." It means "form yourselves into a specific group." Those that are "escaped" among the *goiyim* (Gentiles) are the future people from all nations who will have seen the culmination of the work begun in the return from the captivities (the institution of the messianic kingdom through Jesus Christ), recognize the sovereignty of the God of Israel, wish to escape His judgment and choose to accept His offer of salvation. In other words, it is the church of the New Testament. Isaiah is affirming (in predictive-present) that a specific group of *goiyim* will thus choose to escape the judgment upon all religions except that of Jehovah which will be made apparent to honest-minded believers through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12) and this will be confirmed and affirmed centuries after Isaiah predicts it here. Many of the Gentiles would, when the new Israel (the church) began to proclaim its gospel, acknowledge the futility of their pagan religions and their own lostness (cf. Acts 19:11-20). The indictment of Jehovah is that idols cannot save and those who worship them are without knowledge of the truth.

Many of the *goiyim* would challenge that last statement! Even some of the Jews of Isaiah's day would find it objectionable.

Through the centuries from Isaiah until Christ, the whole Gentile world remained in ignorance and superstition and idolatry. Even after the resurrection of Christ men continued to cling to their idols and human philosophies (cf. Acts 17:16-33). Hundreds of millions of people today worship gods of wood and stone that cannot save them. But the sovereignty of God is demonstrated, as verse 21 states, through the fulfillment of God's prophetic word (cf. II Pet. 1:16-21). Jehovah offers the *goiyim* an opportunity to "state their case" and even invites them to pool their "counsel" and see if they can gainsay the predictions of Jehovah through His prophets. Jehovah alone knows the future and He has demonstrated it from the beginning of time by predicting events great and small in minute detail, thousands of years before their fulfillment. Much of this was prior to Isaiah's time! There was plenty of evidence even in Isaiah's day that Jehovah's word always came to pass. Isaiah himself was able to believe in the Christ as the culminating work of Jehovah (cf. Jn. 12:36-43); Abraham saw the day of Christ by faith and rejoiced (Jn. 8:56-59). But most certainly, when the prophecies Jehovah made by Isaiah gained their fulfillment, the Gentiles would have every possible proof that Jehovah is God and there is no other!

v. 22-25 INVITATION: The Hebrew word *peneu* means *turn*, thus v. 22 should read, "Turn unto me, and be ye saved." There are two other Hebrew words also used to mean turn—*shuv* and *nacham*. *Peneu* means more literally, "turn to or towards; follow; turn to face something or someone." *Peneu* is the imperative of *panah*, so it is Jehovah's command that all the world turn to Him for salvation. The word translated "be ye saved" is *heuashe'u*, the imperative of *yasha'*, and so the Lord is here expressing His deep desire that all men be saved (I Tim. 2:3; II Pet. 3:9). It is really Jehovah's tender insistence that all the world face up to the fact that He is the only God and Savior of mankind there is! Isaiah is truly the spokesman of the Old Testament for the universality of the gospel. God's outreach is to the ends of the earth. The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save (cf. Isa. 59:1-3), it is man's sin

(rebellion) that keeps him from being saved. In other words, man's salvation is complete and readily available but in the final analysis, it is up to man. He must choose. He must accept the covenant terms.

The salvation of all mankind. is of great significance. It is what all of history functions for; it is that for which God has stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to return the exiles. Man's redemption and regeneration is that for which God longs, plans, works and sacrifices (even His own Son). It is His total goal. So He supports His invitation to all the world with an oath. He swears by Himself. There is nothing greater to swear by (cf. Heb. 6:13-20) He swears on His eternality (cf. Gen. 22:16; Rom. 14:11). The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ was the greatest, most specific and thoroughly confirmed oath of God ever made. It was there, in history, God validated the certainty of all His promises and the faithfulness of His own nature (cf. II Cor. 1:19-21; Heb. 6:17f) when He "interposed" *Himself* with an oath. God, in the flesh, dying and coming to life again by His own power! Once and for all God proved through the empty tomb that He is the resurrection and the life. He proved that no one comes to the Father but by Jesus Christ. With absolute historic certainty God proved there that every word of His comes to pass in righteousness. He also proved that eventually every knee must bow and every tongue confess that He is God (cf. Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10f.). While time lasts, men are free to acknowledge His sovereignty or deny it. But when time ceases to be and men inhabit the eternal destinies they have freely chosen, they will all acknowledge His sovereignty. Eventually every thing created must acknowledge His Lordship. Some, as verse 24 points out, will confess His righteousness and strength and come to Him (for salvation). Others, incensed, hateful and rebellious to the end will know and acknowledge His sovereignty but will be "put to shame."

Jehovah will justify (vindicate) all the seed of Israel and glorify them. In our context (the work of God, begun with Cyrus, culminating in redemption for the whole world) this "seed" must refer to the spiritual Israel (cf. Rom. 2:28-29;

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4:13-25; Gal. 3:6-9; 3:27-29; 6:14-16). All, both Jew and Gentile, who "turn" to Jehovah for salvation by faith will have that faith vindicated when God, "bringing many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10), finishes His work at the consummation of it all. Right now we are being changed, by faith, from one degree of glory to another (II Cor. 3:18). One day, when time ceases to be, we shall have all the glory our Great God has prepared for us—then our faith will be vindicated! God is sovereign in salvation!

## QUIZ

1. What is the nature of the "assembly" the nations are to make?
2. Who are the "escaped"?
3. What is God's challenge to the Gentiles who will not accept His sovereignty?
4. How insistent is God that the whole world "look" to Him for salvation?
5. What demonstration do we have that God's good news was universally intended?
6. What was God's greatest "oath" to the world of His faithfulness to keep His promises?
7. Who are the "seed" of Israel?

## SPECIAL STUDY

### TPOLOGY

Definition: From *tupos* meaning literally "to strike"; "the mark or impression of something; stamp; impressed sign; emblem." Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 10:6, 11; Jn. 20:25 "Print" of nail (lit. usage) Webster: "A figure or representation of something to come; a token; a sign; a symbol; correlative to antitype."

## T Y P O L O G Y

Synonyms: *skia* (shadow), Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1  
*hypodeigma* (copy), Heb. 8:5; 9:23  
*semeion* (sign), Mt. 12:39  
*parabole* (parable), or (figure), Heb. 9:9; 11:19  
*antitypos* (antitype), Heb. 9:24; I Pet. 3:21

Characteristics of types:

1. *They are thoroughly rooted in history.* They are not myths or allegories. This is where they differ from symbols. Symbols do not necessarily have to be historical realities (such as the dreams and visions of Daniel and John in Revelation). Types are actual, historical persons, events, institutions.
2. *They are prophetic in nature.* Again they differ from symbols in this aspect. Symbols may or may not be figurative of future things. Types must always predict.
3. *They are definite, integral part of redemptive history.* They were intended to be part of God's plan of redemption. They are not afterthoughts read back into the O.T. story. They retain their typical significance even after the antitype has appeared (I Cor. 10:1-11) (Rom. 15:4).
4. *They are Christocentric.* They all point to Christ in one way or another (Lk. 24:24-44; Acts 3:32ff).
5. *They are edificatory.* They have spiritual meaning for God's people in both dispensations. The OT saint was undoubtedly edified by the typical significance of such things as circumcision (Dt. 30:6), the sacrifices (Hos. 14:2) and the coronation of Joshua (Zech. 6:9-15); also the tabernacle, etc.  
We must be careful not to think the OT saints perfectly understood all the type taught about Christ (I Pet. 1:10-12). If they understood all, it would take away the type's prophetic nature.
6. *They are in variety.* There was a necessity for a great variety of types to give anything like a correct idea of the Messiah. Just as a single letter, or a very few letters from the alphabet could not express the full ideas of authors, so no type could

fully exhibit the promised Savior in the dignity of his person, the mystery of his incarnation, excellency of character, union of offices, depth of humiliation, etc. Moses was an eminent type as a prophet, but he was no priest; Aaron was a chosen priest, but no prophet; David was a king and prophet, but no priest. While one goat *slain* was a type of the death of Christ, another must be sent away *alive* to typify his resurrection.

### Importance of Studying Types:

1. Absolutely necessary if we are rightly to understand the revelation of God.

Types and their antitypes are like a book with a large number of *pictures* of things, institutions, events followed by words of descriptions and explanations. It is difficult to conceive of any one trying to understand the descriptions and explanations without referring to the *pictures* themselves. Yet this is how the Bible is often treated. Many people are satisfied to read the N.T. without any reference to the types of the O.T.

The typology of the O.T. is the very *alphabet* of the language in which the doctrine of the N.T. is written.

2. It is very clear that God himself sets great value upon types. In Hebrews we learn that in the construction of the Tabernacle every detail was planned by Him. And He warned Moses to *follow* those details! For example: The veil in the Tabernacle was not merely a curtain to divide rooms . . . there was great meaning . . . a great lesson conveyed in that veil.

God Himself rent that veil from top to bottom. He added the finishing touches to that picture! Doesn't this show the great importance God puts upon the types!?

3. Jesus set great value upon types. Again and again He referred to them and showed how they pointed to Himself (Manna from heaven; Jonah's death and resurrection from the whale; Light of World; etc.)
4. The very high place that is accorded types by the writers of

the N.T. show their importance (Hebrews, Romans, Gospel of John, Revelation). The Epistle to the Hebrews is almost entirely made up of references to the O.T. The O.T. is the shadows—Christ is the substance.

We sometimes forget that the writers of the N.T. were students of the O.T.; that it was their Bible, and that they would naturally allude again and again to the types and shadows, expecting their readers also to be familiar with them. If we fail to see these allusions, we lose much of the beauty of the passage, and cannot rightly understand it.

5. We fit the type to the antitype as a glove to the hand . . . as we prove a criminal's steps by fitting his boot into the tracks, so are we enabled, by a comparison of these types, to declare to the world that we have not followed any cunningly devised fables when we made known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus. He alone answers to the typical photographs . . . Such is the unity of the Divine purpose, that, look at what portion of it we will, there meets us some allusion to or emblem of our common salvation. The Scheme of Redemption is one gorgeous array of picture-lessons. The nation who typified it was a rotating black-board, going to and fro, and unfolding in their career the Will of the Eternal. Let us not despise the day of small things.

#### Some Rules for Interpreting Types:

1. The literal meaning of the word (strike) is not that which is generally found in the Scriptures.
2. We must never expect the type and the antitype to be the same. It is therefore utterly impossible to find something in the antitype that is analogous to every feature of the type—or that the type has perfectly prefigured the antitype.
3. For one purpose, generally, the type has been selected. Always remember—one point, or, at most, for but a very few features of similarity only.
4. It must predict something.

5. It must have been *intended* to represent something. Types are not coincidental.
6. The Scriptures should be allowed to interpret them, as far as possible.
7. We are always safe in calling anything a type that is so named in the word of God. But it is not necessary to suppose that we are limited to these named ones only.
8. Just like in the interpretation of symbols, the *similarity* between type and antitype will lead, in most cases, to the true meaning. (Lamb, Laver, Priest, etc.).
9. Anything, to be a type, must have been a real person, thing, event, or office.
10. The antitype is always superior to the type. The type is always visible at the time it is given, because it is material; but the antitype contains divine or spiritual thought.
11. Sometimes figurative language is employed in giving a typical event.
12. The rules for the interpretation of symbols apply as well as to types.
  - a. Many of the symbols have been interpreted in whole or in part by their authors. Let them interpret, first.
  - b. Other symbols have been interpreted by other inspired authors. Second choice of interpretation.
  - c. Other scripture illustrations help where authors have not interpreted. Third choice of interpretation.
  - d. Names of symbols are to be understood literally.
  - e. There must be found a resemblance, more or less clear, between the symbol and the thing signified.
  - f. The condition of those to whom the symbol was given must be known, if possible . . . to get the meaning the author intended for his primary audience.

Why types:

- I. There was something *ultimately* greater and more perfect than the OT.
  - A. The Gospel age is the "end of the ages" (I Cor. 10:11; Heb. 11:40; etc.)
  - B. The Gospel age is called "the dispensation of the fulness of time" (Eph. 1:10).
  - C. In the Gospel dispensation only is the great mystery of God in connection with man's salvation disclosed (Lk. 1:78; I Jn. 2:8; Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:27; I Cor. 2:7-10).
  - D. In the NT are the realities which were before in the OT mere shadow and partial revelations (Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5).
  - E. Even the most eminent of people in the OT (John the Baptist) were said to be inferior to the least in the Messiah's kingdom (Mt. 11:11).
  - F. The OT predicts its own fulfillment by something ultimate (Jer. 3:15-18; 31:31-34, etc.).
- II. To prepare the way for the introduction of these *ultimate* objects, He placed His chosen people under a course of training which included instruction by types (designed resemblances) of what was to come.
  - A. There must have been in the Old the same great elements of truth as in the antitypes of the New.
    1. Spiritual necessities of men have been the same in every age. So the truth revealed to meet these necessities, however basic or progressive, must have been fundamentally the same or essentially one in every age.
    2. Primary elements of truth embodied in Gospel (atonement, sacrifice, purification, etc.) had their origin as primary elements of truth even in the types.
  - B. Presented more simply and palpably in the OT types.
    1. In a shape or form the human mind could easily grasp.

2. From type to antitype involves a stretch of the mental faculties.

THIS IS REALLY THE FOUNDATION OF THE WHOLE IDEA OF TYPOLOGY: One truth in both type and antitype, but that truth existing first in a lower, then in a higher stage of development.

### III. Something more was needed than mere prophecy.

- A. Training (experiential) of a very peculiar kind was needed.
- B. Touching, seeing, tasting the spiritual realities which could *not* be seen and touched was needed.
- C. The Jew had constantly presented to his sight and touch, in the outward and earthly things, the fundamental truths and principles of eternal-spiritual relationships which cannot be seen and touched.

Several kinds of types: (not exhaustive)

#### 1. *Typical persons*

- a. Adam (type of Christ in that he was opposite from Him, Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:22, 45).
- b. Moses (type of Christ as leader, prophet and mediator, Dt. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-24)
- c. Joshua (leader)
- d. Melchizadek (priest and king together—not from Levitical genealogy, Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:1-17).
- e. David (king after God's heart, Acts 13:33-35; Isa. 9:6-7).
- f. Solomon (II Sam. 7:13-15; I Ki. 8:18-20; Rom. 1:1-4)
- g. Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1-12; Zech. 4:1-10; 6:12-14).
- h. Cyrus (a type of Christ as deliverer and anointed of God, Isa. 44:27-29; 45:1-4); as Servant of God also.
- i. Ahithophel (type of Judas, II Sam. 15:30-35; Psalms).

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- 41:9; 55:12-20; Acts 1:16-20).
- j. Elijah (type of John the Baptist, Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6; Isa. 40:3-4; Mt. 3:1-3; Lk. 1:17; Mt. 11:7-15; 17:9-13).
2. *Typical things*
- a. Tabernacle (Heb. 9:9-10)
  - b. Temple (Jn. 2:13-22; Eph. 2:19-22; I Cor. 3:16-17)
  - c. Serpent in the wilderness (Jn. 3:14; Num. 21:9)
  - d. Lambs slain by priests (Jn. 1:35; Rev. 5:6, 12).
  - e. Laver before the tabernacle (Titus 3:5-7; Heb. 10:22).
3. *Typical institutions*
- a. Sacrifices and offerings of patriarchs and Law (Heb. 10:1f)
  - b. Day of Atonement; Jubilee (Heb. 9:25; Lk. 4:18-21).
  - c. Sabbath (Heb. 4:1-10; Mt. 11:28-30)
  - d. Cities of refuge (Num. 35:9-34; Heb. 6:18-20).
  - e. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles (I Cor. 5:7; 15:20; Jn. 7:37-39; 8:12)
  - f. Ablutions, laying on hands, etc. (Heb. 6:1-8)
4. *Typical offices*
- a. Prophet
  - b. Priest
  - c. King
5. *Typical conduct*
- a. Abraham's faith, type of Christian response (Rom. 4:1-25; Jas. 2:18-26; Heb. 11:8-12).
  - b. Many of the prophets performed deeds that were typical (Jeremiah, Hosea, etc.)
6. *Typical events*
- a. Passage through the Red Sea (I Cor. 10:1-10).
  - b. The Flood (I Pet. 3)
  - c. The Manna in the Wilderness (Jn. 6)
  - d. The deliverance from Egypt (Hos. 11:1)
  - e. Wilderness Journey (Heb. 3)
7. *Typical places*

- a. Egypt (Bondage and sin)
- b. Jordan (death)
- c. Canaan (heaven)
- d. Babylon (proud paganism opposing God's people)

## THE TABERNACLE

I. The earthly tabernacle was a *parabole* of the Christian age (Heb. 9:9)

A. It is said to be a "shadow" of the heavenly, Heb. 8:5

- 1. All the law of Moses was a shadow of the good things to come, Heb. 10:1
- 2. Thousands of years before the N.T. church was instituted it was typified, and prefigured in the Tabernacle, built "according to the pattern."  
(The pattern was for the tabernacle, not the N.T. church)

B. The Altar of Burnt Offering

- 1. Sacrifices twice daily, besides all the feasts
- 2. For atonement of sins; offerer must lay hands on head of sacrifice (doctrine of laying on hands, Heb. 6), to signify substitutionary nature, Lev. 1:3-4
- 3. Christ is our Lamb; He was a willing sacrifice (Heb. 10), not the blood of dumb animals
- 4. We lay hold of our sacrifice by faith and obedience to the initiatory commands of the Gospel, demonstrating that He died for us and we accept His death in our place.

C. The Laver

- 1. Priests must wash hands and feet (complete cleanness and sanctification) before entering Holy Place; on penalty of death, Ex. 30:17-21
- 2. Laver is certainly figure of our cleansing and separation from world unto God; would then be typical of baptism
  - a. I Pet. 1:22

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- b. Eph. 5:26
- c. Titus 3:5
- 3. We have two things to do before entering God's new Holy Place (the church); accepting in faith the substitutionary death of Jesus; cleansing in the laver of regeneration, I Pet. 3:21
- D. The Lampstand
  - 1. It was for a light in the Holy Place, Ex. 25:37
  - 2. It was to be made of pure gold and burn pure oil
  - 3. It was to burn continually, night and day; no other light was to shine in the Holy Place
  - 4. It typifies the Word of God in the church
    - a. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway
    - b. We have been delivered from the power of darkness into the light of his kingdom by the word of God
    - c. The church is to continue stedfastly in the apostles doctrine
    - d. The word is sufficient light (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:2-4)
    - e. The church is the pillar of truth, I Tim. 3:15  
Christ symbolized the church with seven lampstands in Rev. 2 and 3 as pillars of truth in Asia Minor
- E. The Table of Shewbread (Presence)
  - 1. Twelve loaves renewed each week (Lev. 24:5-7)
  - 2. Eaten as memorial each week to deliverance from Egypt and as a memorial to their being set apart to good works
  - 3. Priests had to partake each week
  - 4. Apparently typifies the Lord's Supper, a memorial of our deliverance, Christ's presence, our sanctification to good works.
- F. Altar of Incense
  - 1. Just before the veil and smoke and scent of incense permeated the whole tent (drifting even into the Holy

of Holies)

2. Was to be made according to the will of God and to be pure (Nadab and Abihu were slain for offering incense contrary to God's will)
3. Burned at times of prayer
4. A figure of prayer in the N.T. church
  - a. Psa. 141:2 "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee."
  - b. Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4, prayers of saints going up as incense before throne
  - c. Our prayers must be according to God's will (I Jn. 5:14-15)

G. Ark of the Covenant

1. God's presence was there in the Shekinah glory (Spirit)
2. It was the place of mercy
3. The people were separated from it by a veil, signifying that an open and free access to mercy and glory had not yet been made
4. The High Priest entered once a year to atone for sins
5. The veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom when Christ was crucified, signifying that the way into mercy and glory had been made and we may now enjoy (every one, not just High Priest) the presence of God in the Spirit—the church is the habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2)

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### 3. SOVEREIGN OVER NATIONS, CHAPTERS 46 - 47

#### a. CONDEMNING THEIR GODS

TEXT: 46:1-13

- 1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols are upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: the things that ye carried about are made a load, a burden to the weary beast.
- 2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.
- 3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, that have been borne by me from their birth, that have been carried from the womb;
- 4 and even to old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; yea, I will carry, and will deliver.
- 5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

- 6 Such as lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, they hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god; they fall down, yea, they worship.
- 7 They bear it upon the shoulder, they carry it, and set it in its place, and it standeth; from its place shall it not remove: yea, one may cry unto it, yet can it not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.
- 8 Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.
- 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none like me;
- 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;
- 11 calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country; yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it.
- 12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:
- 13 I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

### QUERIES

- a. Whose gods were named Bel and Nebo?
- b. Who is the "ravenous bird from the east"?
- c. When is salvation placed in "Zion"?

### PARAPHRASE

Bel and Nebo, the images of Babylonian gods, are as good as gone! They are about to be loaded on camels and horses and taken captive along with their worshipers. Those pagan gods you carried about with such fondness and care are to be

unceremoniously loaded on animals like so much burdensome baggage. Where are the gods these images represent? Why do they not save the images from such humiliation? Because the gods consist of nothing more than the wood and metal of which their images are composed! Therefore the Babylonian gods disappear into captivity. Listen to Me, descendants of Jacob and all you who remain of My covenant people, Israel; take heed to the One who gave you birth as a people and who has given you paternal care ever since. I am your Father through all your lifetime; even when your hair is white with age I will continue to take care of you. I created you and I will sustain you. I am not like the pagan gods—I will deliver you. Is there any pagan god with whom I may be compared? None! All other gods are made of metal and stone by human hands. That is what the Gentiles worship—a creation of their own hands. They take metal or wood, make themselves a god, carry it around wherever they wish and when they set it down any place it stays there, for it is unable to move! And when those who made it cry out to it in prayer and supplication it does not answer, nor does it deliver those who are in trouble. It is not really a god at all—just a piece of wood or metal!

Do not forget what I have just told you, My people, and fix it firmly as a part of you; take it to heart you sinners! Do not forget all the former demonstrations of My sovereignty, both to you and your forefathers. Remember that I, Jehovah, am God and there is not another like me. I predict the events of history and the affairs of men's lives many centuries before they happen. Now, what I have predicted shall just as surely come to pass! My sovereign decree that a "bird of prey" (Cyrus) shall come from the east, a man from a far away country to carry out My counsel, will be brought to fulfillment. I, Jehovah, have planned it and I will surely do it! Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted who are resisting the idea that I will certainly fulfill My predictions of righteous judgments; I am very near to showing My righteousness—it is not far away. And all I have predicted concerning My salvation will soon come to pass. "Zion" will be the location of My salvation and the true Israel will be the recipient of My glory.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-7 DEMISE OF IDOLS: Bel (otherwise known as Merodach or Marduk) was the principal god of the Babylonians. Nebo (or Nabu) was the son of Bel and in later times was identified with the Greek god Mercury because Nabu means "speaker." The Babylonian gods were (as the name Bel indicates) "descendants" of Baal, the Canaanite god (see *Minor Prophets*, by Clinton Gill, pub. College Press, for a special study on Baalism). Bel's major temple was in Borsippa, twelve miles to the south of Babylon. According to the historian Herodotus, the image of Bel was gold and 18 feet tall. These great, impressive, expensive images with the authority of centuries of pagan heritage added, which seem invincible, will be dismantled and carried away from their place to a foreign pantheon. When will this happen? When Cyrus conquers Babylon, October 29, 539 B.C.! (for details of Cyrus' conquest of Babylon see, *Daniel*, by Butler, ch. 5, 7, 8, pub. College Press). The thrust of Isaiah's message here is: these pagan images, impressive as they may be, powerful as their people claim they are, will suffer humiliation and defeat. They will be carried away on the backs of *khayyah* (wild animals, probably asses) and *behemah* (large animals, probably oxen). Those objects of metal (precious gold they may be) of which the Hebrew people were so enamored will ignominiously disappear, loaded unceremoniously onto the backs of dumb brutes and transported at the whim of a conquering emperor. Where are the gods these images represent? If they are images of a real god surely this god would not allow his image to be thus humiliated and obliterated! The answer is: there are no gods. Otherwise they would deliver their images. The gods are figments of human imagination—mere fantasies—less than the wood and metal of which their images are composed. This was fulfilled in a way which would not be admitted by Cyrus. He had claimed that it was under the auspices of the gods that he had marched into Babylon. But the idols were powerless (v. 7); it was the Lord, Jehovah, who was bringing his conquest of Babylon and

its gods to fulfillment.

