

and His Spirit (Jn. 14:21-23; Acts 2:38; 5:32; II Pet. 1:3-5; see comments in *The Gospel of John*, by Butler, College Press, chapters 14-17). The Spirit of Christ dwells in man through faith (Eph. 3:17); faith comes by hearing and obeying the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). The exclusiveness of the instrumentality of the Word in the dwelling and working of the Spirit is emphasized even here (59:21). The Spirit of God was in the prophets (I Pet. 1:10-12) but He functioned through their preaching. The Spirit of God was in the apostles, but He functioned through their preaching. The Spirit of God is in Christians, but He functions through their printing or preaching the Word which the apostles preached and printed and left for the salvation of the world. The apostolic message is the *only* message of the Spirit; He has no further word for the world! He will not function in the life of any one in the world except through the instrumentality of the apostolic Word. Covenant relationship to God has always been made available exclusively through the instrumentality of a revealed Word. God has always limited the delivery of His Word to a few selected individuals in order to preclude the possibility of deception (I Jn. 4:1-6). God has always authenticated His messengers by signs and wonders (Heb. 2:1-4). Once the messengers have been authenticated and the message has been delivered in human language and committed to the printed page, anyone claiming to have a revelation of the Spirit beyond that message is a false messenger! All that is needed for the rest of the world to come into covenant relationship is that the completed, perfected message of the Spirit be passed on by printing or preaching from one generation to another.

The covenant accomplished by the Redeemer and inscripturated by the Spirit will last forever. It will never need updating, changing or superceding. It will need simply to be passed on from generation to generation. It is for the whole world so long as the world shall last!

QUIZ

1. How do these last verses fit in with what has been written in Isaiah 40-59?
2. What all is involved in the excitation of God's displeasure?
3. What is an intercessor? Why did God have to intercede?
4. Give as many reasons as you can why this points ultimately to the Messiah.
5. Who is the Redeemer in verse 20, according to Romans 11:26?
6. What does the Spirit of God have to do with covenant? and how?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS FIFTY-FOUR THROUGH FIFTY-NINE

DEFINITION

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

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>enlarge</i> your tent | 8. <i>Moloch</i> |
| 2. <i>waters</i> of Noah | 9. <i>terebinth</i> |
| 3. <i>leader</i> and <i>commander</i> | 10. <i>covetousness</i> |
| 4. <i>foreigners</i> | 11. <i>afflicted</i> our soul |
| 5. <i>watchmen</i> | 12. <i>adder</i> and <i>viper</i> |
| 6. <i>rest</i> | 13. <i>peace</i> |
| 7. <i>sorceress</i> | 14. <i>intercessor</i> |

MEMORIZATION

Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the _____, and he that hath no _____; come ye, buy, and _____; yea, come, buy wine and _____ without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye _____ money for that which is not _____? and your labor for that which _____ not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is _____, and let your _____ delight itself in fatness. Incline your _____, and come unto me; _____, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting _____ with you, even the sure _____ of David. (55:1-3)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how Jehovah used *marriage* to describe His relation to His people.
2. Explain how unique, in a Hebrew dispensation, it is to speak of all being taught by the Lord. Explain how Jesus quoted this passage in John's Gospel.
3. Explain how God could teach salvation by grace in the O.T.
4. Explain the relationship of God's everlasting covenant with His promised mercy to David.
5. Explain how foreigners minister to Jehovah.
6. Explain why there is no peace to the wicked.
7. Explain Isaiah's emphasis on keeping the Sabbath.
8. Explain how man's sin separates him from God.

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. Do people today still need to understand that God offers salvation by grace, not by earned merit?
2. Is it still necessary today to teach what Isaiah does about God's word being above man's thoughts or ways?
3. Is it necessary today to stress keeping covenant with God

as Isaiah did?

4. May we apply the Hebrew meaning of peace to the Christian experience?
5. Is there any application of the believer's "marriage" to God to human marriage?
6. What application for the N.T. age may be made concerning the lethargy of the religious leaders of Isaiah's day?
7. May we apply the attitude expressed by the sinners of Isaiah's day of "weariness" with sin, to any attitudes of sinners today?
8. Is the admonition of Isaiah against the hypocrisy in fasting and worshipping relevant for the church today? How may his admonition be applied?

IX. ZION — THE ZENITH, CHAPTERS 60 - 66

A. REWARD OF ZION, WEALTH OF THE NATIONS CHAPTER 60

1. GLORY

TEXT: 60:1-7

- 1 Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee.
- 2 For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
- 3 And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
- 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: they all gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms.
- 5 Then thou shalt see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee.

- 6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of Jehovah.
- 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar; and I will glorify the house of my glory.

QUERIES

- a. When does Zion's light come?
- b. How is the "abundance of the sea" turned to her?
- c. Where is Nebaioth?

PARAPHRASE

Do not let the coming captivity prostrate you Zion. Stand up, be steadfast and faithful and begin to be a light to the dark world. The glorious light of God is shining on you—the grandeur, splendor and righteousness of Jehovah is being given to you. It is still night and darkness to the heathen nations around you, but you are going to be light for the whole world when Jehovah gives you His glory. You will become a reflection of God's truth and love that will be seen by people from all over the world. The Gentiles will be attracted to your glory and come to it; great and famous rulers will humbly come to bask in the splendor of your majesty. Look around you, Zion, from all directions people of every nation and tribe and tongue are coming to you; they are all bringing others to you with the tenderness and compassion a foster-parent shows its adopted child. You will see all this and it will make you radiate joy and gratitude. Your heart will be thrilled and swell with excitement toward the Gentiles coming to you. This will be your attitude because you will recognize that God is giving you, in

these who are coming, the true wealth of the islands and coastlands—believers! Multitudes of people will make their way to you, Zion; people from every direction will come bringing their most precious possessions as gifts and they will testify to the majesty and power of Jehovah. Even your inveterate enemies from Mesopotamia and Idumea will be accepted by Me and by you and they will join you in ministering and worshipping Me. The Lord will make His house more glorious than ever when He brings people from all over the world into it.

COMMENTS

v. 1-5 LIGHT: It has been our purpose to show the student of Isaiah the logical progression of the prophet's message. In the first 35 chapters Isaiah has declared that Israel's salvation is not in any human programs; neither self-righteousness nor idolatry nor military alliance with the heathen will save her. In chapters 36-39 Isaiah inserts parenthetically a record of an historical event which demonstrates precisely what he is preaching; that Israel, God's covenant people, can only be saved and reach her messianic destiny through faith in Jehovah by keeping covenant with Him. Finally, in chapters 40-66, Isaiah will prophesy and typify the grand climax of God's program for the redemption of the whole world through the Servant and Covenant relationship to Him. The last section, with which we now begin to deal, predicts the glorious consequence of Zion's appropriation of the Servant's work by Covenant-communion. Zion will enjoy Reward, Regeneration and Rest, among other blessings. Zion is going to be made "whole" (see our discussion of the word *shalom/peace* on 59:8) because she will have given to her a covenant of peace or wholeness (cf. 54:10) when the Servant becomes peace/*shalom* for her (cf. 53:5).

In anticipation of this wholeness (peace) Zion is told to arise and shine. The future glory of Zion is so certain (although it

is centuries away from accomplishment by the Messiah) Isaiah speaks of it as if it had already come. The remnant of Judah will be prostrated in exile along with the unbelievers of the nation. It will be a temptation for the remnant to despair and give up hope that God will ever keep His promises made to their forefathers (Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David). But Isaiah says, "Stand up, stand fast in your witness as those who believe God will keep His covenant. Let your messianic light shine, for God has promised, and it will come to pass!"

The "light" which comes upon Zion is the "glory" of Jehovah. That cannot be anything less than the Messiah. Christ was the effulgence of the glory of God and bore the very image of His substance (cf. Heb. 1:3). Jesus was the Word become flesh and men beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father (cf. Jn. 1:14). The Word was the life and the light of men (Jn. 1:4). The Hebrew word *kevod* is translated *glory*. The fundamental root meaning is probably *weight* or *heaviness*, conveying the idea of some external, physical manifestation of dignity or preeminence of majesty. But the word as it is most widely used means, "the exhibition of the *excellence* of the subject to which it is ascribed." In other words, *character* is the chief element of glory. Concerning God it is the display of His divine attributes and perfections of righteousness, power, truthfulness, faithfulness, mercifulness, justice, compassion, love, etc. Some of the *glory* of God may be seen in a limited way in nature (cf. Rom. 1:18-23; Acts 14:15-18, etc.).

Zion is to have the excellence of the character of Jehovah "rise" upon her. The glory of God is to be imputed to Zion through the Servant and made available for appropriation through the New Covenant. Zion will not earn His glory. The Servant comes to earn God's glory for Zion. Zion simply receives it by exercising faith through covenant conditions.

She is to reflect His glory. Darkness covers the earth. All nations (including Israel) fall short of the glory of God (cf. Rom. 3:9-26; esp. 3:23). But the people who walk in darkness will see a great light (cf. our comments 9:1-7). The Light

of the World came to Zion and made her a kingdom of light (cf. Jn. 8:12-20; 12:46; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12-13; I Thess. 5:5; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 2-3). The letters of the apostle Paul to churches predominantly Gentile confirm the prediction of Isaiah 60:3 that "nations shall come to thy (Zion's) light." Great and powerful rulers and men of reknown were attracted to Zion's glory (see comments 49:7).

The Hebrew word *'amanah* is translated *carried* but means more literally, a *foster-father* or *foster-nurse* who has a child in safe keeping. What it means in verse four is that the Gentiles shall bring children safely to Zion (cf. comments on 49:22-23). Zion is exhorted to look even now in faith down through the centuries from Isaiah's day to the messianic glory and behold Gentiles coming to her from all directions of the earth. This vision compares to the one given the seven churches of Asia Minor by the apostle John when he recorded the spectacle of the redeemed "which no man could number" from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne (Rev. 7:9).

The Hebrew word *nahare* is translated *radiant* in verse five. It is from a root which means *to flow, to run*. Zion's reaction to the Gentiles coming to her for the glory of Jehovah which she has will be that of effervescent joy. She will *radiate* a bubbling excitement because she sees the promises of God being fulfilled that "in her seed shall all the nations be blessed." The word *phakhad* means *to tremble with joy* and is thus translated *thrill*. The picture Isaiah paints of Zion is of the messianic age when she has realized she has become the instrument of God for the salvation of the world and is one of excitement. Zion's heart trembles, swells, pumps and jumps with excitement as she realizes she is engaged in divine, eternal, cosmic redemptive history as a colaborer of Almighty God (cf. Acts 11:18; 15:3; 19:10, etc.). Zion is caused to tremble with joy because she sees that there are Gentiles who are precious in character and that there are Gentiles worthy of becoming jewels in the crown of a Jewish apostle (cf. Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19). The "abundance of the sea" is the wealth of the islands and

coastlands (Gentile territories). What is the wealth of a nation? It is its people, especially regenerated, redeemed people. These are the people who produce goodness, truth and beauty in any nation or society. These are the people who serve humanity without selfish motives. Zion sees that she possesses that which is the wealth of the world after all—people being conformed to the image of Christ.

v. 6-7 LAUDATION: As Keil and Delitzsch point out: "The prophet, indeed cannot describe even what belongs to the New Testament in any other than Old Testament colors, because he is still within the Old Testament limits." In other words, Isaiah is depicting the spiritual prosperity of New Testament Zion (the church) in terminology of his own times. The picture Isaiah draws is that of multitudes of people from the farthest reaches of civilization uniting in praise and honor to Jehovah. Midian was a son of Abraham from Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6) and Ephah was a son of Midian. Midian and his descendants claimed the land east of the Jordan river and the Dead Sea, southward through the Akabah and including the southern and eastern parts of the peninsula of Sinai. Sheba was the oldest son of Jokshan (Jokshan was also a son of Abraham by Keturah). His descendants probably became what is called the kingdom of Sheba or the Sabeans. The Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon was from this people. These far distant peoples shall contribute their wealth to Zion and they shall come to Zion and proclaim the praises of Jehovah. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (a son of Abraham by Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarah), (cf. Gen. 25:13), whose descendants lived in the desert between Syria and Mesopotamia. Nebaioth is mentioned always in connection with Kedar or the descendants of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13; 28:9; I Chron. 1:29) and is regarded by most as identical with the Nabataeans. It is interesting to note that all these are descendants of Abraham, but alien to the original covenant which was administered exclusively through the only son of Abraham by Sarah—Isaac. Yet, when the promise was given to Abraham, before Isaac's birth, it included blessedness to "all nations" through that "singular" seed (cf. Gal. 3:16).

These Gentiles are going to be acceptable! Their offerings (worship) will be acceptable and their ministry will be acceptable. As Young says, "The picture here given is that of Gentiles converted to Christ who bring all that they have and devote it to His service."

These desert nomads (Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nabataeans) were all enemies of the Jews for centuries. They are even today, racial, geographical and political enemies. The only way these people could ever become united in praising Jehovah and be accepted as worshippers and ministers of Jehovah is through the reconciliation that is in Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; II Cor. 5:16-21, etc.).

These verses indicate that Jehovah is going to send His "Light" (the Messiah) to glorify Zion and make available to her the wealth of the world. In other words God is going to demonstrate, once and for all, that His redemptive people (the church) are the focal point of the cosmos. Everything in His creation is to glorify Zion. Sooner or later, ultimately, inevitably God will use everything He has created to serve for the glorification of the redeemed. The apostle Paul said as much in I Cor. 3:21-22: "... all things are yours ... whether ... the world or life or death or the present or the future ... all are yours." Everything that is good and eternal and abiding of God's is the birthright of His Son, and Christians are joint heirs with Him. The "house" of God is going to be made more beautiful than it has ever been when He adorns it with the "wealth" of the nations (Gentiles beautiful in character) (see comments 56:7).

QUIZ

1. Can you trace the logical progression of Isaiah's book and include this section?
2. Why does Isaiah see a necessity to exhort his people to "Arise" and "shine"?
3. What is the "light" or "glory" that is to come upon Zion?

4. What will be Zion's reaction to "nations" coming to her light?
5. What is the wealth of the nations?
6. What would be necessary for the nations listed in verse six-seven to unite with Zion in praising the Lord.

2. GAIN

TEXT: 60:8-14

- 8 Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?
- 9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.
- 10 And foreigners shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee.
- 11 Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings led captive.
- 12 For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.
- 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine, and the box-tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.
- 14 And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

QUERIES

- a. What are the "clouds" and "doves" of verse eight?
- b. How would it be possible for "foreigners" to build Zion's walls?
- c. How would the nation that did not serve Zion perish?

PARAPHRASE

There are shadowy forms on the prophetic horizon drifting inexorably in our direction; they are like homing pigeons or doves going straight for their nests. Who are they: They are ships coming from all over the world bringing all those Gentile sons of Zion who have been waiting so long in darkness to find her. These ships of the prophetic future are bringing the real wealth of the world to Zion. They have been attracted to Zion because God has made her beautiful by giving her His redemptive glory and they want to be made a part of that beauty also. Yes, Gentiles are going to be participants in forming the future Zion; Gentiles will be co-laborers and fellow-citizens of that messianic city. Even some of the rulers of Gentile peoples will become citizens and serve the new Zion. I, Jehovah, am about to destroy the present city of Jerusalem, but I will in mercy also restore a remnant and through them eventually build the everlasting Zion. Access to the new Zion will be open as long as there are people deciding they want to take up citizenship. Nations from the ends of the earth will contribute their best and greatest resources to the new Zion; people great and small shall become willing captives of this glorious city. Those peoples and individuals who do not willingly surrender to Zion will perish. The attitude of many peoples toward you Zion, My dwelling place, will be reverence and a desire to give the best of their possessions to beautify you. Those who have been Zion's enemies will become willing citizens, humbling themselves and believing that what Jehovah has said about her belonging to Him is true. They shall willingly confess that you are Mine, that I dwell in You and that I am God.

COMMENTS

v. 8-12 CITIZENS: Zion now “arisen” and awake to what God has been trying to communicate through the prophet begins to see “dimly” certain shadowy cloud-like forms of the prophetic ingathering of the world to herself. Isaiah has repeated and repeated the message. Like the inexorable movement of clouds and the magnet-like homing of doves the prophet’s visions of masses of humanity coming to Zion has finally caught on in the mind of the remnant. So they ask, “Who are these . . . ?” The answer comes back immediately, “They are the isles!” (see comments on 11:11; 20:6; 23:2, 6; 40:15; 41:2, 5; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5). *Tarshish* was the great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:4), and considered to be the progenitor of a people along the western coastlands and islands of the Mediterranean. *Tarshish* is also conjecturally believed to be a form of the name of Tartessus, an ancient city located on the southern or eastern coast of Spain (see comments, *Minor Prophets*, Jonah 1:3, pg. 225, Butler, College Press). Tarshish probably represents the farthest known reaches of traveled or commercialized civilization of that age. These people so long in darkness waited for Jehovah to manifest Himself and reveal a way back to His presence (cf. 42:4). The prophet has repeatedly predicted that some day their waiting will be over. When that day comes, they will fly inexorably and directly to God. The reason given for that flight is that Jehovah will have “glorified” Zion. That is, of course, the redemptive work of the Servant and the New Covenant available to all peoples.

Foreigners “building the walls” of Zion is definitely a messianic figure of speech (cf. Amos 9:11-12 with Acts 15:16-17; see also Jer. 31:4-6 and attendant context; Jer. 33:7-26; Micah 7:11-17; Isa. 19:16-25). Paul wrote to the Gentiles in Ephesus that they were a part of the New dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:11-22). In the New Zion all members will be “ministers”—even Gentiles. There will be no special priesthood—all members of the New Covenant will be a holy priesthood (cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9; Heb. 10:19ff). All who come to New Zion (Heb. 12:22-24) will

offer sacrifices as ministers and priests (cf. Heb. 13:15-16). God, in His wrath against the wickedness of Old Zion, destroyed it (not only in the Babylonian exile, but centuries later [forever] when Old Zion rejected its Messiah [70 A.D.]). But God is going to build a New Zion by grace (favor) because the Messiah came and earned God's grace for man. The Messiah's merited favor will be made available not only to the Jew but to the Gentile also. Gentiles will be included in the New "building."

Access to New Zion will be constant. Access to New Zion will be for everyone who wishes it. The Holy Spirit, through His Word, and the Bride (the church—New Zion) say "Come" to all who will (cf. Rev. 22:17). Of course, the invitation will not always be offered for men to become citizens of the New Zion. But those who will not willingly enter Zion in this life would not enter it in the next life either (cf. Lk. 16:29-31). This is really the point of Isaiah's statement that Zion's gates are open continually; the idea is ready access for all who wish. There shall be no danger to those in New Zion that the gates will have to be shut and barred. There will be continual freedom and peace in New Zion. The members of Zion will be continually "bringing in the sheaves" (the wealth of the nations).

One very forceful reason for concluding the Zion here is New Zion (the church) is that all who "will not serve" her shall "perish." As Young puts it, "It is obvious that this prophecy does not fit the time of the restoration from exile . . . What nations at that time perished because they did not serve the empirical Zion?" There have been nations through the centuries, and there are nations now, not only refusing to serve literal Zion but making her serve them and they have not perished. Literal Zion as Jehovah's dwelling place perished in 70 A.D. (cf. Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 13:34-35; 19:41-44). The Hebrew word *kharav* is translated *wasted* and means basically *destroyed by drying up*. What tragic waste all the potential resources, and wealth of those nations and peoples who will not surrender to the New Zion!

v. 13-14 COMELINESS: The place of God's dwelling (New

Zion) will be exalted above all that is on the earth—both of nature and men. It is going to be made glorious and preeminent. Everything in creation will be made available to glorify her (art, music, learning, literature, thoughts, emotions). The greatest powers opposing her will be humbled (cf. Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:15-20; 2:14-15; Heb. 2:5-18). Many of the powerful forces and peoples opposing Zion will become converts to her. Formerly they ridiculed and scoffed at her—but they will penitently call her what she very evidently is: The (only) city of Jehovah, The Zion (Citadel or Sanctuary) of the Holy One of Israel. In Old Testament times it appeared Zion could be despoiled, humbled and obliterated by war, seige and death. But Zion's Eternal King came (the Messiah) in a space-time historical event and conquered death forever! This is the message of the book of Revelation. The Lamb has come and conquered death by resurrection and is now worthy to reveal (open the scroll) that New Zion (the church) is unconquerable! New Zion is the citadel of eternal safety.

QUIZ

1. Why does Zion see "clouds" and "doves" (verse eight)?
2. How do the "isles" bring their sons to Zion?
3. Why do we say "foreigners building" Zion's walls is a messianic term?
4. What is the meaning of the continual "opening" of Zion's gates?
5. How does verse 12 help determine this is a messianic passage?
6. Why will Zion's enemies bow down to her?

3. GOODNESS

TEXT: 60:15-22

- 15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through thee, I will make thee an eternal

excellency, a joy of many generations.

- 16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
- 17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron. I will also make thy officers peace, and thine executors righteousness.
- 18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.
- 19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory,
- 20 Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah will be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy morning shall be ended.
- 21 Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.
- 22 The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation: I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time.

QUERIES

- a. What does Isaiah mean by Zion sucking "the milk of the nations"?
- b. Why would Zion need only Jehovah for light?
- c. How does the "little one" become a "thousand"?

PARAPHRASE

Zion, you have been laughed at and scoffed at by the world because it never believed what you proclaimed about your God. You have also been despised for your hypocrisy and profligacy. Although you have been mocked and shunned by the world,

I am going to make you so exalted and majestic for all eternity you will be an object of rejoicing for millions. You shall be fed and grow into beautiful maidenhood from the life and vitality that comes from the nations of the world. Kings and great leaders of these nations shall become part of that food that shall be given you. When this comes to pass you will compare the experience with the predictions I have made in My Word and you will know that I, the God of the Jews, am the only God there is! Only the best will be good enough for you Zion. You will be built with that which is superior and precious instead of that which is inferior. Failing, faltering human rulers will no longer be needed in Zion because I will put Peace and Righteousness upon her throne. There will be no more violence in her midst. Desolation and destruction will be banished from within Zion. My Salvation and My Praise will protect her like walls around a city. She will no longer be dependent upon mere reflections of My Glory for her light, but she shall have the ultimate origin and source of all Light, My Person, illuminating her forever. There will never again be sadness or grief with Zion. Her citizens will all be made righteous and they shall all be given the eternal inheritance I promised them and this will cause all the world to see My glory. From a small and insignificant remnant Zion shall grow into an innumerable multitude of people forming a universal kingdom. I, Jehovah, will accomplish this according to My time schedule of the world's history.

COMMENTS

v. 15-17 RICHES: The time came when the "glorious land" (Palestine) and the "holy" city (Jerusalem) was an object of ridicule and mockery. After Assyrian invasion of Israel in 722 B.C. and the deportation of the ten northern tribes (and the immigration of foreigners into the unoccupied territory) came the Babylonian invasion of Judah (606-586 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, tore down most of Jerusalem's

walls and took the people back to Babylon as prisoners of war. The land of Palestine became inhabited by a nomadic people from the deserts and mostly pagan. The beautiful homes and luxuriant vineyards and productive farms of the Jews were allowed to deteriorate. The city of Jerusalem remained in a semi-ruined state until 70 years later when Nehemiah received word that it was in ruins (Neh. 1:1-4), and got permission to return and rebuild it. For two generations caravans, travelers and soldiers passed by Palestine and by the city of Jerusalem, wagging their heads and "hissing" (whistling) at the devastation. This was what God predicted (cf. Jer. 18:16; 19:8; 25:9, 18; 29:18; Lamentations 2:15-16; Micah 6:16). The world not only hissed at the land of Palestine, it also mocked the Jewish people. They had (until idolatry became so prevalent) claimed their God, Jehovah, was the only true God and that He was all-powerful. They also claimed He was righteous and holy. But they had become pagan themselves and were conquered by those they held in contempt as ignorant heathen. Suddenly they were mocked and shunned and despised. This was precisely predicted (Deut. 28:15-46, esp. 28:37).

