

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

By: William B. Hallman

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS

Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:16-21

It is well to be familiar with the whole history of the nation of Israel to adequately understand and appreciate the utterances of the Prophets.

Israel's history may be briefly sketched in FOUR great periods as follows:

1. THE CAMP PERIOD (470 years)
Extends from the call of Abraham, the founder of the nation, to the entrance of the nation into Canaan under Joshua. This history is given in the Pentateuch.
2. THE COMMONWEALTH PERIOD (450 years)
Extends from their entrance into Canaan under Joshua to the crowning of their first King Saul. This history is given in Joshua, Judges and Ruth.
3. THE CROWN PERIOD (500 years)
Extends from the crowning of the first King Saul to the Babylonian Captivity. The history here is given in the Samuels, Kings and Chronicles.
4. THE CAPTIVITY PERIOD (160 years)
Extends from the Babylonian Captivity to the end of the O. T. History. The history is told in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

The period of the Prophets is found in the last two periods of Israel's history as the following outline will indicate.

PROPHECY	HISTORY
JOEL	2 Kings 11 – 12
JONAH	2 Kings 13 – 14
AMOS	2 Kings 14 – 15:7
HOSEA	2 Kings 15 – 18:1
ISAIAH	2 Kings 15 – 20; 2 Chron. 26-32
MICAH	2 Kings 15:8-20; Isa. 7 – 8 Jer. 26:17-19; 2 Chron. 27-32
NAHAM	Jonah. Isa. 10; Zeph. 2:13-15
ZEPHANIAH	2 Kings 22-23:34; 2 Chron. 34 – 36:4
JEREMIAH	2 Kings 22-25; 2 Chron. 34 – 36:21
HABAKKUK	2 Kings 23:31-24; 2 Chron. 36:1-10
DANIEL	2 Kings 23:35-25; 2 Chron. 36:5-23
EZEKIEL	2 Kings 24:17-25; 2 Chron. 36:11-21

OBADIAH	2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:11-21
HAGGAI	Ezra 1 – 6
ZECHARIAH	Ezra 1 – 6
MALACHI	Nehemiah 8 – 13

“The prophets of Israel were no mere soothsayers. They were the interpreters of the mind of God to their generation. They were commissioned to keep the lamp of true religion lighted in the midst of the ever encroaching darkness of the pagan world. To the prophets of Israel is due the ultimate triumph of ethical monotheism which saved Israel from worshipping a mere tribal deity and which preserves us from regarding God as an impersonal, philosophical abstraction. A knowledge of their times, of the social and political conditions then prevailing, as well as the currents and cross currents of religious tendency is absolutely necessary if we would do justice to the ancient prophets. They were the chosen men of a chosen people.”

(Max I. Reich)

Christ is the center of both history and prophecy. He is the key to prophecy. He is the Prophet of all prophets “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10).

The first prophecy in the Bible refers to Christ (Gen. 3:15) and the last prophecy in the Bible is spoken of Christ (Rev. 22:12) and the last prayer in the Bible has a prophetic element (Rev. 22:20).

From the historical outline above it will be seen that prophets and prophecy did not come until Israel was in a state of apostasy, disobedience and rebellion against God. There was no original provision for prophets – just Priests and Potentates.

Definition of a Prophet: This can be seen from two passages in the book of Exodus –

“And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” (7:1).

“And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do” (4:15).

By divine appointment Moses was to be in the place of God to Pharaoh and Aaron was to act as the prophet of Moses, receiving from him the message and delivering it to the Pharaoh.

It was the ministry of the Prophet to bring to the people the message of Jehovah; while it was the ministry of the Priest to bring the people to God.

1. . . THE PROPHET

There are three Hebrew words used to translate the word prophet or seer, which means to “bubble forth” or a “weller-forth-one”. Someone who utters a communication. Then the words meaning “one who sees” hence the word Seer. The three words occur in 1 Chron. 29:29 – “Samuel the seer” (roeh). “Nathan the prophet” (nabi). “Gad the seer” (chozeh).

In the N.T. the Greek word is prophetes.

There were no prophets in Solomon's day. Why? Because at that time God's original order prevailed – His mind was declared through the Priest and the King.

There were schools of the prophets, though not much knowledge of these is provided. The ignorance of some of these “sons of the prophets” is far from commendable (2 Kings 2:16-18).