After exposing the nothingness of Babylon's gods, Jehovah calls the remnant of the Jews to attention. Why should they put their trust in the gods of foreign nations when it was Jehovah who gave birth to them as a people and a nation (cf. Isa. 44:2; 44:24; 49:5). He "bore" them (sustained) them through centuries of deliverance from enemies all around them many times more powerful than they (cf. Deut. 1:31) 33:27; Isa. 40:11). Jehovah nurtured them, chastened them, enriched them and kept them free (cf. Ezek. 16:1f), but they turned to other gods. He wants to care for them when they become aged and silver-haired, even for all their lives. But He cannot care for them if they refuse His covenant of care. They should know by now the difference between pagan gods and Jehovah. There are no pagan gods in all the history of mankind which can compare at all to Jehovah. He delivers! He keeps His word! He is invincible! He cannot be moved by men. The gods of the Gentiles are made by craftsmen (cf. Isa. 44)—works of human hands—and then human beings fall down and worship the works of their own hands. Utterly absurd! Furthermore, these man-made gods are carried about from place to place. They can be manipulated, misplaced, displaced, burned up, melted down, and carried off to foreign temples. They cannot move once they are set in one place by human hands. It takes human hands for them to move again. Men cry to them, offer sacrifices to them, disfigure themselves in fear of them and all to no avail—the images of wood and metal say not a word. They cannot answer; they cannot deliver anyone from trouble nor can they bless anyone. They are dead! They were never alive!

v. 8-13 DIRECTION FOR ISRAEL: The stance Israel is to take in light of the soon demise of Babylon's gods is to *remember*. They are reminded of two things: (a) it is sinful to worship gods other than Jehovah; (b) there is no One but Jehovah whose word is sovereign. The Hebrew word *hitheaoashashu* ("show yourselves men" v. 8) means literally, "firmly founded." God's direction for Israel is that she remember *who* He is

and *fix it firmly* in her heart. This is the only solution for Israel's idolatrous rebellion. She is a nation of *phosheiyim* (from *pasha*) "rebels." The word means "refuse subjection to rightful authority." The only solution to rebellion and sin is to remember *who* God is! Remember how He has dealt with man and sin in the past; punishment for the incorrigible rebel and forgiveness for the penitent believer. God is omnipotent and omniscient. He not only knows and predicts the future, He controls it and uses it for His redemptive purposes. What He has said about Cyrus will surely come to pass. God will certainly call an '*Ayit* ("ravenous bird") from the east. The Hebrew word means, "to be angry with; to rush or fall upon with fury." Cyrus will come from a "far country" to carry out the counsels of God. This is the "servant" of Jehovah—this bird of prey. He hasn't even been born yet, but his birth, crowning and service to God is as certain as if it had already been done because it is the will of the sovereign Jehovah! Cyrus is not merely another conqueror—he is the divinely commissioned executioner of Babylon and her gods. More sovereign control of the events of history and the destinies of men could not be visualized than is described in these chapters by the prophet Isaiah! When God speaks His word never fails of completion! When God purposes, it is as good as done!

The word *abbiyrey* ("stout-hearted") literally means, "strong" but is probably synonymous with "strong-minded" or "stubborn-hearted." The context would indicate this usage. They are stubborn-hearted and "far from righteousness." "Righteousness" in this instance must mean the righteous purposes of Jehovah in what He has been announcing concerning Israel's captivity, release by Cyrus and Cyrus' destruction of the Babylonian gods Israel had grown so enamored of. Israel was stubbornly staying away from those conclusions. She refused to accept these decrees of the sovereign Jehovah. But Jehovah is about to bring "near" His righteous goal. Its beginning is not far off. In a little over a century it will all begin just as the prophet is predicting it. Jehovah's salvation for all mankind (including the *goiyim*) will come without fail. "Zion" will be

the location of God's salvation (see comments in *Minor Prophets*, Butler, pub. College Press, Obadiah 17; Joel 2:28—3:21). "Zion" is the N.T. church (cf. Heb. 12:22). Of course, the climax of this salvation will not come for some 600 years after Cyrus—but what is 600 years viewed from Jehovah's perspective? Less than a day! For the believer who by faith sees all things from God's perspective "redemption draweth nigh." Not only salvation, but glory!

### QUIZ

1. Where did the gods Bel and Nebo have their origin?
2. Who carried these gods off on the backs of animals?
3. Give four reasons men should be able to know that idols are not gods.
4. To what extent are the people of Israel rebelling against God's purposes?
5. How emphatic is this text on the sovereignty of God?
6. Where is "Zion"?

### b. CONQUERING THEIR GOVERNMENTS

TEXT: 47:1-15

- 1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.
- 2 Take the millstones, and grind meal; remove thy veil, strip off the train, uncover the leg, pass through the rivers.
- 3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and will spare no man.
- 4 Our Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.
- 5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of

- the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called The mistress of kingdoms.
- 6 I was wroth with my people, I profaned mine inheritance, and gave them into thy hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.
- 7 And thou saidst, I shall be mistress for ever; so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter and thereof.
- 8 Now therefore hear this, thou that art given to pleasures, that sittest securely, that sayest in thy heart, I am, and there is none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:
- 9 but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood; in their full measure shall they come upon thee, in the multitude of thy sorceries, and the great abundance of thine enchantments.
- 10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, None seeth me; thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thy heart, I am and there is none else besides me.
- 11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know the dawning thereof; and mischief shall fall upon thee; and thou shalt not be able to put it away: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou knowest not.
- 12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitudes of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast labored from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.
- 13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee.
- 14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: it shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before.
- 15 Thus shall the things be unto thee wherein thou hast labored: they that have trafficked with thee from thy youth shall

wander every one to his quarter; there shall be none to save thee.

## QUERIES

- a. How did God “profane” His inheritance? (v. 6)
- b. Why did Babylon say, “I will not sit as a widow . . .”?
- c. Who are the “monthly prognosticators”?

## PARAPHRASE

Babylon, you may be a virgin in respect to foreign invasion, but you will come down from your delicate luxury and your face will be rubbed in the dirt. From haughtiness to humiliation you will come because Jehovah has commanded it. No longer will you sit upon the throne of the world like a queen. You, O Chaldea, will be forced into a humiliation like the lowliest slave-girl. You will be subjected to the worst degradation, shame and toil. You are going to be exposed for what you really are, Babylon, a shameful, wicked nation. I, Jehovah, will see that vengeance is done upon you and no man will stop Me. Yes, Babylon, our Redeemer is Jehovah of hosts, the Holy One of Israel and He is sovereign. Jehovah says to Babylon, You will be dumbfounded with grief and anguish when I judge you. No more will you be the center of world attention—the darling of the nations. I was angry with My people, says the Lord, so I allowed My possession to be captured by this pagan, wicked Babylon. But you, Babylon, did not show them any mercy or kindness; even the elderly you despised and persecuted.

In addition, O Babylon, you have said, I shall be the darling of the world forever. You have not given heed to the warnings of history or conscience and therefore you do not recognize that you are headed for destruction. So now pay attention to this you sensuous city, secure in your wicked wealth and power. You may say to yourself that you are sovereign of the universe

and there is no other people or nation that will ever bring you down; you may think you will never know the bereavement of a widow or of a mother having lost her children. However, this is exactly the kind of fate you will suffer. In spite of all the hocus pocus of your magicians and soothsayers you will become as destitute and bereaved as a widow and a mother who has lost all her children. This will come upon you because you have trusted in your apparent ability to do as evilly as you please and get away with it. You have said, There is no power higher than I, to whom I must give account. You have become too sophisticated and wise for your own good. Your wisdom has led you to an arrogant self-delusion and to believe you are sovereign ruler of all creation. Because of this attempted usurpation of Jehovah's sovereignty, judgment shall come upon you which you will not, with all your magicians, be able to "charm" away. Destruction is going to come upon you and you cannot pay the price to take it away. You are going to be a wasted, desolate place with such suddenness it will be beyond human understanding or explanation.

Go on using your hocus pocus magic charms by the thousands, like you have since your nation's beginning, if it is the only thing you have to ward off the destruction that is sure to come. You have had so many magicians and such a complex system of magic that most of your people have grown tired of it all. But go ahead, let the astrologers, (those who study the stars) and horoscope-casters arise and save you from the judgments predicted upon you if they are able to do so! Soon it will be apparent to all that they are powerless as stubble which is so easily and quickly consumed by fire. They will, like straw in a fire, be gone almost instantly. They will not even be around long enough to provide an afterglow like the coals of a wood fire. How quickly shall all that disappear for which your generations have expended their energy and wages. In the end all those upon whom you relied for military and financial assistance since your beginning shall desert you. Your allies will not help you; they will not want to have anything to do with you lest they suffer the same destruction. There is not anyone who can save you!

## COMMENTS

v. 1-6 ABASED: Babylon is going to come down from its pinnacle of world rulership. In fact, she is going to lose her identity as a nation altogether. The Hebrew word *bethulath* is translated virgin. It probably refers to the idea that Babylon (from her conquest of Nineveh about 612 B.C. until being conquered by Cyrus 539 B.C.) never suffered foreign invasion. She was untouched until Cyrus spoiled her.

The words *raccah* and *'anuggah*, translated *tender* and *delicate* probably emphasize the luxuriousness of Babylonian life; *raccah* literally means *effeminacy* and *'anuggah* means *pleasure, luxury, sport*. They are descriptive of the indulgent, immoral wickedness of Babylon. From her position as pampered, indulged, haughty queen of the world she would be dethroned and abased. She would become like the lowliest servant-girl doing the most humiliating tasks. Grinding meal is the hardest, most menial task for women slaves. Removal of the veil and stripping off the train means to take off the clothing of a lady of leisure and put on the clothing of a common slave. Uncovering the leg and passing through the rivers probably pictures a slave-girl rolling up her garments to walk across streams and rivers bearing burdens for her master. Slaves were simply the property of their owners and could be treated anyway the owner desired. Most of them, especially women, were treated shamefully. When sold in the slave market they were undressed and their bodies exposed, more to humiliate them than anything else. Jehovah is going to expose Babylon for what it really is. The whole world will see Babylon naked, without all the false luxury and haughtiness she arrogated to herself. God will spare no man—no human being on the face of the earth will deter Jehovah from His humiliation of Babylon.

Verse four is a pause of praise on the part of the prophet. It is like those digressions of the apostle Paul in Ephesians and Romans. The sovereign program of God's redemption for Israel elicits spontaneous testimony from Isaiah to Babylon that the Redeemer of Israel is Jehovah (Covenant-God) of hosts,

the Holy One of Israel. The testimony also serves to show the contrast between Israel's God and the gods of Babylon. Israel's God would raise her out of humiliation to glory (through the Servant-Messiah to come), while Babylon's gods would be impotent to save them from going from glory to humiliation.

When Babylon's degradation comes at the hand of Jehovah she will sit silently dumbfounded. Her shameful humiliation by the conquering Medes and Persians was totally unexpected and incomprehensible from a human point of view. She was the one upon whom the spotlight of the world was focused; but her prominence will soon be gone—all will be darkness for her. She shall no longer be the queen of the world. The Hebrew word *gevereth* is translated *mistress* but it does not mean *mistress* in the sense of a "kept woman" or a fornicator. *Gevereth* means *mistress* in the sense of *royalty*, hence, a *queen*. The proper name *Gabriel* comes from the same root. The wealth and luxury and power of Babylon was almost unbelievable. No other empire before had exerted such influence on the world. But it would all disappear suddenly because she opposed and humiliated the covenant people of Jehovah.

God has been talking of mighty Babylon, but suddenly the little nation of Judah moves into the center of the picture. The center of history is God's covenant people not the mighty empires which seem to dominate the world. God's people strayed from their messianic destiny and incurred the holy wrath of God. He allowed profane Babylon to swallow up Judah for a proper period of chastening. But even profane and pagan people are subject to certain moral standards before the Absolute God (cf. our comments in *Minor Prophets*, Amos ch. 1-2, pub. College Press). The obvious standards of humane treatment were not observed toward the Jews, especially toward older people. Babylon apparently ignored the commonest laws of reasonableness and mercifulness (cf. Rom. 1:18f) written on the consciences of most human beings (cf. comments on verse ten below). Therefore Jehovah will judge her. One should read Isaiah ch. 13-14; Jeremiah 50-51; Daniel 1-5 in connection with these verses.

v. 7-11 ABUSED: Babylon boasted that she would be *gevereth* (mistress) or queen forever. She never gave a thought to the warnings of conscience or the lessons of history. Those who will not learn from history are doomed to repeat it! She seemed unaware of the natural law all around that whatever is sown is eventually reaped. She did not seem to consider where such haughty disregard for humaneness and mercy might lead. The failure of tyrants and dictators to learn where cruelty and immorality ends is almost incredible! It was difficult for most of the world of the 1940's to believe Adolph Hitler was ignorant that the atrocities of the Third Reich would lead to self-destruction. But Hitler "did not remember the latter end thereof" and slaughtered over six million people in his concentration camps which eventuated in degradation and partitioning of Germany which it had never known before.

*'Aediyah* is from the Hebrew root *'adan* and means *voluptuousness, pleasurable, luxurious, sensuous*. It is the same root from which we get *Eden* (Gen. 2:8, etc.). One only has to read Daniel ch. 5 to understand that Babylon was characterized by its bent to pleasure. The kings of Babylon apparently had as their goal the satisfaction of their every pleasure. Wealth, wine and women gave them security. They used their wealth to build gold-plated gods and temples; a massive city with huge, thick walls; hanging gardens and banquet halls; then retired to admire the work of their hands and revel in the sensuous luxury of it all. They told themselves "this is great Babylon. . ." (cf. Dan. 4:28-30). All the world, even the majority of the Jewish people, stood in awe of mighty Babylon. The world expected Babylon to exist forever. Certainly Babylon herself never expected to mourn like a widow or a mother who has lost her children. She anticipated eternal reveling and gaiety and luxury. Apparently the emperors of Babylon decreed themselves to be gods (cf. Isa. 14:12-14), and believed themselves to be invincible (much like Adolph Hitler, centuries later). But the real Sovereign of the world, Jehovah, predicts that exactly what Babylon said could never happen would happen suddenly and fully. The haughty and satiated Babylonians

would one day mourn and grieve like a woman who has lost her husband and a young mother whose children have died tragic deaths. Their affliction would be without warning and in full measure. One day on top of the world; the next day devastated and conquered by the Persians. Babylon fell in one night! (cf. Dan. ch. 5). Babylon was noted for its multitude of astrologers and sorcerers. She was famous for her magic. No other nation since has been as prolific or elaborate in its cultivation of such sorcery. Babylon's whole culture, political, economic and religious was built around its astrologers and enchanters and wise-men. In spite of this elaborate and long established system of pseudo-science and religion, Babylon would fall. Her "star-gazers" would not be able to work magic or charm away the judgment of Jehovah.

Babylon trusted in its wickedness. There is a false sense of autonomy and sovereignty that comes as a result of deliberately practiced wickedness. That is what the devil promised Eve in the Garden of Eden ("... in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil . . ."). Professing to be wise, they became fools. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie. They refused to have God in their knowledge (cf. Rom. 1:22-32). Babylon trusted in her cruelty and cunning and decided she could do as she pleased and no one could stop her. She believed she was sovereign. There was no One to whom she could be held accountable ("None seeth me . . ."). This wicked exercise of power seared Babylon's conscience—it perverted her reason. She went against the most fundamental revelation of nature itself (that there is a divine power higher than man to whom man is morally responsible—cf. Rom. 1:18-21) and denied the existence of God.

But judgment (evil) will surely come upon haughty Babylon. She will now know the *shakherah* (dawning) of it. This probably means (in keeping with the context) she will not "be able to conjure away" or able to keep it from coming by all her incantations and sorceries. There are three different Hebrew words used to describe the judgment: *ra'ah* (break in pieces,

calamity, evil); *hovah* (mischief, or, literally, yawning—utter destruction); *sho'ah* (deserted, wasted, desolation). These words give a graphic description of the process of Babylon's judgment. It will come *suddenly*. Daniel; ch. 5, records that Babylon's overthrow came in *one night!* It was completely unexpected! First she was broken, then came the destruction and to this day there is only a deserted waste place where once mighty Babylon stood. The fall of Babylon is inexplicable except as one understands the prophecy of God by Isaiah!

v. 12-15 ANNIHILATED: Jehovah now challenges Babylon to call upon the full force of its massive and complex system of sorcery, astrology and magic to save it. The ancient peoples not only worshiped the stars, but many of them built their political and economic structures on a "science" of star-gazing and horoscope casting. These pseudo-sciences were elaborately constructed and Babylon was more prolific than all the ancients. Determining things from the motions of the stars was not something Babylon merely toyed with. She had built her whole national identity on this from her very beginning. She went to war or sued for peace on the basis of what the stars "said." She crowned emperors or deposed them only after casting a horoscope. She conducted business and built buildings and practiced the healing arts by interpreting dreams, saying incantations and practicing sorcery. So, if Babylon had any resource greater than any other empire of the past (Egypt, Assyria, etc.) it would be her star-gazing. If she was to prevail against the God of Israel her elaborate system of astrology would have to stand up. The many hours of study devoted to astrology, the voluminous writings of the wisemen and the staggering (and sometimes repulsive) amount of time consumed to practice all the hocus pocus involved wearied the general populace. There is evidence that even emperors became exasperated at the sham of it all (cf. Dan. 2:1-12). The Hebrew word *modiy'ym* (prognosticators) is from *yada'* (to know, perceive, discern) and the word *khadashim* means, new moons or months. The position of the moon was a determining factor in the Babylonian system of astrology.

But none of this shall save Babylon! Even this great, elaborate pervasive system of astrology shall be as vulnerable as dry wheat stubble thrown on a fire. It will go up in smoke, suddenly. Nothing will be left of it. Wood thrown on a fire leaves coals and lasts long enough to provide warmth. But poof, like stubble, Babylon and all her star-gazers will be gone! So much for all the years of toil and energy invested in Babylon's elaborate system of astrology! All those *sokherayik* (traveling merchants) who "trafficked" with Babylon were interested only in financial gain. As long as they were making profit from trading with Babylon they were her friends. But when she needed assistance against her enemies they "wandered to their own quarters," not wishing to suffer the judgments coming upon her. They have merely taken advantage of Babylon and have no genuine concern for her no matter how glibly they may have dealt with her when she was alive and prosperous. It was predicted that the magnificent Roman empire of the apostle John's day would come to the same despicable ruin (cf. Rev. 17 and 18). Rome would say in her heart she was a "queen" and not a "widow." Rome would be burned with fire. The merchants of the earth would mourn Rome's demise because it would mean financial loss for them (not that anyone was genuinely concerned for Rome's fall). Thus "Babylon" is used as a symbol, a type, of the Roman empire (Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21, etc.).

Babylon fell! Great and sudden was her fall! It was totally unexpected! During a night of drunken revelry and carousing by the emperor (Belshazzar), his noblemen and concubines, Cyrus the Persian marched in on a dry river bed (whose waters had been diverted by Cyrus) and Belshazzar was slain. For further details see *Daniel*, by Butler, pub. College Press, pg. 200-208. Rome's fall was not quite so sudden, but it fulfilled the predictions of John just as certainly as Babylon's fall fulfilled the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah. And just as certainly, all human governments must ultimately fall and give way to the kingdom of God for whom the new heavens and the new earth are to be created.

## QUIZ

1. Why is Babylon called a "virgin"?
2. What is meant by calling Babylon the "mistress" of kingdoms?
3. Why may Babylon be judged accountable for knowing that she was headed for judgment by her actions?
4. In what did Babylon place her trust?
5. Describe the fall of Babylon?
6. How did those who had traded with Babylon react to her downfall?

## 4. SOVEREIGN IN WISDOM, CHAPTER 48

## a. PROOF

TEXT: 48:1-8

- 1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; who swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness.
- 2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; Jehovah of hosts is his name.
- 3 I have declared the former things from of old; yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them: suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.
- 4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;
- 5 therefore I have declared it to thee from of old; before it came to pass I showed it thee; lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.
- 6 Thou hast heard it; behold all this; and ye, will ye not declare it? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, which thou hast not known.

- 7 They are created now, and not from of old; and before this day thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.
- 8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from of old thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou didst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

### QUERIES

- a. What are the “waters of Judah”?
- b. What are the “former things” Jehovah showed?
- c. What are the “new things” being shown?

### PARAPHRASE

Listen to this, you descendants of Jacob whom I have called Israel, you who are from the royal tribe of Judah and who take their oaths in the name of Jehovah boasting of your relationship to Him; I know that your relationship is not in truth or righteousness! You boast of your citizenship in the holy city of Jehovah and of your dependence upon Him; but do you not realize He is the Lord God Almighty?!

The Lord says to Israel, For centuries I have been proving to you My sovereignty in wisdom by predicting what would take place; then suddenly I brought it to pass. I knew beforehand that you would be stubborn and unbending and hard-headed. And so I predicted your future long ago, telling you through prophets what was going to happen to you before it happened. I had my prophets predict your future centuries in advance so you would realize I am sovereign in wisdom and not the idols of wood and stone you worship. You have seen all My prophecies come true thus far, but you have refused to confess the truth of it, haven't you? Now I am predicting, through My prophets, new revelations—things impossible

for you to know unless I tell you. These are completely new things; nothing like this has taken place in the past. You cannot say of these things, This is no proof of Jehovah's sovereignty—we knew this all along! The reason you never got the message from all My revelations, both present and past, is you deliberately chose to close your ears to My word. I know you, Israel, you have been treacherous and rebellious from the days you became a nation!

### COMMENTS

v. 1-5 PERSEVERANCE OF JEHOVAH: God addresses the people of Isaiah's day sternly. *Shama* ("hear") means to heed and obey. It appears they call themselves "Israel" but God addresses them as "house of Jacob." Whether there is an intended sarcasm on the part of Jehovah or not is not easy to determine. Certainly God permitted writers of the Bible to employ sarcasm in their attempts to call men to repentance. We have discussed the difference between the terms Jacob and Israel earlier. "Coming forth out of the waters of Judah" simply means the audience of Isaiah's writing are the people of the southern kingdom whose main source is Judah (see Deut. 33:28; Psa. 68:26 for similar phraseology). The main point in citing the three names (Jacob, Israel and Judah) is to emphasize their culpability for not trusting the message Isaiah is giving them about captivity, Cyrus' future return of the exiles and the messianic destiny in their future. These are people of Jehovah—they are His specially graced people, but they do not "hear." They "make mention" of Jehovah but not in truth or righteousness. To acknowledge the name of God in truth means to hear and obey what God has revealed for man to obey. Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him (cf. I Jn. 2:3-6). They worshipped Jehovah with lip-service but their hearts were far from Him (cf. Isa. 29:13-14). They boasted of their citizenship in the "holy" city (where the temple of Jehovah was located)

and they glibly declared their allegiance to Jehovah but it did not seem to register on their minds that He Is Jehovah-Zev'oth (zev'oth is Hebrew for "armies, hosts, myriads" and is also used for "war, battle, etc."). In other words, Jehovah is Lord of all! He is Lord of earth and heaven. He is Lord of the inward man as well as the outward man. He knows everything created everything and commands everything.