From these despicable depths, however, God promises to rescue a remnant and form a New Zion which He will exalt and magnify eternally. The Hebrew word *ge'on* is translated *excellency*; it means *to grow up, to increase, to be lifted, exalted, majestic*. The Lord is going to make the New Zion majestic and an object of rejoicing for succeeding generations (millions of people).

The interesting phrase in verse 16, "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations," is a graphic figure of speech to portray the New Zion as a hungry nursing child feeding on the choicest products of the nations of the whole world. This has already been commented on in 60:11. There have been the Augustines, Justin Martyrs, Pascals, Gladstones, Lincolns, Agassizes, Miltons, Handels, *ad infinitum*, "the milk of the nations" which have sustained Zion. There have been the millions and millions of "little" people, the "salt of the earth" people, the real jewels of each generation and nationality which have also

come to Zion. The fact that great and small, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, weak and powerful may come together in a kingdom of peace redounds to the glory and praise of Jehovah who created Zion. The church itself is undeniable, empirical evidence of the existence of God. Verse 17 is a continuation of the idea that God is going to build New Zion from only the best of everything. There will be no inferior materials in building His New dwelling place (the church). There will be no more need for human rulers in New Zion (human rulers were oppressive and inferior) because she shall be ruled by Peace (see comments on 59:8 for "peace") and by Righteousness. In the church of Christ there are no positions of human rulership—only servanthood. Elders, deacons and evangelists are not rulers—they are slaves, ruled over by the Prince of Peace and the King of Righteousness. The Hebrew word *Jerusalem* means *righteousness-peace*.

v. 18-22 **RIGHTEOUSNESS:** As important to the goodness Zion is to have as riches, is righteousness. Citizens of New Zion are not belligerent; they do not retaliate (they leave justice to be done by the proper authority); they do not war and fight against one another (Mt. 5:7, 9; Mt. 5:21-26; 38-42; I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 5:25-28; James 4:1-12; I Pet. 2:13-25, etc.). Citizens of New Zion have conformed their thinking and acting to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and there is no violence in Zion. The New Zion is the only Zion of which this can be said. It certainly cannot apply to any literal, physical Zion or Jerusalem! The reason there is no violence in New Zion is that she is walled about by Salvation and Praise. Jesus pointed out to some men in His day that the kingdom of God had suffered a history of violent men wanting to take God's kingdom from Him and use it for their own violent purposes (cf. Mt. 11:7-15), but (the inference is) His coming to establish His rule as King would stop all that.

Some commentators think verses 19-20 refer to the heavenly-consummation when heaven and earth shall have passed away and there is no more sun or moon (cf. Rev. 21:23; 22:5). Isaiah does not actually state here that the sun and moon will be

done away, but merely that it is no longer to give light to Zion by day. It is possible that this is merely a figure to predict that all light (mental and spiritual illumination) except Divine Light will be excluded from the New Zion. The *menorah* (lamp-stand) in the Tabernacle in which only that oil made according to Divine formula could be burned typified the fact that in the Lord's dwelling place only Divine Light was to shine. Instructions concerning the Tabernacle also prohibited the Jews from allowing sunlight, moonlight or any other light to shine inside the tent. Jesus was the Light (Jn. 1:4; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). The gospel is the Light (Acts 26:23; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 5:8; I Thess. 5:5; I Pet. 2:9; II Pet. 1:19; I Jn. 1:5, 7; 2:9, etc.). Malachi predicts the "sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2) which we believe to be a messianic prophecy. God's city will be changed from a physical, geographical Zion which has a physical sun to a spiritual, universal Zion which will have a spiritual Light.

Isaiah was directed to "comfort" Israel with the prediction that her "warfare is ended" (cf. Isa. 40:1ff, see comments there). Chapters 60-66 are amplifications of that prediction. When New Zion is created, the days of mourning for God's people will be over (cf. comments Isa. 25:6-9).

The crowning characteristic of New Zion will be the righteousness of her citizens. This is possible only because God has provided a satisfactory atonement and imputed His righteousness to Zion's citizenry (cf. comments 53:11). Zion's citizens, declared righteous, must by righteous living be faithful to their calling, however, or they will not remain citizens. In other words, there is an imputed righteousness and a lived righteousness. The one who is justified and saved will do righteousness (cf. I Jn. 3:4-10). Anyone born of God cannot go on sinning (deliberately). This is the correct understanding of the present tense Greek verb *poiei* in I John 3:9, and the present tense participle *poion* in I John 3:8. Present tense in Greek means *continuing action*. Citizens of Zion hunger and thirst after righteousness. As John says, ". . . let no one deceive you . . . the one continuing to do righteousness is righteous . . . the

one continuing to do sin is of the devil . . .” Ultimately, of course, we will be saved forever by God’s imputed righteousness for we sin even after accepting by faith the grace of God (I Jn. 1:8; 2:1-2 was written to Christians). But if we repent (change our minds) and determine not to continue in a particular sin but rather keep His commandments, we are faithful citizens of Zion and we shall receive our inheritance. We are the human offspring of our earthly parents by their grace, so to speak, and we remain in the grace of our mothers and fathers only so long as we choose to be faithful to them. We are joined to our earthly spouse by his or her grace, but we remain in the love of that grace only so long as we are faithful.

When God’s people are faithful and live righteously, God is glorified. And Zion’s population is increased when God is glorified. The phrase “The little one shall become a thousand . . .” apparently means that the Lord will take the foolish, weak, and despised and confound the wise and powerful (cf. I Cor. 1:18-31). God will take what the world says can never become anything and give it increase and glory (cf. Micah 5:2); even Bethlehem of Ephrathah small among the claims of Judah will produce the Messiah, Jehovah will not follow man’s timetable. He has His own seasons and times in His great redemptive work (cf. Daniel 9:20-27, see our comments there, College Press). The Lord fixes all times and seasons in His own authority (cf. Acts 1:6-7; Dan. 2:20-23). And the Lord will create New Zion “in its time.” Its time was, of course, in the days of the kings of the fourth kingdom (cf. Dan. 2:44); the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff). The creative work of Zion’s incarnate King began on a Sunday, as He mounted a colt, the foal of an ass, and rode toward physical Zion declaring Himself the prophesied King of Zechariah 9:1-10 coming to establish spiritual Zion.

QUIZ

1. When was Jerusalem “hated”?
2. What does the term “excellency” mean?

3. What is the "milk of nations"?
4. Which Zion would experience the cessation of violence?
5. Are verses 19-20 speaking literally or figuratively?
6. What are the two aspects of righteousness the people of Zion shall have?
7. What was the time Jehovah chose to create New Zion?

B. REJOICING OF ZION, CHAPTER 61

1. FREEDOM

TEXT: 61:1-4

- 1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
- 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
- 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.
- 4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

QUERIES

- a. Who is "me" in verse one?
- b. What is the "year of Jehovah's favor"?
- c. How shall the "desolations of many generations" be rebuilt?

PARAPHRASE

The Servant says, The Sovereign God will send Me in all the fulness of His Sovereign Spirit because His mission for Me is to deliver the message of the good news of redemption. The Spirit of God upon Me will be the sign that I come with His authority. My mission is to heal men who have been broken in heart and spirit by sin, to declare liberation for all those who have been made prisoners of sin and to announce that the time Jehovah has set in His schedule to be gracious and conciliatory toward sinful man has arrived. Yes, I am to be sent to comfort and strengthen all who are mourning in Zion for spiritual help. I am going to give them a crown of beauty in exchange for the ashes of affliction they have had to suffer, anointing of My Spirit for joy in exchange for their mourning; I am going to wrap them in divine praise and take away their heaviness of heart. I am going to do this so that My New Zion may be established and stabilized like firmly rooted trees. After I have done this no winds or storms of affliction shall uproot them. The ancient house of Israel which for hundreds and hundreds of years has been in ruin and disarray will be rebuilt by these people whom I will liberate from the prison-house of sin.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 MESSAGE: The "me" of verse one can be none other than the Servant of Jehovah, the Messiah. We have divine sanction for that verified by the Servant Himself in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk. 4:21). Jesus read these verses from the scroll of Isaiah and applied them directly to His own incarnate ministry by saying, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." The Greek *peplerotai* is perfect tense for *has been fulfilled* and would read more literally, *has been and is continuing to be fulfilled*. From the moment Jesus was born until the Christian dispensation shall close and the gospel cease

to be preached, what Isaiah wrote in these verses is being fulfilled. And the Servant is the source of it all. The Hebrew reads, *ruach adonay yehoih*, or literally, *spirit of Lord Jehovah*. *Adonay* is the Hebrew word which suggests Judge or Master. It is like *kurios* in Greek. *Yehoih* is translated *Jehovah* and suggests Covenant-Revealer. This combination of divine character was the *ruach* (Spirit) which was upon Jesus. God gave His Spirit to Jesus without measure (Jn. 3:34). The reason Jesus needed this full anointing of the Godhead was His mission to a world of rebel prisoners enslaved by a supernatural devil. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) so that in Jesus dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9). To anoint (the Hebrew word *mashah* is anoint and is the word from which we get Messiah) meant to crown as king—to give authority. Jesus' authority to proclaim "good tidings from heaven" was demonstrated by the miracles and signs confirming His deity. He demonstrated He had authority on earth to forgive sins by making the lame to walk and giving sight to the blind and raising the dead.

The Hebrew word for *meek* is *'anah* and means *afflicted, oppressed, ravished, miserable, poor*. This is an excellent word to describe those who know they are in need of help. It indicates the kind of person who would be glad to hear good news from God. Jesus pronounced a blessing upon those who were "poor in spirit" (Mt. 5:3-12). *Brokenhearted* is from the Hebrew *shavar* meaning *fractured, distressed, sorrowing*. This is why the Servant is sent to those who are mourning—sin has fractured their lives—they are disintegrating. Jesus was sent to bring them wholeness and to "bind them up."

The Servant came to announce *liberty* to the captives and release to those who were *bound*. The Hebrew word for *liberty* is *deror* and was used in connection with the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10; Ezek. 46:17, etc.) when bond-slaves were set free and land taken in payment for debts was returned to its original owners. The Mosaic "Year of Jubilee" was evidently intended to typify the messianic time. Christ came to "bind" our jailor (the devil) and free us (Mt. 12:25-30; Heb. 2:14-15;

I Jn. 3:8-9; Rev. 20:1-6). We have allowed Satan, by choosing sin, to imprison us in falsehood, lawlessness, fear and selfishness. The Servant of God sets us free from that prison (see Special Study on "Liberty Is Not License"). The Hebrew word for Jubilee is *yovil*, from *yaval*, which means, *protracted sound of the trumpet*, signifying that a very important, "once-in-a-lifetime" announcement is about to be made.

Of course, most of the Jews expected Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30) to interpret this physically. That was the traditional interpretation of the rabbis (see comments on Isa. 53). When Jesus talked of "food" they wanted bread and fish; when He talked of "wholeness" they wanted limbs restored; when He talked of "freedom" they wanted foreign rulers driven from their land. But circumstances are not what constitute the Kingdom of God—it is character, (Rom. 14:17).

Hebrew *qara* means *proclaim, call out, shout, cry, summon*. The Servant became The Prophet, The Apostle. He was sent not only to live a godly life and to do miraculous things; He was sent to *preach* and *teach* the will of God for every other individual in the world. That was really His fundamental mission—accomplishing atonement and preaching the gospel. His miracles were simply means to that end. The Hebrew word *ratzah* is translated *favor* (or *acceptable*) and means *delightful, pleasurable, gracious*. The Servant came to announce the precise time God chose in His divine schedule of redemption to accomplish His grace toward man. In the *fulness* of time God sent forth His Son . . . (Gal. 4:4). The Servant of the Lord was anointed to "summon" all men to the "year" (or appointed time) of the Lord's pleasure or conciliation. And the day of *vengeance* was part of the Servant's announcement. All through the O.T. prophets, in highly figurative language, God promises (in the "last days" of the O.T. dispensation) He is going to defeat His foes in one great battle (Joel 2:30—3:21; Ezek. 38:1—39:29; Zech. 9:9—10:12; 12:1-14; 14:1-21; etc.), and give His people victory. That great battle was at *Calvary* and the great victory over Satan was there and at the *empty tomb*. The principalities and powers were "triumphed

over publicly and shamed" at the cross (Col. 2:15); when He ascended on high He led captivity captive (Eph. 4:8). Of course, the final and consummate vengeance of God will come at the end of this "year" of grace (end of the Christian dispensation, which are the *last days*, or end of all ages, I Cor. 10:11). But this "year" is the only "year" God has sent His Servant to announce. Now is the *acceptable* time . . . *Today* is the day of salvation! (cf. II Cor. 6:1-2). The defeat of God's enemies and His victory is the source of *comfort* for Zion. The Hebrew word *nākhām* (translated *comfort*) is very appropriate here for it means *consoled, eased, freed*.

v. 3-4 MISSION: The Hebrew word *phe'er*, translated *garland*, means more precisely, *an ornamental headdress*, or *adorning tiara*. The Servant-Messiah accomplishes more than conquest—He brings coronation to His people (cf. Rom. 8:31-39). He makes it possible for believers to "sit with Him in the heavenly places" (Eph. 2:6). His followers are crowned and reign with Him over death and all other circumstances. (cf. I Cor. 5:9-13; Heb. 11:7; I Cor. 3:21-22; Rev. 5:10). The Servant anoints His followers with "the oil of gladness" by the anointing of the Holy Spirit (cf. II Cor. 1:21; I Jn. 2:26-27) which is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and the "down payment" on the believer's future inheritance (cf. Eph. 1:14). The *ma'eteh* is from the root *'ataph* meaning *to cover for protection*, or, *cloak, veil*. A man may, so to speak, wrap himself in his human moods as a defense mechanism. Human moods and emotions are no protection; they are capricious, vulnerable to circumstances and temporal. Instead of human moods which are so manipulative and conducive to despair, the Servant will wrap His followers in a protective cloak of praise. If our lives are wrapped in praise to Jehovah we are protected from the manipulative capriciousness of human emotions which are so subject to circumstances. The object of our heart's desires and hopes is The Almighty, Never Varying, Always Faithful God and so we do not ever need to despair (cf. II Cor. 1:8-11). The Servant will dress His people up richly like the father dressed the prodigal son when he

returned home (cf. Lk. 15:22-24). All the despair and heaviness will be forgotten when the Messiah brings God's sons home! The Messiah will give His followers beauty (righteousness) and stability (trees, planting of Jehovah) (cf. Psa. 1:1-3). The messianic people are going to be established as God's people and nothing can "snatch them out of the Shepherd's hand" (cf. Jn. 10:27-28). No human, no spiritual power, no circumstance can take away their beauty. All this, of course, brings glory to the one so clothed, but ultimately to the One doing the dressing. The real glory went to the father of the prodigal because he exhibited such mercy, love and forgiveness.

The Servant's followers will build up the ancient ruins. The house (tabernacle, dynasty, family) of David was in ruins. David's house was the house of messianic destiny. David's throne was the throne reserved for the Messiah. But those who were sitting on David's throne in the days of the prophets scorned and usurped its messianic destiny. They violently rebelled against God's purposes for this throne of David and had brought it to shame and ruin. Amos predicted that the house of David (tabernacle of David) would be rebuilt (Amos 9:11-12). Amos' prophecy was fulfilled when the Gentiles were brought into the messianic kingdom (the church) (cf. Acts 15:12-21). We have already commented on this "rebuilding" (cf. Isa. 59:10, etc.). The church is built as a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:22); Christians are living stones built into a spiritual house (I Pet. 2:4-8).

QUIZ

1. What proof do we have that this is a messianic prophecy?
2. What character is suggested in the "Spirit" by which the Servant is anointed?
3. Who are the "meek"?
4. What kind of liberty will the Messiah bring?
5. What is the "garment of praise"?
6. How will the Messiah's followers rebuild the ruins of generations?

2. FORTUNE

TEXT: 61:5-7

- 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowman and your vinedressers.
- 6 But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
- 7 Instead of your shame ye shall have double; and instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them.

QUERIES

- a. Why emphasize so much the subjugation of "foreigners"?
- b. Why promise that New Zion's citizens would be priests?

PARAPHRASE

Amazing but true, many of those who are now your enemies, alienated against you, will, in the days of the messianic Jubilee, become subjects of the New Kingdom of Zion and join with you in service to Jehovah. All of you together will be anointed as priests and ministers of Jehovah. Those former enemies who become members of New Zion will be the most precious thing their nations have and they will aid in the ongoing of Zion and their coming will bring fame and honor and blessing to you. The fact that Jehovah will conquer and make citizens of Zion of those who once opposed and mocked Him will replace whatever shame you once knew with twice as much glory and honor and blessing. And Zion will be glad and happy forever because of this.

COMMENTS

v. 5-6 JOINING: The Hebrew word *zarim* is translated *strangers* and means, *loathed-ones, barbarians, enemies, excluded-ones*. *Ben-nekar* is Hebrew for *sons of the alien* or *sons of the foreigner*. When the Messiah-Servant came crying aloud the time of the messianic Jubilee (the time of the Lord's pleasure), those who had been excluded, alienated from covenant relationship to Jehovah were to be given an invitation to join the chosen people in serving and ministering to Him. Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth apparently closed the scroll of Isaiah before He read beyond verses one and two of this chapter. He did not read the verses now under consideration, but He implied them in His reference to the mercy shown by Jehovah to two Gentiles (Lk. 4:23-27) in the remainder of His sermon!

Paul's statement to the Gentiles in Ephesians 2:11-22 is certainly the fulfillment of this. Isaiah is replete with predictions that the nations (*goiym*) will be included in the messianic age as God's people (Isa. 2:1-4; 19:23-25; 25:6-12; 56:6-8; 60:10-14, etc.).

The Jewish Apocrypha (non-canonical writings) however, reflect the humanistic, materialistic interpretations of such prophecies as those of Isaiah here concerning God's purposes for the Gentiles in the messianic age. These apocryphal writings show a *liberal* attitude of the Jewish mind toward the Gentiles during a time of relative freedom and peace for the Jews in the days of the Maccabees, but an intensifying *bitterness* and *hatred* for the Gentiles as the oppression of Rome increased until the days of Jesus and the hotheaded *Zealots* and *Sicarii* eventually stirred up the rebellion and insurrection that brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation in 70 A.D.

According to I Enoch 10:21, (written about 164 B.C.), all the Gentiles will become righteous and offer to God their adoration and worship. In the Sibylline Oracles III (written about 150 B.C.), the Gentiles will make their way in procession

to God's Temple there to ponder his law and supplicate the Eternal King (716ff; 725ff); from every land the Gentiles will bring frankincense and gifts to the house of the great God and in the coming messianic kingdom they will have a share in the blessings that it brings. However, in II Baruch (written after 90 A.D.), it is written: "My Messiah . . . will both summon all the nations, and some of them he will spare and some of them he will slay. These things therefore will come upon the nations which are to be spared by him. Every nation which knows not Israel, and has not trodden down the seed of Jacob, shall indeed be spared. And this because some out of every nation will be subject to thy people. But all those who have ruled over you, or have known you, shall be given up to the sword (II Baruch 72:2-6)."

But the bitterness of the Jews toward the Gentiles finds its fullest expression in Similitudes of Enoch and II Esdras (both written in the first century A.D.). They teach that all Gentiles who dwell upon the earth, at the time of the messianic age, will bring to the Elect One gifts and presents and tokens of homage, but these will be of no avail; they will be destroyed and banished from the face of the earth and will perish forever and ever. D. S. Russell says in *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, pub. Westminster, pg. 303, "The bitterness . . . expressed by the writer of II Esdras against the Gentiles is to be understood against the background of persecution which the Jewish nation as a whole had to suffer, first in the time of the Seleucids and then in the time of the Romans. It reflects the troubled years following the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and is in keeping with the trend in Judaism generally. From this time forward, and especially from the close of the first century A.D., the harsher view prevailed and the universalism of the earlier years was gradually replaced by that spirit which could be satisfied only with the annihilation of all the other nations of the earth."

In the light of these apocryphal views, which were undoubtedly the views of the majority of the Jews in Jesus' day, we may well understand the extreme animosity generated

toward Jesus when He interpreted chapter 61 of Isaiah to mean the Gentiles were to be accepted and blessed in the messianic kingdom! The traditional interpretation the people of the synagogue in Nazareth expected to hear was that the Gentiles would at least become literally the conquered slaves of the Jews. That Saturday crowd expected to hear Isaiah 61 interpreted to mean God's people would someday kill most of the Gentiles and those not killed would become slave laborers (like the ancestors of the Jews had been in Egypt) and put to work building a rich, prosperous Jerusalem and Palestine which would become the capital city of the world.

What God meant in Isaiah 61 was, of course, just the opposite of the common Jewish concept. Many of the Jews learned this with great difficulty but rejoiced once it became apparent that it was the will of Jehovah (cf. Acts 9:1-16; 10:34-43; 11:18; 13:44-52; 15:12-21; Gal. 2:11ff, etc.).

The Hebrew word for *priests*, is *kohenyim* from the root word *kahan*, meaning, *to stand, to prepare, make ready, adjust*—thus to *officiate* as one who readies or adjusts something. The word translated *ministers*, is *sharethey* and means, *to wait upon, to serve, to attend*; it is applied only to the Levites in the O.T. Law. The concept that *all* Jews, (let alone a kingdom of Jews and Gentiles) would become priests and ministers to Jehovah was revolutionary! It is essentially a prediction that the Law of Moses will be abrogated in the messianic age! Only those of Levi could be priests and ministers according to the Mosaic covenant. It took the major portion of the book of Hebrews in the N.T. to convince Jewish Christians of the first century that Jesus (from the tribe of Judah) could be a priest (after the order of Melchizedek). *All* of Messiah's people are priests—even Gentiles (cf. I Pet. 2:4-5; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Access, intercession, offering will be the vocation of *all* members of the New Zion (Heb. 10:19-25; 13:15-16; Rom. 12:1-2).

The Hebrew *heyl goiym* could be translated *host* or *army of the Gentiles*. The wealth or riches of any nation is not its gold or diamonds, but its *people*. It is the character of the

people that make any kindgom what it is. God predicts through His prophets that the future "Israel" (N.T. church, Gal. 6:16) will "feed on" the best of all nations (cf. Obadiah 17, 21; Micah 7:11-17; Zech 14:16-21; Isa. 19:16-25; 60:10-18; 66:12-21). Many of those who came into the N.T. church were not what most nations would consider their best (I Cor. 1:26-31), but they were people who could repent and be made into the image of Christ and were really the jewels of creation (cf. Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19-20).

v. 7 Joy: The Hebrew word *bashettekem* is from the root *bash* which means, *disappointment, confusion, ingnominy, disgrace*. When the Jews were sinning the prophets called on the pagan nations to look at them and see if there had ever been a nation on earth so disgraceful (cf. Jer. 2:10-12; 18:13; 23:14, etc.). The nations of the Gentiles could not "hold a candle" to the Jews of the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel! The Gentiles mocked, derided and held in contempt everything Jewish. When they were taken into captivity the Assyrians and Babylonians hissed at them for they had claimed to be invincible because Jehovah was with them. The Jews suffered much indignity and reproach living in "unclean" heathen lands as prisoners. But Isaiah predicts a time (when the Messiah comes) when all these indignities shall be turned into exaltation and joy. The Messiah will take away all "uncleanness" and "disgracefulness." Of course, it would *not* be relief from national, cultural shame, but spiritual disgrace and spiritual uncleanness would be taken away. One is reminded of the glorious predictions of the messianic relief made by the father of John the Baptist (by the direction of the Holy Spirit) when he (Zechariah) spoke of the mission of his own son, the way-preparer (Lk. 1:67-79). Everlasting joy is a promise to be fulfilled only in the Messiah's kingdom (cf. Isa. 35:10; 51:11; Jn. 15:11; 16:22, 24; 17:13; Rom. 14:17; 15:13; Gal. 5:22; I Jn. 1:4, etc.).