The sovereignty of God displayed in raising up these men is conspicuous in the case of Elijah and Amos (Amos 7:14-15). Often trained secretly, they live simple, humble and dependent lives.

Israel rejected Jehovah but Jehovah did not reject them. Her human kings were leading her astray, but God through the voice of the prophets was seeking to woo them back again. The prophet was God's mouthpiece, speaking His warnings, predictions and exhortations.

2. . . THE PROPHECIES

The predictive element contained in the writings of the prophets concerns mainly the Two Advents of Christ: His First Coming in humility to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Isa. 53; Psa. 22, 69) and His second coming in power and great glory to Mt. Zion to deliver Israel, destroy her enemies and make of her a great nation (Isa. 11, 35; Zech. 14).

The prophets saw these two comings blended on a common horizon and from their vantage point could not see the valley that lay between these two great mountain peaks. Of the Church which is Christ's Body they knew nothing whatever. The Spirit revealed to them the Messiah as a rejected suffering servant (Isa. Chs. 42-53) and then as the reigning Messiah (Isa. Chs. 60-66).

From 1 Peter 1:10-11 we learn that they did not understand their own prophesies. They saw the sufferings and the glory but could not reconcile them nor see the great interval between them.

They knew nothing of the “middle wall of partition” between the Jew and the Gentile which was being abolished by the cross and then both reconciled into the one Body. The Church which is His Body was hid in God from the prophets.

The Hebrew is the central figure in prophecy: First, in the national or organic aspect; Secondly, in the ecclesiastical or spiritual, with reference to the believing remnant; and Thirdly, in the personal or Messianic. These are often so intermingled as to be indistinguishable. Predictions relate either to Judah or Israel or the nations by whom they were oppressed. Whatever judgments are foretold, a promise of restoration always relieves the darkness; the believing remnant survives to become a blessing to future generations.

WHAT DID THE PROPHETS SEE?

1. His Own Time
2. 70 Years Captivity
3. Return From Exile
4. First Advent
5. World-wide Dispersion
6. The Great Tribulation

7. Second Advent
8. Millennial Kingdom

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHECY

In 2 Peter 1:16-21 we get some idea of the importance and value of prophecy:

1. It is not cunningly devised fables.
2. It is a sure word because God spoke it.
3. It is a word to heed.
4. It is a light that shines in a dark place.
5. It is not of any private interpretation.
6. It came not by the will of man.
7. It came by the H.S. Who moved men.
8. It brings a blessing to those who read and heed.
9. It is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10).

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Introduction:

It is interesting to note a comparison between Isaiah and the Bible as a whole.

The Bible contains sixty-six books as we have them in our present Bibles; the Book of Isaiah contains sixty-six chapters. However, it is to be noted that chapter divisions are not in the original manuscripts.

The Bible has two great divisions, called first The Old Testament (39books) and secondly The New Testament (27 books). These come from the Old and the New Covenants. Isaiah's first division contains 39 chapters with the general message of condemnation: its second division contains 27 chapters, mainly that of consolation.

The prevailing truths in both major divisions are LAW in the O.T. and GRACE in the New Testament. So in Isaiah there is judgment or condemnation in the first division and comfort or consolation in the second.

In the first section of Isaiah there are frequent allusions to and predictions of the Messiah; but in the second section He is described in great fulness. So there are types and prophesies of Christ in the O.T. with a full presentation of His life and work and doctrine in the N.T.

Genesis opens with the creation and rebellion of man. Isaiah opens with the words: "Hear O Heavens and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth its owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

The second half of Isaiah opens with the words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem ... the voice of one crying in the wilderness." In the N.T. the angels sing over old Judea's hills, "Peace on earth, good will to men". John the Baptist cries in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

Isaiah closes with the words: “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” The Book of Revelation closes with the promise: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

The Book of Isaiah is divided into two sections by many and also into three sections. The two sections would be (1) chapters 1-39; and (2) chapters 40-66.