Judah should have acknowledged His lordship with their hearts as well as their lips for Jehovah had proven His sovereignty in centuries past by predicting (through the mouths of His messengers) the events of Judah's history long before they came to pass. Jehovah also demonstrated through His prophets that He knew the hidden, secret thoughts of men (e.g., Nathan and David). The nation and individuals often knew years and centuries in advance of the coming of minutely-detailed events. Many of these events came to pass *suddenly* without any gradual development or advanced signals. Two needs of the Hebrew people are the motivation prompting Jehovah to predict their future; (a) their obstinacy and hard-headedness toward His sovereignty must be broken; (b) they must acknowledge once and for all that idols are not gods—there is only One God, Jehovah. This indicates that God's primary purpose in predicting the future is not simply to satisfy the curiosity of man about tomorrow. No theology should be built on eschatology! Our theology should be built on the character of the One who knows about tomorrow, not on when and what tomorrow will bring. The only reason God foretells the future is to demonstrate His sovereignty! That is the point! Once man surrenders to His omnipotence and omniscience he does not need to know the future (cf. Mt. 6:25-34; Acts 1:7). Prophecy fulfilled is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The end is to believe God's revelation of Himself and to accept His written word from the hands of the writers as being validated (cf. II Pet. 1:16-21, etc.).

V. 6-8. PERVERSITY OF JUDAH: The onus is put squarely upon the perverse people of Judah. "You have had opportunities to know all these past predictions and their fulfillments;

I remind you to study them again," would be Jehovah's challenge to Judah. The question of verse six is undoubtedly rhetorical: "And you, you will not declare it, will you?" or, "And you, how can you not declare it?" The meaning is that what the Lord predicted came to pass and they must acknowledge the factuality of it even if they do not obey the moral implications of it! This shows that unbelief is a moral problem, not an evidential one!

But now, the Lord is predicting *new* things (things that will have their fulfillment yet in the future). Among these things (so incredible for Judah to accept) were the captivities, release from captivity by a pagan ruler and a coming Messiah who is bringing a way of salvation which is absolutely foreign to their present dispensation. Salvation by grace, through faith in the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah (Isa. 53, et al.) had to be by *revelation*—it had to be a "new" prediction because it could never have been "thought-up" by the human mind (cf. I Cor. 1:18—2:16). This plan of salvation was "created" by God and worked out in His sovereign plans (cf. Rom. 9, 10, 11) as a "mystery to be revealed" (cf. Eph. 1:3-10, etc.). God predicted it all and typified it all in the Old Testament dispensation, to be sure (cf. Rom. 3:21-22; see special study, "The Righteousness of God As Revealed by The Prophets," page 282), but it was dim and abstruse (cf. Heb. 1:1). The Lord predicts and rules in history toward His goal of redemption. He *reveals* His will and plan for man; He reveals Himself (His own person, nature, character—even in the flesh!). Man cannot know God's plan or God's nature until God *reveals* it. Man may not even be able to understand it all when it is *revealed*. But God revealed enough of it in *human language* (which is human experience) (cf. I Cor. 2:13) and in *human flesh* (Jesus Christ; cf. Jn. 1:1-18; I Jn. 1:1-4, etc.) that man can *know* His will for salvation and *obey* His will for salvation.

In verse eight we have the reason God chose to hide these "new" things from Judah until He was ready to *reveal* them. The Hebrew syntax would indicate the latter half of the verse

should read literally: "dealing treacherously you would deal treacherously. . . ." God did not let them know—He did not "open their ear" to these new things because of their perversity. They were spiritually unprepared to hear them. He had yet to put them through a long period of "indignation" (the captivities, the return from exile, the centuries of the Greek-Seleucid oppression and the Roman oppression) before the "new" dispensation could come and be accepted. This verse definitely teaches the sovereign wisdom of God in a *gradual* revelation from Old Testament times to the New. There were things Jesus could not reveal to the twelve until after He had "gone away" because they were unable to "bear" them while He was with them in the flesh (cf. Jn. 16:1-15). Fleshly-mindedness prohibits man from listening to God's word even when it is being spoken and revealed (cf. I Cor. 2:6; 3:1-4; Heb. 5:11-14, etc.). It was difficult for the apostle Peter to accept the revelation of Christ about His atoning death (cf. Mt. 16:21-23) because Peter simply *refused* to accept the concept of a dying Messiah! So, Isaiah says, until Judah stops its rebellion against Jehovah's sovereignty, she is not going to "hear" the "new" things Jehovah wants to reveal.

### QUIZ

1. What is Isaiah's point in mentioning the three names of the covenant people?
2. Why must one obey the commandments of God to say "I know Him"?
3. What two needs of the people prompted the Lord to reveal their future?
4. Why should a theology not be built on an eschatological system?
5. Has God revealed enough of His will to man?
6. Why do most men not know God?

## b. PERSPECTIVE

TEXT: 48:9-16

- 9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.
- 10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.
- 11 For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should my name be profaned? and my glory will I not give to another.
- 12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.
- 13 Yea, my hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.
- 14 Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.
- 15 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him; I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.
- 16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit.

## QUERIES

- a. Why would God stop His anger for His own sake?
- b. Does God love Cyrus (the one who shall perform God's pleasure on Babylon)?
- c. Who is the "me" whom the Lord Jehovah has "sent"? (v. 16)

## PARAPHRASE

In order that the faithfulness and mercifulness of My nature may be manifested and praised I am putting a muzzle on My anger and I will not utterly destroy you, Judah. I have put you to the test in the furnace of affliction, like silver is refined, but I have found no silver in you. Therefore, I want you to know that what I am going to do in redeeming you, this "new thing" I am predicting, is not because you deserve it but because I do not intend for My name to be dishonored. The inviolability of My name is of supreme importance to all men lest they think My absolute sovereignty and glory can belong to another. Listen to Me My chosen people, Israel. I am the Absolute God; I am the only God there is—first, last, and always. I created the earth and the heavens; they are at My command and when I command, they obey! Get yourselves together, Israel, and decide this; which of the heathen gods has predicted or is able to command the future like I am commanding Cyrus now before he is even born!? Jehovah has chosen Cyrus as the object of His pleasure to execute Jehovah's will upon Babylon; yes, it shall be the arm of Cyrus descending upon the Chaldeans on My behalf. I, the Absolute Sovereign of all creation, have spoken; I have determined that it shall be Cyrus; I will support him in My work, and nothing shall keep him from doing My purpose. Draw near to Me and pay close attention to what I am telling you: From the time I began speaking to man My will has always been clearly made known and not secret like the heathen oracles; My sovereign will has been present in everything that has happened to you and it will continue to be present in what is going to happen through Cyrus—even to the coming of the "new" things of the messianic age. Now, I the Suffering Servant, tell you, Israel, the Lord Jehovah sends Me along with His Holy Spirit.

## COMMENTS

v. 9-11 **JEHOVAH'S GOODNESS:** What Jehovah is doing with Judah (Israel), He is doing because of His goodness not theirs. To keep His own absolute goodness and faithfulness and mercifulness inviolate He will act to redeem them from captivity. That which motivates Jehovah is His own graciousness—Judah does not merit redemption. The Hebrew word *'ekhetam* is translated *refrain* but literally means *muzzle*; it is the same Hebrew word used in Deut. 25:4 concerning the muzzling of an ox when treading out the grain. Jehovah decides by His own sovereign grace to muzzle Himself and not utterly destroy His covenant people. The Lord chose His people "in the furnace of affliction." Israel was in the Egyptian "furnace" when first chosen. Then the Lord submitted them to a "refining" process through the wilderness, the period of the judges, the period of the monarchy and the divided kingdoms, to see if there was any "silver" in them. He found none! As good as some of the faithful (like Isaiah, Hezekiah, and some others) remnant may have been, put to the refinement of Jehovah none deserved the approbation, "silver." Jeremiah was instructed to find *one* righteous man in Jerusalem, if he could (Jer. 5:1f). If God refined your community in His crucible today He would not find *one* righteous man who deserved redemption—no man (except the Man, Very Man, Jesus Christ) deserves redemption. All have sinned and come short of the demand of God. But the Good News is that Jesus Christ did come in the flesh, earned absolute righteousness in the flesh, died as the substitute-sinner for all mankind and arose from the dead victorious over that penalty and offers the grace of God to every man conditioned upon that man's faith and covenant relationship. The whole point of this passage is that the inviolability of the name of Jehovah is absolutely necessary to the redemption of Judah because there is no other basis upon which Judah may be redeemed! If Jehovah's absolute goodness and mercifulness and faithfulness cannot be trusted, then all is lost! If Jehovah cannot and does not keep His word

He is no better than the impotent gods of the heathen. The redemption of man rests not in the failing, falling inconsistencies of humanness, but in the *never* failing consistency and absolute changelessness of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. If Jehovah's name can be profaned and His glory given to any other then there is no Absolute Being and man must have an Absolute Being. If this be the case, the focus of all prophecy and preaching should be the character of God and His Son. The Good News is Who God Is and what He has done—not who man is and what he must do! The Gospel is preaching the *person* of Christ, not a religious system. Of course, the good news also reveals how man may enter into a covenant with that *Person*. It is by obedient faith, but not of meritorious works lest any man should boast.

v. 12-16 JEHOVAH'S GREATNESS: This chapter is a summation of the section discussing the *Power of the Lord's Servant* (ch. 44-48). The power of Jehovah is going to be demonstrated through His servant Cyrus (and ultimately through His Servant the Messiah) in order that His name may be vindicated as Absolute Sovereign. This is necessary that once and for all men may realize there are no other gods. Man must trust his eternal life to Jehovah and His sovereign plans and servants. Jehovah is Creator. He made the earth and heavens. Even inanimate creation is His servant. There is nothing made that is useless—Jehovah created everything and made it to be His servant and do His bidding. All of creation "stands at attention" to serve His purpose (cf. Psalms 119:90-91; I Corinthians 3:21-23; Hebrews 1:7, 14, etc.).

So all Israel (Judah) is commanded to assemble itself and hear the sovereign challenge of Jehovah about His servant's work. Which of the heathen gods or false prophets has ever told Israel all that Jehovah is now telling her about His redemptive plan, the use of Cyrus, and the coming of the Messiah-Servant? None! They do not because they cannot! They are not gods but pieces of wood and stone. He "whom Jehovah loveth" is undoubtedly referring (in context) to Cyrus. Of course, Jehovah loves Cyrus, but not in the same way He loves

a believer simply because Cyrus (being an unbeliever) will not *allow* God to love him in a covenant relationship. The word *love* (Heb. *aehevo* from *ahav*) here probably means simply that Jehovah has chosen Cyrus to be the object of His care and providence to serve Him in conquering Babylon and freeing the Jewish exiles. At one time Nebuchadnezzar was chosen to be the recipient of the special favor of Jehovah (cf. Jer. 27:5f); at another time Alexander the Great was given dominion (Dan. 7:6f). The emphasis here is not on Cyrus but on the sovereignty of Jehovah. Jehovah has spoken! Jehovah has called Cyrus! Jehovah will bring (sustain) Cyrus and Jehovah shall make Cyrus prosper in what Jehovah wants, but Cyrus will not prosper when Jehovah does not want him to prosper!

The intent of it all is that Judah might see things from *Jehovah's perspective!* This is the whole point of *revelation*; man must see (or understand) what "is" from the perspective of "Who" Made What "Is!" Man must see that all of creation stands at attention and serves the *eternal* purpose of God which is the redemption of creation. The coming captivity of Judah, the coming conquest of Babylon by a Persian emperor yet unborn (Cyrus), the far distant coming of a Messiah-Servant—all must be seen by man, not through human perspective (carnal, limited, temporal), but through divine perspective which is eternal, righteous, true, pure and glorious. God calls Judah, "Come near unto me, and pay close attention" to what I am about to say. However much of His will God has deemed necessary for man to know and obey at any time, God has not been secretive about it. It was never God's business to keep His will as secret as He possibly could. He has always desired to reveal as much of His will as He possibly could. The only hindrance to revelation has been man's spiritual rebellion. God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ is hindered by man's unwillingness to want that revelation. We would *know* His will more fully if we were more willing to *do* His will (Jn. 7:17; 13:17). God spoke plainly and openly through His messengers from the very beginning. Often times He spoke

more plainly than the people wanted Him to speak (cf. Isa. 30:9-11; Amos 9:10-17; Micah 2:6-11, etc.). Jehovah's presence was apparent in every prophecy made by any prophet of His. Now it should be apparent to Judah that Jehovah's presence and will is being expressed in the prophecy concerning Cyrus.

The last half of verse 16 presents a problem for commentators. Keil and Delitzsch say the "me" who is sent by the Lord Jehovah is "the One unequalled servant of Jehovah" (the Messiah); Edward J. Young calls Him "the Servant *par excellence*" (the Messiah); Leupold believes the "me" is the prophet Isaiah. Of course, it is unusual to have such a sudden transition from the speaking of Jehovah directly to the speaking of the Messiah. But it is not altogether unparalleled. Certainly Isaiah 61:1f are the words of the Messiah. It appears that Isaiah ch. 49 is also a dissertation by the Messiah Himself. Keil and Delitzsch cite Zech. 4:9 as another example of such transition. It would appear that the context supports the messianic view. Jehovah has been emphasizing the "new" thing He is going to do as a consequence of Cyrus' return of the exiles. That "new" thing can only be the messianic age. It is therefore altogether appropriate that the "Unequaled" Servant speak here of His commission or sending. In this text is emphasized also the unique companionship of the Spirit the Messiah will have in His mission (cf. Isa. 42:1f; 61:1f). The Suffering Servant (Messiah) did not come alone. The Holy Spirit was with Him; in fact, He was the Holy Spirit in the flesh (cf. Jn. 14:15-17). From this point on (and of chapter 48) more and more emphasis is put on the program of the coming "unequaled" Servant. The work of Cyrus and the restoration of Israel to Palestine was simply a preparatory step for His coming. There is going to have to be centuries of repentance and sanctification in a remnant of Israel in preparation for His coming. Cyrus and the restoration was just the beginning of it all. From verse 16a to 16b the reader has been transported over a span of more than 600 years. But such "telescoping" of history is not unusual in the writings of the prophets (see Shortened Perspective, in *Minor Prophets*, by Bufler, pub. College Press, pg. 32;

comments on Joel 2:27-28, pg. 184-188).

Jehovah wants Israel to see her destiny from *His perspective*, not from the limited human perspective. Jehovah knows everything from beginning to end. He created everything. He is absolute Sovereign. When He says His people will be taken captive, released by a pagan emperor (yet unborn), and that His Servant will come to bring them everlasting victory and peace, Israel should "see His day" (cf. Jn. 8:56-59; 12:41; I Pet. 1:10-12) by faith.

### QUIZ

1. What was the basis upon which Jehovah acted to redeem Judah?
2. Why must Jehovah do things for the sake of His name?
3. Why emphasize here that Jehovah is Creator?
4. What hinders man from knowing God's revelation of Himself?
5. Why should man need to see everything from the perspective of divine revelation?
6. Why the transition from Jehovah's speaking to the Servant's speaking in verse 16?

### c. PRACTICE

TEXT: 48:17-22

- 17 Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:  
I am Jehovah thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.
- 18 Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:
- 19 thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offering of thy bowels like the grains thereof: his name would not be cut

off nor destroyed from before me.

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

21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

22 There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked.

### QUERIES

- a. How may peace be like a "river"?
- b. When were they to "go forth from Babylon"?
- c. Why do the wicked not have peace?

### PARAPHRASE

This is what Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel says: I am your covenant-God, Jehovah, who wishes to teach you to help you and who wishes to direct you in the way you should go. If only you had obeyed My commandments. Then you would have had peace in your soul deep, steady, living and ever-flowing just like a river and you would have had a rightness in your soul that was powerful and never exhausted itself, just like an ocean. Your descendants would have been as numerous as the grains of the sand on the seashore and I would not have had to take away your nationhood. Now when the time comes for your release from exile, leave Babylon and everything she stands for; you are going to be freed from that pagan oppressor so leave all her paganism behind and flee! Go, singing about your deliverance so the whole world can hear about it; make sure everyone knows it is Jehovah who has delivered His covenant people. The Lord God will sustain you in your deliverance, you will not need to cling to Babylon

as if you need her. When Jehovah led His people through the deserts in the days of Moses He sustained them. They did not need Egypt to give them water and food. The Lord made water come from a rock for them; He split the rock open and water flowed out. If you will be firm in your commitment to My commandments you will have deliverance, peace and righteousness, but there is no peace for those who are wicked and who are lax about My commandments, says Jehovah.

## COMMENTS

v. 17-19 **THE WAY:** The Lord God of Israel has made every effort, from Abraham to Isaiah, to lead this people in the only way profitable for them. The Hebrew word *ya'al*, translated *profit*, means literally, *helpful, good, useful*. It is also used as a proper name, *Jael* (see Judges 4:18; 5:6, etc.). Jehovah *teaches* His people in order to *help* them to peace and righteousness. Joel 2:23 speaks of the "teacher unto righteousness" (see our comments, *Minor Prophets*, by Butler, pub. College Press, pg. 180-183). This is the *way* Israel should have gone—the way of peace and righteousness. It is the "ancient" way wherein is goodness and rest (cf. Jer. 6:16). But Israel, of her own free choice, refused to walk in that way. She chose "bypaths" and "stumbled" (cf. Jer. 18:15-17). The way of the Lord is in His *commandments*. They called Jehovah "Lord" but did not do what He commanded (cf. Isa. 29:13; Mt. 15:8-9; Lk. 6:46; I Jn. 2:3-6, etc.). If Israel had only obeyed God's commandments (the law of Moses and the revelations of the prophets) she would have had peace and righteousness in abundance (cf. Amos 5:24; Isa. 11:9; 44:4), like a deep, steadily flowing, life-giving *river*. The figure of the river and the sea stands in emphatic contrast to Palestine's hundreds of shallow, wadis which were dry most of the year and ran with water only occasionally, during downpours, and then soon ran dry again. The peace and righteousness Jehovah gives through His way (His commandments) is deep, not shallow; it is steady, not

vacillating. It is this because it is imputed, not earned. Man cannot earn peace with God; he may have it as a gift from God by entering into discipleship with Christ (cf. Mt. 11:25-30). This is the peace available to the new, true Israel of God (cf. Gal. 6:11-16) and comes not by legal attainment but by new birth. Discipleship and new birth comes through a willingness to be taught, to be baptized, and to be taught the way of Christ for the rest of one's life (cf. Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 3:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:1-19). If Israel had only listened to Jehovah, He would have made of her a great nation. Of course, of the "seed" (singular) of Abraham, God has made a "great" people (the church) (cf. Gal. 3:6-18). But what great things Israel could have done as a testimony to Jehovah unto the Gentiles long before Christ ever came if she had only walked in His way! God brought His redemption to the world *in spite of* Israel's stubborn disobedience; what could He have done had Israel been a willing, humble, obedient servant!? (cf. Rom. 11:15). Had Israel obeyed, God could have had a holy nation as numerous as the grains of sand on a seashore. But she disobeyed. God had to give her up to wars, pestilence, famine and finally complete national oblivion in captivity in order to sanctify for Himself a small remnant for His messianic use. What great good could be done for mankind today if all Israel according to the flesh would obey and become part of Israel according to faith in Christ, the Messiah! Fleshly Israel's disobedience has been a great hindrance to the gospel. The disbelief and disobedience of the majority of the Jews was a constant source of heart-rending pathos to Jesus!

v. 20-22 THE WAYFARER: The way of Jehovah is in His commandments. The wayfarer is not forced to take that way; he is exhorted to choose Jehovah's way by a deliberate exercise of his will which is expressed by both a negative and positive action. First he is to "flee Babylon" and second, he is to "declare" Jehovah's redemption. These verses are prophetic commands anticipating Judah's captivity by Babylon and release by Cyrus. There were strong temptations for many of the Jews to remain in Mesopotamia after the Persian edict restoring

them to their homeland. Many of them did, in fact, remain (cf. Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther). Although most of the Jews retained much of their cultural identity, many of them, influenced by the paganism around them, lost their firm faith in the Scriptures and they produced succeeding generations whose faith was in their past, not in their supernatural messianic future.

The Lord's command, "Go ye forth from Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans . . ." anticipated more than physical escape from captivity. It is also a command to holiness; it is an exhortation to Israel to separate herself from the wickedness of Babylon and from dependence upon Babylon for sustenance. The true meaning of this finds its fulfillment in the exhortation to the true Israel (the church) to flee the paganism of Rome ("Babylon") (cf. Rev. 18:4-5), and not "partake of her sins." Singing of the Lord's redemption is a favorite figure of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 14:7; 24:14; 26:19; 27:2; 35:6, 10; 38:20; 42:11; 44:23; 49:13; 51:11; 52:8-9; 54:1; 55:12; 65:14). It is a song of praise and testimony the wayfarer is to sing. It is a song about what Jehovah has done—not how the wayfarer feels! Modern "gospel" music focuses too much on subjective experiences and feelings. All the exhortations of God are to sing about what God has done objectively and who God is revelationally! It is interesting that the Psalms, written to be sung, are focused on what God has done and who He is. See Psalm 81:13-16 which especially sounds like this passage in Isaiah.

Israel does not need to be afraid to break all ties with Babylon and separate itself unto its messianic destiny. Babylon's material riches and carnality cannot be the source of Israel's security and sustenance. God will keep His promises to sustain them. He kept His covenant with Israel when she separated herself from Egypt. Even when some of the wilderness wayfarers wanted to return to Egypt for security, Jehovah provided them water in the desert. He clave the rock and water gushed out (Ex. 17:1-7; Deut. 8:15). The fundamental essence of Christ's church, according to the New Testament, is its separation from worldliness. Much of the modern-day church, however,

has not “come out of Babylon” but still clings to worldly-attitudes (bigness for bigness sake, spectacularism, subjectivism, manipulation, exploitation) and worldly behavior (wastefulness, sensualness, legalism, show-offishness, shallowness). The church must learn to depend totally on God, not on human programs.

For there is no peace to the wicked. The Hebrew word *resha'iyim* is from the root word *rasha'* and refers mainly to the activity of *wickedness* which is *disquietude, confusion, tossing, restlessness, disturbing*. Keil and Delitzsch say the primary meaning of the root word is, *laxity* and *looseness*. It is to describe those whose inward moral nature is without firmness and therefore in a state of moral confusion and tossing to and fro; moral upheaval (cf. Isa. 57:20-21). Cunning and deceitful men, Paul warns the Ephesian church, would like to bring wickedness into the body of Christ and cause it to be “tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine” (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). Many people do not understand that doctrinal vacillation leads to moral confusion. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15:33-34) that “evil *homilia* (teaching, sermonizing) corrupts good morals.” And this is the precise point of this passage in Isaiah. Israel must walk in the commandments of Jehovah if she is to have peace. True peace is a result of preaching and doing true doctrine.

## QUIZ

1. What “profit” would God’s teachings be to Israel?
2. What is God’s way?
3. What might have been the result if Israel had been obedient to the commandments of God?
4. Does the exhortation to “Go forth from Babylon” have any application for believers today?
5. Why would the Jews be inclined not to leave Babylon?
6. What is necessary to true peace? Why do the wicked not have it?