QUIZ

1. What would have been the common interpretation of Isaiah 61:1-7 in Jesus' day?
2. Why is calling citizens of New Zion priests so revolutionary?
3. What will the everlasting joy of Zion have as its object of gladness?

3. FAME

TEXT: 61:8-11

- 8 For I, Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- 9 And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.
- 10 I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.
- 11 For as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

QUERIES

- a. What is the "truth" in which Jehovah will recompense?
- b. Whose "seed" shall be known among the nations?
- c. Why use the illustration of a "bridegroom" and "bride"?

PARAPHRASE

I am Absolute, I am Faithful-Yaweh; and so justice is My very nature. I despise injustice and wickedness and so I will faithfully reward My people by delivering them from their wicked oppressors and My pledge of this shall be in an everlasting covenant which I will establish with them. The citizens of New Zion shall be uniquely recognizable and even famous wherever they are all over the world. It will be so simple to identify the godly that everyone who sees them will recognize and acknowledge that Almighty God has blessed them. Zion will be filled with joy and she shall continually offer happy praise to God for His goodness. God has wrapped Zion in the grace of His righteousness and salvation and made her as beautiful and admirable as a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride wearing her precious jewelry. Just as surely as the earth produces fruit when seeds are sown in it, so the fruits of righteousness and praise will sprout from the "seed" of New Zion sown by Jehovah among the nations.

COMMENTS

v. 8-9 **RENOWN:** Zion will one day rejoice because she shall be made famous. The reason she shall be made famous, however, will not be due to her own merit but because God is who He is: He is by nature absolutely just and faithful. God will deliver Zion from her enemies because He loves justice and hates iniquity and therefore must vindicate His absolute sovereignty by destroying iniquity and rewarding loyalty. The loyalty Jehovah will reward will be that of the sinless Servant; but the Servant will impute His perfect meritorious obedience (Heb. 10:5-10) to all who by faith and covenant-keeping become citizens of the New Zion. The Lord's primary goal is the vindication of His Name (cf. Ezek. 29:9, 14, 22, 44; 36:21, 22, 23, 32; 38:16, 23; 39:7, 8, 25-29). It is imperative that Jehovah's absolute sovereignty and absolute faithfulness be

proven and vindicated. Man's salvation depends on God's faithfulness, not his own (see comments, Isa. 48:9-11).

The word '*emeth* is translated *truth* and is from the Hebrew root '*aman* (same as Greek and English *amen*). The word means *firmness, faithfulness, stability, fidelity, verity*. The idea in verse eight is that God is going to prove His fidelity by keeping His promise to destroy Zion's enemies because they are wicked. This demonstration of Jehovah's absolute faithfulness will, in turn, move men of all nations to happily come into covenant relationship with Jehovah. All this will be accomplished when Jehovah makes an *everlasting covenant* with man. Thus once again we conclude these scriptures are prophetic of the New Zion, the church. It was at the cross and the empty tomb that God destroyed the power of all the enemies of man (cf. Lk. 1:67-79; 2:29-35; Jn. 12:27-33; 16:11; Rom. 8:31-39; Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15, etc.).

The Hebrew word *berith* is the word for *covenant*. It is from the Hebrew root word *barah* which means literally *to cut*, or *to choose, to select*. Its fundamental idea is "chosen" "separated" or that which distinguishes a "selected" people. God's salvation and blessings are available always *within a covenant*. A covenant, by its very nature, demands choice, or selection, and that requires conditions and terms. The everlasting covenant (or "new" covenant Jer. 31:31ff) has conditions and terms men must choose if they wish its blessings. Christ is the *new* covenant (cf. Mt. 26:26-29; Heb. 8:6; 12:24; 13:20). He is the resurrection and the life, whoever *lives* and *believes* in Him shall never die (Jn. 11:26). Paul, the apostle, spoke of the new covenant relationship as "being *in* Christ" (cf. Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 15:22; II Cor. 1:21; 3:14; 5:17; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 3:6; etc.). The everlasting covenant is predicted in many places in the O.T. (cf. Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 16:60-63; 37:26, etc.).

The "seed" and "offspring" of New Zion will be renowned among the Gentiles. The people of the Messiah (Christians) were known throughout the Roman world of the first century (and ever after) for their faith, obedience and love (cf. Acts

2:47; 4:13, 33; Rom. 16:19; I Thess. 1:8-10; Philemon 4-7; I Pet. 4:4). Pliny the younger wrote "the believers met regularly early in the morning to worship Christ as a divinity. They insisted on a strict code of ethics; to abstain from fraud, theft, and adultery, never to lie, nor to default on an obligation. At the end of the assembly they ate a common meal and then adjourned." John Noble (prisoner of the Russians for 12 years) received the admiration and respect of the Russian prison guards for his Christian life. Isaiah means to stress how different the people of the Messiah will be from the heathenish behavior of the Israel of his day or the paganism of the world in general (cf. Jn. 13:35). The goodness and blessedness and joy of the lives of the citizens of Zion will be acknowledged (perhaps even grudgingly respected) by the whole world. The Messiah's people are "blessed with *every* spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3).

In verse ten, New Zion is rejoicing in the Lord because the Lord has clothed her in salvation and righteousness. The church is all dressed up like someone waiting for a wedding! (cf. Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:6-10). The people of the Messiah partake of the glory of the Messiah by being made partakers of His nature (II Pet. 1:3-4) which is done by abiding in His Will (Jn. 15:1-11). New Zion partakes of her King's nature gradually, progressively, "from one degree of glory to another" (II Cor. 3:17-18). New Zion must never forget that her beauty is relative to and dependent upon partaking of her Lord's righteousness and salvation. New Zion has no beauty of her own. She is clothed by Someone else! So all her boasting or rejoicing is directed to the Source of her glory (cf. I Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14-16).

As surely as the earth produces when seeds are sown in it, so the Lord will produce righteousness and praise to spring forth all over the world. Isaiah affirms the faithfulness of Jehovah to keep His word. God's word always produces—it always comes to pass! (Isa. 55:10-11). The existence of God and His faithfulness has been demonstrated in thousands of supernatural, historically-eyewitnessed events. Many of these

events were predicted hundreds of years before they occurred. But most finally and ultimately God has proved His absolute veracity and trustworthiness in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Death, the ultimate enigma, the ultimate obstacle, has been defeated. It has been swallowed up forever (Isa. 25:8). He kept His word! In spite of dungeon, fire and sword, God saved a remnant of Judah and brought the Messiah into the world. Babylon could not stop His word from being fulfilled; Persia, Greece, Rome—they could not stop it! Not even the death of the Messiah upon a Roman cross could stop His word.

Now the Lord works slowly, estimated by our finite, limited experience. But He works certainly! Some, in fact a majority of men, may scoff (II Pet. 3:1-10), but one day this victorious, living Messiah is coming back for His dressed-up bride. What righteousness and praise that will call forth from New Zion (the bride) whose citizens are from every tribe and tongue and people on the face of the earth. Every knee *will* bow and every tongue *will* confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

QUIZ

1. What does the nature of God have to do with our salvation?
2. What is a covenant?
3. What is man's relationship to God's covenant?
4. Has verse nine been fulfilled?
5. What is the source of Zion's beauty?
6. How do we know God's word is sure?

ISAIAH

LIBERTY IS NOT LICENSE

Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16

INTRODUCTION

Bob Iverson tells of the man who went to one of the new style worship services in which a "rock and roll" record was being played at ear-shattering levels (Rolling Stones now hold Guinness record of decibels 120 . . . SST Concorde is 130 decibels at take off). When he asked the young man in charge why such noise, the youth replied that this was an expression of "doing one's own thing." The older man, then, did "his own thing" by getting out his pocket knife and destroying the amplifier.

This illustrates the human problem of knowing and practicing freedom or liberty.

I. NO SUCH THING AS ABSOLUTE FREEDOM FOR MAN

II. TRUE FREEDOM

- A. Is when human beings recognize their limitation and obligations
- B. Is always relative and relational. It is relative to the will of the Absolute Creator and in relation to knowing and abiding in His will and fellowship with other human beings.
- C. True freedom is:
 - 1. Legacy
 - 2. Not license
 - 3. Liability

DISCUSSION

I. LIBERTY IS OUR LEGACY

- A. Christ came to free mankind.

1. "Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue in the house forever; the son continues forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Jn. 8:34-36
2. "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Jn. 8:31
3. The most important freedom Christ gives is freedom from falsehood. He reveals the real, abiding, saving, edifying TRUTH about who God is, who man is and how life is to be lived. YOU SEE, THE DEVIL LIED TO EVE AND ADAM ABOUT THAT AND HAS DECEIVED MOST OF MANKIND SINCE. . . . MAN ACTS ACCORDING TO WHAT HE BELIEVES. WHEN THE DEVIL DECEIVED MAN INTO BELIEVING AND DOING A LIE, HE ENSLAVED MAN WITH GUILT, FEAR AND SELFISHNESS.
- B. The real hindrance to true freedom is not God's Law (His Will) BUT GUILT, FEAR AND SELFISHNESS.
 1. These are the elements Satan uses to keep men in bondage (Heb. 2:5-18) etc.
 2. Freedom comes only by faith in Christ's atonement, His priesthood, and His Lordship.
- C. Christ frees us from sin.
 1. Sin is lawlessness.
 2. The devil's subtle lie is that freedom is found in rebellion . . . that we cannot really be free if we are going to let God tell us what is right or wrong.
 What most people do not realize is that if we don't let God tell us then we let the devil tell us! And he lies. You see, man, limited to this world cannot determine right or wrong, reality or unreality, for that has its basis in what is beyond our finite existence—only supernatural sources know ultimate truth.
 3. Christ frees us from the slavery of lawlessness.
 4. If you want an example of the slavery of lawlessness read Rom. 1:18-32.
 5. He also frees us from the guilt and penalty of sin.

D. Christ frees us from fear.

1. It is through guilt and the fear of death and the judgment the devil keeps men enslaved to him.
2. Christ paid our penalty, died and rose again and we who are in covenant relationship with Him do not fear death.
3. We are not driven by a motive of fear of failure to keep God's law . . . that is a never-ending, never-attaining bondage.
4. We are forgiven, freed, adopted sons and now serve willingly from love.
5. By faith the law of love is transformed into the love of law and almost in proportion as the law is loved, it ceases to be felt as law at all, but privilege and blessing!
6. THE LOVE OF GOD MASTERS THE CHRISTIAN, AND THE MASTERY OF LOVE IS FOUND TO BE PERFECT LIBERTY.

E. Christ frees us from inordinate love of self.

1. L. H. Marshall in his, *The Challenge of N.T. Ethics*, says, "Jesus attributes all moral evil to the self-will that knows not the rule of God," page 31.
2. Selfishness enslaves us. We become incapable of growth; we become unteachable, impenetrable, unloving.
3. Selfishness destroys creativeness, the ability to appreciate and enjoy.
4. The selfish person imprisons himself, fetters himself, hinders himself more than any man who has ever been imprisoned in any concentration camp.

II. LIBERTY IS NOT LICENSE.

A. God has objectively, judicially and propositionally freed me.

God has emotionally, willingly loved me when I was unlovely . . . and He did it in such a way that it breaks my rebellious heart . . . and I love Him.

LIBERTY IS NOT LICENSE

1. Loving Him is not something I can produce without an adequate cause. "We love because he first loved us" (I Jn. 4:19).
 2. Jesus commanded His disciples to love others as He loved them. Perfect love has its origin and reproduction in the divine Lover.
 3. Our love is a rebound—a reaction—a response.
 4. Love is both a motive and a force operating on the human will.
 5. Love moves a person to want to do something.
- B. The love of Christ constrains me, but constrains me from what or to do what?
1. Love is not self-defining.
 2. Even in the Garden of Eden—in innocence, man's liberty and freedom could only be enjoyed and expressed within divine guidelines.
- Before man had ever been deceived by falsehood, God told man what to do to love his Creator.
3. The creaturely nature of man forbids absolute license.
 4. God must be allowed to tell us how to love and what to love.
- C. Liberty is not self-defining.

1. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, page 39:

"What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could 'be like gods'—could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God . . . The reason why it can never succeed is this. God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about His will."

2. Anything God forbids He does so to free us from anything which is not His nature.

Anything God commands He does so to create in us the divine nature.

D. Liberty is found in order. God is order. Our lives must operate within order and discipline.

1. An ancient writer of Athens illustrated the consequences of license and disorder this way:

A farmer, not wishing to take the time and effort to sort his harvest, threw into his granary barley and wheat and peas together. But then, when he wanted barley bread or wheat bread or pea soup, he had to pick them grain by grain, instead of having them separately stored and easily accessible.

2. In 1776 George Mason wrote this statement into the Virginia Declaration of Rights:

“ . . . the blessings of liberty can (not) be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, *moderation*, *temperance*, frugality, and *virtue*, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.”

Edmund Burke, British statesman 1727-1797, said: “(Liberty) cannot exist unless a controlling power on the will and appetite is placed somewhere; and the less there is within, the more there must be of it without.”

4. Discipline is not antagonistic to liberty. License is not proof of freedom. The test of the greatness of liberty is the extent to which we can obey self-imposed law.
5. As Christians we are free to move responsibly within an orbit as wide as the revealed will of an all-knowing, all-loving, all-true; all-holy God.

A study in 1968, entitled “Studies in Self-Esteem,” of young men from homes where parents demanded high standards of behavior and performance and where firm discipline was a fact . . . findings . . . suggest . . . the development of independence and self-reliance is fostered by a well-structured, demanding

environment rather than by largely unlimited permissiveness and freedom to explore in an unfocused way. (See *Education In America*, by G. Charles Roche, III, pub. Fee, p. 142.)

III. LIBERTY IS LIABILITY.

- A. Booker T. Washington, in his book, *Up From Slavery*, describes the scenes among the blacks on the night of the proclamation of their freedom. "There was no sleep that night. . . . All was excitement. . . . Early in the morning we were all sent for. The proclamation was read and we were told that we were free and could go when and where we pleased. . . . There was great rejoicing, followed by wild scenes of ecstasy. But the wild ecstasy did not last long. . . . The great responsibility of being free seemed to take possession of them. . . . Now that they were liberated, they found possession of freedom to be much more serious business than they had anticipated . . ."
- B. Freedom is never free! There is always a price that those who would possess it must pay. The price of freedom is responsibility. Those who demand freedom but are not willing to pay this price, seek, not freedom, but license.
- C. One man illustrates it as like the fundamental law of economics: "There is no such thing as a free lunch . . . there are no moral bargains in freedom. Liberty has a price—it is responsibility."
 1. A generation of young adults fed existentialism in education, art, and modern rock music, pursues the self-defeating course of aspiring to freedom while seeking to evade responsibility.
- D. Liberty demands self-mastery.

"During a Fritz Kreisler concert, a young violinist sat enthralled. 'Ohhh,' she sighed, 'what I would give to have such finger dexterity, such mastery, such freedom!' Later she told the incomparable Kreisler that she would give her life to play as he did. The violinist looked at her compassionately, then said, 'But, my dear, *I did.*'"

- E. The man who has not accepted the liability and paid the price to discipline himself has narrowed his freedom. A man who cannot deny himself, cannot choose.

More advance in rank in USN, more liberty—*but* more responsibility.

More Christian maturity, more liberty—*but* more responsibility.

- F. Liberty is a capacity, a potentiality.

1. We are freed by Christ to make possible the reaching of that capacity, that potentiality for which we were made . . . that beautifully free, purposeful, harmonious person, Christ demonstrated in the flesh it was possible to be!

2. Liberty is in being . . . not in things or circumstances!

3. The difference between a baby making random movements in his crib and the beautiful balance and coordination of a Willie Mays or Jack Nicklaus is the discipline and self-mastery and growth it takes to reach the potential.

4. The difference between a show-off, infantile, immature church of Christ in Corinth, and one that truly serves and ministers and reflects the gospel of Christ, is the discipline and self-mastery those Christians would exercise in the liberties Paul declared they had as Christians.

5. Liberty is not license.

Paul wrote: "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but I will not be enslaved by anything."

"All things are lawful, but not all things build up." True liberty is having self-mastery to do what is right and good when we don't "feel" like it!

"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself . . ."

HOW DID CHRIST, THE FREEST, MOST LIBERATED PERSON EVER TO LIVE UPON THIS EARTH, KNOW SUCH LIBERTY? He found it surrendering self to the will of the Father as revealed in God's Word.

Liberty cannot survive in a vacuum. Jesus illustrated this with His parable of the unclean spirit who returns to his house to find it swept and put in order, but empty, and goes and gets seven other spirits more evil than himself and re-occupies the liberated, but empty, dwelling place!

CHRIST HAS LIBERATED US *for* SERVICE. HE HAS LIBERATED US TO LIBERATE OTHERS. LIBERTY IS NOT JUST TO ENJOY . IT IS TO USE! AND TO USE FOR HIS GLORY! LIBERTY IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, BUT SERVICE.

A famous poet once said, "I have on my table a violin string. It is free. I twist one end of it and it responds. It is free. But it is not free to do what a violin string is supposed to do—to produce beautiful music. So I take it, fix it in my violin and tighten it until it is taut. Only then is it *free* to be a violin string."

Each of us is free, if we choose, to be an untightened, unhampered piece of violin string and flop around or lie around and produce nothing. Or we are free, if we choose, to be tightened, constrained and tuned by the will of the Master and only then are we *free* to be what He can make us and produce what we were made to produce.

C. REGENERATION OF ZION, CHAPTER 62

1. NEW NAME

TEXT: 62:1-5

- 1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.
- 2 And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.
- 3 Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah

and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

- 4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.
- 5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

QUERIES

- a. How could Zion's salvation be like a burning lamp?
- b. How is Zion to be a "crown" in the hand of Jehovah?
- c. What is "Hephzi-bah"?

PARAPHRASE

For the sake of Zion, I dare not remain silent. For the sake of My holy city, I dare not remain inactive. It has come time for Me to act on her behalf again so that men may not think I have become powerless or defaulted on My promises toward her. I will act historically and supernaturally so that what I do toward her salvation will be as unmistakable as the bright sunshine and a burning lamp. What I am going to do in justification of My people will be so radically different from anything I have ever done before these people will have to be called by a new name, which comes directly from the mouth of God. When God totally remakes His people they will be so glorious they will sparkle and dazzle in God's hand like a jewel-covered diadem. My people will no longer be called Forsaken or Desolate; they shall be called God Is Pleased With Her and Happily Married, because Jehovah will be pleased with her and He will marry her. Just like a young man eagerly takes possession of a virgin when he marries her, so God's people will be eagerly possessed by Him. Just as a groom is delighted with his bride, so God will delight in His people.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 APPEARANCE: Jehovah dare not remain *khashah* ("silent") or *shakat* ("inactive") any longer in relationship to Zion. Apparently this "inactivity" and "silence" toward Zion has to do with the long period between the O.T. and the N.T. when there was no God-sent prophet and no specific supernatural action from Him. Of course, God providentially sustained Israel during the intertestamental period. Daniel predicted that He would (Dan. ch. 10-12). But Jehovah dare not allow this period of Jewish "indignation" go on longer lest His enemies think He has no more concern for them.

So Jehovah will not rest again until He has made Zion so righteous her splendor and glory will be as blindingly evident as the sun in the heavens or a lamp shining in pitch darkness.

What God is going to do in glorifying Zion, the whole world shall see. And it shall be so totally different from what Zion has been before she shall have to be called by a new name. Everything about her will be new; old terminology will be inadequate. This wholly *new* Zion is predicted by other prophets (Jer. 3:15-17; 33:16; Ezek. 48:35). This prophecy was fulfilled when God's New Covenant people began to be called "Christians" (cf. Acts 11:26). It was fitting that those "married" to Christ should be called "Christians" (cf. Jn. 3:31-36; Eph. 5:21-33; Rev. 19:6-8; 21:2; 22:17, etc.). The Hebrew word *shem* is the word for *name*. It means literally, *a mark, fame, reputation, monument*. God was going to do something so radical to Zion she would henceforth be distinguished by a completely new *mark*! She would have a "new" commandment and live by a "new" love (Jn. 13:34-35). Of course, there were many *names* by which New Covenant believers were known; e.g., "the way" (Acts 24:14), "saints" (I Cor. 1:2), "brethren" (Gal. 1:2), "church of God" (I Cor. 1:1-2) and others.

Notice, the crown of beauty is not on the head of Jehovah, but in His hand. Zion, the church, is a work of His hands and He now beholds the work which contributes to the glory that is already His. The "woman" (Rev. 12:1-2) which we take to

represent the covenant people of God (in both Old and New Testaments) has a crown upon her head. The church is the "crowning" accomplishment of God through the redemption of the Son. Recreation glorifies God even more than creation!

v. 4-5 APPELLATION: The point of the name-change appears to be focused on the changed relationship of God toward His people. He will no longer call them *'ezuvah* (Forsaken) or *shemamah* (Desolate). God will eventually call His people *khephzi-bah* (My Delight is in Her) and *be'ulah* (Married). These name-changes may have initial application to God's redemption of Judah from Babylonian captivity. However, their ultimate goal is the changed relationship in the New Zion (the messianic kingdom-church). One is reminded here of Hosea's prophecy of changed relationships and changed names (Hos. 1:8—2:1; 2:14-23). Hosea's prediction definitely found its fulfillment in the New Covenant church (cf. Rom. 9:25-26; I Pet. 2:10). It may be of interest to know that the Hebrew word *be'ulah* (married) comes from the root word *ba'al* which means, *to have dominion, to be lord over, to possess*.

The emphasis on marriage as descriptive of the new relationship stresses the fact that God's concern for His people is not one of mere duty; it is deeper than that—it is love. Just as a young man eagerly possesses (marries) his bride, so Jehovah will join Himself intimately to His people. He makes a covenant of love with His bride (the church) to protect her, sustain her, live with her and give her the honor of His name. He will lavish upon her the best of everything He has—even His own Son to atone for her sins.

QUIZ

1. Why must Jehovah not remain silent any longer about Zion?
2. When was Jehovah silent toward Zion?
3. Why was it necessary to rename Zion?
4. What is the probable fulfillment of the "new name"?

5. How do we know the name-changing refers to the messianic kingdom?
6. Why illustrate God's relationship to New Zion as a marriage?

2. NEW NOURISHMENT

TEXT: 62:6-9

- 6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest.
- 7 and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
- 8 Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy grain to be food for thine enemies; and foreigners shall not drink thy new wine, for which thou hast labored:
- 9 but they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah; and they that have gathered it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.

QUERIES

- a. What is a "remembrancer"?
- b. Why bring up the subject of grain and wine?

PARAPHRASE

I will set sentries all around you, O City of Righteousness and Peace; they will be constantly vigilant crying out warnings and directions. I will also establish intercessors within you, Zion, and instruct them that they are to continually offer supplications and intercessions and prayers of thanksgiving for your establishment throughout the earth. Jehovah has sworn by His own Self, the most powerful oath there is, saying, I will not permit your enemies to plunder you and take away from you what is rightfully yours anymore. What is yours by right of inheritance you shall have and enjoy because you shall be forever in My presence.