George Williams in his commentary makes this division:

“The First Section contains forty-eight chapters. Its earnest call is found in 1:18 and its solemn warning in 48:22. The Second Section ends with chapter 57. Its earnest call is 49:1 and its solemn warning 57:21. The Third Section is formed of Chapters 58-66. Its earnest call is 58:8-14 and its solemn warning 66:24. These three sections harmonize with the dispensational purposes of God as revealed in the Bible (Acts ch. 13 and 15:16. The first forty-eight chapters are addressed to Israel while in Covenant relationship with God. The next nine are addressed to the Nations, Israel included, during the time that Israel is ‘Lo-Ammi’ and the remaining chapters are addressed to Israel when brought back into relationship with God.”

A. ...PROPHETIC (General) Chapters 1 - 35

(Pre-Assyrian Invasion)

1...PROPHESIES CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM 1-12

1. The People’s Condition and Condemnation 1-5
2. The Prophet’s Call and Commission 6
3. The People’s Redemption and Restoration 7-12

2...PREDICTIONS AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS 13-23

(The Book of Burdens – 10)

Babylon, Palestine, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Desert of the Sea, Dumah, Arabia, Valley of Vision and Tyre.

3. PRONOUNCEMENTS OF JUDGMENTS AND DELIVERANCES 24-35

1. Transgression and Tribulation 24
2. Triumph and Testimony 25-27
3. Testing’s and Tribulation 28-33 (Book of Woes – 6)
4. Terror and Triumph 34-35 (Here the future of the Nations and Israel are Contrasted)

B. ...HISTORIC (specific) Chapters 36-39

(Assyrian Invasion and Deliverance)

A review of Hezekiah’s Reign.

1. RETROSPECTION (The Assyrian) 36-37

2. PROSPECTION (The Babylonian) 38-39 (Parallel passages are 2 Kings Chs. 18-20 and 2 Chron. Chs. 29-32)

C. ...MESSIANIC (Specific) Chapters 40-66
(Post-Assyrian Invasion)

1. A MESSAGE OF CONSOLATION 40-48
(Deliverance thru a Servant) Cyrus the historic type (44:28)
2. A MESSIAH OF CONSOLATION 49-57
(Deliverer thru Suffering)
3. A MEANS OF CONSOLATION 58-66
(The Delivered thru Salvation)
The faithful and unfaithful compared; and their respective ends.

The period of Isaiah's prophecies was one of national prosperity. But underneath was moral and spiritual superficiality. Formality and tradition prevailed (1:11-18). Against the sham of his age he prophesied with conviction and courage. He sought to impress upon the nation that God "desired truth in the inward parts".

The Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah are more abundant than any other Book in the Bible except the Psalms. Every glory of our Lord and every phase of His life on earth was beheld by this prophet. In 4:2 He is "the Branch of the Lord"; in 7:14 His name is "Emmanuel"; in 9:6-7 he is "a child born ,, a Son given; Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"; in 11:1 He is a "rod out of the stem of Jesse"; in 28:16 He is "a precious corner stone, a sure foundation"; in 32:1-2 He is "A King reigning in righteousness: an hiding place, a covert, the shadow of a great rock"; in 42:1 He is "God's elect Servant"; in 49:6-7 He is "the Redeemer of Israel"; in 61:1 He is "God's anointed Messenger".

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Introduction:

Of all the writing prophets, Isaiah is justly accounted the greatest. His activity extends over a longer period of time than any of the others, not less than sixty or sixty-five years. His prophecy is quoted more frequently than any other in the New Testament. He speaks more of the coming Messiah than any other prophet.

Isaiah was contemporary with Jonah, Amos and Micah. Like Samuel, Jeremiah and Daniel he commenced to preach at a very early age, some suggest as early as fifteen years. He died at about the age of eighty-five. Tradition has it that he was sawn asunder by Manasseh (See Hebr. 11:37).

Prophecy is sad but sweet; sad because it deals with sin; and sweet because it reveals a Savior from sin. All prophecy gathers round the person of Christ and mainly concerns Israel. The Church nowhere appears in the Old Testament prophecies (Eph. 3:5) – William's Commentary.

I . . . HIS PERSONAL HISTORY

1. His Name

His Hebrew name is Yeshayyah, which means, “Jehovah is salvation”. His Greek name is Hesaias: the Latin, Esaias or Isaias. And our English is usually Isaiah.

2. His Family

Isaiah was married. His wife is called “the prophetess” (8:3). He had at least two children, boys, Shear-Jashub (which means “a remnant shall return”); and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (which means “the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth”). These boys were thus living reminders of their father’s prophecies; though Judah was hastening away to captivity yet she would not lose her identity, “a remnant should return”.