## EXAMINATION

## CHAPTERS FORTY-FOUR THROUGH FORTY-EIGHT

## DEFINITION

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

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Jeshurun</i>        | 8. <i>hidest</i> thyself       |
| 2. <i>graven image</i>    | 9. <i>Nebo</i>                 |
| 3. <i>delight</i>         | 10. <i>show</i> yourselves men |
| 4. <i>shut</i> their eyes | 11. <i>virgin</i>              |
| 5. <i>seen</i> the fire   | 12. <i>mistress</i>            |
| 6. <i>liars</i>           | 13. <i>tender, delicate</i>    |
| 7. <i>anointed</i>        | 14. <i>profit</i>              |

## MEMORIZATION

I am Jehovah, and there is \_\_\_\_\_ else; besides me there is no \_\_\_\_\_. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the sun, and from the west, that there is \_\_\_\_\_ besides me; I am Jehovah, and there is none else. I \_\_\_\_\_ light, and \_\_\_\_\_ darkness; I make \_\_\_\_\_, and create \_\_\_\_\_; I am Jehovah that \_\_\_\_\_ all these things. (45:5-7)

For my \_\_\_\_\_ sake I will defer mine anger, and for my \_\_\_\_\_ will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not \_\_\_\_\_. Behold, I have \_\_\_\_\_ thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of \_\_\_\_\_. For mine \_\_\_\_\_ sake, for \_\_\_\_\_ own \_\_\_\_\_, will I do it; for how should my \_\_\_\_\_ be profaned? and my \_\_\_\_\_ I will not give to another. (48:9-11)

## EXPLANATION

1. Explain the stupidity of idol making.
2. Explain how God shuts the eyes of idolaters.
3. Explain how Cyrus could be used of God in redemption.
4. Explain how God proves that idols are not gods.
5. Explain what was “new” about some of Jehovah’s predictions.
6. Explain why Jehovah always acts primarily for His own name’s sake.

## 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. Would man in our enlightened age be stupid enough to call a “thing” God?
2. Does God’s statement that He creates both goodness and calamities apply to modern history?
3. What application may we make of God taking an oath on His own name?
4. Of what value is biblical typology today?
5. Why is the teaching about idolatry so continually relevant to every age of civilization?
6. Is the teaching about listening to false prophets relevant for today?
7. Is there an application concerning the practice of astrology today from the teachings of Isaiah concerning Babylon’s astrology?

C. PROGRAM OF THE LORD'S SERVANT,  
CHAPTERS 49 - 53

1. RESCUE, CHAPTER 49

a. DESPISED SERVANT

TEXT: 49:1-6

- 1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far:  
Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of  
my mother hath he made mention of my name:
- 2 and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the  
shadow of his hand hath he hid me: and he hath made me a  
polished shaft; in his quiver hath he kept me close:
- 3 and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom  
I will be glorified.
- 4 But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength  
for nought and vanity; yet surely the justice due to me is with  
Jehovah, and my recompense with my God.
- 5 And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be  
his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be  
gathered unto him; (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah:  
and my God is become my strength;)
- 6 yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be  
my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the  
preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the  
Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of  
the earth.

QUERIES

- a. Who is this Jehovah "hath called from the womb"?
- b. Why is he disappointed that he has labored in "vain"?
- c. Why increase his burden to "the end of the earth"?

## PARAPHRASE

Listen to Me, all you peoples in far distant parts of the earth, Jehovah called Me to be His servant long before I was ever born. From within the womb of My mother I was given My name by Jehovah. Jehovah is going to make My words His weapon, like a sharp sword. I will be the greatest weapon in His hand. He will make Me like a finely polished and sharpened arrow, ready in His quiver for His warfare. Jehovah said to Me, You are My Servant, My Prince, and people will praise Me because of You. But I replied, My work as Your instrument seems fruitless. I have spent My strength and it appears I have accomplished nothing! Nevertheless, I will commit it all to Jehovah—I know He will do what is just and give Me the reward I should have. And now, says Jehovah—the One who is is going to incarnate Me in a woman's womb to be His Servant, to gather Israel unto Him, the One who has honored Me with this task and gives Me strength to do it, He says to Me, I have a greater task for You than gathering just a remnant of the Jews to Me; I will also make You a revelation of My truth to the Gentiles and You will be My salvation to the whole world.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-3 CALL: Who, other than the Messiah-Servant, could be speaking in these verses? Note the following:

1. Called from the "womb" (he is to be born of a woman) (cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2, etc.).
2. Named while still in the womb (Mt. 2:18-25; Lk. 1:30-35; Isa. 7:14; 9:6).
3. His mouth a "sharp sword" (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15; Heb. 4:12)
4. He is hid in shadow of Jehovah's hand (Col. 3:3)
5. He is called "Israel" (Prince of God) (Isa. 9:6; Dan. 9:24-27; Lk. 1:30-35, etc.).

6. Jehovah is to be glorified in Him (cf. Jn. 12:27-36; 17:1-5)
7. He is to bring Jacob back to Jehovah (Lk. 1:33)
8. He is honorable in the eyes of Jehovah (Jn. 12:27-36; Lk. 3:21-22; Mt. 17:5-8; Acts 2:22-36; Acts 3:17-26, etc.).
9. He is to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 9:1-2; Mt. 4:12-17; Lk. 2:29-32, etc.)
10. He is Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth

A new emphasis is begun by the prophet Isaiah. From this point on Babylon and Cyrus are not directly mentioned. The Messiah-Servant and the glory of His future kingdom will be pre-eminent. Everything the prophet has to say to his contemporaries will, from this point on, be in relationship to the future messianic glory.

Note the absolute authority with which the Servant addresses the world, commanding the isles and all afar off to listen to Him. Jehovah has made the Servant His instrument of conquering warfare. The Servant is a "polished arrow" and His words are a sharp sword. The Servant is kept in Jehovah's "quiver" until the proper time for battle. The word of Christ is more powerful than any sword or arrow or any other carnal weapon. The word of Christ converts the mind and soul—carnal weapons only subdue bodies (cf. II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20; Heb. 4:12). It is imperative that the people of God today remind themselves they are engaged in the *warfare* of God. God sent His Son as a sword and an arrow! God so loved the world that He sent His Son, but He was sent to engage in a "life and death" struggle, a war, with the devil and his henchmen. The devil has been defeated and bound, but he still struggles against his "chain" and will devour all who willingly put themselves within his sphere of influence. God does not see the world, the flesh and the devil as a "good place, every day and every way getting better and better." The world, the flesh and the devil are condemned, doomed, judged. Only those who bring every thought into captivity to obedience of

Christ will survive the final judgment of the world.

The Messiah-Servant is also called to be anointed "Israel" (Prince of God). The Hebrew word *yisrael* means "Prince of God." Jesus was descended from David according to the flesh (Rom. 1:1-6), and promised the throne of His earthly father and His Heavenly Father—therefore, Prince (cf. Isa. 9:6; Dan. 9:24-27; Lk. 1:30-35, etc.). To glorify is to honor. The highest form of praise or compliment is imitation and impersonation. Jesus reflected the very image of God (Heb. 1:3); to see Jesus was to see God (Jn. 14:8-10); in Him dwelt all the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:15-20; 2:9); Jesus was the Word become flesh (Jn. 1:1-18); He glorified the Father on earth (Jn. 12:27-36; 17:1-5).

v. 4 COMMITMENT: This verse is one of the most unique verses of all the Bible! It predicts, in the words of the Servant-Messiah Himself, a point in the Servant's ministry when He will cry out in frustration and disappointment. Edward J. Young comments, "The expression of discouragement is no thought of unbelief, but simply of a genuine modesty borne from a consciousness of one's own weakness." Jesus, the Eternal Son, pre-existent with the Father, humbled Himself, emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of flesh (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). He partook of the same nature as man (Heb. 2:10-18) and was tempted in all points like we are tempted (Heb. 4:14-16) yet without sinning. It was in this incarnation that He partook of human weaknesses. Part of that weakness was the frustration and disappointment men know when they love other men and want to lead them to God's redeeming grace and when sinful, rebellious men refuse to be led (cf. Mt. 19:16-22; Mt. 23:37-39; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 19:41-44; Jn. 12:27-36; Mt. 26:36-46). Did Jesus agonize? Did He have to cry out to God in prayer? Yes! (cf. Heb. 5:7-9). Jesus was "astonished" at the unbelief of His countrymen (Mk. 6:6); He wept at the grief of Mary and Martha (Jn. 11:35); He even despaired of finding faith on the earth at His second coming (Lk. 18:8). The earthly ministry of Jesus was not spectacular in its personal results—judged by human standards. He made

more enemies, per capita, than friends. He convinced only 12 men to follow Him, one of them was a traitor, and the others disavowed Him at His death. He came unto His own and His own received Him not (Jn. 1:9-11). This was predicted (Isa. 52:13—53:12)!

In spite of the fact that the Messiah experienced discouragement and disappointment and was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” He realistically committed His cause to Jehovah for vindication, justification and reward. The Christian must be a realist also! If they persecuted the Master they will persecute the disciple (cf. Jn. 15:18-27; I Pet. 4:12-19, etc.). There will be emotional lows as well as emotional highs for the Christian. The implication that believers should have a constant, happy glow about life is a form of Christian schizophrenia. Christian emotional dishonesty often can lead to deep despair and other psychological problems. A Christian psychologist says: “God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons we could not learn in any other way. The way we learn those lessons is not to deny the feelings but to find the meanings underlying them. . . . Emotional dishonesty may be creating problems for others . . . Emotional honesty is necessary for one’s own spiritual growth and it also helps others to get the right perspective on their own experience.” Commitment to God is not built on human feelings as a basis—they are too subjective, biased and vacillating. Christ did not “feel” like going to the cross (“. . . let this cup pass from me . . .”). Commitment to God is built on faith in the facts about who God is as they are objectively revealed in the Scriptures and in the Person of Jesus (“. . . nevertheless, not my will but thine be done . . .”). Even the Messiah, in His incarnate humiliation, knew emotional depression and could overcome it only by commitment and faith in the knowledge of who the Father is. The Messiah knew He could depend upon the faithfulness of Jehovah to see that justice was ultimately done and that His ministry would receive its eventual reward. Eventually the work of the Messiah would produce a “great multitude” of believers “which no man could

number" (Rev. 7:9f); but not in the earthly lifetime of the Messiah. Christians need to learn the lesson of the parable . . . "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mk. 4:26-29).

v. 5-6 COMMISSION: The Servant is born incarnate to accomplish a specific mission. He is to bring back Jacob and gather Israel to Jehovah. *Ye'seph* is the Hebrew word translated *gathered* and means, "to be brought in; placed in safety." His commission was to go to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." This He did. And He brought to safety all of the true Israel (cf. Gal. 6:16; Rom. 11:25-32). The parenthetical statement is the Messiah-Servant's reiteration that He has committed His cause to Jehovah and He is sure Jehovah will vindicate His ministry with honor and strength.

The Messiah-Servant's commission is much broader than physical Israel, although in the sovereign plan of God that is where redemption began (Acts 1:8). The Messiah was for the whole world. He was to gather sheep not of Israel into the flock of God to become part of the true Israel (cf. Jn. 10:16). Paul the apostle quotes Isaiah 49:6 in Acts 13:47 to give us the inspired interpretation of this prophecy. Jesus Christ is no provincial Messiah; He is not just a prophet of the Jews—He is Savior of the whole world. He is the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12f). One religion is not as good as another—not even to Isaiah. There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12). Isaiah is the prophet of world missions. Strangely enough, Isaiah says more about the salvation of the Gentiles than any O.T. book, and yet he is the one most read in the Jewish synagogues! Of course, most of the Jews have a different view of what God has in store for the Gentiles than Isaiah predicted (cf. Lk. 4:16-30).

## QUIZ

1. How may we be certain this passage is a prediction of the Messiah?

2. How was the Messiah to be used as God's instrument?
3. Does the N.T. support the idea that the Messiah may have been disappointed in His earthly ministry?
4. Why can't we base our relationship to God on our feelings?
5. What N.T. scriptures indicate that the Gentiles were to be given an opportunity to become part of "true Israel."?

## b. DESIRABLE SAVIOUR

TEXT: 49:7-13

- 7 Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of Jehovah that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.
- 8 Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;
- 9 saying to them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and on all bare heights shall be their pasture.
- 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them will lead them, even by springs of water will he guide them.
- 11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.
- 12 Lo, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.
- 13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have compassion upon his afflicted.

## QUERIES

- a. Why the change from abhorrence to worship (v. 7)?
- b. How is a person given for a covenant (v. 8)?
- c. When did Jehovah "comfort" His people (v. 13)?

## PARAPHRASE

Jehovah, Redeemer, and Holy One of Israel speaks to the One whom men will at first despise, for whom His own nation will feel revulsion, and whom men in high places will esteem lower than a slave, His Servant, and says: Do not be discouraged, kings and princes will one day recognize Your deity and will respectfully worship You. This will happen because Jehovah is absolutely faithful to fulfill His divine purpose of redemption in You. Jehovah also says, At the time acceptable to Me, at the time when, according to My sovereign will, I decide to accomplish My salvation of the world, I will deliver You from those who would try to thwart Your mission and I will make You, personally, My covenant. Through You My people shall receive the inheritance I promised to their forefathers; through You I will say to those in bondage—you are freed; to those in blindness—you may now see. My people, like sheep, shall be fed in green pastures and on grassy hill-sides. They shall not be hungry or thirsty for righteousness; nothing will be allowed to hurt them any more for they will be led by One who loves them to an everlasting source of living water. I will remove all obstacles in their way and smooth out all the rough places. Behold, these people of Mine will be coming from the farthest reaches of the world—even from the far east. All of creation is invited to sing praises unto Jehovah because, when He has done what He here predicts through His Servant, He will have comforted His afflicted people as He promised to do.

# COMMENTS

v. 7-8 VINDICATION: Jehovah calls Himself "Redeemer of Israel." Redeemer is from the Hebrew word, *go'el*, which means, *avenger, vindicator, ransom, retributor, recoverer* (often translated, *kinsman*, esp. in Ruth). Jehovah is going to redeem mankind through His Servant, and when He does His Servant will be vindicated. During His earthly tenure, the Servant, because of His humble station and His sinless purity, will be despised by rebellious, sinful men. In order to destroy the wisdom of the wise and thwart the cleverness of the clever, God chose what is weak, low, despised and foolish to the world in order to save the world. Man must learn to trust *completely* in God. If man is given any margin for egotism or boasting in self, he cannot trust God completely (cf. I Cor. 1:18-31). So God chose to send the Messiah, born in a Bethlehem barn, of poor parents, not tutored in the rabbinical schools, reared in Galilee (circuit of the Gentiles), a friend of fishermen, tax-collectors and harlots. He was abhorred by His own people. They called Him, "Samaritan," "demon-possessed," "friend of sinners." He had no "form or comeliness . . . that they should desire Him," (cf. Isa. 53:1f). They were sure no good thing could come out of Nazareth (Jn. 1:46). Finally, they murdered Him (cf. Acts 2:22-24; 3:13-16; 13:26-32, etc.). But Jehovah raised Him from the dead and exalted His name above every name (cf. scriptures just cited plus Phil. 2:9-10; Rev. 1:5; 5:5; 15:3-4; 19:11-16). After the exaltation of the Servant, kings and princes and men in high places became His followers and worshipped Him (cf. Acts 13:7; 17:32-34; 18:8; Rom. 16:23; Phil. 1:13). In succeeding centuries many kings and national leaders have become Christians. The Son was, for a little while, made lower than the angels (cf. Heb. 2:9). After He suffered the necessary humiliation and accomplished atonement for sin, He was enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3f) and was restored to the glory He had with the Father from the beginning (Jn. 17:5). All this was according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23f)

and God kept His word (Acts 3:12-26).

The "acceptable time" (Heb. *be'eth ratzon*) means literally, "delightful, pleasing, gracious, satisfying time." It is the "time" pre-figured in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8ff), when tribal inheritances were restored and bond-slaves were set free—a time for great rejoicing. Jubilee was a type of the time of delight and grace that would come when the Messiah appeared (cf. Isa. 61:2) to release captives, etc. "Day of salvation" (Heb. *yom yeshu'ah*) is, interestingly, "day of Jesus" or "day of Joshua." The apostle Paul apparently quotes this verse in II Cor. 6:2 and applies it to the N.T. dispensation. In the fulness of time, God sent His Servant (Gal. 4:4) to bring salvation and, in person, be a "covenant" of the people. Isaiah has already revealed that the Servant will Himself be given as a *covenant* to the whole world (cf. Isa. 42:6). How does the Servant *become* a covenant? Girdlestone says in his, *Synonyms of The Old Testament*, "The Lord Jesus is called the mediator of the New Covenant, because He is the medium wherein the Disposition of God is carried into effect, whether as regards the individual or the race as a whole (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The inheritance which was given by *promise* to Christ (Gal. 3:16) was conveyed by *covenant* (through His blood-shedding) to all believers (Gal. 3:17, 29), who are made *one* with Him by faith; and it is this union of God with man, and of man with God, in Christ, which is summed up in the N.T. sense of the word *berith*." Jesus, in the offering of Himself to die the "second death" for all sin, became personally a covenant. Covenant relationship is relationship to Christ, the Person, not to a legal system. He said His blood (death) was the covenant (Mt. 26:26-29). All the promises of God find their Yes in Him (II Cor. 1:20). Christ became a servant . . . to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given . . . (Rom. 15:8). When God could find nothing higher to swear by in order to show the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed (Himself) with an oath (Heb. 6:17). Malachi calls Him the "messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1-2). Daniel says the "prince, the anointed one" who is to

be cut off will make a strong covenant with many (Dan. 9:24-27). The renovated "land" of verse eight is all part of the imagery of the fulfillment of Jehovah's covenant with Abraham and his spiritual descendants, and is not to be understood literally. We come into covenant relationship with God by being "joined" in discipleship to Jesus. Disciples of Jesus are those who have been baptized into Him and keep His word (Mt. 28:18f; Jn. 8:31f).

v. 9-11 VIVIFICATION: The Servant will give Jehovah's people back their life. Men will be released from their bondage to sin and delivered from their blindness (darkness) (cf. Isa. 61:1-3; Lk. 4:16-30; Jn. 8:12; 9:39; I Jn. 1:7; 2:10; etc.). Furthermore the Servant will shepherd Jehovah's people (see comments on Isa. 40:11). God's people will not have to wander in the deserts of unbelief and sin aimlessly. They will be led by the Incarnate Messiah-Son who has partaken of their nature in order to become The Good Shepherd (cf. Jn. 10:1f). They will pasture in ways that formerly would not provide or were inaccessible. The Servant will change everything! The Servant's people will not want (Psa. 23); when they hunger or thirst after righteousness, they will be filled (Mt. 5:6). The Hebrew word *sharav* may be translated *heat*, *drought*, or *mirage*. It is the same word used in Isa. 35:7 and there translated "glowing sand" which would seem to mean *mirage*. The mirage was a common experience of the thirsty Palestinian traveler, who often thought he saw water where there was none. The Servant will not delude the many dying of spiritual thirst—He will provide living water and that in abundance. The Hebrew word *mabbu'ey* is translated *springs* and means, *to gush out*, *effervescent*, *bubbling out*, *abundant*. It is also found in Isa. 35:7, translated *springs*. The final thing the Servant will do will be to make mountains into highways and raise the roads through deep valleys up to where they are safe and easily accessible. Apparently the mountains and valleys here stand for obstacles that are to be overcome by the Servant on behalf of His people (cf. 40:4). Faith in Christ makes mountains into mole-hills (cf. Mt. 17:20; 21:21; Mk. 11:23). Every obstacle to the knowledge

of God may be destroyed with the weapons of the Servant (II Cor. 10:3-5).

v. 12-13 VERIFICATION: The Servant will also verify that God has kept His promise (Isa. 40:1-2) to "comfort" His people and bring their "warfare" to an end (see comments on Isa. 40:1-2). The Servant's people are to come from the far reaches of the world. We have again the universal nature of the messianic salvation. The return from exile in Babylon is no longer the focus. The prophet's revelation is now expanded to the whole world. The word *Syuniym* (Sinim) means, some commentators say, people of the wilderness of Sin, or the Sinites, a people of Canaan (Gen. 10:17; I Chron. 1:15). Gesenius says it means *Chinese*. Kyle and Delitzsch also believe it refers to people of the ancient land of China. The word *Tsin* can be traced back to about 1122-1115 B.C. as a name (in many different forms) of small states into which the empire of China was divided after the reign of Wu-wang. *Tsin*, according to the Sinologist Neumann, was the name of a feudal kingdom of some importance in Shen-si, one of the western most provinces of the land of China, and *Fei-tse*, the first feudal king of *Tsin*, began to reign as early as 897 B.C. It would be quite possible then for Isaiah to have heard of the land of the *Sinese*. Of course, there were no exiles in China from the Babylonian dispersion. However, there is documentation that there were Jews who immigrated from Persia to China during the Han dynasty (205 B.C.—220 A.D.). If Isaiah is speaking of the messianic era, as we think he is, then there is no problem with some people from China (Sinim) becoming followers of the Messiah. Since the emphasis is on distance from Palestine, China is more acceptable than the first two suggestions. Whatever the case, the whole universe is commanded to acknowledge in a hymn of praise that Jehovah has comforted His people and shown compassion to the afflicted. He has done it in the Person of the Servant who, despised and abhorred, tested in the crucible of incarnate weakness and disappointment, is now the exalted and desirable Savior.

## QUIZ

1. What does the word Redeemer encompass?
2. Why was the Servant abhorred?
3. Can you name some of the kings and princes who worshiped Him?
4. What is the “acceptable” time?
5. What do you know about the Servant becoming a covenant?
6. Where do all the people come from to be comforted through the Servant?

## c. DEJECTED ZION

TEXT: 49:14-21

- 14 But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me.
- 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee.
- 16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.
- 17 Thy children make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth from thee.
- 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and gird thy self with them like a bride.
- 19 For, as for thy waste and thy desolate places, and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.
- 20 The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell.
- 21 Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me

these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?

### QUERIES

- a. Why would Zion think Jehovah had forsaken her?
- b. How would Zion "clothe" herself with those coming to her?
- c. Why does she ask, "Who hath begotten me these"?

### PARAPHRASE

But those in Zion who have been listening to these predictions of their glorious future say, How can all this come to pass if we are to go into captivity? Surely Jehovah is showing that He has forsaken us and forgotten us if we must go away to Babylonian exile! So Jehovah answers, As incredible as it may seem, occasionally a mother may disown her own baby, but I will never disown My true Zion. Look! I have cut your name deeply into the flesh of the palms of My hands. Your walls may be broken down from time to time but I see them ultimately and eternally built up. When the time of the Servant comes I want you to observe that many of those who have previously been your destroyers will cease opposing you and will come to you and become a part of Zion. Your beauty will be enhanced by their joining you. You will look as lovely as a bride dressed for her wedding. You think your population will be decimated by the captivity, and your nationhood destroyed. I tell you you will become so populous you will think there is no room for all the people joining themselves to you and your destroyers will be made powerless. The descendants of those who shall go into exile will one day shout to you, Zion is not large enough for all these people; it must be enlarged. Then you will say in amazement; Where did all these children of Zion come from,

seeing I have suffered so much destruction and death of my own children? I have spent most of my existence wandering to and fro, so how could I have produced all these children? Look, I was left all alone in captivity and no one seemed to come forth to help me, so where have all these children been hidden all this time?

## COMMENTS

v. 14-18 **MELANCHOLIA:** The people of Zion are represented as being in a state of deep despondency. This is anticipating the nation of Judah in exile in Babylon. The Psalmist of the exile wrote: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion . . ." (see Psa. 137:1f). The promises of the prophets were glorious but only the most thoroughly committed believer put much hope in them. All recent history taught the Jews was that nations taken captive into Mesopotamia disappeared or lost their national identity. The great empires had never allowed a conquered nation to return to its own homeland. Judah was certain Jehovah had forsaken her (cf. Lam. 5:1f).