COMMENTS

v. 6-7 PROTECTION: Watchmen were sentinels standing watch upon the tops of walls and in watch-towers of ancient cities to cry out warning at the approach of the enemy. The term is also used figuratively to denote men especially commissioned by God to preach and proclaim the Law of God to His people (cf. Ezek. 3:17; 33:1-9; Isa. 56:10, etc.). God promises that the "watchmen" in New Zion will be alert, constant and adept. They will not be like the watchmen of Isaiah's day, satiated, filled with wine, loving to lie down and slumber (56:10). The watchmen of New Zion will declare the whole counsel of God, night and day, with tears (cf. Acts 20:17-35). Shepherds of the flock will be always on guard protecting against "greivous wolves" (false teachers and false doctrines). Faithful ministers of the gospel and elders and teachers of the church are her watchmen. They can never afford the false luxury of holding their peace for Zion's enemy, like a roaring lion, seeks whom he may devour. Not only shall Zion have faithful watchmen, she shall also have persistent "remembrancers." The Hebrew word *hammazkirim* is literally, *those who remind*. The idea is that New Zion will have those who are constant in prayer, supplicating God on her behalf. Jesus taught constant, persistent prayer as a characteristic of the citizen of the messianic kingdom (cf. Lk. 11:5-14; 18:1-8). The point of Jesus' parables is not that we can wear God down until He gives in because we have prayed so long and so eloquently, but that if an exasperated friend or a grouchy old judge will answer the pleading of someone in need, *how much more* will our Father who is really *anxious to help*, answer us speedily?! The first century church was in constant prayer because its leaders (apostles, elders, evangelists) were men of constant prayer (I Thess. 5:16-18).

The main thing to be "remembered" and that which is to be kept constantly before God in prayer is the "establishment" of New Jerusalem as a praise in the earth—evangelism. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest

(cf. Mt. 9:37-38; Lk. 10:21; Jn. 4:35, etc.). Going into all the world to make disciples was our Lord's parting words to the church (Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:44-53; Acts 1:8). Prayer for the evangelization of the world must be constantly upon the heart and lips of New Zion.

v. 8-9 PROVISION: Jehovah has allowed Jerusalem's enemies to plunder the land. Specifically Assyria and Babylon invaded Palestine and looted harvest field and city shops. Even the Temple was ravaged by Babylon and its vessels carried off. Israel's inheritance was wrested from her. But it shall not be so with New Zion. Her inheritance is incorruptible and eternal—one that does not fade away (I Pet. 1:3-5). Nothing in the seen or unseen world can separate New Zion from her inheritance (Rom. 8:31-39). Ancient Zion's glory was transient but New Zion's is eternal (cf. II Cor. 4:16—5:5). Once again Isaiah puts New Zion's future glory in terminology comprehensible to ancient Zion (agricultural terms).

New Zion will enjoy the constant presence of the Lord. She "eats and drinks" at the Lord's Table. She has been invited to a feast (see Isa. 25:6-12 and Special Study, *RSVP, Come To the Feast*).

QUIZ

1. Who are the watchmen in New Zion?
2. What is their function?
3. What should New Zion be constantly in prayer for?
4. Why can New Zion's inheritance not be plundered?

3. NEW NATURE

TEXT: 62:10-12

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones;

lift up an ensign for the peoples.

- 11 Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth,
Say ye to the daughter of Zìon, Behold, thy salvation cometh;
behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before
him.
- 12 And they shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of
Jehovah: and thou shalt be called Sought out, A city not
forsaken.

QUERIES

- a. What is an "ensign"?
- b. When were they called "The holy people"?

PARAPHRASE

Zion you must get out of the middle of heathenism, separate yourself once and for all from such a life, and build your high-way toward the City of God as He is preparing it for you. Your mission is to become, as it were, a flag or signal toward which people from all over the earth may be drawn to find God. Listen, this is what Jehovah has announced to the whole world; Zion, your salvation is surely coming, and all the blessings and judgments promised in connection with that salvation are coming also. When this great salvation comes Zion's citizens will be acknowledged as holy, separated unto the Holy God, purchased by Jehovah. Zion will at last be what she was intended to be, Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

COMMENTS

v. 10-11 SEPARATED: The admonition to Judah here is that she prepare to separate herself from paganism in order that she may become the remnant through which Jehovah will build

New Zion (the redeemed messianic church). Judah will soon go into captivity. There she will be surrounded by the idolatry and carnality with which she is so enamored in her own land. It will be a great temptation to all of the Jews to compromise the truth of God's revelation and take up with paganism to the extent that when the time comes to return to Palestine and restore the Jewish commonwealth they will all decide to remain in Babylon (see our comments 48:20-22). These verses are similar to 40:3-4 and 57:14.

God had placed the Hebrew people in Palestine so they might be a sign and witness to all the heathen world around them of the Only Righteous, Omnipotent, True God (cf. Ex. 19:5-6; Ezek. 5:5ff). Israel was to be *masas* (*ensign*) or standard, flag, banner, sign, token, by which the world was to be attracted to her God. But she "showed pirate colors"—she demonstrated more paganism than the pagans (Ezek. 5:5ff; Jer. 18:13, etc.).

Now the Lord is calling her back to her divine mission and predicting that there will be a remnant who will choose to fulfill this mission and eventually form New Zion (the church) which will draw people from all nations to her.

Jehovah will accomplish Zion's redemption. He will pay the price. He will conquer her most powerful enemies, sin and death (in the Messiah). But Zion must exercise her will and accept that salvation by faith, repentance and obedience to the covenant terms. Repentance and faith requires an obedient turning away from sin, separating oneself deliberately and willingly from all that God prohibits and living deliberately and willingly what God commands. Covenant terms for New Zion involves obedience in baptism (immersion in water), Acts 2:38; 8:12-13; 8:38-39; 10:47; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12; I Pet. 3:21, etc.). Zion is also to announce to the world the proclamation that God has accomplished salvation. With acceptance of God's proffered salvation comes the rewards of all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). With rejection of God's proffered salvation comes the recompense of judgment (cf. II Thess. 1:8-9).

v. 12 SANCTIFIED: When Zion separates itself from paganism and accepts the Lord's salvation, she shall be acknowledged as *holy*. It will be apparent to the whole world that she is dedicated, set-apart, and belongs to the Lord of Glory, author of Life and Righteousness. This is what the church of Christ is for—a testimony of the Holy God. She is to fulfill what God intended for Israel (Ex. 19:6). The world is to acknowledge that members of New Zion consider themselves *purchased* (redeemed) by Almighty God; Zion is to testify that her citizenship is in heaven and that she has no abiding place here—she is a city of sojourners whose destiny is the Eternal Jerusalem where God dwells forever and ever.

QUIZ

1. Why is Zion admonished to “go through the gates”? What gates?
2. What must Zion do concerning the salvation offered by Jehovah?
3. What will the New Zion fulfill that Old Zion did not?

D. RESTLESSNESS OF ZION, CHAPTERS 63 - 64

1. PREDICTED VINDICATION

TEXT: 63:1-9

- 1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.
- 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?
- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and

- trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.
- 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.
- 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me.
- 6 And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.
- 7 I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
- 8 For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour.
- 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the one "who speaks in righteousness"?
- b. What is the "year of my redeemed"?
- c. Who is the "angel of his presence"?

PARAPHRASE

Who is this majestic figure I see approaching Zion from the direction of Edom. He has on royal robes and strides along in a grand and stately march. He answers, I am the One who vindicates Zion, the One who is Zion's Saviour. But why are your robes stained all over with red as if you had been tramping

grapes in the winevat? He answers, There was no one capable or willing anywhere to do what I have done so I have had to do this mission all by myself. What I have been doing is enforcing My threats of wrath and anger by utterly destroying the enemies of My people. That is the blood of My enemies staining My garments! I have done this because the allotted time for punishment to be meted out has reached its fulfillment in My divine program of redemption. When this time came, I looked for someone to join with Me in this work of judgment but there was no one and I was disturbed. So I did the work of destroying the enemy alone. When I executed My anger upon My enemies, I made them reel and stagger with the destruction. The cup of their wrath which they made others drink, I filled up with My wrath and made them drink until they died of it.

In all of this judgment upon Zion's enemies the compassion of Jehovah is manifest toward Israel and I will therefore praise Him and proclaim His lovingkindness with all that is within me. It is also evident in this great deliverance through judgment that Jehovah has saved Zion to make of her a people who will not deal falsely but will be righteous and just. God Himself experienced affliction when His people were afflicted and so He sent Himself to save His people. Personally affected as He was by His love and compassion for them, He personally entered into the salvation and redemption of His people all the years of their past history and He will take a personal hand in their future salvation and redemption.

COMMENTS

v. 1-6 CONQUEST: The prophet sees "Someone" coming from the direction of Edom (southeast of the Dead Sea) with "dyed" garments. The Hebrew word is *khamutz* and means, *highly colored*, indicating royalty or affluence. The remainder of verse one indicates the approaching One is majestically divine since He is One that "announces vindication" (*davver tzedakah* in Hebrew) and is "mighty to save." Later, the prophet

praises Jehovah for His lovingkindnesses as expressed in the judgments upon Zion's enemies. The unrecognizable figure coming from Edom is Jehovah. Bozrah was the ancient capital of Edom. For a discussion of Edom and its relation to the Israelites, read our comments in *Minor Prophets*, pub. College Press, pg. 117-118. The Edomites were inveterate enemies of Israel. They rejoiced with spite-filled hearts at any misfortune befalling the Jews. Edom participated in every opportunity that came their way to plunder Jerusalem and Judah, selling Jewish captives into slavery and killing them unmercifully (cf. Obadiah 1-14; Isa. 34:5-15; Ezek. 35:1-15). Many of the prophets predicted the judgment of God upon the Edomites. Edom is often mentioned as typical or representative of *all* the ungodly powers that oppose Jehovah's redemptive work through Israel. We believe that is the case here also. The picture here is of Jehovah's judgment of all that opposes His messianic program.

The Hebrew word *'edom* is translated *red* and is the same word we apparently translate *man* and *Edom*. The garments of the One approaching are splattered with *red* like a man who has just come from tramping in the winevat and has splattered red grape juice all over his clothing. This red is the "lifeblood" of his enemies (cf. v. 3). A similar picture is painted by John the apostle as he portrays the judgment of God upon the Roman empire in Revelation 19:13.

Lest someone get the idea that Edom's downfall (and that of any other nation for that matter) is a matter of chance, or that it might have been averted if other circumstances had fallen just right, Jehovah emphasizes that He *alone* brought it about. The One approaching (the Lord) had trodden the "winepress" alone. He had no assistance, not only because no one else would be adequate for the task, but also because He needed no one else! The emphasis of this whole passage is that Jehovah is *personally* involved in and responsible for the deliverance, salvation and redemption of Zion—even to the destruction of her enemies. In a prior statement (Isa. 59:16) the Lord emphasizes the same ideas. The Lord has everything needful for Zion's messianic destiny exactly scheduled in history

and He carries it out according to His own righteous pleasure. The "day" of His vengeance was in His own heart and the "year" of His "redeemed" comes precisely according to His timetable, (cf. Isa. 61:1). The Lord sets times and seasons (Dan. 2:20-23); He deposes and sets up kings and kingdoms to fit His own plans (Dan. 5:18-21); He has a definite time schedule for the messianic nation to bring forth the Messiah (see comments Dan. 9:24-27). He has the power in His own "arm" to bring salvation to His people and needs no other assistance (cf. Isa. 40:10; 51:5; 52:10; 53:1 for comments on "arm"). The Lord made His enemies *drunk* with His wrath. This is a figure of speech indicating two ideas. First, His enemies have caused the Jews to "drink" their cup of wrath in plunder and slavery; Jehovah will recompense these enemies with His own cup of wrath filled to the brim. God is not mocked; whatever a nation sows, that shall it reap, double! Second, when Jehovah's enemies are made to drink His cup of wrath, they will stagger and reel under it as drunken men reel (cf. Isa. 29:9; 49:26; Rev. 17:6; 18:3-7, etc.). God's wrath is *perfect*; it is complete and lacks nothing.

V. 7-9 CELEBRATION: Zion, through the prophet Isaiah, is led to rejoice in Jehovah's judgment of her enemies. It is not sadistic for those who love righteousness to praise God when He judges and defeats evil. The Bible insists that an Omnipotent, Absolutely Holy and Just God must, by His very nature, ultimately uphold and give complete victory to truth, holiness and justice. He must, on the other hand, bring about complete defeat and incarceration of evil. That is why He made Hell! God intends to accomplish those objectives through two means. First, He will make available an opportunity and a way for all human beings, who so choose, to be declared righteous (by Jesus' blood) and to grow into the image of His own righteous nature (through faith and obedience to His revealed New Covenant). These, He will save and give Life everlasting. Second, He creates an everlasting penitentiary (Hell) where He will ultimately defeat and imprison all those who choose against His will and desire to live in rebellion against Him. Now a

part of recreating in His own righteous image those who choose that Life by surrender to His will is that they shall also hate evil and love good (cf. Isa. 1:16-17; Prov. 8:13; Amos 5:15). Heaven and the saints are told to rejoice over the fact that God destroyed the "harlot," "Babylon" (the city of Rome and the Roman empire) with blood, war, pestilence, fire, destruction and torments (cf. Rev. 17-18, esp. Rev. 18:20 and 19:1-8)! A person who cannot hate evil, cannot love good! The uniqueness of Jesus' fleshly nature was that as a man He "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb. 1:9) and thus was the Perfect Man!

Thus in these verses it is a mark of the righteousness and godliness of Zion that she praise God and speak of His loving-kindnesses in response to His wreaking vengeance upon those who despise Him, rebel against Him and oppress His people. He vindicates His holiness, He upholds His absolute justness and He delivers His people and vindicates their faith in Him. If He cannot thus vindicate man's faith in His absolute holiness and justice and righteousness, then His faithfulness is compromised and there is no hope in worshipping Him as opposed to any other god!

God is true! Those who wish to be known as His children must be true. They must rejoice at the defeat of evil and the establishment of righteousness because this is the absolute truth. Those who oppose good and rejoice in evil cannot be His children because that is the ultimate falsehood. In addition, His sons will act upon their choice and *do* righteousness. Those who claim to be His children will not deal falsely. A citizen of Zion cannot *say* he stands for righteousness and *refuse to do* it. That is falseness (cf. I Jn. 2:3-6; 3:4-10). God cannot save the declared rebel and He cannot save the pretending servant; the pretender is as much a rebel as the declared one!

There is a difficult problem with the opening phrase of verse nine. The modern, vowel-pointed Hebrew text reads, *bekal-tzaratham l'o tzar*, or, "In all their affliction he was *not* afflicted." The ancient Hebrew text was strictly consonantal (without vowel-points). There is a consonantal text known

as *Kethiv*, or, "written" which acquired a standing of sacredness and prohibited any scribe from tampering with it. It could not be changed. But the Massoretes (cir. 950 A.D.), a group of Hebrew scholars, produced a text which preserved traditional readings in variance with the "sacred" *Kethiv*; this was called *Qere*, or, "to be read." The *Qere* was a text with the "traditional" variant consonants out in the margin. Because the vowels, being added later, did not have the sacredness of the consonants, the Massoretes felt it was proper to put the vowels for the marginal consonants (*Qere*) with the old consonants in the text (that is, with the *Kethiv*). This, of course, resulted in some impossible forms. The problem in verse nine is that the *Kethiv* text has *l'o* while the *Qere* text has *lo*. Young advocates the adoption of the *Qere* reading which would make the phrase read, "In all their affliction, there was affliction to him." Keil and Delitzsch say, "The Masora actually does reckon this as one of the fifteen passages in which *lo* is to be read for *l'o*." The *Qere* reading of *lo* certainly fits the context better and suits the concept already expressed concerning the suffering Servant (cf. Isa. 53:4-6; 53:10-11). The context indicates that when His people suffered affliction from their oppressors, God Himself felt that affliction and acted in judgment. That is no strange teaching in the Bible. The experiences of Hosea were indicative of the feelings God experienced toward a nation of people who had spurned His love (cf. Hos. 1:2-3; 3:1; 11:1-4, etc.). Our God feels—He is not a robot or a stoic, impassive, insensitive Idea. Jesus proved God feels (cf. Jn. 11:33-35).

Another interesting phrase in verse nine is, "and the angel of his presence saved them . . ." The Hebrew word translated *presence* is *panaym* which means literally, *face* or *person*. The word *male'k* is *angel* and means *messenger*. God promised to send the *messenger* of His *face* or *person* to His people (Ex. 23:20-23) and actually did send to them this messenger (Ex. 14:19; Num. 20:16). He is the Lord's messenger (Ex. 33:14, 15) and is actually the Lord Jehovah Himself (Ex. 33:12). Keil and Delitzsch say, "This mediatorial angel is called 'the angel

of His face,' as being the representative of God, for 'the face of God' is His self-revealing presence (even though only revealed to the mental eye); and consequently the presence of God . . . is called directly 'His face' in Deut. 4:37 . . . and 'my face' in Ex. 33:14-15, by the side of 'my angel' in Ex. 32:34, and the angel in Ex. 33:2, appears as something incomparably higher than the presence of God through the mediation of that one angel . . ." Young says, "The angel of His face is the angel who is His face or in whom His face is made clear. In him the Lord is Himself present." When the Lord said He would send His angel to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36) it is reported that the Lord Himself did the deed (cf. Isa. 10:12; Isa. 10:33-34).

The next section (63:10-14) indicates the judgments over Zion's enemies here declared (63:1-9) were past judgments upon which Zion might base her trust in Jehovah for deliverance from the Babylonian captivity which was apparently inescapable as Isaiah was writing these words. But, as the next section indicates, Zion is having difficulty believing that Jehovah will work for her deliverance as He did in days gone by.

QUIZ

1. Why is the One appearing to Isaiah's vision coming from Edom?
2. What could be a different translation of the word "righteousness" in verse one?
3. Why does this One coming have "red" on his garments?
4. Why stress that this One has trodden the winevat alone?
5. Is it proper for Zion to speak of God's lovingkindness in connection with judgment and vengeance?
6. How is God afflicted when His people are afflicted?
7. What is the relation of this angel to Jehovah?

2. PRAYER FOR VICTORY

TEXT: 63:10-14

- 10 But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.
- 11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?
- 12 that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name?
- 13 that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not?
- 14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

QUERIES

- a. Upon whom did Jehovah turn to be an enemy?
- b. Who remembered the days of old?
- c. When did they "rest"?

PARAPHRASE

In spite of all the times God vindicated His people by saving them from their enemies in past times, they have grieved His Holy Spirit by rebelling against His commandments. Because of their rebellion He had to become their enemy and must now fight against them. Now they are remembering those days gone by when Moses delivered God's people and they are crying out, Where is the One who brought our ancestors through

the Red Sea with shepherds like Moses? Where is the One who put His Holy Spirit within them? They are also saying, Where is the One whose glorious power parted the Red Sea in the path of our ancestors and vindicated His name forever when Moses lifted up his rod? Where is the One who guided them through the bottom of the Sea? Like horses galloping easily through a desert cleared of all obstacles, our ancestors never slipped or stumbled walking through that Sea's rocky bottom. Just like cattle that go easily and safely down to graze in the wadis, the Spirit of Jehovah gave our ancestors rest. That is the way You led our ancestors, Lord, and Your name then was made glorious. Where are you now, Lord?

COMMENTS

v. 10 RESISTING HIS SPIRIT: Although the Lord has given the prophet a vision of His power and faithfulness to destroy Zion's enemies and uphold her when she trusts Him (63:1-9), Zion seems bent on not believing and acting upon it (63:10-14). Therefore the Lord is going to give Zion over to humiliation, destruction and captivity (63:15-19).

The Hebrew word *maru* is translated *rebel* and is the strongest word for that circumstance, meaning literally, *to revolt*. Their revolt *pained* or *sorrowed* the Holy Spirit; in Hebrew *'itzevu 'eth-ruach kadesho*. In Ex. 23:20-21 Jehovah said to the people, "Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him." However, the people rebelled from the time they left Egypt (Ex. 17:1ff; 32:1ff), and they continued their rebellion until God finally took them out of their land and into captivity. The third Person of the Godhead was actively involved in the program of redemption in the Old Testament (see Special Study, "The Holy Spirit In Old Testament Times," pages 458-462). Young sees in this chapter all three Persons of

the Godhead: "Thus, . . . there is a distinction of the three persons of the Triune God: He (Yahweh), the angel of His presence and the Spirit of His holiness. In the history of the chosen people each Person of the Trinity was active." The point of this verse (10) is that the people whom Jehovah chose to co-operate with Him in redeeming the whole world forced Him to be their enemy because they revolted and afflicted His Holy Spirit. Jehovah is against them because they are against Him. He must vindicate His holiness and justice now upon the chosen people. He is giving them up to chastening in Mesopotamia for 70 years. The writer of the Hebrew epistle in the N.T. exhorts, ". . . do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Heb. 3:7-19). The Lord had to turn from being "afflicted with their affliction," to "fighting against them" because that was what He said He would do if they rebelled against Him. The Lord keeps His promises!

v. 11-13 REMEMBERING HIS SPIRIT: The subject of "remembered" could be either Jehovah or Zion. It appears Zion would fit the context better. With the downfall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity imminent, Zion (the people of Judah) is *remembering* (and evidently praying for a return of) the Holy Spirit of God in power and deliverance as He did through Moses at the crossing of the Red Sea. If the Holy Spirit of God could part the waters of the Red Sea, can He not now deliver them from Babylon? The phrase, "where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?" is interesting and perhaps should give us pause to rethink our concept of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament age. The Hebrew word *kerev* is translated midst; the usual word for midst is *tok*. *Kerev* is unique and means *inward part, inwards, bowels*; hence, *the heart*. *Kerev* is the word in I Kings 17:22 where "the soul of the child came *into him* again." Did God's Spirit indwell the believer of the O.T.? Could it be that God put His Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people as He was leading them in the exodus from Egypt—and there they grieved Him? One N.T. passage appears to preclude the possibility of the Spirit dwelling in believers of the O.T. age. John notes, "But

this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn. 7:39). Note, however, the word *given* (in Jn. 7:39) is a supplied word—it is not in the Greek text. Does this indicate that the Spirit was not yet for *everyone* who believes (including Gentiles)? or does it mean that the Spirit was *not yet given at all* (not even for Jews) until after Jesus was glorified? The latter has been the traditional interpretation. If the latter interpretation is to be followed, what is one to do with the apostle Paul's clear statement that, ". . . if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his . . ." and, ". . . if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:9-11)? If eternal life and resurrection from the dead necessitates the Spirit of God dwelling in man, and if the Spirit was *not* given at all until Christ was glorified, how do we account for the eternal life apparently granted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28; 16:23, etc.). How could Abraham be justified by faith without receiving the Spirit of God also by faith (Rom. 4:2-9; Gal. 3:6-7; Jas. 2:23)? How could the beggar be borne to Abraham's bosom if the beggar did not have the Spirit of God (Lk. 16:22)? How could Moses and Elijah be transfigured with Christ in glorified appearance without having the Spirit of God (Mt. 17:1-5; Lk. 9:30-31, etc.)?

The only resolution of this dilemma appears to be to recognize that the Spirit of God was certainly *in* men of the Old Testament (Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David and the prophets, cf. Num. 27:18; Psalms 51:11; 143:10, etc.). Rotherham says on Psalm 51:11, "David . . . had enjoyed the presence of the Holy Spirit, or he could not have prayed, *Take it not from me*. Was that Spirit, not hallowing, as well as illuminating and revealing? Can we really enter into the undercurrent of this psalm, without perceiving that a hallowing Divine *Presence* had lain at the roots of the writer's spiritual life; . . . By how much soever this is clear, by so much also must it be clear.

that the Evangelist (John) spoke *comparatively* when he said (Jn. 7:39) that the Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified." (*Studies In The Psalms, Vol. I*, by J. B. Rotherham, pub. College Press, pg. 352).