Isaiah was the son of Amoz (1:1). There is Jewish tradition that he was of royal descent, a cousin of King Uzziah. This may be the reason for his keen insight into the political affairs of his day.

3. His Home

Isaiah lived and prophesied in Jerusalem which at that time was the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, the southern kingdom.

II . . . HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

1. The Time

Isaiah was called to the prophetic office “the year that King Uzziah died” (6:1). He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Hezekiah and if tradition is right that he died in the reign of Manasseh, he also prophesied until then.

The reign of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chron. Ch. 26). (52 years – 2 Kings 15:2).

The reign of Jotham (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chron. Ch. 27) (16 years – 2 Kings 15:33).

The reign of Ahaz (2 Kings 16: 2 Chron. Ch 28) – (16 years 2 Kings 16:2).

The reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18, 19, 20; 2 Chron. 29-32) – (29 years 2 Kgs. 18:2).

The reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chron. Ch 33) – (55 years 2 Kgs. 21:1).

2. The Sphere

His ministry was both to Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 1:1). But Israel, Syria, Moab, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria and Babylon all come in for their share as they came in touch with Judah.

3. The Character

Isaiah was bold, fearless and absolutely sincere. No class of society escapes his scathing denunciation – kings, rulers, priests, common people and even the women (3:16-26) are unsparingly told just how they appear in God’s sight.

Isaiah was a many-sided genius. Not only was he a great writing prophet but also a poet, a statesman and orator as well.

4. The Circumstances

a. Politically

Within the borders of Judah: Judah was constantly assailed by the Moabites, Edomites and the Philistines. These kingdoms had been subdued by David under his reign but now were a constant source of annoyance. Frequent uprisings would occur as Judah grew weak under certain kings.

Without the borders of Judah: The great issues of the world's secular history were being fought out by the mighty world powers – Assyria and Egypt. Jerusalem was a strong fortress on the road over which Assyria and Egypt had to pass. Her only safe-guard was to sit still and trust Jehovah for deliverance. This was the advice given by Isaiah, but his counsel was not heeded (6:12-13).

b. Spiritually

Under Uzziah and Jotham the people worshipped the true God, but failed to remove the places of Idolatrous worship. Therefore with the increase of temporal prosperity, true piety declined more and more.

c. Morally

Following a decline of religious fervor there is always a decline in morals.

d. Materially

The nation enjoyed great temporal prosperity corresponding to that enjoyed by Israel under Jeroboam II.

5. The Call (Isa. 6:1-13)

a. Coronation of the Almighty (1-4). Here the prophet gets a vision of God as being high and holy.

b. Confession of sin (5)

“Woe is me; for I am undone ... I am a man of unclean lips.”

c. Cleansing from sin (6-7)

Flying Seraph. Live coal. Burnt lips. “God is a consuming fire.” “Iniquity taken away ... sin purged.”

d. Consecration to the task (8)

God's call and Isaiah's answer – “Here am I send me.”

e. Commission to proclaim

This is the pronouncement to judgment. Definite, Dignified, Dynamic and Destructive.

CHAPTER ONE

I. THE INTRODUCTION (Vr. 1)

1. The Theme – “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz”

a. “Vision” is used in the wide sense of a collection of prophetic oracles. As a prophet was called a “seer” (hozeh) and his perception of divine truth was called “seeing”, so his message as a whole is termed a “vision” (hazon).

b. Isaiah His name means “Jehovah is Salvation”. Son of a certain Amoz about whom we know nothing. He was married and had two sons (7:3; 8:1-4). Received his call in the year that Uzziah died – 740? B.C. (6:1).

2. The Tribe – “Judah and Jerusalem”

Comprising really two tribes – Judah and Benjamin. Samaria representing the two northern tribes had fallen to Sargon of Assyria in 722 B.C.

3. The Time – “In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.” About from 740 – 701 B.C.

Uzziah or Amaziah reigned some 52 years

Jotham “ “ 16 years

Ahaz “ “ 16 years

Hezekiah “ “ 29 years

Two Great Crises:

(1) The Syro-Ephraimitish War of 735 B.C. Assyria was under Tiglathpileser and was conquering northern Syria and threatening Palestine. Syria and Israel allied themselves against Assyria and tried to get Judah under Ahaz to join them. Isaiah urged that Judah stay neutral and trust Jehovah. But Ahaz joined the Assyrians and became a vassal state, paying tribute to Assyria.