The Lord left His people in Babylon for 70 years (two generations would have been born and reared in a foreign land). Some of those who were taken down to Babylon as captives of war undoubtedly died there without ever seeing their homeland again (perhaps Daniel and his three friends). It was a great temptation for many Jews to despair and to spread their discouragement among others. The Lord works slowly, as men are prone to count time, but He is absolutely faithful to keep His promises. One of the most beautiful promises of the Old Testament is pictorialized in verses 15-16. The Hebrew word *'ulah* is translated "sucking child" but means more literally an *infant* (newly born). On rare occasions one learns of a mother deserting her new-born child, but it is very unusual. The Lord's love for Zion is indestructible! He *cannot* forget her—it is not in His nature at all to forget His promises. He

is preparing to sacrifice His only Son for her. True Zion is precious to Him. He has *khakak*, graven, them on the palms of His hands (not tattooed, but carved, etched deeply). He is constantly reminded of Zion! Her walls may be torn down by her enemies but in God's sovereign vision, they are constantly before Him as built up forever. Whatever God dreams or envisions comes to pass. God's dreams are not sand-castles. He has proven this through dreams and visions He manifested to the world by the instrumentality of His prophets. They all came to pass! So when God envisions the walls of Zion built forever, they shall be built forever! Maybe not in the lifetime of Isaiah, or the returned exiles, but when the Messiah arrives, He shall build the eternal walls of Zion (cf. Heb. 12:25-28, "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" is already being received by the recipients of the Hebrew epistle)!

Those contemporaries of Isaiah who read his prophecy should look and see that what God has promised about Zion is already beginning to happen, and believe. Already the *true* Zion is beginning to take shape. Already the sifting process is taking place. True believers in the long-range program of God are starting to separate themselves from those who are "destroyers" of Zion (unbelievers). Already Isaiah's teaching had begun to form a small band of "disciples" (Isa. 8:16-18), a "remnant," which would eventually include all "those who walked in darkness" even the Gentiles (Isa. 9:1-7). Jehovah swears by His own life (which is, of course, never ending and absolute) that Zion shall one day wear these few, faithful believers (of Isaiah's day) as a bride would her wedding finery (cf. Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 12:1; 19:7-8; 21:2).

v. 19-21 MARVEL: Zion's melancholia would eventually turn to *marvel*. These verses indicate Isaiah is predicting a "spiritual" land of Zion. Zion's literal land has never been too small for her. She has never thought she had too many literal, physical "children." There were times, however, after the establishment of the New Testament church that some of the Jewish Christians (even Peter) wondered about the amazing and rapid growth of the new Zion (the church). Many were

wondering how God could make room in "Zion" for Gentiles from all over the world! There has never been a time (especially after the return from exile) that the enemies ("those who swallowed up") the Jews were literally far away. Enemies of the Jews have always been near and have continually oppressed them and "swallowed them up" (e.g., Sanballat, Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, Pompey, the Moham-medans; in our lifetime, the Germans, Russians and Arabs). But spiritually, the Messiah defeated the arch-enemy of Zion, the devil, and bound him for a thousand years so that Zion's enemy is "far away." It is a constant source of wonder and amazement that Jehovah could take the small minority of believers exiled in Babylon and preserve them through centuries of "indignation" and eventually make of them a world-wide Zion (cf. Acts 11:1-8; 15:1-21, etc.).

We quote from Edward J. Young, "Even during the exile the tide was turning. God was raising up Cyrus, who would make it possible for the exiles to return to their home. In this return there is seen the first fulfillment of this promise, but in the deeper sense the fulfillment takes place in the distant future when the Gentiles are brought into the Church of Christ. Zion is bereaved, but she has children, so many that there is no room for them."

The remainder of this chapter confirms the messianic intent of the prophet.

## QUIZ

1. What are other scriptures to indicate the despondency of the exiles?
2. Why is God unable to forget Zion?
3. When did they "remember" Zion?
4. How could the land be "too strait" for Zion?
5. Why can't this be literal Zion?

## d. DELIVERED SOCIETY

TEXT: 49:22-26

- 22 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their bosom, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
- 23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; and they that wait for me shall not be put to shame.
- 24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives be delivered?
- 25 But thus saith Jehovah, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.
- 26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

## QUERIES

- a. Why put up a signal for the "nations"?
- b. How does God contend with those who contend with Zion?
- c. When did Jehovah take the "prey" away from the mighty?

## PARAPHRASE

Now this is what the Lord Jehovah says, Look! I will give directions to the Gentiles and point out to them the sign I have set among the covenant people of My presence among men

and they shall bring Zion's sons and daughters to her in gentle safety. Gentile kings and queens will be like foster-fathers and foster-mothers to you. They will humiliate themselves to Zion and serve her like slaves. Then you will acknowledge that I am Jehovah and realize that trusting in Me with faith and patience will result in victory. Now you are despondent, saying, It is utterly impossible for us to be rescued from mighty Babylon—the righteous usually do not escape from the unrighteous. But Jehovah replies, Quite to the contrary, and as incredible as it may seem, I will do as I have promised and rescue my people from the giant. They shall be the prey of the tyrant no longer. I, Jehovah, will make war against those who make war upon you. I will make your enemies feed upon one another—they will make war upon one another, until they stagger and reel with defeat like drunken men. When all this comes to pass then all mankind will have evidence to know that I am the One Sovereign Lord who saved His people and sets them free. This will be the revelation to all the world that I am the Mighty One of Jacob.

## COMMENTS

v. 22-23 SIGNAL: Two different Hebrew words are used to denominate the recipients of Jehovah's "ensign"—*goim* (Gentiles, or nations) and *'ammim* (peoples). Girdlestone says, "... the word *goim* primarily signifies those nations which lived in the immediate neighborhood of the Jewish people; they were regarded as enemies, as ignorant of the truth, and sometimes as tyrants . . . If *goi* denotes a nation regarded from without, *'am* signified a people as viewed by one of themselves. Sometimes it (*'am*) is used in the familiar and domestic way in which we speak of 'folk' . . . It is often brought into direct . . . contrast with *goi*. Thus Moses, speaking to God concerning Israel, says, 'This nation (*goi*) is thy people (*'am*),' Exodus 33:13. *'Am* is used by Isaiah (and other prophets) to distinguish Israel as God's people, and to mark them off from the heathen

*goim*." Often Isaiah predicts that the *goim* who had not been *'ammim* should become the people of God through the messianic redemption. Psalms 18:43; for example, reads, "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen (*goim*); a people (*'am*) whom I have not known shall serve me." This will come to pass when Jehovah shall be acknowledged as holding rule as "King of the *goim*" (Jer. 10:7; Hos. 1:9-10; 2:23).

This by-play upon the words *goim* and *'ammim* in verse 22 seems to indicate the delivered society referred to, although it may begin with deliverance from exile by Cyrus, has its ultimate goal as the messianic society (the church). The setting up of an "ensign" (a battle standard upon a pole; a rallying flag) is one of Isaiah's favorite pictures of the coming Messiah (11:12; 18:3; 62:10). When God sends His Messiah to the world, the pagan nations are going to deliver up (by the preaching of the gospel) all whom God in His omniscience knows are His (both Jew and Gentile). The Lord once told Paul "I have many people in this city . . ." That city was Corinth (Acts 18:9-11). "Nursing fathers" is from the Hebrew word *'omenayik* (root word is *'man*) which means "foster-father" and its root meaning is "to stay, to support." The Hebrew word *yanak* ("nursing mothers") means literally "to suckle" and therefore may be translated "foster-mother." The whole idea is that kings and queens of the *goim* (heads of state of heathen nations) will one day become, as it were, parents or supporters of Zion! And the once haughty, domineering *goim* will come to Zion in all humility to serve as slaves of Zion and her King. This is the only way anyone can join Zion—humility and service. When Jehovah begins the great work He is predicting here then many will begin to acknowledge Him as Sovereign and look forward in faith to the completion of it all in the messianic kingdom (just when the completion is to come they will not know, cf. I Pet. 1:10-12). Those who thus "wait" in patient faith upon Jehovah's promises, even though they do not live to see them accomplished, (Heb. 11:13-16), will not be put to "shame" but will "stand at their allotted place at the end of the days . . ." (Dan. 12:13).

v. 24-26 SPECTACLE: Zion is not yet convinced. If Zion is taken captive by the mighty (*gibbor*) one (Babylon) how is it possible that she shall ever see kings and queens coming to her in humble service? The *lawful* captives are, in Hebrew, the *tsadiyk* or *righteous* captives. They are righteous compared to Babylon. The "righteous" are Jews essentially non-warlike as compared to "unrighteous" Babylon. It was historically unheard of that a nation taken from its homeland into exile by such self-serving empires as Babylon should ever reappear again in its own homeland. Jehovah predicts that Zion shall not only be returned to her homeland but her enemies shall serve her. Incredible as it may seem, Zion is going to be delivered from her mighty and terrible enemy. These verses apply to the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile at the decree of Cyrus the Persian. This is a prelude to the signal to the *goim* of verses 22-23 and their becoming foster-parents to Zion (the church). Zion needs first to believe that Jehovah will deliver her from Babylonian captivity. This is the first obstacle in the way to the formation of a remnant which will in turn perpetuate the true Zion through the centuries until the King of Zion appears. So God says, I will make war upon those who contend with Zion. This is one of the fundamental warnings of the Bible; "Leave God's people alone—do not harm them—for He is jealous for them." Whoever would attack the people of God attacks God! God even holds the world responsible for "standing aloof" when His people are being set upon (cf. our comments, Obadiah, v. 10-14, *Minor Prophets*, Butler, College Press). All God has to do is give pagan empires up to their own paganism and they turn on one another and bite and devour one another (cf. Rom. 1:24-32). The history of the unbelieving world of human governments is one long tale of war, tyranny, destruction and politico-socio cannibalism. Man, in his perverse rebellion against God, goes on devouring himself! It is a matter of history that when Cyrus took up the conquest of Babylon some of the satrapies of the Babylonian empire revolted and fought with the Persians against their former rulers. Isaiah's prediction came to pass specifically and generally.

## ISAIAH

### QUIZ

1. Who are the "nations" and "peoples"?
2. Who is the "ensign"?
3. How will kings and queens become "nurses"?
4. How will those who wait upon Jehovah not be put to shame?
5. Why does Zion still think they may not be delivered from captivity?
6. How does Jehovah "feed" oppressors with their own flesh?

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

by Fred Long

#### I. Pre-Assyrian Prophets

##### A. Obadiah

1. v. 15-21 "The Kingdom shall be Jehovah's"
  - a. Who: House of Jacob means God's covenant people (Acts 15:13-18, 13:29-37).
  - b. When: Christian age, when Gentiles were added to kingdom (Acts 15:13-18).
  - c. Where: Mt. Zion is the Church (Heb. 12:18-29).

##### B. Joel

1. 2:28-32 Promise of Holy Spirit
  - a. Who: Twelve Apostles (Acts 2:14-21)
  - b. When: Day of Pentecost—Christian age (Luke 1:68-75)
  - c. Where: In Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22)
2. 2:30—3:3 "Great and Terrible Day of the Lord"
  - a. Who: Children of promise (Rom. 9:6)
  - b. When: Second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:29)
  - c. Where: Valley of Jehoshaphat—symbolic of Last Judgment

3. 3:17-21 Jerusalem shall be holy
  - a. Who: Jerusalem—symbol of Church, Christians
  - b. When: Messianic age (Hebrews 6:17-20)
  - c. Where: Zion, Jerusalem is the Church (covenant people)

C. Jonah

1. 1:17 Jonah—symbol of Christ's death (Luke 11:30)
  - a. Who: Christ (Matthew 12:40, 41—Matthew 16:4)
  - b. When: Messianic age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (literal), Nineveh is type of Gentiles

D. Amos

1. 9:11-15 Raise up the Booth of David
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Acts 15:14-18)
  - b. When: Messianic age
  - c. Where: Church

E. Hosea

1. 1:10-11 Great shall be Day of Jezreel
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:24-26; I Peter 2:9, 10)
  - b. When: Messianic age (John 10)
2. 2:21-23 Pity on Not Pitied
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:25, 26)
  - b. When: Messianic age
3. 3:4, 5 Israel shall return and seek Lord
  - a. Who: Israel—Church (Hebrews 12:22)
  - b. When: In latter days (Messianic)

## II. Assyrian Prophets

A. Isaiah

1. 2:1-4 Mt. of the house of the Lord established as highest
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Luke 24:47)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Hebrews 12:22, 23; Col. 1:23)
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (Church) (Romans 10:18)
2. 6:9, 10 Jews reject the Gospel
  - a. Who: Jews (Matthew 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12)

- b. When: Jesus' ministry (parables) (Luke 8:10; John 12:40) (Romans 11:8)
3. 9:1, 2 Gentiles of Zebulun and Naphtali see Great Light
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Matthew 4:13-17)
  - b. When: Jesus traveled to Zebulun and Naphtali (Luke 1:32)
4. 10:21-23 Only remnant of Jacob will return
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:27, 28)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Church
5. 11:1-6 Shoot from the Stump of Jesse
  - a. Who: Christ (Acts 13:23)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Romans 15:12; Romans 12:12)
6. 29:13, 18, 19 Deaf shall hear, Blind shall see
  - a. Who: Hypocrisy of Jews (Matthew 11:5; 15:8-9)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (Mark 7:22)
7. 35:8-10 Highway called the Holy Way
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Matthew 13:14)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Zion—symbol of Church
8. 42:1-4 My Servant Brings Justice to the Nations
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Matthew 11:4-5; 12:18-20; 3:16, 17)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (Matthew 17:5)
9. 49:6 Light to the Nations
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Luke 2:32)
  - b. When: Christian age (Acts 13:47; 26:23)
  - c. Where: Ends of the earth
10. 54:1, 13 Children of the desolate
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Gal. 4:27)
  - b. When: Christian age (John 6:45)
11. 55:3 Everlasting Covenant
  - a. Who: Covenant People (Christians) (Romans 10:5; Acts 13:34)
  - b. When: Christian age (Luke 22:37)

## PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

12. 56:8 I will gather others
  - a. Who: Gentiles (John 10:16)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry
13. 61:1, 2 Day of Vengeance
  - a. Who: Jesus (Luke 4:18; Matthew 5:4)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (read in synagogue) (Mark 4:17-21; Luke 21:21-28)
  - c. Where: Nazareth
14. 65:1, 2 Jews rebellious
  - a. Who: Jews (Romans 10:20, 21)
  - b. When: Messianic age

### B. Micah

1. 4:1-7 Mountain of the House of the Lord (Isa. 2:2-4)
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Luke 24:47)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Heb. 12:22; Col. 1:23)
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (Church) (Romans 10:18; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15)

### C. Nahum

## III. Chaldean Prophets

### A. Zephaniah

1. 2:7 Seacoast shall become possession of remnant of the house of Judah (Luke 1:68)
  - a. Who: Covenant people (remnant of Judah)
  - b. When: Birth of Christ
  - c. Where: Bethlehem

### B. Habakkuk

1. 1:5 Unbelief of Jews
  - a. Who: Jews (Acts 13:41)
  - b. When: Christian Age
2. 2:4 Righteous shall live by Faith
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Hebrews 10:38, 39)
  - b. When: Christian age (Romans 1:17; Gal. 3:11)

### C. Jeremiah (and Lamentations)

1. 3:14-18 Jerusalem called Throne of the Lord
  - a. Who: All nations

## ISAIAH

- b. When: Christian age (Acts 20:28)
- c. Where: Jerusalem and Zion—symbol of Church
- 2. 6:10 Jews reject the Gospel
  - a. Who: Jews (Acts 7:51)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem
- 3. 9:25 Punishment of “uncircumcised” in heart
  - a. Who: Jews (outwardly) (Romans 2:8, 9, 28)
  - b. When: Christian age
- 4. 17:25 Jerusalem inhabited forever
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Christians) (Luke 1:32)
  - b. When: Christian age (Hebrews 12:22)
  - c. Where: The heavenly Jerusalem (Church)
- 5. 31:1 All Israel will be saved
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 11:26-28)
  - b. When: Christian age
- 6. 31:31-34 Promise of a New Covenant
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Gentiles) (John 6:45)
  - b. When: Christian age (Hebrews 8:8-12; Romans 11:27; I Thes. 4:9)
- 7. 33:16-18 Judah will be saved
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Hebrews 13:15; Phil. 3:9)
  - b. When: Christian age (Luke 1:32, 33)

## IV. Exilic Prophets

### A. Ezekiel

- 1. 39:29 Promise of Holy Spirit
  - a. When: Pentecost (Acts 2:17)
- 2. 47:21-23 Aliens shall be allotted an inheritance
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 10:12)
  - b. When: Christian age (Eph. 2:12-14; 3:6)
  - c. Where: In the Church (Col. 3:11)

### B. Daniel

- 1. 2:44-45 God's Kingdom set up—never be destroyed
  - a. Who: Christians (I Cor. 15:24)
  - b. When: During Roman Empire (Iron Kingdom)
  - c. Where: Heavenly Kingdom

2. 9:24-27 Promise of Coming Kingdom

- a. Who: Covenant people (Christians) (Matthew 9:12; Luke 19:43)
- b. When: After seventy weeks of years—Christian age
- c. Where: Jerusalem (heavenly)—Church (Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20)

V. Post-Exilic Prophets

A. Haggai

- 1. 2:6, 7 I will shake the heavens and the earth
  - a. Who: New Covenant people (Hebrews 12:26)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Heavenly Kingdom—Church

B. Zechariah

- 1. 13:1 Fountain opened for the House of David
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Hebrews 9:14)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (heavenly)—Church

C. Malachi

- 1. 4:5, 6 Return of Elijah the Prophet
  - a. Who: John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14)
  - b. When: Before Jesus' ministry (Mark 9:11)
  - c. Where: Israel (literal) (Luke 1:17)

VI. New Testament scriptures that show the Gentiles taking part in prophetic promises:

Acts 26:17-23	Romans 11:11, 25
Acts 28:25-29	Romans 15:12
Romans 2:28, 29	Ephesians 2:11-16
Romans 9:6-8	Galatians 4:24-31
Romans 9:24-31	Hebrews 12:18-24
Romans 10:13	

## 2. TEACH, CHAPTER 50

## a. OBJECTIONS CANCELLED

TEXT: 50:1-3

- 1 Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother's divorce-ment, wherewith I have put her away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold for your iniquities were ye sold, and for your transgressions was your mother put away.
- 2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stink, because there is no water, and die for thirst.
- 3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

## QUERIES

- a. Why bring up the subject of divorce?
- b. What is meant by the question, “. . . was there no man”?
- c. What do “stinking fish” have to do with the subject?

## PARAPHRASE

This is what Jehovah says to your objections: I am the husband, you are my wife. You know My law says when a husband divorces his wife he must give her a written certificate of divorce. You say I have divorced you, Israel, and I am putting you away—where is the certificate? No, I have not divorced you, you have left me. Look at it another way: Do you think you have gone into slavery because I sold you to pay somebody a debt I owed them? I owe no one! You are going into slavery because you wanted to be as much like the Babylonians as possible.

It is your rebellion against Me and your infatuation with and dependence upon ungodly men that will bring about your enslavement to them. Why did everyone try to hide and keep away from Me when I came to save you? Why did no one answer Me when I called through My prophets? Have I ever given anyone reason to think that I could not save you from every enemy? No, you and all your ancestors have seen with your own eyes that I have saved you from greater powers than men. I have dried up seas and rivers and some of you have seen the heaps of rotting, stinking fish when this has happened. I have also worked great miracles in the heavens which some of your ancestors saw and have written in your scriptures. No, you are not going to be enslaved because I am powerless to help you or because I wanted it that way, says Jehovah.

### COMMENTS

v. 1 ACCUSATIONS: Judah is trying to justify herself against Jehovah's accusations (through His prophets) and against His promise of her impending captivity, with some accusations of her own! Judah is trying to blame Jehovah for her troubles with Babylon. She is accusing Jehovah of casting her off "illegally," or without justification. That is the impenitent sinner's usual ruse. Jehovah answers by referring them to His Law. The Law of Jehovah is, of course, His will—a revelation in human terms of His very nature. It is not Jehovah's nature to do anything without justification. In the matter of divorce, for example, if there is legal cause for a man to put away his wife, he must certify the legality of it by a written bill of divorcement (Dt. 24:1f). There is no written "bill of divorcement" from Jehovah. Israel is separated from Jehovah by her own doing—not His! She has gone after other lovers (cf. Hosea 1-3). The Lord did not want the separation, nor is He responsible for it. Another objection Israel might propose is that the Lord will give her up to slavery because Babylon has some claim upon Him. The thought is preposterous. Jehovah

owes no one! Jehovah is not man that He has creditors. No one has any claims upon Him! Israel will go away into slavery because of her own weaknesses, not God's. Judah had flirted with the Babylonians off and on for a number of years (cf. comments on Isaiah, ch. 36-39). The separation was her doing, not the Lord's. Jehovah's attitude toward Israel is graphically portrayed in the experience of Hosea with his wife.

v. 2-3 ACTUALITIES: Israel has accused Jehovah of insensitively casting her off. The actual facts are quite different. Many times Jehovah came to Israel (through prophets and providential judgments and redemptions) to rescue her from her headlong plunge into pagan slavery, but she would not listen. This is the historical record! Furthermore, the actual facts are that God demonstrated that He not only wanted to save Israel from enslavement but He had the power to save her. Time and time again He came, but none responded. In fact, He was rejected (cf. Isa. 30:8-11), until in the fulness of time He came incarnate to His own and they crucified Him! Delitzsch interprets these as the words of The Servant. Certainly 50:4f would seem to be The Servant's, and these may very well be His also. The apparent reference to the Red Sea exodus ("... at my rebuke I dry up the sea . . .") would indicate these to be the words of Jehovah. Since Jehovah and the Servant are essentially One (Jn. 1:1-18; 14:8-11; Col. 1:19; 2:9), Isaiah constantly shifts from One to the other in these latter chapters. This is not unusual. It is the "shortened perspective" aspect of O.T. prophecy. It may be nearer the correct interpretation to understand Jehovah as the speaker in 50:1-3 and the Servant in 50:4-11. Whatever the case, the point of this passage is to emphasize the righteousness and justness of God in Israel's imminent enslavement and to implore Israel again that He is not only willing but able to save her if she will hearken to His leading. The final and full revelation of Jehovah's redemptive purpose will be in the Person of The Servant, and that is who addresses Israel next.

## QUIZ

1. What kind of accusation is Jehovah countering by the reference to a bill of divorcement?
2. What accusation would be answered by speaking of "creditors"?
3. Why did Israel go away into captivity?
4. Who is speaking in verses one-three?
5. How has Jehovah demonstrated His power to save?

## b. OBEDIENT CHRIST

TEXT: 50:4-9

- 4 The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught.
- 5 The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward.
- 6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
- 7 For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.
- 8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand up together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.
- 9 Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

## QUERIES

- a. What is the “tongue of them that are taught”?
- b. What is significant about “plucking” hair from the cheek?
- c. How did he “set his face like a flint”?

## PARAPHRASE

The Servant of Israel who comes to redeem Zion speaks. The Lord Jehovah gives Me words of divine wisdom so that I may sustain the weary and despairing. I am in constant communion with the will of Jehovah just like an obedient disciple to His Master. The Lord Jehovah speaks His commandments to Me and I keep them—I do not rebel and turn away from them. I willingly conform to Jehovah’s plan and will offer my back to those who will smite me. I will suffer the humiliation of having the hairs of my beard plucked out by my tormentors. I will not be resentful or rebel when my enemies try to shame me by spitting in my face. I will trust completely in the Lord Jehovah for He will come to My aid. My intention to do His will cannot be thwarted by such actions and I will not be distracted from His will by them. I have set my will as hard as diamond to do His will and I know that ultimately I will be glorified in doing so. He is always present and He will vindicate My trust in Him. He will show to the world once and for all that I am sinless and righteous. If there is someone in all creation who can prove any unrighteousness against Me, let him stand up and present his case! There is no one! The enemies of the Servant may falsely accuse Him, but they will all be put to shame as easily as a moth devours old, worn-out clothes.