B. B. Warfield in his *Biblical and Theological Studies*, (pub. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1952), says, "The Spirit of God, in the Old Testament, is not merely the immanent Spirit, the source of all the world's life and all the world's movement . . . He is as well the indwelling Spirit of holiness in the hearts of God's children."

We submit that the message of the Messiah was therefore, that the Spirit of God was *not* come in *His fulness* until Jesus was glorified and redemption was completed. After the redemptive work of God was completed through the Son, the indwelling presence of the Spirit would give man a greater, more strengthening participation in the inheritance God had stored up for believers. The New Covenant is certainly better, far surpassing and the fulfillment of the Old. The New is enacted upon better promises. But it would seem to us that the Spirit of God was in those saints of old who were justified and thus given eternal life (historically accomplished at the death of Christ, Heb. 9:15-17; Rom. 3:21-26), which they appropriated by faith. Perhaps it was a matter of "good, better and best" as pictured in the following chart. Or, perhaps the Spirit of God was given to the O.T. saints "on credit" or "retro-actively" to guarantee their resurrection to eternal life much as their forgiveness was "on credit" (cf. Heb. 9:15). One thing is certain, having the Spirit of God is necessary to being raised from the dead!

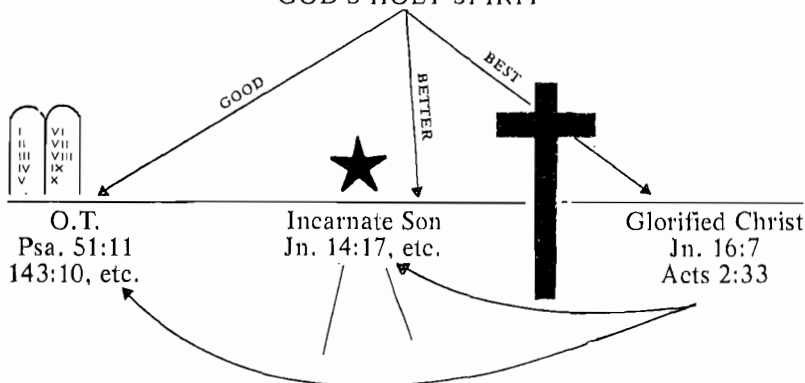
Be that as it may, the point of this passage is to portray the frustration of the people over the impending captivity. It appears to them as if God's Spirit has deserted them and that God Himself does not care that His name will be debased if He does not save them as He saved their ancestors. He led their ancestors across the bed of the Red Sea as easily and swiftly as a horse runs through a desert where all the obstacles have been removed. Why does He not do that now?

Was not The Spirit of God in the saints of old
in order to keep them from eternal death? (Rom. 8:9-11)

YES

Perhaps in lesser degree of companionship.

GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT



Or, perhaps the Holy Spirit was theirs in promise before
Jesus was glorified and theirs in fact, retroactively,
after His glorification (like forgiveness, Heb. 9:15f).

v. 14 **RESTING IN HIS SPIRIT:** The people remember that their ancestors were led by the Spirit of God into the land of Canaan like contented cattle are led securely and easily down into the wadis to graze. The Spirit of God was the *cause* of their *nukh* ("rest, settling down, having repose, abiding") in Canaan. Now they are wondering why He cannot cause them to remain in their land. Could it be that their prayer is not really a penitent prayer but a selfish one? Could it be that they want Jehovah to deliver them *in* their rebellion and not *from* it—as so many of us are prone to want to be saved in sin and not from it? On the other hand, perhaps this is a prediction of the prayers of penitence the people will offer down in Babylon when they have had time to consider their sins and truly repent. Perhaps this is prophecy! When they have truly repented (cf. Dan. 9:3-19) God will hear their prayer (Dan. 9:20-23) and return them to their land to fulfill their messianic destiny (Dan. 9:24-27).

QUIZ

1. When did God's people rebel? How long?
2. Did God put His Holy Spirit in people in the Old Testament?
3. Have you thought through the teaching of the Bible on the Holy Spirit as thoroughly as you would like? (We suggest C. C. Crawford's two-volume work entitled, *The Eternal Spirit, His Word and Works*, pub. by College Press.)
4. Do you think the prayer of the people here is a penitent prayer?

3. PETITION OF VICTIMS

TEXT: 63:15-19

- 15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me.
- 16 For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name.
- 17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake; the tribes of thine inheritance.
- 18 Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.
- 19 We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name.

QUERIES

- a. Why did they think they had to call upon God to "look"?
- b. Why does Abraham not know the nation?
- c. What time reference is involved in verse 18?

PARAPHRASE

Lord, where have You gone? Lord, are You oblivious to our predicament? Look down from where You sit on Your transcendently glorious and holy throne and give attention to our situation. Where is all the eagerness and power You used to show us now? Apparently You are deliberately keeping Your love and pity from us! You are the only Father we have with enough power to save us from the impending captivity. Yes, Abraham and Jacob were our earthly fathers, but they are not able to redeem us or save us; You, Jehovah, are our only Everlasting Father. Why have You disowned us? Why have you prevented us from wandering away from You and prevented us from hardening our hearts toward You? Come back, Lord, for the sake of those who serve You and help us, for we are the people of Your possession. We, your holy people, have possessed the land so briefly; our enemies are making us a dispossessed and dispersed people by taking over Your land. Lord, You are treating us as if You had never been our Sovereign and as if we had never been Your people.

COMMENTS

v. 15-17 DISOWNED: The Hebrew word *shamayim* is plural for *shamah* which means *high, heavenward, height*. The word is always in the plural form in the O.T. God most often manifested Himself from the direction of the sky in the O.T. and the Hebrew thought of the sky (or beyond) as the place of Jehovah's habitation. Actually, due to the limitations of human language (which is limited by human experience) designating the *heavens* as God's habitation is about as accurate as any man can be. The point seems to be that these people feel Jehovah is so utterly transcendent, dwelling in such absolute holiness (separation from this world) He is disowning His creatures. The petition is that He will look down from His high and lofty place and give attention to their predicament.

Based upon the historical record of Jehovah's dealings with their ancestors (Genesis, Exodus, et al.) He was eager, zealous and arduous in delivering, guiding and sustaining their nation in centuries past. But suddenly, it appears, Jehovah has deliberately *restrained* (withdrawn) His zeal for their nation. It is their assumption that Jehovah does not even care about them anymore. How could they get that idea? Jehovah repeatedly told them of His love and care through the prophets. But their accusation that Jehovah was deliberately insensitive to their needs was based upon their carnal concept of what their need was and their carnal ideas as to how God should act toward them. They believed their imperative need was to be delivered from those who would take them into captivity. They believed God should act in supernatural, judgmental power *now* upon their enemies as He had done in the past. Man has always had the tendency (ever since the devil taught him in Eden to do so) to blame God, or someone else, for the consequences of his own faults and failures. Judah has been indulging in false religion which induces false ethics which results in social disintegration; she has been playing the dangerous game of international intrigue and politics which results in war and invasion; now she is blaming God for her predicament. Judah suggests that Jehovah has defaulted on His Fatherhood! Acknowledging that He is the only Father capable of saving their necks, the implication is that He is unwilling now to act as their Father. He has disowned them! There is no disavowal of their ancestry to Abraham and Jacob here—the point is the contrast between human fathers and Supernatural Father. An emergency has arisen and now they need their heavenly Father; they did not seek Him before (cf. Isa. 8:19-22; 30:9-11; 58:2-5; 59:1-3, etc.). The Hebrew word *tate'enu* is from the *Hife'iyl* stem which denotes causative manner and is thus translated *make us to err* in verse 17. Certainly God does not *force* man to sin. God does not even cause man to sin in the sense that He makes man's choice for him. Of course, man very often *accuses* God of making him sin, or being the cause of his sin. That is the way of rebellion,

dishonesty, lawlessness and devil-mindedness! Man may be even more subtle (as we have given it in our paraphrase) and blame God for *not preventing* him from sinning! It is the old cliché, "If God is a good God, why does He permit evil to happen?" The Lord tried every way possible consistent with the free will of man to keep man from wandering into rebellion and lawlessness. Judah, by the use of the *hife'iy* stem, has betrayed her moral dishonesty in trying to blame God for her wandering and hardening of heart against Him. In one sense of the word God must, by the fact of man's freedom to choose, allow man to either choose that which will soften his heart and bring him to walk in God's way, or, choose that which will harden his heart and lead him to wander away from God's way. But God will also make the ultimate sacrifices to furnish man with every opportunity to make the right choice; He will send His Spirit in His word through the prophets, leaders and kings; and finally in His Son He will Himself atone and offer a New covenant.

God has not disowned His people. He is about to demonstrate, through the captivity, just how much He owns them. The child who is not chastened has no real father (cf. Heb. 12:1-11). So, our Father-child relationship to God depends upon our perspective. These people of Judah could not look upon their impending captivity as the chastening of a loving Father (which is what it was revealed to be by Hosea, Isaiah and others). They looked at it through carnal eyes, not eyes of faith. Looking thus, they charged God with desertion!

v. 18-19 DISPOSSESSED: In these two verses the people are dangerously near impugning the honor of the Lord. They complain that although God gave them the land of Palestine and built them a Temple, they had lived in it only a brief time (from approximately 1400 B.C. to 600 B.C.) and now it was about to be invaded by enemies and they would be dispossessed. So the Lord appears to them unable to maintain His people in His land and keep His Sanctuary standing. The time in which the Lord maintained His people in His land by His sovereign power was so relatively short (800 years), it hardly

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seems worthy of calling it a "rule." The length of time in which the Hebrews were called "the people of Jehovah" seems so short it is as if they were never His people at all. They are saying, in essence, Lord if Your name is ridiculed because of our being taken from our land, it is your fault. Their attitude is if God does not help them *now* and on their terms, He cannot blame anyone but Himself. How often all men are tempted to evaluate their circumstances through the dying eyes of carnal-mindedness and blame God for them. May it not be so in New Zion!

QUIZ

1. Where did the Hebrews believe God dwelt?
2. Is there a better location to suppose God abides?
3. Why do these people think God has disowned them?
4. Why are they now calling on Him to act like a Father when they did not before?
5. Does God *make* men err?
6. Can God demonstrate in their captivity that He is their Father? How?
7. What seems to be their accusation against God in verses 18 and 19?

SPECIAL STUDY

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

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INTRODUCTION:

There is a wealth of teaching in the Bible with respect to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is said to do what only

persons can do. He can speak, teach, search, reveal, lead, and forbid (I Tim. 4:1; John 14:26; I Cor. 2:10; Acts 16:6, 7). He has the faculties of a person-mind, knowledge, affection, and will (Rom. 8:27; I Cor. 2:11; Rom. 15:30; I Cor. 12:11). He is shown to have the attributes of God. He is eternal (Heb. 9:14). He knows what God knows (I Cor. 2:10, 11). He exerts God's power (Luke 1:35). He is everywhere present as God is (Psalms 139:7-10). He is the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). We have every right to conclude, therefore, that a Bible study of the Holy Spirit is most valuable and essential.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKED THE WORKS OF GOD IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

1. He was present and active in the creation of the universe (Gen. 1:2).
2. He shared in creating man in the Godhead's image (Gen. 1:26; Job 33:4).
3. He exerted power as from God (Judges 14:6; Mic. 3:8).
4. He convicted men of sin and tried to turn them back to God (Gen. 6:3).
5. He cooperated in confounding arrogant men at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7).

B. THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED AND GUIDED GOD'S LEADERS.

1. During the very unsettled times covered by the book of Judges, God gave assistance to several judges with the presence of His Spirit.
 - a. God sent His Spirit upon Gideon, encouraging him to rally the tribes of Israel against the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 6:33-35).
 - b. God's Spirit enabled Jephthah to defeat the sons of Ammon (Judges 11:29-33).
 - c. God's Spirit empowered Samson to slay a lion and to slay thirty men (Judges 14:6, 19).
 - d. God's spirit was strong in Samson to prepare him to slay 1,000 Philistines (Judges 15:14).
2. Though Jehovah did not want Israel to have a king, when

granting them their wish, He assisted Saul and David by bestowing His Spirit upon them.

- a. When Saul was anointed by Samuel as Israel's first king, the Spirit came upon him to lead him in prophesying (I Sam. 10:1, 6, 10).
 - b. Once Saul was rejected by Jehovah, David was selected as Saul's successor. As the Spirit came upon David, He deserted Saul (I Sam. 16:12-14).
3. The Holy Spirit's most extensive work of all in Old Testament times is found with respect to God's prophets.
- a. Moses expressed the selfless, open-hearted wish that all of God's people could be prophets under the guidance of His Spirit (Num. 11:29).
 - b. When one understands the Old Testament's concept that the prophet must speak for and represent God to man exactly (Ex. 7:1, 2), he can see the necessity of man's being guided by the Spirit to be qualified as a prophet.
 - c. In Nehemiah's day, the Israelites stood a fourth of a day confessing their sins. Then they were admonished by Levites to recall the bountiful blessings God had showered upon their ancestors. Among these was the Spirit's instruction of them through the prophets (Neh. 9:20, 30). Sadly, most of the nation would not give heed to the prophetic words spoken.
 - d. Zechariah observes how the people had hardened their hearts against the former prophets, even though the Spirit revealed Jehovah's law and words through them (Zech. 7:12). Jehovah promised not to listen to them just as they had not listened to Him.
 - e. The most effective summary of Old Testament prophecy is found in the New Testament: II Peter 1:20, 21. There it is declared that no prophecy of Scripture originates from human will. Rather prophets spoke as they were guided by the Spirit of God.
4. Though there are over 300 references to priests in the Old Testament, there is not one example of the Holy Spirit's

presence to guide them. This is probably best explained by the fact that their duties, mode of dress, and style of life were set down by divine revelation. Their obligation was to obey what God had already told them to do.

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT ASSISTED SECONDARY LEADERS.

1. The leaders previously mentioned furnish illustrations of the major human leadership God provided and equipped for Israel.
2. There was also a back-up or assisting leadership which God prepared with Holy Spirit guidance.
3. During Moses' career of directing people of Israel over a period of 40 years of wandering, God commanded him to select 70 elders from among the population to act as his religious and civil assistants. This would lighten his burden of trying to deal fairly and adequately with almost three million people. God placed His Spirit upon these men, once they were chosen (Num. 11:16, 17, 25).
4. Joshua took Moses' place and led out to conquer Palestine for Israel and to settle the tribes in their new-found home. God had placed His Spirit within Joshua and asked Moses to ordain him to his task by the laying on of hands (Num. 28:17).
5. God endued Bezalel and Oholiab with His Spirit so as to make them skilled tradesmen, fitted to prepare all the artistic designs and accompanying furniture of the Tabernacle. They exhibited superior skills which were worthy of God's "house of worship" (Ex. 31:1-11).

D. THE HOLY SPIRIT STRESSED THAT DEPENDENCE UPON HIM IS THE ONE WAY TO GOD'S VICTORY.

1. Through Isaiah Jehovah chastised the nation of Judah for making its own plans, not accepting His; for making alliances with Egypt and not with His Spirit (Isa. 30:1, 2). See also Isa. 31:1-3. They were adding sin to sin. Their foul attitude is dramatized by the fact that they were refusing to listen to God's instruction. They even bullied God's prophets (seers), telling them not to prophesy what

was right. They wanted to hear pleasant words and deceits (Isa. 30:9, 10).

2. Because Israel rejected God's Spirit in the wilderness wanderings, He turned against them as His enemies (Isa. 63:7-14).
3. Under the figure of a lampstand holding seven lamps and supplied with lighting fuel by two olive trees, Zechariah conveyed a valuable lesson to Zerubbabel from God: accomplishment of God's work is achieved by God's Spirit, not by human might or power (Zech. 4:1-6).

CONCLUSION:

The presence of God's Spirit has played a fundamental role in His direction of men throughout both the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations. Special men were selected for the Spirit's indwelling so that they might lead God's people correctly. These principles can minister to a better understanding of the Spirit's work in New Testament times.

D. RESTLESSNESS OF ZION (cont'd), CHAPTERS 63 - 64

4. PENITENTLY VEXED

TEXT: 64:1-7

- 1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence,
- 2 as when fire kindleth the brushwood, and the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!
- 3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down; the mountains quaked at thy presence.
- 4 For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him.
- 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,

those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them have we been of long time; and shall we be saved?

- 6 For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us by means of our iniquities.

QUERIES

- a. Why has the attitude of the people now apparently changed?
- b. Is verse four quoted in I Corinthians 2:9?
- c. How does one "take hold" of God? (verse seven)

PARAPHRASE

O Lord we wish you would break open the impenetrable expanse of the skies that seems to be keeping You from coming down personally to us in all Your omnipotence making the whole earth shake and tremble with Your judgment. If you would intervene directly, Lord, Your righteous glory would consume our enemies like fire consumes brushwood and the fiery lava of volcanoes makes the waters boil. Yet, when we think about it Lord, if you came down thus You would do such awe-inspiring wonders that we do not even have language to describe them. Since the world was created no person anywhere has ever seen or heard of a God like You who works for those who patiently trust in Him. Lord, You gladly receive any man who comes to you doing righteousness and joyfully following in Your ways. But we have continued in our sinning; even when You expressed Your hatred of our rebellious ways we went right on sinning. How can we ever be saved? Yes, we all stand in relationship to You as one cut off from the covenant

because of our uncleanness; any righteousness we might think we have is really non-existent and we are as legally unclean as the bloodstained rags of a woman at her monthly period. Like the leaves of autumn, we fade, fall and wither; our sins sweep us away like the wind blows away the autumn leaves. In spite of our very apparent condition, no one calls upon Your name and no one ever prods himself to make any firm commitment of his life to Your word. You have withdrawn Your grace from us and we are being consumed by the consequences of our sins.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 CRY: The complaint of the preceeding passage begins to turn toward a cry of desperation which leads to a confession. The remnant is gradually coming to the attitude God is able to use in His messianic program. Now the cry is that Jehovah will tear an opening in the impenetrable black cloud that is standing in the way of His seeing their predicament and come down to help them. They are begging God to come in direct intervention as He did for their ancestors. God presented Himself as directly as He dared to Isaiah in His theophany in the temple (cf. Isa. 6:1ff). Why could the people not accept Isaiah's testimony to that direct appearance and trust Him to deliver them from the impending captivity? For the same reason men and women today demand a physical appearance from God before they will believe when there is sufficient testimony to His incarnation in the New Testament!

The anticipation of Jehovah's appearance is couched in the experiences of their ancestors—mountains quaking, fire burning, waters boiling, nations trembling, (cf. Ex. 19:16ff; Psalms 144:5; Deut. 32:22; Judg. 5:4-5; Micah 1:3-4; Heb. 1:4-6; 3:3; 15; Psalm 18:8-16, etc.). Should God appear directly He would consume the whole material universe (cf. Heb. 12:18-21; 18:25-29). Instead of coming in His consuming Presence, He sent His Son to give the world a saving Presence. So when the people give more thought to what such a direct intervention

of Jehovah would bring, they are moved to cry, "O, Jehovah, if You came down thus You would do awe-inspiring deeds and wonders that not even we could anticipate!" Should Jehovah appear on earth it would be overwhelming—no human language could express it, no human being could guess what it would be like! The great apostle Paul was caught up "into the third heavens" and saw things it was impossible for human language to describe (cf. II Cor. 12:1-4).

v. 4-7 CONFESSIO: At last, the remnant, after contemplating the awesome holiness of Jehovah and His unsearchable power, confesses its sin and prepares to be clay in the Potter's hand (cf. 64:8). First, there is the confession of the uniqueness of Jehovah's revelation of Himself and His relationship to those who "wait" (or trust) in Him. The people are at last testifying that Jehovah is quite unlike the idols. In fact, no one in all the world is able to know the mind, Spirit, deeds, personhood of Jehovah unless Jehovah chooses to reveal Himself. And even then, man can know only as much of God's mind as He chooses to reveal through His appointed spokesmen (prophets and apostles, etc.). This is the sense in which the apostle Paul quoted Isaiah 64:4 in I Corinthians 2:9. The nature of the living God is such that the human mind is incapable of *discovering* Him or *inventing* Him—man must humbly "wait" until God reveals Himself and man must humbly accept both the instrumentality by which and the extent to which God reveals Himself.

The uniqueness of Jehovah stands out in contrast to all pretended gods most apparently in His faithfulness to be constantly present with those who seek righteousness and "remember" (walk in) His ways. The holiness of Jehovah was unique in contrast to all the gods of the heathen. At last the people are admitting that Jehovah requires men to "rejoice" in and "work" righteousness to enjoy His presence. They have come confessing as Hosea (Hos. 14:1-9) instructed their northern countrymen to do. This remnant of Isaiah's disciples has been brought to its confession through the preaching of the prophet concerning the atoning suffering of the Servant and the future

glory of Zion. They will produce a progeny of faithful servants (by implanting Isaiah's message in their offspring) which will, in turn, bring the Messiah into the world (cf. Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:24-56; Lk. 1:67-80; Lk. 2:1-52; Lk. 4:14-30, etc.).

Once man has been confronted with a revelation of Jehovah's holiness and admits it, then he sees himself as he truly is, a sinner in need of Jehovah's saving grace (cf. Isa. 6:5-6). The remnant here acknowledges it has been "a long time" in its sin and in need of God's grace; else, how shall it be saved? They see their uncleanness. They now realize they are spiritually cut off from Jehovah because He is absolutely holy and they have defiled themselves and are no longer worthy to stand in His presence—even if He should come in answer to their prayer. This is quite different from the attitude expressed by some in Judah when they haughtily dared the Lord to come down and be present with them (cf. Isa. 5:19). They see their uncleanness as a "polluted garment" using the figure of the ceremonial uncleanness of a woman at the time of her monthly period (cf. Ezek. 36:17; Lev. 18:24-28). The Hebrew word *tame'* is translated *unclean* and is the same word the leper is to cry out (Lev. 13:45-46) indicating the confession here is a recognition of having been cut off from covenant relationship by their sin.

Not only are they experiencing the legal condemnation of their sin, they are also experiencing the psychological and social consequences of it. They are all withering and dying like leaves on a tree and their sin is tossing them about and blowing them away like the wind blows the fallen leaves. The tragedy of the situation is that sin is so pervasive in the nation, no one seems concerned enough to call upon the name of the Lord which involves "taking hold" of His word. Perhaps the "none" would be qualified by the fact that a *few* were calling on the Lord (Isaiah and the remnant). But there were so few Jehovah must still withhold His direct intervention ("hid thy face from us") until the captivity comes and the nation is chastened and purified and a larger remnant is formed. The Hebrew word *khazak* is translated *take hold* but is usually

more intense and translated *hold fast* as when Hagar was told to *hold fast* to Ishmael (Gen. 21:18) or when Pharaoh was *holding* on to the Israelites (Ex. 9:2). So now their sin is consuming them—they are suffering the due penalty of their sins (cf. Rom. 1:28), and the nation as a whole does not turn to God and hold fast to Him for strength—it is going to be blown away into captivity.

5. PLEA FOR VERIFICATION

TEXT: 64:8-12

- 8 But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.
- 9 Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.
- 10 Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.
- 11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant places are laid waste.
- 12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

QUERIES

- a. Is there a change in attitude here?
- b. Is Jerusalem a desolation at this writing?
- c. What is their “beautiful house”?