(2) The Assyrian Invasion under Sennacherib. When Sargon died in 705 B.C. the vassal states decided to rebel. The new king, Sennacherib came with his armies and put down one after another. He finally came to Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah. Judah sought help from Egypt and Babylon. Isaiah pled against this. Hezekiah then sought the Lord and Isaiah for help. Isaiah told him that Sennacherib would be slain and Assyria called back. That night a great plague swept over the camp of Assyria and they all fled.

II. THE INDICTMENT (Vrs. 2-9) “Hear, O heavens and give ear, O earth.”

1. Because of Rebellion (2-4) “They have rebelled against me.”

a. Lack of knowledge (Vr. 3)

b. Lack of moral integrity (Vr. 4)

2. Bringing Ruination (Vrs. 5-8) (Sennacherib’s invasion)

a. Of Physical and Moral Corruption 5-6

b. Of National and Political Chaos 7-8

Jehovah has discovered rebellion and ingratitude in the sons whom He has reared and brought to honor. The evidence of Judah's sin is seen in her moral, physical and political decay.

3. Believing Remnant (Vr. 9) "The Lord of Hosts" See 1 Sam. 17:45.

This is the first idea of a remnant. God has always had a faithful remnant that His purpose in Israel may not be frustrated.

III. THE INTERROGATION (Vrs. 10-17) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?"

1. Condemnation of a Dead Orthodoxy (Vrs. 10-15)

"Sodom ... Gomorrah" (See Amos 4:11; Jer. 20:16; Lam. 4:6; Zeph. 2:9).

"I am full" ... "I am fed up" on your religious pretention and profession. Their religious practices were an insult to Jehovah.

2. Call For Moral Reformation and Public Righteousness (Vrs. 16-17)

"Wash" "Learn" "Seek" "Relieve" "Judge" and "Plead". – Demands of the Law of God (Vr. 10). Under the Law these were concrete examples of true worship.

IV. THE INVITATION (18-20)

1. To a Conference (Vr. 18)

Jehovah now challenges His people to come and hold communion with Him, be reasonable and receive that cleansing which they need. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He alone can cleanse, heal and forgive.

2. The Consequences (Vrs. 19-20)

a. Prosperity 19. Here reward for obedience promised. Material prosperity a definite promise to Israel.

b. Perdition 20. Here is the penalty for rebellion – "Devoured with the sword."

V. THE INTERVENTION (21-31)

1. Dirge Over Jerusalem (Vrs. 21-23)

He sighs over the fact that He sees harlots, murderers, rebels, Thieves and bribe-takers.

2. Destruction of Evil Doers (Vrs. 24-25; 28-31)

Apostasy must be destroyed and with it all who partake in it. This looks forward to the day when all God's enemies will be annihilated.

3. Deliverance of a Righteous Remnant (Vrs. 26-27)

As complete as was the destruction of His enemies, so complete shall be the salvation of the faithful remnant.

CONCLUSION:

This chapter has been called, "The Great Arraignment" (Ewald). It stands worthily as an introduction to Isaiah's prophecies. Its leading ideas – the breach between Jehovah and Israel; the inefficiency of mere ritual; the call to national repentance; the certainty of a sweeping judgment; all of which underlie Isaiah's teaching and that of the Pre-exilic prophets.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

Chapter two begins a series of prophecies which run to chapter five. They have their setting in the “Day of Jehovah” in which Christ will come to destroy all His enemies and to deliver His people Israel; and also to set up His kingdom.

“We have seen that though the people if repentant are assured of God’s blessing, they are shown that governmental punishment must first be executed on the wicked by Him who alone is capable of righteousness; then and not before shall Zion be redeemed in deed and truth. This redemption in power and with judgment is manifestly distinct from redemption by blood only, as we know it in Christ by the gospel of salvation. Judah’s deliverance is accompanied by divine judgment. Jerusalem’s heart is at length reached, her time of hardness accomplished, her iniquity pardoned.” – William Kelly

I. RESTORATIO OF THE LORD’S HOUSE (Vrs. 1-4)

See Micah 4:1-5

Verse one is practically a repetition of 1:1. This would reveal that chapter one is sort of a summary revelation of the whole prophecy.