## COMMENTS

v. 4-7 DISCIPLINED: The Hebrew word *limmudiyim* (them that are taught; could be translated *disciples* for it is the same word

as is used in Isaiah 8:16. It is the root word from which the later Hebrew word *Talmud* (instruction) was derived. Jehovah will equip the Servant with divine wisdom and instruction. The obedient character of the Servant is being emphasized. He will hear the commandment of Jehovah and do it (cf. Mt. 3:17; 17:5; Jn. 8:29; 14:31; 15:10; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 5:8; 10:9), as compared with Israel who had the commandment of God taught to them by the prophets and did *not* hear and obey. The Servant, experiencing obedience, will become the "pathfinder" (Gr. *archegon*, in Heb. 2:10) of our salvation. He will be able to "succor" those who must also experience obedience (Heb. 2:18). Why did the Servant (Jesus) need to "learn obedience through the things He suffered" (Heb. 5:8-9)? Was He disobedient? Was He less than perfect? Were there things He did not know and could only know by chastening and instruction? Perhaps we shall never know fully the profound, divine mystery of the *kenosis* (humiliation) of the Son of God. Perhaps, in His willing choice to suffer the humiliation of incarnation (becoming flesh), He must, in some way *experience* discipline in order to fulfill the whole experience of incarnation. He was subject to His earthly parents as well as to His Heavenly Father. He did grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man (cf. Lk. 2:40, 51, 52). Perhaps He did not need to experience obedience for His own sake but for ours. If we are to really believe He knows and cares about our chastenings—if we are to have realistic (not superficial) commitment and discipleship to Him—then the Servant must experience suffering and obedience. He must obey the Father's commandments at the cost of self—not for Himself but for us. So the Servant, God-incarnate, is given the tongue of them that are taught, that He may know how to sustain with words him that is weary.

The phrase "he wakeneth morning by morning" emphasizes the continuous, unreserved obedience of the Servant. He always obeys. He never takes a day off from obeying the Father. It was His *mission to obey* the Father! (Jn. 12:27; Heb. 10:5f). It was His mission to teach mankind what obedience to the Father

involved and produced. There was not the slightest rebellion in the Servant. He was tempted; He was tested—supremely—but He did not yield. Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, and a host of other servants objected and some even tried to resist the Lord's call (cf. Ex. 4:10ff; Jer. 20:7ff; 17:16; Jonah 1:3). The Servant did not turn back from serving Jehovah for one moment (cf. Mt. 4:1-11; Jn. 4:34; 9:4; Heb. 10:5-10, etc.).

The Servant's experience of obedience involved "giving His back to the smiters." He was to be delivered up for such humiliation and suffering according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (cf. Acts 2:23). Yet it was not without His willing surrender to God's plan for He had the power to lay down His life and the power to take it up. No one took His life from Him (cf. Jn. 10:17-18). Whatever He did or whatever was done to Him, He allowed it to be (cf. Jn. 19:10-11) in obedience to the plan of His Father. He allowed His tormentors to "pluck off the hair" which refers no doubt to His beard. Many passages in the Bible seem to show that the Jews let their beards grow. Psalm 132 directly states that Aaron, Moses' brother, had a beard; and balm flowed down it to the very skirts of his robe. The Oriental regarded the beard as a sign of freedom and respect; and to pluck out the hair of the beard is to show utter contempt. The most heinous and degrading insult is to spit in the face of another. It is nothing short of impossible to willingly subject oneself to such humiliation without resentment, rebellion and perhaps revenge. But the Servant did it! (cf. Mt. 26:67; 27:26; Jn. 19:1ff). And He did it for us!

v. 7-9 DEFENDED: The power of the Servant to render such unreserved obedience is in His unreserved trust in Jehovah to vindicate Him. Whatever the Servant has to suffer, Jehovah will ultimately make right. Furthermore, Jehovah will give the Servant divine assistance. The Servant's secret is godly faith and dependence (cf. Heb. 5:7) that Jehovah will, in His own good time, turn the Servant's humiliation into everlasting exaltation. So the Servant sets His face "like a flint" to do Jehovah's will (cf. Lk. 9:51-53). The Hebrew word *hallamiys* is translated "flint" but Young says it is comparable to the

Akkaddian word *elmesu* which means *diamond*. The point to be illustrated is that the Servant will not be deterred by anything from doing the will of Jehovah because the servant has complete confidence in Jehovah's justification. The reason the Servant has such confidence is His constant companionship and communion with Jehovah (cf. Jn. 14:10-11; 15:9-10; 16:25-28; 17:1-26, etc.). Jesus knew, mentally, emotionally and experientially the constant presence of Jehovah and He *lived*, not by bread alone, but by God's abiding presence (Mt. 4:4; Jn. 4:34)—that is how *near* God was to Jesus. When God justifies, who is there to condemn (cf. Rom. 8:31-39)?! The enemies of the Servant abused Him, slandered Him, perjured themselves bearing false witness against Him, tormented Him, accused Him and crucified Him as a criminal, but God raised Him from the dead showing the Servant was right and not His accusers! The cause of the Servant's enemies was "as full of holes as a garment eaten by moths." They went the way of all flesh, but the Servant lives forever! The same exaltation given the Servant is offered to all who faithfully serve the Servant. If we belong to the Servant, God is for us. If God is for us, who can be against us! We are justified because our faith is in the justified Servant.

## QUIZ

1. What characteristic of the Servant is being stressed in this text?
2. Why did the Servant need to experience obedience?
3. What is the meaning of "morning by morning"?
4. Why say the Servant "gave" his back to the smiters?
5. How did the Servant have the ability to render such unreserved obedience?
6. How did Jehovah justify the Servant?

## c. OUTCOME CONFIRMED

TEXT: 50:10-11

- 10 Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? he that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God.
- 11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

## QUERIES

- a. How could people of Isaiah's day obey the "servant"?
- b. What is the "fire" that is kindled?

## PARAPHRASE

Whoever among Israel says he fears Jehovah must give obedient belief to all I have said about the coming Servant. There will be times when you will have to struggle through dark hours of tribulation because you belong to Jehovah and you may not be able to understand it all. Remember what I say about My Servant. He too shall suffer dark tribulation. But you, Israel, follow the Servants obedient life and trust in the name of Jehovah. Put yourself totally dependent upon your God. On the other hand, you among Israel who ignite the hellish fire of rebellion against Me and My Servant and arm yourselves with the fiery darts of Satan, you go ahead and build your fires as big as you want and gather as many of Satan's firebrands as you desire. Those who play with that fire are sure to be burned up with it. I will take this fire you have ignited and turn it upon you and you will be struck down to suffer torments.

## COMMENTS

v. 10 **STRENGTH:** Israel is offered two options in relation to Jehovah's prediction of the coming Servant. The outcome depends on one's attitude toward Jehovah's coming Servant. Parenthetically, it may be well to point out here that the "Servant" cannot possibly be the nation Israel since fearing the Lord and hearkening to the voice of the Servant are synonymous. Harkening to human Israel (even the best of Israel) cannot be seriously equated with fearing Jehovah. By "obeying" the voice of the Servant is meant believing, accepting and obeying the predictions of the coming Servant insofar as their limited revelation of God's will at that time would direct them in such obedience. Israel must believe that God's redemptive purposes were to be fulfilled in a coming "suffering Christ" (I Pet. 1:10-12) and prepare themselves to be used by Jehovah as the instrument of that coming by obeying God's instructions for them. Israel may have to walk in centuries of "darkness" (tribulation and indignation) but she must trust in the name of Jehovah and *yisshae'n* (Hebrew for "lean upon for support") *rely* upon God. Israel is to follow the example of the mysterious Servant who will come and be willingly obedient even in the face of extreme humiliation. Then Israel may expect to be vindicated and exalted as is predicted of the Servant. That is Israel's first option—the one Jehovah desires she choose.

v. 11 **SORROW:** The other option is rebellion. Those who opt for rebellion are those who play with fire. Fire is used chiefly as a figure of destruction, doom, torment, wrath, anger. Those who rebel against God are toying with forces that destroy those who continue to kindle them. Rebellion against the Creator is self-destructive for the creature (Rom. 1:18ff). Jehovah speaks ironically, "walk ye in the flame of your fire . . ." or, "Go ahead and rebel if you insist. . . ." (cf. Isa. 1:2, 20; Ezek. 2:3; 20:8, 13, 21; Dan. 9:5, 9; Isa. 30:1, 9; 65:2, etc.). The Lord will take this rebellion in His hand and turn it against the rebels until they are struck down in sorrow. Rebellion can never lead to happiness. It always leads to sorrow. When the

Jewish people rejected their Servant-Messiah their rebellion eventuated in the Roman holocaust. The sorrow of the Jew has been unceasing. He can never find happiness until he "obeys the voice of the Servant."

### QUIZ

1. Why does this verse preclude the possibility of national Israel being the "Servant"?
2. How may Israel of Isaiah's day obey the voice of the Servant?
3. Why is rebellion self-destructive?
4. How did the rebellion of the Jews against the Servant lead to their sorrow?

### 3. RULE, CHAPTER 51

#### a. TURN TO JUSTICE

TEXT: 51:1-8

- 1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.
- 2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many.
- 3 For Jehovah hath comforted Zion; he hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.
- 4 Attend unto me, O my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples.
- 5 My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.
- 7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings.
- 8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation unto all generations.

### QUERIES

- a. Why look unto Abraham and Sarah?
- b. Is the garden of Eden to be reestablished on earth?
- c. How could anyone have the law of God in their heart before Christ?

### PARAPHRASE

Listen to Me, you small and fearful remnant: If you are truly seeking to know Jehovah and wanting His way of life, look unto the character of your ancestors Abraham and Sarah—that is where you will find an example of what you seek. I called this one man, Abraham, and he responded in faith and obedience. I delivered him from all that opposed him and made of him a great nation. Now Jehovah has promised to deliver and strengthen true Zion, a small remnant though she may be. He has promised to change Zion's despair and destitution into a salvation that will restore the fellowship between Him and man which was present in Eden. True joy and thanksgiving will abound when this has come to pass. Listen to Me, O My people: I am going to send into the world the final and full expression of My will and it will be a revelation to the Gentiles

as well, to bring them to salvation. This is near—it is as good as done. When it comes to fulfillment (and it is beginning now), it will be both salvation and judgment; salvation for all (even Gentiles) who trust in Me, and judgment upon those who reject My will. Study the universe: both the heavens and the earth are doomed to disintegration and dissolution. All humanity likewise is dying. But what I will and what I work shall endure forever. Listen to Me, you who have allowed My will to rule your mind and heart so that you are doing right: Do not fear the threats of human beings, no matter how powerful they may appear to be. They will all be consumed and disappear like a garment eaten by moths, but My righteousness and salvation will endure forever.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-5 ESTABLISHED: This chapter predicts the coming of Jehovah's rule of justice through His law. It is, of course, an integral part of the whole section discussing *Salvation Through God's Servant* (ch. 40-53). Thus we are to understand Jehovah's predicted rule of justice will be through the coming Servant. This chapter is a special message to that small remnant of true believers contemporary with Isaiah. They are designated "ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah." The majority of people in Isaiah's day did not follow after righteousness. And even the remnant which did was sorely tempted to give up all hope. In view of the depraved morality and hypocritical religiosity of most of Israel and in view of the dreadful predictions of the true prophets of God that Babylonian captivity was near, the remnant must be encouraged. This remnant was sincere in its search for righteousness. The Hebrew word *rodephey* is translated *follow after* in the ASV, but is stronger and more properly translated *pursue* as in the RSV. There was not much righteousness to be found among this nation. They were a people "laden with iniquity" (Isa. 1:4, etc.). Only a few "disciples" of Isaiah (Isa. 8:16) desired real justice and the

rule of Jehovah. The Lord encourages them to believe that He will establish His rule of justice by directing them to look backward to what He did through Abraham and to look forward to what He promises to do in the future. To the tiny remnant of Isaiah's disciples it may appear impossible that Jehovah's rule of justice will ever be established. However, Jehovah is able to do the impossible! Let the remnant look back to the "rock from which" the nation was hewn—Abraham—and the "hole of the pit" from which it was digged—Sarah. That Jehovah could produce a nation of many people from one man and woman who were past the age of child-bearing was thought impossible. Nevertheless, from one lone sojourner who had a wife whose womb was barren and who was beyond the age of bearing children and who bore only one child, God produced a nation. Of course, Jehovah could not have done it without the faith of Abraham and Sarah (cf. Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-9; 4:21-27; Heb. 11:8-12; Heb. 11:17-22; James 2:18-26). This is the point. God is able to save this remnant and through them establish His rule of justice, but they must be people of steadfast faith like their forefather Abraham. Through one man, Abraham, and through the one son of Abraham, Isaac, God formed a people for Himself. But this people rejected His rule. Through the one "Seed" (Christ) of Abraham, Jehovah will produce a new Israel who will submit to His rule (cf. Gal. 3:15-29; 6:13-16). Isaiah's "remnant" must believe even though they may not receive what is promised; they must see it and greet it from afar (cf. Heb. 11:13-16). A remnant must be preserved through which the Messiah-Servant may come and establish the rule of Jehovah's justice (cf. Isa. 9:7; 11:1-9, etc.).

Jehovah's *comforting* of Zion will reach its culmination in the coming Servant (cf. comments Isa. 40:1-11; 49:13). Verse three is in the "predictive present." What Jehovah will do through the Servant is so certain it may be spoken of by Him as having already been accomplished! When the Servant finishes comforting Zion, all Zion's spiritual desolation and moral destitution will be turned into a righteousness that will

be like Eden restored. The prophet is not here intending that the land of Palestine shall be physically restored to the flora and fauna of pre-fallen Eden. This world is destined (including Palestine) for destruction (cf. II Pet. 3:1-13). The prophet is speaking of a restoration of spiritual paradise; a restored Zion over which Jehovah rules in righteousness and justice, in which there shall be joy and gladness (see comments Isa. 35:8-10).

Jehovah will comfort Zion through a rule of *torah* (law). This is not the law of Moses in commandments and ordinances which "stood against us" (Col. 2:13-15). No man could be justified by that law (cf. Gal. 3:10-14; 5:1-6). This is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (cf. Rom. 8:1-17). Young calls it, "in particular . . . the law of faith, given 'by the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith' (Rom. 16:26)." It is that final and full revelation of the will of God for man's salvation which also sets before man what God requires of him. It is the same going forth of His law as predicted in Isaiah 2:1-4. This rule of Jehovah through the law of the Servant will provide light for all people (cf. comments on Isa. 9:1ff).

The Lord's righteousness is *near*. Near is relative to God's perspective! All time is as one day with Jehovah. When He declares a thing, it is as good as done. He will begin His great work toward this coming of the Servant with the Babylonian captivity and release from it through Cyrus. Israel may know Jehovah's salvation is on its way when they see Him "judge" the peoples by His arm. When these great empires fall and Israel continues to survive she may know that His salvation is so certain it may be said to be *near* (Heb. 11:13-16). For a discussion of the meaning of "isles" see comments on 41:1ff.

v. 6-8 ENDURING: What seems as if it will go on and on, unalterably fixed and sure (the heavens and the earth) will one day vanish. Even the perpetuity of the human race *seems* assured. But it too will expire. Only that which is saved by Jehovah will endure forever. What is declared *right* (His righteousness) by Jehovah is eternal because that is truth. Anything declared *not right* by Jehovah will perish. And how does

man know what God declares right?—by hearkening unto God's law! And what is this law which is in the heart?—it is the law of Christ, the law of faith which was in the heart of Abraham and by which he was justified (cf. Rom. 4:1-25). It is the will of God concerning redemption through the Servant (cf. Isa. 42:1-4)—the Servants law. That this law (or will) of God concerning future salvation through an atoning Servant was written on the hearts of some before Christ was born is evidenced by Abraham rejoicing to see Christ's day (Jn. 8:56), Isaiah seeing the glory of the Christ (Jn. 12:41), the prophets inquiring about Him (I Pet. 1:10-12) and from all the faithful in Hebrews, chapter 11. The prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31-34 does not exclude every Jew of the Old Testament dispensation from the capacity to have God's law written on their heart through faith. If that should be the case, it would contradict Romans 4, et al. The Jeremiah 31 passage, taken in harmony with this passage in Isaiah, seems to say that out of a *small* remnant of O.T. saints who believe God's promises about an atoning Servant (the law of Jehovah about the Servant "written on their hearts"), Jehovah is going to form a new covenant people who will be covenant people *only* because they have His law written on their hearts and not because they were physically born to a particular nationality. In other words, there was a nucleus of people in the O.T. with Jehovah's will (law) written on their hearts and they were justified, in prospect, by their faith. When the Servant came and fulfilled the predicted atonement, these O.T. believers were justified in fact (cf. Heb. 9:15-16). The message of God expressed in all the sacrifices and offerings and in all the prophecies of the suffering Servant was that man could not atone for his sins by any works—God alone could provide atonement. Now when the O.T. believer *took that to heart*, with the moral and doctrinal implications it had for his life, then he had the law of God written on his heart! The goal of all this is, of course, the New Testament dispensation. Without that goal the faith of the O.T. believer could not have justified him. If the Servant had not come and accomplished the atonement which was typified

and prophesied there could have been no law of God written on any heart either before the fact or after. The N.T. covenant is enacted upon better promises because it is after the fact of the Servant's work.

Those who have the law of faith written on their hearts do not need to fear the threats of those who stand in opposition to the rule of Jehovah's Servant. Those who stand for the rule of the Servant will always be in the minority. Those who stand against the rule of the Servant will always be in the majority and will control all the resources of human power. But Jehovah has revealed historically that He is more powerful than all human power put together. His righteousness (what He declares right) will endure every opposition. There may be those of ethnic Israel who do not want to know that what God says is right (cf. Isa. 30:9-11), but those who are true Israel do not need to fear for what God says is right and will last forever.

### QUIZ

1. What is "following" after righteousness?
2. What relationship does Abraham have to the needs of Isaiah's audience?
3. How will Jehovah comfort Zion?
4. What is the law that goes forth from Jehovah?
5. How is the Lord's salvation near?
6. How may we say some of the people of Isaiah's day had the law of God written on their hearts?
7. How are they to know the righteousness of God can withstand all opposition and endure forever?

### b. TRUST IN JEHOVAH

TEXT: 51:9-16

9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is

- it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?
- 10 Is it not thou that driedst up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that madest the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?
- 11 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.
- 12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou art afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass;
- 13 and hast forgotten Jehovah thy Maker, that stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and feareth continually all the day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he maketh ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?
- 14 The captive exile shall speedily be loosed; and he shall not die and go down into the pit, neither shall his bread fail.
- 15 For I am Jehovah thy God, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar: Jehovah of hosts is his name.
- 16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

### QUERIES

- a. Does Jehovah have to be awakened?
- b. Who is the captive exile?
- c. Into whose mouth has Jehovah put his words?

### PARAPHRASE

Help! Help! Come forth to help us girded with power as You did for our ancestors in olden times, O Lord. Did You

not slay the "Big Mouth" dragon, Egypt? Did You not dry up a path through the great Red Sea for Your people to walk across and escape from Egyptian slavery? You have promised: 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. Jehovah answers: Yes, I, the same God who delivered your ancestors, Am the God who is coming forth to deliver you. What kind of people are you that are so afraid of human beings? Mortal man is no more enduring than the grass of the field! Have you forgotten Jehovah, your Maker, who spread the stars through the skies and brought the earth into existence? Are you in constant dread of the oppressions of men? Are you paralyzed with terror at the anger of your enemies. Soon Zion shall be set free; dungeon, starvation and death are not going to put an end to Zion. Remember, I am Jehovah, your God, Lord of all creation. I control the sea and everything else. Zion's deliverance will be revealed and accomplished through My Servant, for I have put my words in His mouth and I protect Him with My mighty hand. Through Him I will make a whole new creation, a new Zion, who shall truly be My people.

### COMMENTS

v. 9-11 PLEA: The Hebrew words *'uriy 'uriy* (Awake, awake) do not mean to convey that Isaiah thought God had fallen asleep. The word is also used in Dan. 4:10, 14, 20 and translated, *watcher*. The idea of the word is *watchfulness, alertness* or *awareness*, that motivates action. In view of the impending Babylonian captivity, the prophet is calling upon the Lord to act on behalf of the small minority of believers and save Zion. God has promised protection from Babylon, but God has not acted. Men, even prophets, often run ahead of the Lord. Isaiah

is representing the remnant, of course, and they are expressing their terror at the threats of Babylon. It appears from their fearful perspective as if God is either unaware of their plight or is aware but is not intending to do anything about it. Their appeal for action is based on what they know of His previous deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Their ancient writings tell of Moses' and Israel's passage from slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea. Egypt is called "Rahab" (which means "loud mouth" in Hebrew; see 30:7) and *thanniyn* "the monster"; *thanniyn* is translated *serpent* in most uses (cf. 27:1). Jehovah delivered from the dragon Egypt, will He now allow Zion to be destroyed by the lion Babylon? The sea which was dried up must refer to the Red Sea crossing (Ex. 14:1ff).

Verse 11 forms an excellent conclusion to Isaiah's plea. It is a quotation, almost letter for letter, from 35:10 which likewise forms a conclusion to a messianic section. Isaiah quotes himself (and why not, since it was such a beautiful and emphatic promise of God the first time it was spoken) as part of his pleas as if to remind Jehovah of His recently promised redemption; see comments 35:8-10.

v. 12-16 PROMISE: Jehovah answers the plea of Isaiah and the remnant by affirming that He is indeed that same Jehovah who kept His covenant with Israel and delivered them from Egypt. The "I, even I . . ." appears to be a retort in irony to "awake, awake." Jehovah is who He is and will always be the same. What the remnant needs is to find its own identity. And that is the interesting thing here; the remnant's identity is to be found in who Jehovah is! In other words, if Jehovah is always the same, then who are those who believe and trust in Him? They are those who need not fear mortal men. The same truth is relevant for today. Men and women can only find their true identity in relationship to their commitment to God. If they trust Him and follow Him, they are invincible; He will save them from all that threatens. If they do not trust Him and do not follow Him they will be lost. The fundamental identification of man is his savedness or his lostness! That is who he is! When man forgets his Maker—when man forgets that he is creature

and Jehovah is Creator—he is a slave to fear and falsehood. When man forgets his Creator his whole perspective is warped. Anyone who searches for self-identity without first knowing who God is (and all that such knowledge of Him implies) searches in vain! If the remnant of Isaiah's day remembers its Maker, it will be freed from fear of its enemies.

The Hebrew word *tzo'eh* means "to bend down; to stoop" as though burdened down and is translated "he who is bowed down" in the RSV. It is predicting the circumstances of the Babylonian exiles being "bowed down" in chains or in prisons. Zion (the remnant of believers; disciples of Isaiah) may have to go into captivity but she shall "speedily" be released (70 years). Most assuredly, Jehovah does not intend Zion's ultimate destiny to be imprisonment, starvation and death! She will suffer chastening but Jehovah will work through her to create a new Zion.