PARAPHRASE

Now, Lord, we are pleading that You will intervene directly and relieve our present circumstances because, First, You alone

are our Father. We are clay and You are our Former or Potter, the One who formed us with Your own hand. You should not be so angry with us, or keep on holding our sins against us, Lord, because we are begging You to remember, we are Your children. Second, the cities and villages of Your consecrated land, (even Zion, Jerusalem, the city where Your presence dwells) are being desecrated, profaned and ruined by Your enemies. And if they are not stopped, our beautiful temple, Your house, where our ancestors worshipped You is as good as ruined by the fires of our enemies. All our beautiful, peaceful land will be made a place of desolation and ruin. In view of all this, will You still withhold Your judgment upon our enemies and refrain from intervening for us and allow us to continue to be afflicted?

COMMENTS

v. 8-9 OWNERSHIP: This last section of the petition of Zion, born of her restlessness, is a plea for Jehovah to verify His relationship to her. She offers two motives she thinks should move Jehovah to act and intervene directly to relieve her circumstances. First, the Lord should act immediately and supernaturally, on her behalf, because they have no other Father than Jehovah. The emphasis is on His exclusive Fatherhood. The literal Hebrew syntax would read, "And, even so, Father of us You are, we are clay and You are former of us, and work of Your hand all of us are." Despite their uncleanness and their sin, Jehovah formed them like a potter forms clay. They now fall back upon that relationship as a last resort. This was not always their attitude. Once they refused to admit the potter-clay relationship (cf. Isa. 29:16; 45:9-10)! That was when they thought they needed no help. But now it is a different story! Now they plead for His mercy and His immediate and direct help *because* they have suddenly realized He is the *only* Father they have!

Before we thank God that we are not like those people, let

us remember that we have undoubtedly been as arrogant and then as helpless as they at one time or another in our Christian walk. All of us have tried, with Peter, to walk on the stormy sea of life by ourselves at one time; all of us have probably cried out as we began to sink, "Lord save me!" (cf. Mt. 14:29-31). But actually, this is where God wants us! This is where He wanted Zion! He could not save them until they allowed Him to do so. Of course, most of us want Him to save us right now, and according to our human program. But Jehovah is not only omnipotent, He is omniscient. His knowledge of what we need and when we need it is perfect. He is indeed our perfect Father.

A literal translation of verse nine would read, "Do not be angry, Jehovah, unto strength, and do not eternally remember our sin." In other words, they are pleading that Jehovah not carry out His anger as *strongly* as He is capable of doing. That would obliterate them! Their plea is that they are His *people*. Their appeal is that Jehovah verify their status as His chosen people by intervening and saving them from impending captivity. Jehovah will deliver them from captivity and verify their election as His children when they do their part to verify their relationship to Him by obedience to His will as children should. Will Jehovah claim them as children? Yes, when they claim Him as Father! Will He verify they are His? Yes, when they verify He is theirs! Will He deliver them! Yes, when they allow Him to do so and when it is best for Him to do so! Ezekiel (Ezek. 20:1-49) predicts this very thing! God does have a remnant and He will verify His ownership!

v. 10-12 OMNIPOTENCE: The second motive Zion thinks should move Jehovah to act immediately on her behalf is the continuing plunder of Judah's cities and villages by the Assyrians. This continuing plunder portends an even more disastrous day when the Temple may be put to the torch and the holy city itself, beautiful Jerusalem, may be overrun and ruined by the heathen hordes. It was evidently so imminent that the prophet spoke of it as if it were already happening! Jerusalem and the Temple were not completely destroyed and burned

until 586 when Nebuchadnezzar razed the whole city (cf. Jer. 52:13). Isaiah is not writing after the fact but using the "predictive present."

The statement in verse 12 sums up and presses home the point Zion is pleading—need for immediate, direct intervention by Jehovah to deliver her from her enemies. God must not allow the land and the people who bear His name to be profaned lest His name be profaned throughout the world. Jehovah has acted in the past to vindicate His power and glorify His name; will He now remain silent? The Hebrew word *khesheh* is translated *peace* in verse 12, but more literally means *silence*. The usual Hebrew word for *peace* is *shalom*. The phrase '*ad-me'od* which means, ". . . unto strength . . ." is repeated in this verse. In view of the continued plundering of the cities and the imminent razing of Jerusalem and the Temple, will Jehovah continue to keep silent and continue to afflict Judah so severely? Indeed He will so long as Judah keeps on walking in sin. One has only to read Jeremiah and Ezekiel to know that Judah not only continued but worsened in her sin and rebellion (cf. Ezek. 5:5-6; 8:7-18) until finally Jehovah withdrew His glory from her altogether (Ezek. 11:22-25).

For the sake of His name and the faithfulness of a small remnant, Jehovah delivered His people from their captivity and rebuilt their city and their temple. However, the rebuilt Jerusalem and Zerubbabel's temple were temporary edifices used by the Lord to the ultimate end He sought and that was a "dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22), the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the church the presence of the Lord dwells now and forever more. An earthly Jerusalem and an earthly temple are now of no consequence to God and His people. Those who worship Him now and forever more worship in Spirit and in truth (cf. Jn. 4:19-26).

QUIZ

1. What is the aim of Zion's petition in these verses?
2. To what relationship does Zion appeal in her plea?

3. Does God want men to come to such helplessness as Zion exhibited here?
4. Why does Zion remind the Lord of what is happening to the cities?
5. Did God ever deliver Zion?
6. What was God's ultimate deliverance?

E. REFINING OF ZION, CHAPTER 65

1. CLEANSED

TEXT: 65:1-12

- 1 I am inquired of by them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.
- 2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, that walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts;
- 3 a people that provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense upon bricks;
- 4 that sit among the graves, and lodge in the secret places; that eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;
- 5 that say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.
- 6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, yea, I will recompense into their bosom,
- 7 your own iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith Jehovah, that have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I first measure their work into their bosom.
- 8 Thus saith Jehovah, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

- 9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah and inheritor of my mountains; and my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.
- 10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.
- 11 But ye that forsake Jehovah, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny;
- 12 I will destine you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but ye did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not.

QUERIES

- a. What is the practice of "sitting among graves" (verse four)?
- b. Where is the valley of Achor?
- c. Who is "Fortune"?

PARAPHRASE

This is what the Lord says in answer to Zion's complaint: While some seek Me and do not find Me, others who never before sought Me will find Me! I will reveal Myself to a people I have not chosen. However, the rebellious people I have chosen—with whom I have been continually pleading to come to Me—they have chosen to follow their own evil ideas and desires. These people of Mine insult Me continually, and Blatantly to My face, worshiping in the idol-gardens and burning incense to images on heathen altars. They go out at night to the graveyards and other secret places to hold seances and try to contact the dead; they indulge in the pagan rituals of eating swine's flesh and rotten food. These have so completely given themselves over to pagan ritual and mystery-cults they

think they have attained extra-ordinary sanctity and do not wish to associate with their fellow countrymen so they say, Stay away from me, you are not in the same class as I am in wisdom and religion. The Lord says of these, They are as vexatious and repulsive to Me as smoke in the nose from a fire that smolders continually. I have been recording their deeds and I have written down a decree that I will no longer restrain Myself toward these rebels. I am going to pay them with a full penalty for their rebellion. I am going to dump this entire mess of ungodliness they have made right back into their laps. I am going to punish them, not only for their own sins, but also for the sins of their forefathers too, says the Lord, because their forefathers taught them to worship idols on the hilltops and profane My name and insult My name; I will pay them back for the centuries of profanity with which they profaned Me.

But I will not destroy them all, says the Lord; just as one does not want to throw away a cluster of grapes because there are some good grapes mixed with the bad ones, so there are some good people in Zion I do not want to destroy. There are a few in Zion who are My good servants. I will save a small group and these will provide "seed" to form a people who will receive the inheritance and the dwelling I have promised them. This inheritance and dwelling place will be one of prosperity and security like Sharon's plains and the valley of Achor for those who seek Me. But as for the rest of you, who worship the gods of Good Luck and Destiny, and who forsake My temple and forget Me, I will "destine" you to slaughter by your enemy's sword. You are marked for the slaughter because when I plead with you to come to Me you did not answer My pleading; when I commanded, you did not obey. In fact, you deliberately did what I had said was evil and your every desire was what I told you was undesirable to Me.

COMMENTS

v. 1-7 SIN REPAID: It may have appeared up to this point in Isaiah's prophecy that he was pronouncing doom upon the *whole* nation. However, the prayer in chapter 64 shows that there was a small remnant of people who had turned to the Lord for help. This small group had the testimony of Isaiah "bound up and sealed" among them and were the prophet's disciples. They had turned to "the teaching and to the testimony" (cf. Isa. 8:16-20). Chapter 65 is the verification that Isaiah had been declaring all along the *whole* nation was not to be doomed but that there would be a sifting and God would indeed answer the prayer for deliverance by the remnant. Those who blaspheme the Lord will be recompensed with judgment; those who trust Him will become a "seed" and provide heirs to Judah's promises.

The apostle Paul helps us understand that these final verses of Isaiah's book have to do with the Messiah's kingdom (the church) for he quotes 65:1-2 in Romans 10:20-21 as fulfilled at the preaching of the gospel and its reception by Gentiles. Isaiah is predicting that a refining, sorting, culling process is going to take place as a consequence of the Babylonian captivity and the subsequent centuries of the Jewish "indignation" (cf. our comments Daniel, College Press, pages 343-353 and 429-435). From the Babylonian captivity, through the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth, through the Seleucid domination and the Maccabean revolt, and through the early Roman domination the Jewish nation would undergo a *spiritual sifting* until thoroughly prepared (with a remnant of godly servants like Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, etc.) for the *new creation* (Isa. 66:18-24) (the Messiah's Zion). This sifting must take place because of the abominable rebellion of a majority of Israel in Isaiah's day. Many of these rebels will never find Jehovah even though He has plead with them (through prophets and leaders) for century after century. They would not give up their idols. So it is predicted that God *will* have a people turn to Him in the future who had never inquired

about Him before. This will be the *goiy* (singular of *goiym*). Isaiah 65:1 substantiates Ephesians 3:1-6 that Jehovah did not in ancient times make known to the Gentiles the messianic program as He did to the Jews. But Isaiah 65:1 predicts a time when the Gentiles would *find* Him; the Gentiles *will* behold Him and they *will* be called by His name. The time will come, says Isaiah, when God will reveal Himself and invite the Gentiles, "behold Me, behold Me!" That invitation will be through the preaching of the gospel of Christ says Paul in Romans 10:14-21.

But until the time comes for Jehovah to open the messianic kingdom to the Gentiles, He "spreads out His hands all the day to a rebellious people." Jehovah was more than patient, more than merciful, more than just with Israel. Century after century He plead with them through His prophets (cf. II Chron. 24:18-19; 36:15-16; Jer. 7:13; Lk. 11:50, etc.). But they would not listen (cf. Hosea 11:1-2; 12:10-14; Micah 2:6-11; Isa. 30:8-11; Jer. 5:3; 6:16-19; 7:27-28; 8:5-6, etc.). The Hebrew word *soorer* is translated *rebellious* but is more specifically, *stubborn*. They have their own ways and their own ideas and they stubbornly refuse God's thought and ways. With centuries of evidence behind them that God's ways result in good and man's result in evil, they still reject God's ways! The Hebrew phrase in verse three, *ha'am hammake'isiym*, is literally, "the people, the ones *angering* me" to My face continually. The Hebrew word is actually stronger than *provoke*—it emphasizes *anger*! The sin of Israel here depicted is insensitive and blatant. Knowing it angers Jehovah, they persist; not only do they persist, they invent *new* ways to provoke Him.

1. Sacrificing in gardens: making the ritual offerings in the groves of trees and flower gardens dedicated to pagan idols (see comments 57:1-8).
2. Burning incense upon bricks: incense is usually associated with prayer. They were praying to idols by burning incense upon brick altars.
3. Sit among graves, and lodge in the secret places:

apparently this refers to the practice of trying to contact the dead. The Hebrew word *loon* is translated *lodge in in secret places* but means simply, *lodge all night*. They were practicing the common pagan ritual of necromancy which was strictly forbidden by their scriptures (cf. Dt. 18:11; I Sam. 28:3; Isa. 57:9). Jerome refers to a practice called "incubation" in the temples of the idols "where they were accustomed to lie upon the skins of the victims stretched upon the ground, to gather future events from their dreams."

4. Eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things: Swine's flesh was offered by the heathen in sacrifice to their idols and then eaten as a ritual of dedication and holiness (cf. II Maccabees 6:18-22; 7:1-2). It was forbidden for the Hebrews (cf. Lev. 11:7ff; Dt. 14:8). The Hebrew word *pigguliyim* is translated *abominable things* and according to Ezek. 4:14; Lev. 7:18; 19:7 it is things that are legally unclean. Young calls it "rotten" things; Keil and Delitzsch says the word means "*a stench, a putrefaction*, broth made either of such kinds of flesh or such parts of the body as were forbidden by the law." It was a disgusting and revolting practice evidently a part of pagan cultic worship.

Those who became initiates into the pagan mystery cults did so through secret rituals and orders. They went out in the dark of night to the groves and hilltops; they talked in a cryptic language about mysterious rites and ceremonies; they glanced and smiled knowingly when asked about their worship. All of this made the cult worshipers consider themselves the "in" group, the "wise" people, and religiously above everyone else. Any person not a member of the cult was considered ignorant, unsophisticated and not one with whom to be associated. Therefore, they said (literally), "Be off to yourself," that is, "Stay away from me, you do not know all the secret things I know and we just are not in the same class of people." Such arrogance by men who have rejected goodness and purity for

wickedness and rottenness vexes Jehovah (The absolutely righteous One) like the smoke smoldering from a garbage heap in the nostrils of a man.

The Hebrew word *shillameti* comes from the root *shalam* which primarily means *complete, entire, finish, make good, repay, or requite*. It is translated in verse six *recompense*. The Hebrew *kheygam* is from *khoog* which means *lap, or bosom*. Jehovah has written down in His heavenly books the "bill of goods" on these profane, blasphemous people and He is going to pay them back and dump the whole mess into their laps. Sin pays wages (Rom. 6:23). Jehovah has ordered His moral creation so that man and nature may "receive in their own persons the due penalty for their error" (Rom. 1:28). When men plow iniquity, they reap injustice; when they sow falsehood, they eat the fruit of lies (cf. Hosea 10:13). God is not mocked, what a man sows, that shall he reap (Gal. 6:7-10). Generations of men reap the fruit of lies because they follow willingly in the lies of their ancestors (cf. II Chron. 33:9; II Kings 24:3; Jer. 15:4 for the classic illustration of this in Manasseh). The idolatry and blasphemy characterized by Isaiah here was practiced by the Hebrews from the days of Solomon (cf. Hosea 4:13; Isa. 57:7; Jer. 2:20; 3:6ff; 17:2, etc.). Those who "dance" must "pay the fiddler." Israel and Judah paid the consequences of their idolatrous indulgence with sword, pestilence and famine for centuries and centuries until they finally filled up the cup of their iniquity by rejecting Jehovah's Servant, the Messiah, and forfeited their birthright; lost their national identity and surrendered their only salvation.

v. 8-12 SEED REPLANTED: Out of the captivities Jehovah will refine a small remnant. When the husbandman of a vineyard gathers clusters of grapes he does not throw away a whole cluster if he sees some good grapes in it. So Jehovah saw in this rotten nation a few good people who would be a blessing to the world and form the messianic remnant. The Lord did not destroy the whole nation, (cf. Jer. 46:28). Many died of famine, pestilence and the sword during the Babylonian attacks (606, 597, 586 and 582). Many fled into the hills and

caves of Palestine from the Babylonian attacks and died there of starvation. Jeremiah says there were approximately 4,600 Jews taken back to Babylon as captives. The number is 10,000 in II Kings 24:14 plus some additional ones later (II Kings 25:8-17). A few of the very poor and physically infirm were left in Judea to farm the land. In addition, some whom the emperor of Babylon gave special favors, such as Jeremiah, and roving bands of deserting soldiers also remained (see comments *Old Testament History*, by Smith & Fields, College Press, pgs. 665-676, and *First and Second Kings*, by James E. Smith, College Press, pgs. 733-755). Altogether, about 15,000 were deported to Babylon from Judea. The Assyrian emperor, Sargon, noted on an inscription (discovered in 1842 by Botta) that he took 27,290 Jews captive from the northern ten tribes (Israel) when that nation fell in 722 B.C. About 42,000 people were taken captive between 722 B.C. and 582 B.C. (140 years). Some 50,000 returned at the release of the captives granted by the edict of Cyrus (536 B.C.). From the fall of the northern ten tribes (Israel) to the return to Palestine was 186 years. The Hebrew nation was begun at the exodus with approximately 2,500,000 people (see *Old Testament History*, Smith & Fields, College Press, pg. 155). After its purging through Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, it was begun again with 50,000. That is about a two-percent remnant!

With those statistics in mind, one is much more impressed with the promise of Jehovah to Isaiah concerning the "holy seed" (cf. Isa. 6:13). Jehovah is going to bring forth a *seed* out of Jacob (65:9) and this seed shall be replanted in the land and it shall *produce servants* to inherit the spiritual blessings which shall come through the messianic kingdom. Isaiah has a goal in mind for the seed of Jacob *beyond* the physical return of the Jews to Judea because the *seed* is to consist not only of Jews but of Gentiles as well (65:1)! Those who came to Jesus, the Messiah, inherited the *rest* God had promised His chosen (cf. Hebrews 3:1—4:13). Those who came to *Zion*, the N.T. church, inherited Jehovah's mountain (cf. Hebrews 12:22-29). Jehovah promised to multiply the *seed*

to inherit the messianic promises (cf. II Sam. 7:12-17; Isa. 44:3; 54:3; 59:21; 66:22; Jer. 33:19-22, etc.). And the *seed* was multiplied and did include the *Gentiles* (cf. Rom. 4:1-23; 8:12-17; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:16; 3:28-29).

The restful, prosperous pastoral scene is figurative of the spiritual rest and prosperity that will be inherited by the people of the Good Shepherd (cf. Ezek. 34:1-31; Jer. 33:14-26; Hos. 3:5; Joel 3:1-3; Amos 9:11-15; Obad. 17:21; Micah 5:2-4; Zeph. 3:9-20; Zech. 12:1—14:21). Sharon's plain was well known for its fertility and Achor is probably the same as the Wadi Kelt which descends through a deep ravine from the Judean hills and runs between steep banks south of the modern Jericho to the Jordan river. In all the five places where it is mentioned it is described as the '*emek*, the arable valley of Achor. Hosea pictures the comforting aspect of the terrible event for which the valley is famous (Achan's execution, Josh 7:24-26); it was a doorway of *hope* for chastened Israel (Hos. 2:15).

Gesenius identifies Fortune (Heb. *gad*) and Destiny (Heb. *meniy*) with Jupiter and Venus, the Greater and Lesser Good Fortunes of the astrologers. However, the ISBE (Vol. I, pg. 299) says, "... it is more probable that they are the two beautiful starclusters that stand on the head and the shoulder of the Bull at the old commencement of the zodiac ... the Hyades and Pleiades ... Both groups were considered traditionally as composed of seven stars; and the two names ... taken together give the meaning of the 'Fortunate Number,' i.e., seven ... The ... spreading of the table and mingling the wine to *Gad* and *Meniy* at the beginning of the year to secure good fortune throughout its course, were therefore held about the time of the Passover, as if in parody, if indeed they were not a desecration of it; heathen rites added to one of the most solemn services of Jehoavh."

Jehovah will save a *seed* through the process of refining and purifying (cf. Mal. 3:1-4), but as for those who make a mockery of His commandments and think they can blaspheme Him by adding heathen rites to their worship, He will arrange for their destiny to be the slaughter of war. There is a very obvious

sarcasm in the use of the word *meniy* (destiny) in verse 12. The people worshiped and trusted in the god Destiny; Jehovah will show them who controls destiny! They will receive a *destiny* which they deserve, for when Jehovah called, they did not answer and when He commanded they did not (*shama'* hear) obey. It is well to note here that God came to His people by *words* (a propositional revelation, not mystical and subjective) and those words were to be *obeyed*, not merely noticed or felt. It is also well to note that those to whom the revelation came had the freedom to choose and *chose* to disobey. The Hebrew syntax is interesting in the last phrase of verse 12; the construction ("... that which I delighted not in, you chose") puts emphasis on that in which Jehovah delighted not! The Lord is justified in His rejection of these people for they have, in fact, rejected, mocked and deliberately chosen against Him.

QUIZ

1. Who are those who found Jehovah having not sought Him?
2. Who are the rebellious people being sought by Jehovah?
3. Name the abominable practices of the rebellious people.
4. Why did they consider themselves holier than others?
5. How does God recompense them?
6. What is the figure of the "new wine" in the cluster?
7. Who were the "seed" brought forth?

2. CHARACTERIZED

TEXT: 65:13-16

- 13 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be put to shame;
- 14 behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall

- cry for sorrow of heart, and shall wail for vexation of spirit.
- 15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; and the Lord Jehovah will slay thee: and he will call his servants by another name:
- 16 so that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

QUERIES

- a. Who are Jehovah's servants?
- b. How will Israel's name be a curse?
- c. What is the other name?

PARAPHRASE

On account of the fact that there are a few good people who have chosen to serve Me while the majority of Israel has deliberately chosen to do evil, I will fill My servants with spiritual nourishment and satisfaction but those who rebel against Me will suffer spiritual starvation and shame, says Jehovah. Indeed, those who choose to serve Me will express their joy in singing, but those who disobey Me will weep, moan and wail with sorrow and confusion. The name of this disobedient nation will be forever after used as an illustration of rebellion, mockery and blasphemy by those who are really My chosen people. Jehovah is going to deliver a deathblow to Israel's status as the elect people and He will choose obedient people from every nation on earth and call them by a new name which will characterize their new nature and blessedness. I will so completely and certainly fulfill My promises, the people who are chosen will invoke My name as the source of all truth for those who are My servants will be pardoned forever from the guilt and penalty of sin.

COMMENTS

v. 13-14 NURTURED: Continuing the idea of a refined Zion and the contrast between the "good grapes and the bad grapes" the Lord now pictures the different consequences of the refining process. Those (even of the *goiym* who were not called by His name) who do find Him and call upon Him and become obedient servants, He will fill with spiritual nutrition growth and satisfaction. Of course, Isaiah is using "times coloring" here, i.e., writing of future spiritual things in physical terminology. The New covenant scriptures make it plain that God's richest blessings are spiritual (cf. Eph. 1:3, etc.). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (Mt. 5:6); those who seek the Bread of Life shall have it (Jn. 6:52-65); those who thirst for the Water of Life shall drink of it (Jn. 4:13; 7:37-39, etc.); those who declare joy shall have it abundantly (Jn. 15:1-11, etc.). Eating, drinking, feasting, celebrating and singing merely *symbolize* the blessings God's servants will receive (see comments Isa. 25:6ff). The kingdom of God is essentially *character*, not food and drink (physical things) (cf. Rom. 14:17). Those who rebel and disobey will find their souls and spirits starving and dying of spiritual nourishment. They will suffer sorrow and vexation (cf. Amos 8:11-12). There is no torture more excruciating than spiritual torture (cf. Lk. 16:24-31).

v. 15-16 NAMED: Those of the chosen nation who rebelled against their messianic destiny and their God left their name to the world for a curse. God promised Israel she would become a *proverb* and a *by-word* among the nations if she was rebellious and disobedient (cf. Dt. 28:37; I Kings 9:7; II Chron. 7:20; Psalms 44:14). The Jewish nation became the chief illustration for Christians of the consequences of rebelling against the Lord (cf. Mt. 21:33-43; 22:1-10; Lk. 13:34-35; I Cor. 10:1-13; Heb. 3:1—4:13, etc.).

The Lord will slay the former Israel and create a new Israel (Gal. 6:15-16). Jehovah delivers the deathblow to the former Israel when He cancelled her covenant and nailed it to the

cross of Christ. It was definitely prophesied that He would do away with the election of physical Israel (cf. Jer. 3:15-18; 31:31-34, etc.). These verses (Isa. 65:13-16) clearly show that the genetic nation of Israel as such is not synonymous with God's chosen (cf. also Rom. 2:28-29). In the light of this precise statement that God is going to slay the disobedient nation and call His servants by another name, what scriptural reason is there for expecting a future resurrection of genetic Israel? Ezekiel 37 undoubtedly refers to the restoration of Judah after the Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C. Certainly the nation that was restored then cannot be the fulfillment of Isaiah 65:13-16; neither can the present-day Israel! See our comments on Isaiah 62:2 for a discussion of the *new name*.

The Lord will so completely and evidently fulfill His promises in Christ, those who choose to obey Him will invoke His name as the source of *all truth*. They will pray to Him for every need and they will proclaim Him as Infinite answer to man's finiteness. He, Himself will become "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn. 14:6). Those who become His disciples will know the truth and be set free from falsehood (Jn. 8:31ff). The Incarnate Son of Jehovah will become an oath demonstrating in time and space the veracity of Jehovah's promises once and for all (cf. I Cor. 15:1ff; II Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:17-20; 9:1ff, etc.). Whoever wishes to be blessed from henceforth must be blessed in the name of Jehovah and His Son; whoever wishes to verify the truthfulness, value, reality or meaning of anything must henceforth verify it in the character and will of Jehovah and His Son as revealed in the written record (the scriptures).

The "God of truth" is an extremely significant proposition. Jehovah is the truth. In the Person of Jehovah (and His Incarnate Son) is the whole of truth! There is no source of truth outside the character and will of God. He is truth absolute, ultimate, eternal in contradistinction from all that is relative, derived, partial and temporal. All that is true is relative to His character. When we speak of the sanctity of truth we must understand that underlying such a phrase is the sanctity of His character (His love, power, faithfulness, holiness, etc.).

He is the God of truth and all truth derives its sanctity from Him. This is why all untruth or falsehood is wrong; it is a contradiction of what God is! This is why God cannot lie or change His will. To do so would contradict Himself and He cannot deny Himself and be God! The devil's attack upon man was first an attack upon the veracity of God. He accused God of deliberate falsehood and deception in telling Eve that she should not eat of the tree because God knew if she did her eyes would be opened and she would then know something only God knew. Furthermore, the devil said God lied when He told Eve she would die if she ate of the tree. The devil openly assailed the integrity and veracity of God. And here is the important point; in convincing Eve that God was less than faithful, the devil very subtly destroyed Eve's integrity when he seduced her into doubting God's integrity. The only reference point upon which man may build his own integrity, veracity, truthfulness and faithfulness (his own character, as it were) is in unreserved commitment and belief in God's integrity and faithfulness. All of man's unfaithfulness (indeed, all of man's sin) has its affinity with that lie by which Eve was seduced—that God is untrustworthy. Man has only the power to believe or disbelieve. Truth is not in man, but in God. Truth can only be in man when man believes and trusts and obeys God! Therefore, if men are to be formed into the image of God it can only be done by preaching the objectively revealed (in the Bible) character of God (His faithfulness, love, and power). All preaching to convert must center on who God is and what He has done—not in what man feels, or thinks or is able to do. It is not in man to be faithful or to love or to be holy. Man can only be faithful and love and be holy when he believes God is absolutely faithful and absolutely loving and absolutely holy.

All that is false and standing against man has been forever conquered and eliminated through the Son of God. The power, the guilt and the penalty of man's rebellion has been atoned for and truth, ultimate saving truth, is resident in Him. Man can be in Him by faith. That is where God chooses His servants—in Him Who is Truth! This is the new, refined Zion.

QUIZ

1. What kind of eating and drinking is to be given the servants of Jehovah?
2. What did God promise about the name of the Jews if they rebelled?
3. What happened when God slew the rebellious Israel?
4. What is meant about people blessing themselves by the God of truth?

3. CREATED

TEXT: 65:17-25

- 17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
- 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
- 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying.
- 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.
- 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
- 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
- 23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them.
- 24 And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer;

and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.

QUERIES

- a. Is this a prediction of the end of time?
- b. Why speak of longevity of life in verse 20?
- c. Does verse 25 mean the same as Isaiah 11:6-9?

PARAPHRASE

And when this refining takes place I will also create a whole new age or order of things; the former order or age will be considered by the Lord and His new people as no longer valid. None of the Lord's people will regret the passing away of the old; they will be eternally grateful for His new creation. The Lord says, I am going to create a new Jerusalem which will be characterized by and inhabited by a people filled with joy. This new Jerusalem and her joyful people will bring Me joy, too, says the Lord. There will be no more occasions for sorrow and mourning in My new Jerusalem. There will be no more limited life in My new Jerusalem—neither among the very young nor the very old. Every citizen of new Zion will live in eternal joy. The sinner is also going to live forever, but in accursedness and not in new Zion. The citizens of new Jerusalem will no longer labor in vain; whatever they do will prosper and they shall know eternal satisfaction in their service to Jehovah. Nothing shall be able to separate them from their heavenly Father; they shall be the children of God and enjoy eternal fellowship with Him. They shall live in eternal dependence upon Him and He will hear and answer their requests before they even make them! In new Zion man and his environment

will be at harmony with one another. There will be nothing to harm the citizen of new Zion—all will be safe and secure. The devil, that old serpent, will be ground into humiliating defeat, and peace shall reign supreme.

COMMENTS

v. 17-19 **PERSONALITY:** In verse 16 Isaiah promised new Zion, "the former troubles are forgotten." Now the prophet shows why the former troubles will be forgotten; Jehovah is going to create an entirely new order. The Hebrew verb *bara* is translated *create* and is used in the Hebrew *qal* stem only with God as the subject, because it means bringing into existence something absolutely new. This creation is not speaking of a literal, physical new heavens and earth, but of a new era, a new age or a new order in which God will create His spiritual kingdom on the present earth. Young puts it, ". . . heaven and earth are employed as figures to indicate a complete renovation or revolution in the existing course of affairs." It is the *new* Jerusalem, the *new covenant*, and the old will not be remembered (cf. Jer. 3:15-17). In Hebrews 2:5-9 we are told that Christ came to restore man to the dominion over "the world to come" which man lost when he sinned in Eden. God cursed that creation because of man's sin. But Jesus, partaking of human nature, conquered sin in the flesh and has potentially given man's dominion back to him. This was done at the *first* advent of Christ (not the second). What God has done by Christ's redemptive work and establishment of the church is, therefore, the new creation. Hebrews 12:27 indicates that the *old order* (Judaism, or Mosaic covenant) was "shaken" (destroyed) "in order that what cannot be shaken may remain." That which "cannot be shaken" is the *new order* or the kingdom of Christ (Heb. 12:28) which is the church. Paul indicates that the *new covenant relationship* is the *new creation* (cf. II Cor. 5:16-21; Gal. 6:15-16, etc.). The Bible also teaches a *consummation* of the new creation at the *second* advent of

the Messiah (cf. I Thess. 4:13—5:11; II Pet. 3:7-18, etc.).

The Jewish Apocrypha (see our comments on chapters 53 and 61), especially those works written after the Maccabean era, speak of the *new age* as being *ushered in* by cataclysmic events, brought about by supernatural powers, taking the form of a cosmic drama in which divine and demonic forces are at work, and involving a remaking of the heavens and earth to form a new beginning free from the corruption which had all along affected creation. It was, of course, to include the judgment of most of the Gentiles and the reign by power and wealth of the Jewish nation over the world. The apocryphal writers were interpreting the prophetic passages of the new order (such as we have here in Isaiah 65) colored by and relative to the persecution and oppression the Jews were having to endure at the hands of Gentile empires. Thus they pictured the messianic age beginning with a great supernatural deliverance of the Jewish nation from its oppressors involving cosmic warfare between God and Satan and demons, followed by creation of a new world order with headquarters in a new Jerusalem. It is easier, in the light of this materialistic interpretation of the prophets, to understand why the Jewish rulers kept insisting that Jesus show supernatural "signs and wonders" to verify His claims to be the Messiah!

What Jehovah is going to create will be eternal because Isaiah exhorts, "Be ye glad and rejoice *for ever* in that which I create . . ." Jerusalem, the focus of the new creation, is characterized as both a subject of rejoicing and an object of joy. The *new* Jerusalem (the Jerusalem that is from above, i.e., the church in Gal. 4:26 is *ano* in Greek which means pre-eminent) will be filled with rejoicing as opposed to the sorrow and mourning which will fill old Jerusalem (the physical city). The *new* Jerusalem will also be the exclusive object of God's rejoicing. Calvin wrote, "So great is his love toward us, that he delights in our prosperity not less than if he enjoyed it along with us." Thus the personality of God's newly created Jerusalem is characterized as joyful (cf. comments on Isa. 35:10).

v. 20 PERPETUITY: This verse is portraying in figurative language the *immortality* of the citizens of *new Zion*. It is not as clear as the statement in Isa. 25:8, but nevertheless, in context, is teaching the concept of immortality. The idea of eternal life is taught in the Old Testament (cf. comments Isa. 25:8), but vaguely and gradually. Actually, immortality for both the believer and the sinner is taught here; the believer will enjoy eternal blessedness, the sinner eternal accursedness. The basic idea is, on a level of spirituality commensurate with their immaturity, greatly increased longevity of life will be one of the blessings of the *new Jerusalem*. As we have it in our paraphrase, "There will be no more limited life in My new Jerusalem—neither among the very young nor the very old. Every citizen of new Zion will live in eternal joy. The sinner is also going to live forever, but in accursedness and not in new Zion."

v. 21-25 PROSPERITY: The Lord kept telling His people that when they disobeyed Him, everything they attempted (physically or psychologically) would not reach full fruition or bring them satisfaction (cf. Dt. 28:30; Zeph. 1:13; Micah 6:14-16; Amos 8:9-12, etc.). But in the *new order* (the messianic age of man's reconciliation to Jehovah) the exact opposite will prevail. Everything the citizen of new Zion does, as he conforms to the image of Christ, will produce fruit to Jehovah's glory and satisfaction to the heart of the doer (cf. I Cor. 15:58; Rom. 8:28, 37; II Cor. 9:8-11; Eph. 3:20; I Thess. 1:2-10; 4:9-12, etc.). The picture is one of security, satisfaction and enjoyment. Whatever the citizen in God's new kingdom labors at will glorify God (cf. Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:17; 3:22-25; II Thess. 3:6-13). Anything done honestly and within the will of God will be honored by Him and rewarded. Nothing the Christian does (if God can be thanked for it, I Tim. 4:4) will be in vain; nothing he does will be destroyed. The works of the citizen of new Jerusalem "follow after him" (cf. Rev. 14:13).

Those who have been refined and recreated as God's new Israel will call upon Jehovah and He will hear them. In fact, new Israel will be such a joy to Him He will eagerly answer

their prayers before they are uttered! Daniel exemplified the faith that such a member of the new Israel would have. While he was still praying (Dan. 9:1-19), the Lord sent an angel to answer his prayer (Dan. 9:20-23). Daniel had hardly begun his prayer before the Lord answered it! Old Jerusalem complained (Isa. 64) Jehovah was not listening to their prayers. It will not be so in the new Jerusalem. He will not only send His angels to minister to new Zion (Heb. 1:14), He will give His Spirit to utter prayers for new Zion when she cannot find adequate ways to express herself to God (cf. Rom. 8:26-27). He knows before we ask what we need (Mt. 6:8). If men know how to answer the requests of others, how much more does a divinely-caring Father know how to answer His children (cf. Lk. 11:5-13; 18:1-8).

Verse 25 is a fitting summation to this chapter. Nothing hurtful will be permitted in new Zion. In God's "holy mountain" (Zion, cf. Heb. 12:22), the place where He dwells, there will be peace, joy and festivity (cf. our comments Isa. 11:6-9; 25:6-9).

QUIZ

1. Is there N.T. teaching to substantiate the interpretation here that the first coming of the Messiah brought a "new creation"?
2. How, according to Jewish apocrypha, did many of the Jews interpret the "new creation" passages in the prophets?
3. How much teaching is there in the O.T. concerning immortality?
4. What will be the end of the labors of citizens of new Zion?
5. What will be the reaction of God to the prayers of citizens of new Zion?

F. EPILOGUE, CHAPTER 66

1. BURIAL OF OLD ZION

TEXT: 66:1-6

- 1 Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest?
- 2 For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.
- 3 He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine's blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations:
- 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not.
- 5 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake, have said, Let Jehovah be glorified, that we may see your joy; but it is they that shall be put to shame.
- 6 A voice of tumult from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompense to his enemies.

QUERIES

- a. What is the point of stressing the omnipotence of Jehovah?
- b. How is one who kills an ox like one who slays a man?
- c. How could those who cast others out say, Let Jehovah be glorified?

PARAPHRASE

What arrogance you disobedient ones manifest by thinking I will have anything to do with that building you call My Temple. The wickedness and hypocrisy you are practicing there are abominations to Me. I Am Omnipotent and Absolutely Holy; I am not like the provincial gods of the idolatrous heathen which have to have earthly houses to live in. Neither will I allow My name to be profaned by having it associated with your blasphemies. I created the whole universe; I am omnipresent and I desire an atmosphere of humility where I am worshipped. I dwell in people of afflicted and contrite hearts—those who respect and obey My word. But people like you, arrogant, haughty, rebellious and blasphemous—your hypocritical animal sacrifices are as abominable to Me as if you had made human sacrifices or offered an unclean sacrifice like a dog; your wicked attitudes make your attempts at ceremonial purification as repugnant as if you had offered swine's blood for your cleansing; your burning of incense is as ungodly as if you were worshiping an idol. This is so because you are arrogantly and blatantly doing these things when you know they are against My will. You are not making innocent mistakes; you are doing these abominations because you like them and want to mock Me. You worship the stars because you fear famine and pestilence; you worship pagan idols because you want to trust in the pagan nations of those idols; now I am going to use those very things you fear as a judgment upon you and prove to you that they are delusions. This is the alternative you have left Me, you rebellious people. When I spoke to you through My messengers, you refused to listen and obey. You deliberately did what I told you would profane My name and anger Me. Now, hear Me those of you who do respect and wish to obey My word: Those of this nation who claim to be your brothers but really hate you and make you outcasts of this society and mock you, saying, We have cast you out, but of course, you are Jehovah's so why don't you praise his name and rejoice now!—let Me tell you, says the Lord, it is these

arrogant mockers who will be soon put to shame. Very soon now there will be the clash, clatter and din of warfare heard from inside the walls of this very city—yea, even from within the temple you hold so dear shall come the noise of judgment. That noise will be the voice of Jehovah rendering His vengeance upon those who have deliberately declared war upon Him.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 ABOMINABLE: Chapter 66 contains a three-part summarization of the whole book of Isaiah. First there is capsulation of the abomination of Isaiah's contemporaries and the coming judgment (66:1-6); second, the birth of new Israel (messianic age—church) (66:7-14); third, the proclamation of redemption to the whole world (66:15-24). These are the three major theses of the prophet and thus chapter 66 forms an appropriate epilogue.

These verses are not condemnations of houses of worship as such, nor were they intended to abrogate animal sacrifices for Isaiah's contemporaries. The prophet *is* condemning the arrogant hypocrisy of those who thought an earthly temple guaranteed the presence of Jehovah in their midst regardless of the wickedness of their motives and actions. Many of the Jews fell into the dangerous self-induced delusion that as long as their temple stood Jehovah *must* confine Himself there so their nation would never be without His presence and protection. This delusion is a consequence of spiritual immaturity and this-worldly-mindedness about the worship of God. Most of the Jewish rulers and religious leaders of Jesus' day trusted in their earthly temple, human priesthood and animal sacrifices but not in the Invisible God who made them. It is a common failure of human nature to demand that which can be "handled, touched and tasted" (cf. Col. 2:20-23; II Cor. 4:16—5:5, etc.). When the Pharisees of Jesus day wanted to make an oath by the highest thing they could think of, they made it on the temple or the gold of the temple (cf. Mt. 23:16-21). When Jesus

predicted the desolation of the city and the temple (Mt. 23:37-39), His own disciples could not believe it, so He gave an extended lesson to them about the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 24:1-35) at the hands of the Romans. The fundamental issue of the entire book of Hebrews in the N.T. is that of "weaning" Hebrew Christians away from the powerful temptation to return to Judaism (abrogated by the new covenant) which appealed to the fleshly desire for a religion that centered in an earthly temple, touchable sacrifices, visible high-priesthood and religious hierarchy. Stephen, the martyr, condemned his Jewish brethren for not accepting the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of all the temple stood for (Acts 7:44-53). The Jews were not alone in thinking the Creator could be reduced to human level and confined to earthly shrines. Paul reminded the idolaters of Athens that such ideas were illogical (cf. Acts 17:24-28). Young aptly says, "Those who would build a house influenced by such conceptions were seeking to render the infinite finite, the eternal temporal, and the Creator a mere creature."

Jehovah *does dwell* in a spiritual temple composed of people (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; II Pet. 2:5) of afflicted and contrite hearts. The Hebrew word *'anah* is translated *poor* but means literally, *afflicted*. It is from a root word that may also be translated *answer*. The idea is that God dwells in people who are poor in spirit or afflicted in the soul enough to answer God when He calls. God's presence dwells in a people who are humble and penitent, whether they have a "church building" or not. But the most elaborate building and the best well-organized religious system will never enjoy the presence of God if haughty, arrogant, independent and rebellious worshipers gather there. True worship of God is done in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:19-26) and *where* God is worshiped is secondary to that! When truth and righteousness are renounced for the sake of places, things and human traditions, it is an abomination before the Lord!

Rituals and ceremonies are means to an end; they are vehicles of human expressions of faith and willing obedience to a Person — God. When the rituals and ceremonies become the objects

of our hope, they become idols! God Himself is the object of our hope; biblical commandments concerning acts of obedience or rituals or worship are revealed as acceptable ways men may express their faith in Him. There are two ways men turn biblically revealed rituals into abominations before the Lord: (a) make the rituals the object of their hope, or; (b) refuse to observe the ritual as the Lord commands it in His Word. The people of Isaiah's day were guilty of both. They were making their ability to keep the rituals the object of their hope which is trusting in self-righteousness, and they were also arrogantly mixing the practices of pagan idolatry with the worship of Jehovah. Sacrifices to God, no matter how often or how affluent, without the proper spirit and contrary to revealed truth are unacceptable to God (cf. Isa. 1:10-20; Ezek. 8:5-18; 14:1-11; I Sam. 15:17-23; Isa. 57:1-13; Micah 3:11; Mt. 5:23-24; 6:1-18; etc.). Observance of rituals contrary to biblical specifications and without humility toward the God who commanded them makes them abominations to God. A man may kill an ox and bring it to the temple for a sacrifice, but with an improper attitude toward God he may as well have offered a human sacrifice—both are equally abominable to God! Do men really realize how serious it is to observe religious ritual in an improper frame of mind and heart?! To give an offering or do any act of worship without a contrite heart is an affront to the Lord and as insulting as offering swine's blood! Such impersonal, rebellious, impenitent behavior exposes the real focus of the heart of a man—the ritual itself—and that is in fact, idolatry! Even people of the new covenant must be on guard against this tendency. Ananias and Sapphira fell—not in the amount given or not given to the Lord, but in the attitude they had in their heart (cf. Acts 5:1ff). Simon, the converted magician, fell—not in what he sought but the purpose for which he sought it (cf. Acts 8:9-13). Even the Corinthian church made the Lord's Supper an abomination before the Lord by the attitude of divisiveness in which they participated in it (cf. I Cor. 10-11). The church at Laodicea was an abomination to Christ—not because she was affluent but because of her

attitude toward her affluency.

Men will err and sin. Those who worship God will never be able to do so perfectly. The Lord will forgive those errors when men worship Him penitently, honestly and "trembling at His Word." But when men deliberately choose their own ways against those God has plainly revealed, and when they "delight" in doing what they know is contrary to His revealed will, He will not forgive.

V. 4-6 ABANDONED: What choice do men leave the Righteous and Just God when they delight in their abominations? The only choice God has is to leave them to their choice! God chooses their delusions as the instruments of their judgment. When God called and called, none were poor (*'anah*) enough in spirit to answer. When God spake, none obeyed (*shama'*). They plainly told God they did not want to hear from Him (cf. Isa. 30:9-11; Micah 2:6-11, etc.). They obstinately chose their own way against God's (cf. Jer. 6:16-18; 8:4-7, etc.). So the Lord let them have what they chose! The Lord abandoned them to their sins (cf. Ezek. 11:21-25; 39:23-24, etc.). They are given up to suffer in their own bodies the due penalties of their errors (cf. Rom. 1:27). Judah trusted in human schemes and human allies to keep her safe and prosperous, but her human allies betrayed her and turned on her. Judah's idol gods could not provide anything for her because they were only pieces of wood and stone. Judah's social injustices and political chicanery on the international scene eventually caused her captivity. But it was Jehovah who was exercising His sovereign rule in righteousness over the universe that was the real cause of it. God exercises His sovereign rule through secondary agents both in men and natural means (cf. Isa. 10:5-19; Jer. 27:1-11; Amos 4:6-11; Hab. 1:5-6; Dan. 8:1ff; Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1—9:21; 17:15-18, etc.).

In verse five, the Lord addresses Himself to those few people who were listening to the teaching of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 8:16ff) and being persecuted for their faithfulness. The majority of the people hated the righteous remnant. God's righteous minority will always be persecuted by the wicked majority

because their righteousness acts as a catalyst of judgment in their midst (cf. Jn. 3:18-21; 9:35-40; 15:18-27, etc.). The righteous minority of Isaiah's day had been "cast out" which probably means the haughty, self-righteous majority had ostracized them socially, religiously economically and politically. The poor and humble in spirit and those obedient to the Word of God were oppressed and exploited. The rich and powerful wicked mock them as they oppress them, saying, "Since you are so anxious to praise the name of Jehovah and call on Him for help, we will give you plenty of opportunity to call on Him by casting you out." Such perverse haughtiness in a people who had all the advantages of the miraculous deliverance of God from enemies centuries past and who had the Law of God delivered by angels through Moses, is shocking! It is blasphemous! But such mockery of God's saints in the midst of their persecutions will continue so long as this present order exists. All who live a godly life in this world will suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12). But God's vindication of His saints will be done—if not in this world, in the next!

As for those of Isaiah's day who were persecuting the righteous, they would themselves be cast out and suffer shame and humiliation for their disobedience to God in the Babylonian captivity. But Isaiah is looking past his own time by many centuries and hears the noise of warfare that comes from Jerusalem, the city that the wicked majority believed would never fall (Micah 3:11; Jer. 6:13-14; 8:11; 26:7-11; 28:1-17). Isaiah's prediction of Jerusalem's judgment refers to her fall at the hands of Rome (70 A.D.) as will be seen from the following text.

QUIZ

1. What did the majority of Isaiah's contemporaries think about God's presence in Jerusalem and the temple?
2. Are these verses intended to condemn building houses of worship?

3. Where does Jehovah dwell in the new covenant age?
4. Just how serious is it to worship with a haughty attitude?
5. How does chapter 66 form an epilogue to the whole book of Isaiah?
6. What is being "poor" and of a "contrite spirit"?
7. Did the people of Isaiah's day and later really think their city and temple would never fall?