The final word of Jehovah (v. 16) is manifestly addressed to the Servant because it shall be particularly through the Servant that Jehovah creates the new, ultimate Zion (cf. Heb. 12:22). Jehovah reaffirms His promise (cf. 50:4-11) that the Servant will be sent with the incarnate word of the Lord ("my words in thy mouth"). The special, intimate, divine companionship to the Servant is also reiterated ("covered thee in the shadow of my hand"). Jehovah will "plant" and "lay the foundations" and "say unto Zion. Thou art my people." Some commentators think this refers to the creation of a new heavens and earth, or a new cosmos, after the present one is destroyed by fire (as per II Pet. 3, etc.). That may be the ultimate outcome of the "new creation" ushered in by the Messiah at His first coming, but we believe Isaiah is not really focusing on the end of the messianic age but on the beginning of it. The messianic age is often pictured as a "new creation" of Zion (cf. Isa. 66:22-24; II Cor. 5:16-21, etc.). The Zion of the N.T. was created after the "removal of what is shaken" (Heb. 12:25-29). The old "creation" (Judaism) was shaken down and the new "creation" (Christianity) remains and cannot be shaken. The abrogation of the old dispensation and the creation of a new

dispensation (especially a dispensation which would include Gentiles in God's covenant) would not be possible in Jewish thinking without a whole new creation (new heavens and earth)! The prophet figuratively accommodates his language to the Jewish thought-pattern. Of course, God did not intend to create a new physical heaven and earth when He sent the Servant on His first advent. And this is one of the major causes of Jewish rejection of the Messiah! They could not adjust their thought-patterns to the reality of the revelation that Jesus was the Christ and that He came to form a spiritual kingdom in this present earth and not to form a political kingdom in a rejuvenated physical earth! Certainly, God will one day destroy this present cosmos and create a new one. But mankind must be reborn and accept citizenship in a newly created Zion before he is ready for the new cosmos. The Jew, as well as the Gentile, must become a new creature first. Toward this first goal the prophets primarily pointed! "Thou art my people" is definitely a messianic term (cf. Hosea 1:10-11; 2:16-23; Rom. 9:23-33; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

In the light of so much contemporary emphasis on personal subjectivism and feeling as criteria for proper relationship to God, it is important to notice in this chapter thus far the criterion for proper relationship to God is the objective revelation of His nature. Man's relationship to God is properly built on who God is—not on how man feels. And God has objectively demonstrated—in historical deeds—that He is absolutely powerful and absolutely faithful. Isaiah's contemporaries are exhorted to look back at what Jehovah has done; look now at what He is doing; and look forward to what He promises to do. They are never asked, what do you think He ought to do, or, What is He doing to your feelings!

## QUIZ

1. What does Isaiah mean when he cries to Jehovah, "awake, awake"?

2. What event in Israel's history is appealed to in reference to the "sea"?
3. Why can man only find out who he is when he finds out who God is?
4. Why will God not leave the exiles to starve and die?
5. Why do we think God is addressing the Servant in verse 16?
6. What are the "heavens and . . . earth" God is going to plant?
7. Why did the Jews think the "heavens and . . . earth" would have to be physical?
8. What criterion of man-to-God relationship is appealed to in this chapter?

### c. TORMENTORS JUDGED

TEXT: 51:17-23

- 17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, that hast drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of his wrath; thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of staggering, and drained it.
- 18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand among all the sons that she hath brought up.
- 19 These two things are befallen thee; who shall bemoan thee? desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword; how shall I comfort thee?
- 20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of Jehovah, the rebuke of thy God.
- 21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:
- 22 thus saith thy Lord Jehovah, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of staggering, even the bowl of the cup of my wrath; thou shalt no more drink it again:
- 23 and I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee,

that have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy back as the ground, and as the street, to them that go over.

### QUERIES

- a. When did Jerusalem drink the cup of Jehovah's wrath?
- b. Why was there none to guide her among her sons?
- c. Who made her "bown down" and where did they "go over"?

### PARAPHRASE

Attention! Be alert, Zion! You will soon drink of the cup of Jehovah's punishment. You will have drained every drop; you will have been made to reel under your punishment. You must now decide what course you shall take. You cannot depend on any of this generation of Israelites to take spiritual leadership of Zion. None of them are capable of stopping the desolation and destruction that is coming upon you. Starvation and war and captivity is coming and how will I, Jehovah, save you? Your young men, in whom you hope for leadership, have collapsed everywhere from spiritual and moral weakness. They are as helpless as deer caught in a hunter's net. They shall feel the full force of the Lord's wrath. On account of this, you suffering people of Zion, you shall reel under the Lord's punishment but the Lord your God will defend you. You can believe this: I will take the cup of staggering punishment out of your hand. You will not drink from My wrath-filled cup again when I comfort you through My Servant. I will put that cup of judgment in the hand of your tormentors. Those who have forced Zion to surrender to the chains of captivity and those who have oppressed and trampled her, body and soul, into the dust—they shall stagger under My judgment.

## COMMENTS

v. 17-20 STAGGERED: Again, this is Servant-centered. And again, we have the prophet predicting the captivity of Zion, her release, and out of that the ultimate comforting of Jehovah in the coming Servant. Jerusalem (Zion) is roused to wakefulness to prepare herself for the coming "cup" of God's wrath (cf. Jer. 25:15-29; Ezek. 23:31-35); Zion will drink the whole cup Jehovah has for her—exile into a pagan land. Her walls and her temple will be leveled to the ground by a pagan people. The sacred vessels will be desecrated and carried away. Her people will be marched away in chains like slaves. They will be utterly cut off from Jehovah without a temple or a priesthood, unable to offer sacrifices or be ritually cleansed. This would be "staggering" to a Jew. The religious-psychological-moral shock would be more staggering than the physical suffering. People can endure great physical privation when they know they are not suffering the disfavor of God.

Zion is to learn something from this "cup of staggering." She is to alert herself to the fact that only Jehovah can deliver her from the fix she has gotten herself into. None of Jerusalem's wise old men could rescue her from the consequences of her sins. None of Jerusalem's bright young men had the capability to step forward and deliver her from the coming ruin. In fact, those who were capable of leadership had become so self-centered and cynical they did not even *want* to become involved with civic mindedness (cf. Isa. 3:6-12; 4:1, etc.). Jerusalem is headed for desolation, destruction, starvation and slaughter; who will rescue the remnant of Zion? Jehovah asks the rhetorical question, "How shall I comfort thee?" If there are no "sons" of Jerusalem through whom Jehovah may work, what shall be the instrument of His salvation? All the "sons" of Jerusalem are as helpless as the antelope caught in the hunter's net. The Hebrew word *toa* is translated *oryx* (Gr.) in the LXX and *wild bull* in the KJV. It is probably the *dorcas gazelle*, common to Syria, Palestine and Arabia, or the *oryx beatrix* (Arabian oryx). The Hebrew root word, *tha'ah*, means

literally, "to outrun," thus signifying the antelope-gazelle animal which is extremely fast but physically weak. The men Jerusalem expected to be leaders and deliverers will become victims like everyone else. They too have drunk the cup of the Lord's wrath dry. They have imbibed of the same heady wine of rebellion and moral corruption in which the populace has indulged. Now they will all stagger and reel. How shall Zion be delivered?

v. 21-23 SAVED: The word "therefore" is meant to be understood, "on account of this . . ." On account of Zion's inability to save herself, Jehovah will "plead her case." (the Hebrew word *riyv* is a term of the court; cf. 45:9; 49:25; 50:8). When the proper time comes, Jehovah the judge will discontinue Zion's punishment and give the cup she was drinking into the hand of her enemies. Undoubtedly this refers initially to the deliverance from Babylonian exile. This great event is predicted over and over by Isaiah (and other prophets). It will begin in the days of Cyrus, ruler of the Persian empire. But almost always, wherever the return from the captivity is predicted, it is pointed to as the initial step in a glorious program of redemption which shall culminate in the messianic age. Jehovah certainly did not *literally* take away Jerusalem's "cup of staggering" with the return from exile. Jerusalem suffered severe physical warfare under the Seleucids and the Romans (predicted in Daniel). There are two possible interpretations of the phrase "thou shalt no more drink it again": (a) The removal of the cup was to be conditional. Jerusalem would never stagger again after the captivity as long as she remained true to Jehovah. She did not remain true as evidenced by Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and as evidenced by her murdering of the Messiah, so Jerusalem was given the cup of staggering again; or (b) the promise is to Zion, the true Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that is above (pre-eminent, cf. Gal. 4:26), the messianic kingdom, the church. The true people of God, the born-again kingdom, shall never suffer being cut off from the presence of God as were the Jews of the exile. The N.T. church will always have its one and only sacrifice (the Lamb of God).

It shall always have its sanctuary in the heavens and its Eternal High Priest. Of course it may suffer trial and tribulation in the physical sense here on earth, but it shall always enjoy the favor of God. The cup of staggering is taken from the hand of God's true Israel by the atoning death of the Servant. He became a "curse for us" (cf. Gal. 3:10-14), and delivered all who submitted to the rule of God in Christ from the wrath of God that is to come upon the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-22). The cup of staggering is put into the hand of "Babylon" (humanity opposed to God) and it shall reel and fall under the wrath of God (Rev. 16:19; 17:6; 18:4-8). God will accomplish all this through the Suffering Servant and for the new Zion (the N.T. church and the O.T. saints who believed which form the one great Mt. Zion pictured in Heb. 11:22-29). And thus we approach the climactic chapter of Isaiah's entire work—chapter 53—the Suffering Servant. But first the transition-chapter, chapter 52. Actually, 52:1-12 serves as the transition from generalities concerning the Servant to particulars, and 52:13—53:12 detail the specifics concerning the Servant.

The Babylonians "afflicted" the *souls* as well as the bodies of the Jewish exiles. They humiliated them, taunting them about the whereabouts of their God, Jehovah; they took their sacred vessels and priests and desecrated them in their pagan country; they forced many of them to perform pagan, idolatrous rituals. They were tortured psychologically as well as being punished physically. We should probably understand the commanded "bow down" as figurative. However, certain Assyrian monuments show vanquished prisoners literally bowing down or lying down on the ground while the conquerors walked on their bodies.

## QUIZ

1. How does the "cup of staggering" relate to the coming messianic age?

2. What would “stagger” Zion the most?
3. What is Zion to learn from this?
4. What does the word “therefore” in verse 21 indicate?
5. Give the two possible interpretations of “thou shalt no more drink it again.”
6. Were the people of Jerusalem literally “walked” on?

#### 4. EVANGELIZE, CHAPTER 52

##### a. REDEMPTION

TEXT: 52:1-6

- 1 Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.
- 2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit on thy throne, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.
- 3 For thus saith Jehovah, Ye were sold for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.
- 4 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there: and the Assyrian hath oppressed them without cause.
- 5 Now therefore, what do I here, saith Jehovah, seeing that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them do howl, saith Jehovah, and my name continually all the day is blasphemed.
- 6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I.

## QUERIES

- a. Who are the "uncircumcised" and "unclean"?
- b. Why does Jehovah say, "What do I here . . .?"
- c. Doesn't Israel know God's name? (verse six)

## PARAPHRASE

Attention! Alert yourself! You will be strong and beautiful, My True Zion! You will be My holy dwelling place and those who have not made covenant with Me will not, from the day of your establishment, be given entrance. But you must do your part, O True Zion, and shake yourself free from the filth and enslavement of Babylonian paganism. When I deliver you from your captivity, you must return to your royal messianic destiny. I am your Sovereign. When I send you into exile it will be because I exercise My absolute sovereignty and not because someone pays Me to do it. When I redeem you from your exile it will be because I exercise My absolute sovereignty and not because I pay someone to release you. When you went down to Egypt, you went of your own choice and Egypt enslaved you without the right to do so; the Assyrians had no right to take some of you into exile. And now, what do I have in the Babylonian exile—the same thing! Babylon's intent is without moral justification and motivated by wicked rebellion against My sovereignty. The rulers of Babylon are already screaming out their hateful threats and blasphemies. But I am going to save you, O Zion, from Babylon. And when I do reveal My sovereignty in this unequivocal manifestation, true Zion will acknowledge Me as her Savior in a way she has never done before; she will recognize that it is I, Jehovah, who is calling her back to her messianic destiny.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-2 DISSOCIATION FROM PAGANISM: As before, the prophet is speaking of the future Babylonian exile in the present tense. He is directing the exhortation to his small band of disciples (the "remnant" which shall form the nucleus of "Zion"). This remnant must prepare itself for imminent exile into pagan Babylon. It must strengthen itself by believing what Isaiah is predicting about its Messiah and its messianic role. Zion must commit itself to an adornment of holiness so that when it is taken captive it will be able to keep itself separated from the filth and enslavement of heathenism with which it will be so alluringly surrounded. Zion must not allow the fleeting pleasures of Babylonian ungodliness lure her from her "throne" (her royal messianic queenship).

The aim of this passage is spiritual Jerusalem. That is evident from the prediction that the uncircumcised and the unclean would no more come into her. It cannot be literally or physically intended. Jerusalem has suffered literal invasion and occupation by one uncircumcised culture after another. First the Babylonians, then the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Turks, Mohammedans, Crusaders, Arabs, and even today there are Gentile citizens of Jerusalem. What this passage refers to ultimately is the Israel of God over which the Messiah rules, the church of Christ. Those not in covenant relationship to God through obedience to Christ's gospel (the uncircumcised) and those not purified from sin by the atoning blood of the Suffering Servant (the unclean) will not come into the ultimate Zion, no matter what their genetic ancestry may be—Jew or Gentile. It is interesting to note that Joel predicts, in his messianic conclusion, that "strangers shall never again pass through" Jerusalem (Joel 3:17); and on the other hand Ezekiel, in his portrayal of the glorious messianic era to come, predicts that "aliens" will be given an "inheritance" and be as "native born sons" (Ezek. 47:21-23). It is apparent, therefore, that when the messianic kingdom was to come, people were to become citizens of that kingdom, not as a result of being born a Jew

and circumcised in the flesh, but by being reconciled to the Messiah of God through faith. All who are not thus reconciled are "strangers" and "uncircumcised and unclean" and cannot enter spiritual Jerusalem. That is precisely what the New Testament teaches (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 4:9-25; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 3:1—5:25; Gal. 6:12-16; Eph. 2:11-22; Phil. 3:2-11; Heb. 12:18-29).

God promises to physically deliver Zion from her captors. But Zion herself must make the choices and do the deeds of holiness that separates her from Babylonian wickedness. Verses one and two are saturated with imperatives (commands): "Awake; put on; Shake; arise; sit; loose" are all commands for Zion to act. This is what distinguishes spiritual Zion from genetic Israel—holiness by choice.

v. 3-6 DELIVERANCE FROM PERSECUTION: Jehovah will act to deliver Zion from captivity in a display of divine sovereignty. He will give her up to captivity according to His sovereign plan and rescue her through the same sovereignty. No one will pay Jehovah to exile her—no one will force Him to—and no one will pay Him to rescue her. She will remain in captivity for exactly the time Jehovah assigns (70 years) and she will be delivered.

In verses four and five Jehovah pronounces the guilt of Zion's oppressors—past, present and future. God's sovereign decision to chasten Zion does not relieve her oppressors of guilt. The people of God went down to Egypt of their own choice with Jacob during the famine. And the Egyptians, by their own choice, enslaved and persecuted God's people. Israel's persecutors during Isaiah's lifetime, the Assyrians, were acting by free moral choice—not because they were forced to. "Now therefore, what do I here . . ." may be paraphrased, "Now, what do I have here . . ." in the imminent exile into Babylon? It is the same situation! God will use the exile to chasten the sinful nation of Judah, but at the same time the Babylonians will be held responsible and found guilty. Their captivity of Judah was clearly an unjustified act of aggression. The sovereign God of all mankind declares any nation or people guilty

who perpetrate the same acts of unprovoked aggression against other peoples (cf. our comments, *Minor Prophets*, on Obadiah and Amos ch. 1-3). Babylon, like all the other oppressors of Israel, attacked without due cause. Although the sovereign Jehovah may use the wicked assaults of the heathen empires as tools of chastening (cf. Isa. 10:5ff; Jer. 27:1-22, etc.), that does not mean the heathen empires are guiltless for making their own moral choices to "Touch the apple of His eye" (cf. Zech. 2:8) without justifiable provocation. These Babylonians "howl" out harsh orders to their captives (cf. Daniel 1-6) and blaspheme the name of Jehovah continually. What they are doing with God's people is certainly not in agreement with the will of God.

When Jehovah decides, in His own sovereign time-schedule, to deliver Zion from Babylonian captivity (cf. Jer. 27:22; 25:11), then Zion will "know His name." His name is Jehovah (YHWH, "He who causes to be . . .") (cf. Special Study, Vol. II, *O.T. Names for God*, pg. 126f.). Jehovah is the name for "Covenant-God," and here the faithfulness and sovereignty of God to keep His covenant promises is emphasized.

### QUIZ

1. What are the "beautiful garments" Zion is to put on?
2. Are we to understand the banishment of the "uncircumcised" literally?
3. Why say the daughter of Zion is to be redeemed "without money"?
4. Why point out that Assyria oppressed Zion "without cause"?
5. What is the name of God that Israel shall know?

### b. REVELATION

TEXT: 52:7-12

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth

- good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
- 8 The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion.
- 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.
- 10 Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; cleanse yourselves, ye that bear the vessels of Jehovah.
- 12 For ye shall not go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight: for Jehovah will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

### QUERIES

- a. Who is the "messenger" bringing "good tidings"?
- b. What is meant by "seeing eye to eye"?
- c. Why emphasize that the people would "not go out in haste"?

### PARAPHRASE

How lovely will be the Messenger coming across the mountains of this land bringing good news, the good news of peace, goodness and salvation, announcing to faithful Zion, Jehovah has established His sovereign rule among men; the kingdom of God has come! Listen to the voices of your prophets who have been watching and announcing its coming! They are shouting and singing for joy! They see the eventual rule of Jehovah over Zion as surely as if it were right before their eyes! Babylon may ruin you, O Jerusalem, but Jehovah is going to restore you

and make you strong, so burst forth into joyous singing. Jehovah is going to unleash His holy power so that the whole world will witness it; His salvation will be revealed to the whole world. So, Zion, when you are delivered from Babylonian captivity in anticipation of the coming kingdom of God, separate yourself completely from all the unholy paganism which has surrounded you there. Do not let your heart be defiled by desiring to cling to the worldliness of Babylon. You are a kingdom of priests to Jehovah and you must be holy unto Him. You will have plenty of time to arrive at the right attitude toward separating yourself from the ungodliness around you. Your exodus this time will not be in haste or in fear, as it was in the days of your forefathers and the Egyptian captivity. The Lord, Your God, will surround you, guiding you and protecting you on every side.

### COMMENTS

v. 7-10 PEACE: Apparently we have in this prediction of Isaiah an instance of "shortened perspective." That is, the prophet is predicting the deliverance of Judah from Babylonian captivity and the deliverance of all mankind from sin through the Messiah without mentioning all the history of the scheme of redemption that transpires between the two historical events (cf. our comments on Joel 2:27-28). There is no doubt that the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction was to find itself in the Messiah and His gospel (cf. Rom. 10:15). Isaiah's context indicates he is predicting what is going to eventuate with the coming of The Servant. Of course, messengers of the good news that Judah is to be released from her captivity and restored her physical commonwealth in Palestine by the decree of Cyrus will be lovely to behold. The lesson from this miraculous deliverance will be that God rules in the affairs of all men to fulfill His sovereign will. There will be "peace" for a while for Judah. But surely there is more good news involved in this prophecy than a physical deliverance and a physical peace.

The physical deliverance of Judah was the first step in a long series of historical events which were to lead to the coming of the Messiah and the true deliverance, the spiritual salvation, and peace between God and man, (cf. comments on Daniel 9:24-27 for the time-table of historical events between). Ultimately then, "him that bringeth good tidings" is the Messiah. Christ, The Servant, is also The Messenger (cf. Isa. 61:1-2; Lk. 4:16-30; Malachi 3:1-4). The messenger who "prepares the way before" in Malachi 3:1 is unquestionably, John the Baptist. But the "Lord whom you seek . . . the messenger of the covenant . . ." of Malachi 3:1 is the Messiah. Notice what the messenger of Isaiah's prophecy announces: peace—good—salvation—the rule of God—comfort for His people—redemption of Jerusalem. Furthermore, this is to be "seen" by all "the ends of the earth." Surely there is more to God's "salvation" and "comfort" (see Isa. 40:1ff) than a mere temporary deliverance of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. Surely there is more to God's reign than a Jewish nation only superficially submitted to Him in the restored commonwealth under Ezra and Zerubbabel. The post-exilic prophets make it very plain (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) that the returned exiles *soon* fell back into their old rebellions against the law of Moses and the rule of God. The salvation, peace and rule of God announced by Isaiah's "beautiful" bearer of "good tidings" is made accessible to all men through Him who came and "preached peace" to those "far off" and those "near" (cf. Eph. 2:11-22). Notice in Romans 10:14-21 how Paul emphasizes the prophecies of Isaiah about the Lord's salvation were *not* fulfilled in a rebellious, physical Israel!

The "watchmen" are probably the prophets and those faithful believers down through the centuries who kept on believing in the coming of the Christ (cf. I Pet. 1:10-12; Heb. 11:13-16; 11:32-40, etc.). These "watchers" put their predictions and hopes into poetic form, song, symbol and type. They did it with great style and emotional expressiveness. For they saw the eventual rule of Jehovah as surely as if it were right before their eyes (cf. John 8:56-58; 12:41), which is what "they shall

see eye to eye" means. Even the "return" of Jehovah to Zion is messianic. The crowning glory of Ezekiel's new temple and new city (Ezek. 40-48) is ". . . the name of the city henceforth shall be, The Lord is there." The church is the temple of God's habitation (Eph. 2:21-22).

On account of the absolute certainty that Jehovah is going to eventually send His Messenger with the good tidings of salvation, and on account of the certainty that Jehovah is going to take the first step toward that end delivering the Jews from captivity, the Jerusalem (or Zion) that in Isaiah's day is being "wasted" and "ruined" by pagan oppressors should lift up its spirit and sing of its salvation. This would, of course, take faith because it was not as yet "seen." But that is man's whole relationship to God—faith! That was the problem when the Messiah came to "comfort" His people and "redeem" Jerusalem. Most of the people could not believe it because they could not "see, touch, taste" His deliverance. It is still a problem with so many millions today who want only to be saved physically from trouble and depravation, but not from their sinful rebellion against the revealed will of God!

The salvation of God was "proven"! God's ability to save man and His faithfulness to keep His word was demonstrated visibly, historically and supernaturally. God "bared" His holy "arm" of supernatural power time and again in saving the Jewish people from their enemies. He showed in no uncertain terms to believer and unbeliever alike (read the book of Daniel) that He would deliver those who trusted and obeyed Him. The "arm" of the Lord will consummately be "bared" in the Messiah's death and resurrection (cf. Isa. 53:1ff). God's greatest "power" is the *gospel* which is, fundamentally, the atoning death and justifying resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jehovah showed His power in many and various ways in former ages, but the greatest demonstration of it was in the resurrection of Christ. It was here that God bared His "holy arm" to all the ends of the earth so that all men might see His salvation. God has fixed a day in which he will judge the world, by an appointed man, and He has given assurance to *all men*

by raising this man from the dead, and so His message to *all men* everywhere is, repent (cf. Acts 17:30-31). But, you see, the problem is that the "arm" or power of the Lord was revealed in a Suffering Servant (Isa. 53:1) and this, so unacceptable to Jewish presuppositions about the power of Jehovah, is still unacceptable to human presuppositions (cf. I Cor. 1:18-31).

v. 11-12 PURIFICATION: Now we come to the practical application of the prophecy of the coming Messenger and His message. How are these people of Isaiah's day or the people of the Babylonian captivity to relate to a prophecy of something that is so far off in the future? They are to keep themselves from the ungodliness that surrounds them. The temptations to become Babylonianized, to devote their energies to pagan pursuits, will be strong. The temptation to stay in the relative security of the land to which they were exiled and forget they have a messianic destiny to serve will not be easily overcome. Thousands of Jews *did* stay in Babylon! The task of returning to a ravaged land, occupied by hostile people, to struggle through long hard years of rebuilding, was almost overwhelming! Even the temptation to take with them back to Palestine some of the heathen customs and practices that seemed so security-enforcing would seem innocent enough. Yet the command of the Lord is, "depart . . . touch no unclean thing . . . cleanse yourselves." The rule of God cannot be established if the people are unwilling to depart from ungodliness. "Those that bear the vessels of Jehovah" is probably a figurative way of indicating the uniqueness of the Jewish people as a messianic people.