2. BIRTH OF NEW ZION

TEXT: 66:7-14

- 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a manchild.
- 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? shall a nation be brought forth at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.
- 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith Jehovah: shall I that cause to bring forth shut the womb? saith thy God.
- 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her;
- 11 that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.
- 12 For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: and ye shall suck thereof; ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees.
- 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
- 14 And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants; and he will have indignation against his enemies.

QUERIES

- a. Who is "she" and who is the "manchild" of verse seven?
- b. How will Jehovah extend the "glory of the nations" to Jerusalem?
- c. How will the Lord combine comfort to Jerusalem and indignation against his enemies?

PARAPHRASE

But a marvelous thing shall happen with Jerusalem. She will fall and this nation will be cast off by God and dispersed all over the world. She will be like a woman pregnant with child but she will miraculously give birth before the travail of labor pains come upon her. Before her time of judgment she shall deliver the predicted Son! At one stroke the nation that is destined for destruction shall produce a new nation. Such a miracle has never occurred before—no one has ever seen such an instantaneous birth of a nation! The reason such a miracle will occur is that Jehovah started this work. Will the Lord, having begun this new nation in its germinal form, not be able to bring it to completion? Rest assured that when I decide to bring something into existence, I will certainly do so, says God. Therefore, be jubilant with this news concerning new Jerusalem all you who love the place where God dwells and mourn over old Jerusalem's sin. Rejoice that you will be cuddled to her breast and drink deeply of her sustenance and find security, satisfaction and pleasure. This is what Jehovah says, I will fill her up and running over with goodness and glory from the best people of all the nations of the world and she will be nourished and cared for like a mother cares for her baby. Those who will be citizens of this miraculously-born new Jerusalem shall acknowledge this when it happens and they shall praise Jehovah for having brought them forth and causing them to grow and for manifesting Himself to them. The birth of God's new nation will become His pronouncement

of judgment upon all human attempts to usurp His sovereignty over man and the world. When God forms His new kingdom on the earth, it will, in fact, become a judgment upon all other kingdoms.

COMMENTS

v. 7-9 MIRACULOUS: That the pain and travail of verse six predicts the Roman destruction of Jerusalem is evident from what follows in these verses (7-14). Isaiah's prediction here of the birth of a new nation on the ruins of the old closely parallels the predictions of Daniel (see our comments on Daniel 9:24-27) who also looks forward to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.

The point of verses seven through nine is to emphasize the miraculous nature of what God is going to do *before* He casts off old Zion finally and completely (at the Roman destruction). Before the Old covenant nation is destroyed, the "manchild" and the New covenant nation will be born. The *manchild* can be none other than the *son* and *child* of Isaiah 9:6 and *Immanuel* of Isaiah 7:14. He is the Messiah (the *anointed prince* of Dan. 9:25): The *manchild* of Isaiah 66:7 is the same, we believe, as the *manchild* born of the *woman* in Revelation 12:1-6. In the Revelation John sees the O.T. woman (faithful members of the Old covenant people) give birth to the manchild, the great red dragon (the devil) attempting to devour the manchild, and God catching the manchild up to heaven safe and secure. Just as in Isaiah 66:8, so in Revelation 12, the woman has a plurality of offspring or children. Of course, these children are joint-heirs with the only-unique Son (manchild) by adoption. He is the seed (singular, Gal. 3:16) and they are offspring (plural, Gal. 3:23-29, by adoption).

Old Jerusalem will produce the manchild and the offspring before her travail comes upon her. By a series of rhetorical questions Isaiah emphasizes the uniqueness of the predicted birth of the new nation. Who ever heard of a new nation from

an old nation *before* the old nation passes away? But even more unknown is the birth of a nation in one day! The Hebrew word *pa'am* is translated *at once* but means literally, *at one stroke*, as with one stroke of a hammer. A "land" and a "nation" was brought forth with one stroke of God on the Day of Pentecost, June, A.D. 30. Isaiah's figurative use of "land" should help us understand that much of what he (and other prophets, especially, Ezekiel) says about the future of God's "land" refers to the messianic "land" (or church), (cf. Ezek. 37:15-28; ch. 45-48, etc.).

The guarantee of all this is that Jehovah started it (with Abraham) and He will most certainly carry it through. When God promises, He fulfills. God does not lie; He is not a man that He repents or changes His mind or will. God's new nation (the Church) will be born; nothing will stop it (cf. our comments on Daniel 2:44-45, *Daniel*, College Press, pgs. 91-94). Not even the gates of Hades (death) shall prevail against the birth of God's church (cf. Mt. 16:18). God's new nation will be like no other nation ever on the face of the earth. Governments and cultures of human origin come and go, but God's nation (kingdom) will incorporate all races, tongues, cultures and classes, and will last forever. His kingdom is supernatural!

v. 10-14 MATERNAL: Isaiah continues the figure of a mother and her child. He pictures the citizens of the new Zion as hungry children contentedly nursing from the breasts of their mother. Zion's children drink deeply ("milk out") until they are completely satisfied. In contrast to those who rebel against God, who can never be satisfied (cf. Isa. 65:13-14; 9:20; Micah 6:14-15), new Zion will be satisfied (cf. Jer. 31:14; Isa. 25:6-9; 55:1-3; 58:11, etc.). Citizens of new Zion learn to be content (cf. Phil. 4:10-13; I Tim. 6:6-8); they have the peace which passes all understanding (cf. Phil. 4:4-7). It is interesting that this contentment, satisfaction, glory and peace which shall belong to new Zion comes to those in her who rejoice and mourn. It seems incongruous to talk of rejoicing and mourning at the same time. Yet the Lord pronounced those blessed who mourned (cf. Mt. 5:4). Only those who believe in the Lord

can comprehend this. Those who think that rejoicing can only come when there is nothing over which to mourn do not understand the meaning of joy as Jesus taught it (cf. John 15:1-11; 16:20-24; 16:33; 17:13-19, etc.). It is possible for the citizens of Zion to *mourn* over sin and all that results from it and at the same time *rejoice* in the salvation and future vindication of the Lord. When the citizen of Zion is able to do this he is at peace. Peace means wholeness (cf. comments Isa. 58:9) and Jehovah is going to fill new Zion's "land" up and running over with wholeness, prosperity and goodness like a river fills up and runs over its banks. Zion's wholeness will come as a result of the best of *goiym* (nations) being brought to her, (cf. our comments 61:5-7). Is there anything more tender and helpful than the comfort a mother gives a distressed child? Nothing except the comfort of God! But our God helps us understand His feeling toward us and His ability to comfort us in the highest experience of comfort we know—that of our mothers (cf. Isa. 49:15-16; 60:4, etc.). Jesus expressed His tenderness toward Jerusalem often (cf. Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 19:41-44, etc.).

Those addressed in verse 14 as those who shall see these things are those who shall actually experience them, i.e., those who became the "nation brought forth" at one stroke (verses seven-nine). That generation alive when the Messiah was born (the manchild) and when the nation was brought forth (at Pentecost, A.D. 30), experienced the miracle of God and the maternalness of God (cf. Lk. 1:67-79; 2:29-35; 2:36-38; 24:13-53; Acts 2:43-47; 3:17—4:4; 4:32-37, etc.). The hand of Jehovah was seen and acknowledged in all this, not only by those who believed and became followers of the Way, but also by some who did not follow (cf. Acts 5:27-42; 26:28; 28:1ff, etc.). Not only will the redemptive hand and the providential hand of Jehovah be manifested in the birth of new Zion, but His judgmental hand will also be made known. It is the double-emphasis theme that runs throughout the biblical record of redemption. Whenever God redeems the faithful, He necessarily judges the unfaithful. God cannot reward righteousness without condemning unrighteousness. When He delivered Noah,

He destroyed the world; when He saved Lot, He destroyed Sodom; when He delivered the Hebrews under Mo'eres, He destroyed Pharaoh; when He delivered Israel from captivity, He did so by destroying Babylon. The redemption provided in the atonement of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom, pronounces and gives unequivocal evidence of the final judgment of all who will not surrender to His sovereign rule by becoming covenant members of His church, (cf. Jn. 12:31; 16:11; 17:31; Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; I Jn. 3:8; Rev. 19:15-16, etc.). God allowed His enemies (Satan and his kingdom) to gather all the power at their disposal and meet Him at Calvary and do battle there. It was at Calvary and the empty tomb that God redeemed the world and judged the world—potentially. Those who wish the redemption He won for them there must appropriate it by accepting His new covenant terms. Those who do not wish it must accept His judgment. The final execution of His redemption and judgment is yet future, but just as certain as the cross and the empty tomb! (see our comments *Minor Prophets*, College Press, pgs. 184-201).

QUIZ

1. Where else in the O.T. and the N.T. are the “woman and the manchild” referred to?
2. Why is the birth of the new nation of God so unique?
3. How can the citizens of the new nation rejoice and mourn at the same time?
4. How did God choose to illustrate His desire to comfort His people?
5. Where did God demonstrate with finality His redemption and judgment of the world?

3. BUILDING OF ZION

TEXT: 66:15-24

- 15 For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render his anger with fierceness, and his rebuke with flames of fire.
- 16 For by fire will Jehovah execute judgment, and by his sword, upon all flesh; and the slain of Jehovah shall be many.
- 17 They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves to go unto the gardens, behind one in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, they shall come to an end together, saith Jehovah.
- 18 For I know their works and their thoughts: the time cometh, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and shall see my glory.
- 19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.
- 20 And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an oblation unto Jehovah, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah, as the children of Israel bring their oblation in a clean vessel into the house of Jehovah.
- 21 And of them also will I take for priests and for Levites, saith Jehovah.
- 22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain.
- 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah.
- 24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the dead bodies of the men that have transgressed against me: for their

worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

QUERIES

- a. Why repeat the message of judgment?
- b. What is the "sign" of verse 19?
- c. Who is going to come before Jehovah on new moon and sabbath?

PARAPHRASE

Yes, Jehovah must come with His judgment of wrath to prepare the way for the redemption of mankind. He comes in all the awful consuming fierceness of fire when He judges. His sword of judgment will fall upon the world. Those who have rejected the Lord will suffer His wrath and many will die. Yes, the manifest judgment of God is near upon all, both Israelite and Gentile who dedicate and purify themselves to idolatry, who follow those who indulge in perverseness like eating swine's flesh, mice and other abominable things contrary to My holy Law. I see what they do and I know their secret thoughts, says Jehovah. The time is coming when I will summon all nations and races to behold the ultimate demonstrations of My glory. At this time, men will see My awesome sign of redemption and judgment in its historical certainty, and some of them will escape the judgment I have pronounced upon the world. Those who escape I will send as messengers with the good news of My salvation to the far reaches of civilization to people who have never heard of Me and have never seen My sovereign omnipotence. These messengers will go to Spain, North Africa, Armenia, Greece and other lands beyond these. They shall proclaim My glory among men of all nations and races. All who hear and obey will become brethren and precious gifts to My honor. They will be brought to My New Zion from

all over the world; they will come from different directions, by every means possible. Many will come because some of the children of Israel will have accepted My salvation and offered themselves to Me in obedience. They will become messengers, bringing Gentiles to Me with that same faith and obedience; these Israelites will finally have offered Me clean offerings; these Gentiles will also be considered cleansed and I will consecrate them as My servants, says the Lord. For as surely as the new order which I am creating will last forever, so those who accept My salvation shall be My children forever and their relationship to My name shall stand forever. People from all nations will come into covenant relationship to Me and worship Me according to My will forever. These will behold My judgments upon those who were so favored but who rebelliously rejected My will; this will be a constant reminder of the terrible punishment of the rebellious and of the greatness of redemption to the obedient.

COMMENTS

v. 15-17 DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD: We repeat, for emphasis, this chapter (66) is an epilogue. First, judgment upon Israel for disobeying the Old covenant (verses 1-6); second, promise of a new Israel and a new order (verses 7-14); third, building the new order by destroying the old and opening up citizenship in the New order to the whole world (verses 15-24). J. A. Alexander, in *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, pub. Zondervan, says these verses are "... an integral part of the 'great argument' with which the whole book has been occupied, and which the Prophet never loses sight of to the end of the last sentence. The grand theme of these prophecies . . . is the relation of God's people to himself and to the world, and in the latter stages of its history, to that race with which it was once outwardly identical. The great catastrophe with which the vision closes is the change of dispensations, comprehending the final abolition of the ceremonial law, and its

concomitants, the introduction of a spiritual worship and the consequent diffusion of the Church, its vast enlargement by the introduction of all Gentile converts to complete equality of privilege and honor with the believing Jews, and the excision of the unbelieving Jews from all connection with the church or chosen people, which they once imagined to have no existence independent of themselves."

The emphasis of this final prophecy is on the establishment of the New messianic age and the gathering of the Gentiles into covenant relationship. In order to establish its fulfillment the Old order must be abrogated. The abrogation of the Old and the establishment of the New are coincidental—they are to occur at the same time, i.e., within a generation (cf. Mt. 24:34). The generation of the apostles (Peter, James, John, etc.) did not pass away until God had abrogated the Old order and instituted the New!

God's judgments are appropriately likened unto fire. Fire fiercely consumes (cf. Heb. 12:29; II Thess. 1:7-8, etc.). and is often representative of torment and punishment (cf. Lk. 16:24; Rev. 14:10-11). Jehovah abrogated the Old order, in fact, at the cross of Christ (cf. Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 9:15-28, etc.). That was when God judged both the Mosaic system and all other human (Gentile) systems through which men tried to earn righteousness before Him. All human governments, religions, and ideologies are essentially human rebellions against the rule of God. They were all judged, exposed as inadequate, and destroyed in the power they might exercise over men at Calvary and the Empty Tomb. All human deviations from faith in God through His promised Son are idolatrous. They all fall under the generalized picture of abomination in verse 17. They all "came to an end together" in God's great redemptive-judgmental work in Jerusalem, 30 A.D., when Old Jerusalem had run its course and used up the time allotted to it (cf. Dan. 9:24-27). When the Suffering Servant had made atonement for sin and was raised from the dead destroying the ultimate power of the devil, Israel was to turn to Jehovah and accept citizenship in New Zion (the church). Some did,

but a majority did not. Jehovah, in His longsuffering allowed the Jewish nation to retain its city and temple for another 40 years (until 70 A.D.), and then, by His own providential design He allowed the city and the temple to be destroyed and burned and the nation dispersed over the face of the earth by the Roman empire. Thus the fire of God's judgment fell both literally and figuratively upon the Old order and consumed it.

V. 18-24 DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW: Concurrent to the judgment of the Old order, Jehovah will establish the New order. The phrase "time cometh" connects the judgment of those who shall come to an end together and the "gathering of all nations and tongues" to see His glory. All nations would see God's glory in the two-fold accomplishment of the destruction of the Old and establishment of the New. Jehovah's historical *signal* that He was fulfilling His promises made through the prophets about all this was the Messiah! All who saw Jehovah's *signal* that human systems were overthrown believed in the Christ and were saved ("escaped") from that perverse generation (cf. Acts 2:40). These "escaped" ones (the Jews who became Christians at Pentecost and soon thereafter) were sent by the Lord unto the nations (Gentiles) where they announced the great historical events of redemption which glorified God. Perhaps some of the early Gentile converts (e.g., Cornelius) were also among the "sent" ones. Tarshish, if our conjecture is right, is Spain (at the extreme west of the Great Sea); Pul is probably Put in North Africa (the extreme southern boundary); Lud is probably Lydia in Asia Minor (northern boundary); and Tubal and Javan are Armenia and Greece respectively (generally forming a northern bounday). These nations are mentioned to emphasize the extreme distances to which the escapees shall be sent with their declaration of the glory of Jehovah.

Those escapees who are sent are going to bring "brethren out of all the nations." Apparently the apostle Paul had this scripture in mind when he referred to his ministry of bringing the Gentiles to Christ as an *offering* unto God (cf. Rom. 15:16). The prophet's designation of *goiym* from all nations being

brought forth as "brethren" of the covenant people is unique! Many of the prophets predicted that the Gentiles would one day be brought to Jehovah, but none (save in this one place) referred to them as "brethren"! The reference to various beasts of burden and vehicles of transportation pictorializes the ease, swiftness and splendor in which the Gentiles will be brought to the Lord. The "holy mountain" is a favorite phrase of Isaiah to designate the messianic age (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; 11:9; 56:7; 57:3; 65:11, 25, etc.).

From the Gentiles Jehovah will take "priests and Levites." In the New age (the church) all citizens are priests (cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10, etc.). This may have a more specific reference, however, to the special ministry of those "sent" (even of early Gentile converts) to the extreme boundaries of civilization to "bring brethren out of all the nations." In other words, it may refer to Gentile converts chosen especially by God as ministers and missionaries to declare the glory of God, e.g., Timothy, Luke, Cornelius and others.

The next verses (22-24) emphasize the finality and perpetuity of the establishment of the New order and the judgment of the Old order. We have already established our view that the term "new heavens and new earth" as Isaiah uses it means the New Order (the messianic age) (cf. Isa. 65:17ff). The prophets talk of a whole *new* age to come when the Servant of Jehovah appears:

- a. There shall be *new* things told by God (Isa. 42:9; 48:6-7).
- b. God's people will sing a *new* song (Isa. 42:10).
- c. God will make a completely *new* covenant (Jer. 31:31ff).
- d. God will put a *new* heart and spirit in men (Ezek. 18:31; 36:26).
- e. They will have a *new* name (Isa. 62:2).

There are many other references to the *newness* of the age to follow the old one where the word *new* is not specified but inferred. Just as this new creation will be God's final covenant and just as this new order will last forever, so those who enter

into the covenant will be His people forever. That was prophesied by Hosea (Hos. 2:16-23; 3:5) and fulfilled according to the apostles (Rom. 9:24-33; I Pet. 2:9-10). The name God gives His New Covenant people will remain upon them forever (cf. Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 14:1; 22:4). Old Israel with its old covenant, old name, and old institutions shall pass away (cf. Jer. 3:15-18) and not even be remembered! But from the old will spring the remnant that survives God's casting off, and together with the remnant will be a great gathering of Gentiles to form the true Israel of God which is a "new creation" (cf. Gal. 6:15-16)!

Isaiah was a preacher-prophet to the people of the Old dispensation. He must communicate his message about the New dispensation in terminology and forms to which those of the old dispensation could relate. So, using the terminology of "new moon and sabbath," Isaiah predicts that in the new order there will be faithful, regular, worship of God which will be pleasing to Him. This brief picture of worship in the new dispensation given by Isaiah is dramatically paralleled and expanded in Ezekiel, chapters 40-48, and in Zechariah 14:16-21. Verse 23 is Isaiah's picture of the situation with new Zion after its creation. Verse 24 is the prophet's description of the relationship of the New, true worshipers, to what they see concerning the Old dispensation which has been judged and destroyed or abrogated. The New citizens of Zion are safe within her walls, worshiping Jehovah gladly and truly. Occasionally New Zion's citizens "look upon the dead bodies" of those who have transgressed against Jehovah and the sight of His judgment upon the sinners reminds Zion of the greatness of its redemption and the awful terror of God's punishment from which she has been saved. The undying worm and the unquenchable fire is figurative use of Gehenna where the Jews disposed of dead carcasses of criminals.

Christians witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and were reminded of the fate of all who disobey God and reject His Son and warned that a similar fate awaits an unbelieving world when Jesus comes back to earth at the end of time (Mt. 24:1-51). New Zion is directed to "look upon

the dead" Roman culture of the first and second centuries (Rom. 1:18-32; Revelation, chapters 17-20:6) and rejoice for salvation while also being warned against partaking in Rome's sin.

Isaiah's pictorialization of the great judgment of God upon impenitent Israel and the founding of a new order upon the ashes of the old has parallels: (a) the great battle of Gog and Magog and the new land, city and temple of Ezekiel, chapters 38-48; (b) the great battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat and the escape of those who call upon the name of the Lord in Joel 2:28—3:21; (c) the battle and victory the "king" will win, the purging of the land, and the practice of purified worship depicted in Zechariah 9:9—14:21. So Isaiah closes his great prophecy predicting, not the end of time but the end of the Old dispensation and the creation by God of a New dispensation. Isaiah is predicting the *first* coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, the church, not the *second* coming of the Messiah.

Essentially Isaiah's message is that God's great plan to redeem the world involves the incarnation of the Word in the person of the Suffering Servant; the atonement for sin by the Servant; the offering of a new covenant relationship of grace through faith; the incorporation into that covenant relationship and the formation of a New Zion from all in the world who will believe and accept its terms; the judgment and punishment forever of all who will not accept it.

QUIZ

1. How is chapter 66 an epilogue?
2. Why use fire as a picture of God's judgments?
3. In what way is the judgment of the old connected to the establishment of the new?
4. Why list the names of the nations in verse 19?
5. What is unique about the term, "bring all your brethren . . .?"

6. Who are the "priests and Levites" of verse 21 and from whence do they come?
7. Who goes forth to look upon the dead (verse 24) and when?
8. How would you sum up the message of the whole book of Isaiah?

And now, dear reader, having lived some portion of each day of our life for the last four years with the majesty and awesomeness of this work from the pen of Isaiah, we are impressed very deeply that the one great necessity for a world of unbelief is it must be brought face to face, mind to mind, heart to heart with the glory of God. Men must be taught, must acknowledge and put their trust in *who God is* and not in what man can do! The focus of the prophets on the character and nature of God is the true focus of all preaching. Now, in the end of the ages, the glory and personhood of God has been revealed incarnate in Jesus Christ and His accomplished redemption. And that is the ultimate focus of all preaching. Now therefore, be wise

PSALM 2

- 2 Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, *saying*,
- 3 Let us break their bonds assunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:
The Lord will have them in derision.
- 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure:
- 6 Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 I will tell of the decree:

Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations for thine inheritance,

And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;

Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:

Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve Jehovah with fear,

And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the son, lest he be angry,

and ye perish in the way.

For his wrath will soon be kindled.

Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS SIXTY THROUGH SIXTY-SIX

DEFINITION

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

1. *wealth of the nations*

2. *Spirit upon me*

3. *meek*

4. *liberty*

5. *year of Lord's favor*

6. *strangers*

7. *priests*

8. *covenant*

9. *married*

10. *ensign*

11. *Edom*

12. *Zion*

13. *swine's flesh*

14. *new heavens and earth*

MEMORIZATION

The _____ of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath _____ me to preach good tidings unto the _____; he hath sent me to _____ up the broken-hearted, to proclaim _____ to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are _____; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's _____, and the day of vengeance of our God; to _____ all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in _____, to given unto them a _____ for ashes, the oil of _____ for mourning, the garment of _____ for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called _____ of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah that he may be _____. (61:1-3)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how Zion would be built by foreigners.
2. Explain what the One anointed by the Lord was to declare.
3. Explain the new name Zion was to receive.
4. Explain the Holy Spirit's relationship to believers in the O.T.
5. Explain why God said former things would not be remembered.
6. Explain how God created a land in one day (brought forth at once a nation).
7. Explain how people of Zion look upon dead bodies.

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. Does Isaiah's prediction of the year of the Lord's favor at the coming of the Messiah apply to our understanding of

biblical eschatology?

2. Does Isaiah's symbolic use of Edom in chapter 63 contribute anything to present day understanding of the relation of Zion to the world?
3. Does the impatient prayer of Zion in chapters 64-65 have any application to New Zion?
4. How can we apply the statement, ". . . bless himself in the God *truth* . . ." to our concept of God today?
5. Does the symbolic use of "new heaven and new earth" in chapter 66 apply to our eschatological understanding of the O.T.?
6. What is the main application concerning the nature of God from the book of Isaiah?

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