They will have ample opportunity to consider and apply the command of the Lord for separating themselves from their heathen environment. They will not have to make a hasty exodus as their ancestors did in Egypt and so they will not have to take any of the Babylonian baubles to support them as those under Moses did. These Babylonian exiles will have plenty of time and they will know, by prophecy, exactly how many years they will be spending there. Cyrus will supply them

with money to rebuild their commonwealth. And finally, they will not have to tramp the wilderness, constantly fleeing from one enemy after another as their ancestors did. Jehovah promises to surround them with guidance and protection—both front and rear. And so they were protected from those who wanted to thwart their rebuilding (cf. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther), as they prepared to be the people through whom the great Messenger would come with a revelation of salvation to all the ends of the earth.

### QUIZ

1. Why do we call this prophecy of the “messenger” one of “shortened perspective”?
2. Where is the N.T. quotation of this passage and what is the connection?
3. Who are the watchmen and why do they sing?
4. When did Jehovah “bare his holy arm”?
5. Why the command to “depart”?
6. Who are those who “bear the vessels of Jehovah”?

### c. REGENCY

TEXT: 52:13-15

- 13 Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.
- 14 Like as many were astonished at thee, (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,)
- 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand.

## QUERIES

- a. How shall the servant "deal wisely"?
- b. In what way was his "visage" marred?
- c. How shall he "sprinkle" many nations?

## PARAPHRASE

Behold! My Servant shall succeed. He shall be exalted to the highest degree. At first, many will be shocked at the humiliating physical torture and disfigurement he endures—so much more than is possible for others in human form. But his exaltation will be that much more astounding. His success will cause the hearts of many to leap within them. Kings and great men will be awed by His glory. They will see and understand things they could never know before His coming.

## COMMENTS

v. 13 AFFIRMATION: Chapter and verse numeration (which came many centuries after the original documents were written) obscures the contextual flow of our present passage; 52:13 through 53:12 should be read as a unit. Making 52:15 the end of a chapter and 53:1 the beginning of another is an unfortunate adumbration which the student of Isaiah's message must be careful to trace out. These verses are all one dissertation on the *success of the Suffering Servant*.

The Hebrew word *yasekkiyl* is the infinitive of *sakal* and may be translated "to prosper; to have success," instead of "deal wisely." This translation would fit the context. The affirmation of Jehovah is that His Servant shall succeed in fulfilling all the predictions made (through Isaiah) of ultimate deliverance, redemption and glorification of Zion. The Servant-Messenger-Messiah of Jehovah will be exalted to the highest degree. Zion has suffered and will suffer much from the days

of Isaiah until God comes and establishes His reign among men. Good tidings are beginning to come through the prophets of God. How beautiful will be the feet of the divine Messenger of God who will not only bring the message of salvation and peace but also accomplish it in Himself (cf. 52:7). The mighty Jehovah is going to bare His holy "arm" (power) before all the world (cf. 52:10). Contrary to God's apparent default on His covenant promises to the patriarchs by allowing the Babylonian captivity, the Lord is going to send His Servant and He will succeed in re-establishing Zion in divine power and splendor. This Servant will achieve what He sets out to do. Why is it necessary to affirm the success of the Servant? Because even the Servant's appearance in history will initially be in such a low, humble, unspectacular, humiliating way, most of the world will not believe. He is a manifestation of the *power* of Jehovah! (cf. 53:1ff). But the success of the Lord's Servant will be *extraordinary*. Three Hebrew verbs (*room*—exalted; *nissa*—lifted up; *gavah*—very high) are piled one upon another to emphasize that The Servant will not be defeated in the extreme suffering He will have to undergo (including death).

v. 14-15 AMAZEMENT: Verse 15 is in antithesis to verse 14 and emphasizes the contrast between what the Servant first appeared to be and what He later was acknowledged to be. The "thee" of verse 14 is therefore the Servant-Messiah (not Israel). Men will be shocked at His humble demeanor. He claimed to be the king of the Jews—the Messiah, but He did not in any way fulfill human presuppositions as to messianic royalty. He was slandered, mocked, accused of blasphemy, arrested, unjustly tried and sentenced as a criminal. He was scourged with a Roman whip and physically mutilated more than most human beings ever suffer, placed on a bloody Roman cross and there tortured both physically and psychologically by mocking rabbis, soldiers, and the multitudes. Some were shocked at His extreme disfigurement (cf. Lk. 23:47-49). But the fact of His absolute innocence contrasted with His willing acceptance of the atonement for the sin of the world is what makes his "visage . . . so marred more than any man . . ."

Philippians 2:5-11 expresses it perfectly. The Son of God emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. But God highly exalted Him. As low as His humiliation was, His exaltation was infinitely higher! The Hebrew word *yazzeḥ* is kin to the Arabic *naza* which means the "springing or leaping of people caused by excess of emotion." *Yazzeḥ* is from the Hebrew root *nazah* which is usually translated *sprinkle*, but apparently is better translated here, "startle, amaze, cause to jump, scatter." Leupold translates it "startle"; Today's English Version translates "marvel"; New International Version footnotes, "marvel"; RSV is "startle"; most other translations make it "sprinkle." Young comments ". . . he will sprinkle many nations . . . As one who is disfigured, the servant does something for others, in that he performs a purifying rite . . . men regarded the servant as himself unclean and in need of purification, whereas he himself as a priest will sprinkle water and blood and so purify many nations." We prefer the translation *startle* because it seems more appropriate to the intended contrast of the context.

Man will be shocked at His humiliation. But the *goiym* (nations or Gentiles) will be startled at the totally unexpected development events surrounding His humiliation and exaltation will *ultimately* take! The consequences will be world-wide. A church will be born; His disciples will be found even in the household of Caesar! The like of what shall result from the humiliation and exaltation of Jehovah's Servant was never imagined by the great (kings, philosophers, theologians). Never was anyone brought so low; never was anyone raised so high as God's Servant. Emperors, philosophers, rabbis will be awed by His glory. Through Him will come a revelation from God (justification, redemption, sanctification) of things they could never know before His coming, but now they believe, appropriate and experience.

This text (52:13—53:12) is written in the *predictive present*. It is prophecy, but it is so certain to come to pass it can be written as if it had already happened or was then happening. It is almost as if we were listening to two disciples of Jesus standing

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on a street-corner in Jerusalem reviewing the things that happened on Good Friday in the light of Easter Sunday and the Day of Pentecost. Isaiah's account is so vivid and was fulfilled so minutely it is little wonder that many of the fathers of the church days of old claim that the account reads as though Isaiah had sat at the foot of the cross.

### QUIZ

1. Why emphasize the success of the Servant of Jehovah?
2. Why were men astonished at the marred visage of the Servant?
3. What verses of the N.T. shed light on the humiliation of the Servant?
4. What is the contrast between verses 14 and 15?
5. What is *predictive present*?

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### THE WORD OF GOD, THE ILLUMINATING AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION

by Paul T. Butler

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. QUALIFICATIONS

- A. We believe the Scriptures plainly teach that the spoken and written Word of God (the Bible) is the only illuminating agency of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners.
- B. This is contrary to the creeds of most major Protestant religious bodies today. They say, in essence:

1. Man, the sinner, has a mind biased and prejudiced by sin and he cannot, therefore, understand the spiritual truths of the Bible until . . .
  2. The Holy Spirit acts, directly, irresistibly and apart from the written or spoken Word of God, regenerating man's mind in order that man can understand the written truths in the Bible . . . only then will man be able to believe in Christ and become a Christian.
  3. This is individually and subjectively experienced and one cannot be assured of his salvation until he is able to relate such an experience.
  4. Those who have never had such an experience, so far as we are able to tell now, are not "elected" to salvation.
- C. By our statement in A. above we do not intend to exclude the providential actions of the Holy Spirit.
1. The Holy Spirit may act in providence to bring a Christian and non-Christian together for the purpose of allowing the non-Christian to hear the message of Christ (e.g., Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch; Peter and Cornelius, etc.)
  2. But in the final analysis, it is the written or spoken Word of God into the sinner's mind and upon his heart that converts and leads him to become a Christian.

## II. WHAT WE ARE NOT DISCUSSING IN THIS STUDY

- A. We do not wish to discuss here, to any length, at least, the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the miraculous way the apostles were immersed in the Holy Spirit.
  - B. We do not wish to discuss here the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit by which certain people spoke in tongues, prophesied, healed, etc.
  - C. We do not wish to discuss whether or not people have had particular "religious experiences . . ."
1. That people have had subjective religious experiences is difficult to disprove—at least to the one who

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claims such an experience.

2. But whether or not we are to follow what we think those subjective experiences teach, in order to the assurance of salvation, is quite another thing and is contrary to Biblical teaching.

### III. ASSUMPTIONS WE MAKE

- A. That the Bible is the infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God and the ultimate and final authority in matters of faith and practice.
- B. That we learn all we need to learn on this particular subject from the New Testament.

## DISCUSSION

### I. JESUS TAUGHT THAT THE WORD OF GOD (WRITTEN AND SPOKEN) ILLUMINATES THE MIND OF MAN UNTO CONVERSION

- A. Matt. 11:25-30 . . . only the Son can reveal the Father . . . we must take the Son's yoke upon us and *learn* of Him.
- B. Matt. 7:24-27 . . . the wise man is the one who *hears* the words of Christ and *does* them.
- C. Matt. 13:1-23; Lk. 8:4-15 . . . the *seed* of the kingdom is *the word* of God sown on the hearts of men. This *word* must be *held fast* in honest and good hearts to bear fruit.
- D. Matt. 4:4 . . . Man does not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God.
- E. Matt. 28:18-20 . . . the great commission is to *teach*, baptize and *teach* all that Jesus commanded the 12 disciples.
- F. Lk. 10:21-28 . . . Jesus told a lawyer to do what he *read* in the Law in order to inherit eternal life.
- G. Lk. 10:38-42 . . . Mary chose the good portion for she sat at Jesus' feet and *listened* to His teaching . . .

- H. Lk. 11:27-28 . . . Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who *hear* the word of God and *keep* it . . ."
- I. Lk. 16:19-31 . . . the rich man in Hades was told it would do no good for him to go back from the dead and warn his brothers . . . "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them . . . If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead . . ."
- J. Lk. 24:13-35 . . . Jesus took special time and effort "beginning with Moses and all the prophets . . . interpreting," for some despondent disciples "all the scriptures" said concerning Himself.
- K. John 1:1-18 . . . Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God, "exegeted" God to man; *exegesato* is the Greek word in verse 18, from which we get *exegesis*, but it is translated *declared*.
- L. Jn. 5:24 . . . whoever *hears the word* of Christ and *believes* God, who sent Him, has eternal life.
- M. Jn. 5:25 . . . whoever *hears* the voice of the Son of God, will live.
- N. Jn. 6:63 . . . except men eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood they have no life in them . . . THIS IS TO BE DONE BY HEARING AND DOING THE WORDS JESUS SPOKE, FOR *His words are spirit and life*.
- O. Jn. 6:44-45 . . . No one comes unto Christ . . . unless they *learn* from the Father.
- P. Jn. 6:69 . . . Peter declared that Jesus has the *words* of eternal life . . ."
- Q. Jn. 8:31-32 . . . only those who *continue* in His word are His disciples and in doing so they will be made free for it is the *truth* that makes free . . . and only by continuing in *His word* do we *know the truth!*
- R. Jn. 10 . . . the sheep follow the good Shepherd only because they *know* the difference between His *voice* (word) and the voice of the hireling.
- S. Jn. 11 . . . the *spoken word* of Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
- T. Jn. 12:44-50 . . . the *words* Jesus spoke will judge men

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- at the last day, and the *commandment* which the Father gave Him *to speak is* eternal life.
- U. Jn. 13:12-17 . . . Jesus gave the disciples an example of humble and loving service to one another and then said "If you *know* these things, blessed are you if you do them . . ."
- V. Jn. 14:23 . . . Jesus made the *abiding* presence of the Holy Spirit specifically conditioned upon *keeping His commandments*. It must, therefore, be possible for a sinner to come to believe in, and begin to obey Christ before the Holy Spirit abides in him . . . in other words the sinner is converted by knowing, believing and obeying the Word, which is the agency of the Holy Spirit in the sinner's conversion.
- W. Jn. 15:3 . . . the disciples were cleansed by the *word* which Christ had already spoken unto them.
- X. Jn. 15:1-11 . . . our abiding in Him and His abiding in us is conditioned upon our abiding in His word . . . it is not irresistible.
- Y. Jn. 16:1-15 . . . the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all truth, etc., and thus, *through their preaching* to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
- Z. Jn. 17:1-26 . . . eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ . . . this the disciples had because they accepted the *words* which Jesus was commissioned to give them from the Father . . . through His *words spoken* they had joy . . . They were *sanctified* in His *word* which is truth . . . Jesus even prayed for all who should subsequently *believe in Him through the preached word* of the apostles (verse 20).
- AA. Jn. 18:37 . . . Jesus said . . . "I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the *truth hears my voice*."
- BB. Jn. 20:30-31 . . . the gospels were written that men might believe and have eternal life.

## II. THE ACTS TEACH THAT THE WORD OF GOD (WRITTEN AND SPOKEN) ILLUMINATES THE MIND OF MAN UNTO CONVERSION

- A. Acts 2:37-38 . . . when the multitude *heard* the preaching of Jesus they were convinced and obeyed . . . there is no notice that the Holy Spirit illumined their hearts apart from the preaching of the inspired word.
- B. Acts 4:4 . . . many who *heard* the preaching of Peter in Acts 3, believed and became Christians.
- C. Acts 5:32 . . . the Holy Spirit is given only to those who obey Christ . . . how can one obey Christ unless he has *heard* the commandment of Christ and understood the commandment?
- D. Acts 8:34-40 . . . Philip *preached* unto the eunuch Jesus and then the man obeyed.
- E. Acts 10:22 . . . Cornelius was directed by an angel of the Lord to send for Peter so that Peter might *preach* to him the gospel in order that Cornelius might hear and believe . . . cf. Acts 10:33; 11:14.
- F. Acts 17:29-31 . . . Paul said men should understand that God is going to judge the world and that He wants them to repent simply *from knowing the fact* that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.
- G. Acts 20:18-35 . . . Paul charged the elders of Ephesus to "feed the flock of God" on the word of God as he himself had done . . . and Paul "commended them to God and to the *word of His grace*, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
- H. Acts 26:24-29 . . . Paul presented the *facts* concerning Jesus and appealed to the *writings* of the prophets in hope that Agrippa might become a Christian.
- I. Acts 28:23-28 . . . Paul *expounded* the *facts* concerning Jesus all day to a group of Jews, trying to *convince* them about the kingdom of God, etc. some were *convinced*, some were not.

### III. THE EPISTLES TEACH THAT THE WORD OF GOD (WRITTEN AND SPOKEN) ILLUMINES THE MIND OF MAN UNTO CONVERSION

- A. Rom. 1:16-17 . . . the *gospel* is the power of God unto salvation.
- B. Rom. 6:17-18 . . . men are set free from sin by *obedience* from the heart to the *standard of teaching* of the apostles.
- C. Rom. 8:6 . . . to set the mind on the Spirit . . . is life . . . the Spirit is revealed in the Word.
- D. Rom. 8:13-14 . . . it is by the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body and it is by the Spirit we are led . . . the Spirit only does that by revealing His will to us in the Scriptures.
- E. Rom. 10:8-17 . . . the word of faith which is in their hearts is the word which the apostles preached . . . all who call upon the Lord will be saved, BUT THEY CANNOT CALL UPON HIM IF THEY HAVE NOT HEARD HIS WORD, BECAUSE FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD!!!
- F. Rom. 12:1-2 . . . we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind in order that we may prove what is the acceptable will of God.
- G. Rom. 15:18 . . . Paul would win obedience to Christ from the Gentiles by preaching to them the word of Christ . . .
- H. Rom. 16:25-27 . . . Paul said that the *preaching* of Jesus Christ was . . . to bring about the *obedience of faith* . . .
- I. I Cor. 2:1-14 . . . Paul said that the Spirit of Christ had been given to the apostles . . . and this *Spirit was imparted to the Corinthians in words* . . .
- J. I Cor. 15:1-2 . . . the *preached gospel* was what the Corinthians received, that in which they stood fast, that by which they were saved.
- K. II Cor. 1:20 . . . all the promises of God find their Yea

- in Jesus Christ objectively revealed . . . not subjectively.
- L. II Cor. 10:3-5 . . . the *preaching* of the word of God has *divine power* and is able to *destroy arguments* and every proud *obstacle to the knowledge of God* and bring every *thought into captivity unto Christ!!!*
- M. Gal. 2:20; 3:2; 3:26-27 . . . The Spirit of Christ lives in men and is put on by men through the hearing of faith . . . and faith comes by hearing!
- N. Eph. 3:17 . . . Christ dwells in us through faith, and faith comes by hearing.
- O. Eph. 1:9-14 . . . those who have *heard the word of truth*, the gospel, have made known to them the mystery of His will and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- P. Eph. 3:8-19 . . . Paul was made a minister to the Gentiles to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ and make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God . . . that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known . . .
- Q. Eph. 4:11-16 . . . the various offices of ministry (including evangelists) were given to the church to edify the church and bring the church to a mature knowledge of Christ.
- R. Eph. 5:17-18 . . . Paul connects being filled with the Spirit directly to first understanding what the will of the Lord is . . .
- S. Phil. 4:8-9 . . . Paul said that true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious things were revealed to Christians by the preaching and Christian living of the apostles.
- T. Col. 1:27-28 . . . Paul proclaimed and taught Christ to every man in all wisdom so that Christ might dwell in men and they might have the hope of glory.
- U. Col. 3:16 . . . Christians are to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly.
- V. I Thess. 2:13 . . . Paul said the Christians there received their preaching as the word of God and that this *word* was at *work* in them.

- W. II Thess. 1:8 . . . Paul said God would bring vengeance upon all who *do not obey the gospel* . . . an objective standard!
- X. II Thess. 2:14 . . . Paul said that men were *called* by God through the preaching of the *gospel*.
- Y. I Tim. 4:11-16 . . . Paul told Timothy that by holding to that which he had been *taught* he would *save* both *himself* and his *hearers*.
- Z. II Tim. 2:9 . . . Paul speaks of the word of God as not being able to be fettered.
- AA. II Tim. 3:16 . . . The scripture is able to completely equip the man of God for every good work . . .
- BB. Titus 1:1-3 . . . Paul said the faith of the elect was furthered by the preaching of the word . . .
- CC. Titus 2:11-15 . . . Paul said the "grace of God . . . trains us . . ." and we should thus declare it . . .
- DD. Hebrews 4:12-13 . . . the word of God is living and active . . . pierces even to the division of the soul and spirit . . . and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart . . .
- EE. James 1:18 . . . "Of his own will he *brought us forth by the word of truth* . . ." Here the word of truth is specifically said to be the agent of the Holy Spirit in the new birth.
- FF. I Pet. 1:22-25 . . . "You have been *born anew* . . . *through the living and abiding word of God* . . . that word is the good news which was preached to you . . ." This they did by obedience to the truth: IT CANNOT BE ANY PLAINER THAN THIS THAT THE SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD IN REGENERATION.
- GG. II Pet. 1:3-4 . . . it is *through a knowledge* of Jesus Christ and through His precious and exceeding great promises that we become *partakers of the divine nature*.
- HH. I John 2:3-6 . . . we are sure we are in Him only when we know and keep His commandments.
- II. I John 3:24 . . . we abide in Him and He abides in

us when we keep His commandments.

JJ. I John 4:1-6 . . . whoever knows the Spirit of God listens to apostolic teachings and this is the only way man may know the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

KK. II John 9-10 . . . anyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God . . . he who abides in this doctrine has both the Father and the Son.

#### IV. LOGIC TEACHES THAT WE MUST DEPEND UPON THE SPIRIT TO BRING US TO CONVERSION THROUGH OUR RESPONSE TO HIS OBJECTIVE REVELATION OF HIMSELF IN HIS WORD!

A. Alexander Campbell, in *The Christian System* "moral facts are those which either exhibit, develop, or form moral character . . . all the works and words of God are moral facts and truths . . ."

1. The work of redemption is a system of works or deeds on the part of God and Christ which constitutes the most splendid series of moral facts which man or angel ever saw . . .
2. When these moral facts are brought into immediate contact with the mind of man, they delineate the image of God upon the human soul.
3. Testimony is but the channel through which these facts draw the image of God on the heart and character of man.
4. The love of God in the death of Jesus never drew a tear of gratitude or joy from any eye, or excited a grateful emotion in any heart among the nations of our race to whom the testimony never came. No TESTIMONY, NO FAITH!
5. The quality or value of faith is found in the quality or value of the testimony. If the testimony be valid, OBJECTIVE, and authoritative, our faith is strong and operative. "If we receive the testimony of men, the

testimony of God is *greater . . .*"

6. The power of faith is also found in the power or moral meaning of the testimony, or of the facts which the testimony represents. If by faith I am filled with joy, or sorrow, that joy or sorrow is in the facts contained in the testimony . . . or in the relation of those facts to me. And, if faith purifies the heart . . . this power is in the facts believed.
  7. It is neither the faculty of perception, nor the manner of perception, but the things perceived, that excited us to action. It is not the exercise of reflection, but the thing reflected upon. It is not reason itself, nor the exercise of reason, but the thing reasoned upon which affords pleasure or pain—which excites to action—which cheers, allures, consoles us.
  8. Even in our volition this is true. It is not choosing, nor refusing; hating, loving, fearing, desiring, nor hoping; IT IS NOT THE NATURE OF ANY POWER, FACULTY, OR CAPACITY OF OUR BEING, NOR THE SIMPLE EXERCISE OF THEM, BUT THE *object or things* UPON WHICH THEY ARE EXERCISED, WHICH INDUCE US TO ACTION, OR INFLUENCE OUR BEHAVIOR!
  9. AND SO MY FRIEND WE ARE PURIFIED BY OUR OBEDIENCE TO THE OBJECTIVE TRUTH . . . THE REVEALED, WRITTEN AND SPOKEN TESTIMONY ABOUT THE PERSON AND PROMISES OF JESUS CHRIST BECOME THE OBJECTIVE AGENT WHICH MOVES US . . . WITHOUT AN OBJECT (JESUS) AND AN OBJECTIVE REVELATION OF HIM WE WOULD BE LEFT ONLY TO LISTEN AND FOLLOW THE DECEITFUL WHISPERINGS OF OUR WICKED HEARTS—SEE POINT #V ON PAGE 254.
- B. In the religious world today we have many groups, teaching about as many contradictory dogmas, most claiming to be led now or having been led in the past by special direct revelations of the Holy Spirit apart from the received Bible. IF THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES ON THE MINDS OF MEN APART FROM AN OBJECTIVE

STANDARD (THE WORD), HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH IS CORRECT?

1. We appeal to such scriptures as Gal. 1:8-9; I John 4:1-6 and assert that there is only one leading of the Holy Spirit today and that is in the infallible, innerant, objective standard called the Bible, and that only!
2. Don DeWelt says in his book, *The Power of the Holy Spirit*, Vol. I, pg. 31, commenting on Rom. 8:16 . . . "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." ". . . The Bible does *not* say that the Holy Spirit bears witness *to* our spirit, thus making it a subjective experience within the Christian. The text *does* say the Holy Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit, thus making it an objective experience without or apart from the Christian. The witness of the Holy Spirit is the New Testament. This is His testimony as to how to become a Christian or child of God, and also how to remain faithful as God's child. We know within ourselves if we have done what the Spirit has said to do in order to become a child of God . . . We then become a child of God, our spirits have agreed with the testimony of the Holy Spirit . . ." when we have done what we are commanded to do in the New Testament. (cf. Jn. 20:30-31; I Jn. 5:13).

#### V. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US THAT WE WILL BE DECEIVED BY LISTENING TO THE SUBJECTIVE WHISPERINGS OF OUR HEART.

- A. Prov. 16:2 . . . "all the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit . . ." (cf. also 21:2)
- B. Jer. 17:9 . . . "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? I the Lord search the mind and try the heart . . ."
- C. Heb. 3:13 . . . warns that Christians must continually