“The word that Isaiah ... saw.” Some of the prophets “heard” what was imparted to them, but Isaiah “saw” what was revealed. Possibly when in a trance, the words passed before his mental vision, making a super-sensory impression. It was then either recorded by the prophet or dictated to a scribe.

1. Its Position Vr. 2

“established in the top of the mountains.” This can only mean Jerusalem.

“exalted above the hills.” It will not be firmly established, but greatly embellished and “exalted” as of old.

2. Its Provision Vrs. 3-4

a. Place of instruction Vr. 3

“He will teach us of His ways.”

“We will walk in His paths.”

Out of Zion or Jerusalem shall come forth the Law and the Word of Jehovah.

b. Place of judgment Vr. 4

“Judge and rebuke the nations.”

“Neither shall they learn war any more.”

True peace – a just and lasting peace on earth can only come when the Lord comes, Israel is restored, Jerusalem established and exalted and there is a national walking in the Law and Word of Jehovah.

II. REVELATION OF THE LORD'S DAY Vrs. 5-22

“For the day of the Lord of hosts.” This is the first of some twenty occurrences of the expression “Day of the Lord” in the Bible. There are twenty in the O.T. and four in the N.T. (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 1:10). The number is thus stamped with the number four – six times four in all; five times four in O. T. and four times in the N. T.

It is the “Day” when the Lord returns to abase man and exalt Himself. Now we are living in “man’s day” (1 Cor. 4:3).

1. Spiritual Confusion (Vrs. 5-9)

Caused by idolatry – Israel’s great national sin.

a. Adopted foreign cultists (Vr. 6A)

They forsook the ways of the Lord among their fathers and took to diviners and soothsayers from the East and Philistia.

b. Adopted foreign customs Vr. 7

“silver and gold, horses and chariots.”
Emphasis upon materialism

c. Adopted foreign idolatry Vrs. 8-9

“Land is full of idols.”

Both the lowest and highest among men bow down and worship the work of their own hands.

2. Physical Convulsion Vrs. 10-17, 19

When the “Day of Jehovah” breaks upon the people, they will hide in the dens, caverns, and clefts of the rocks. (See Amos 5:18-29; Rev. 6:12-17).

God will bring low all the pride of man and exalt His Son Jesus Christ. Not only man but every place of idolatry – cedars, oaks, high mountains, hills, high towers, fenced cities, ships and pictures of desire.

All nature will fight against them – the thunderstorm, the hail, the wind, the rain, the earthquake, drought, disease and grasshoppers. (See Lev. Ch. 26; Deut. Ch. 28)

3. Spiritual Cleansing Vrs. 18-22

“And the idols He shall utterly abolish.”

They will see how useless the idols are in the day of calamity. The prophet describes the sudden despair and ignominious discomfiture of all who partake and put their trust in images.

CONCLUSION:

“Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

The inefficiency, helplessness and folly of man will be set forth more fully in 3:1 – 4:1.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter we shall see the ruination of Judah and Jerusalem. Having established the certainty of a judgment, the prophet goes on to describe it in detail.

I. THE POLITICAL RUIN Vrs. 1-15

1. As Seen In Their Removal Vrs. 1-7

a. Upper class removed Vrs. 1-4

“The nations chief sinners are those of the upper classes, the very ones to whom the people are looking to for protection and guidance. Boldly and vehemently the prophet reproaches these” – Robinson.

“Stay and the staff” ... “bread and water” – These are figures of life’s necessities.

The army and its officers	Vr. 2	Diviners and aged	Vr. 2
The cabinet officials	Vr. 2	Honorable men and counselors	Vr. 3
Judges and lawyers	Vr. 2	Artificer and orator	Vr. 3
Professional prophets	Vr. 2		

“Children and babes” instead are going to rule (4). This may mean either a state of infantilism or literally as Manasseh who became king at 12.

b. Oppression shall prevail Vr. 5

All oppress each other. Children against elders. Base against honorable.

c. The fit will not rule Vrs. 6-7

The distress shall be so great that any one who is still possessed of a respectable outer garment shall be importuned to accept the government and shall protest against the dubious honor.

2. As Seen In The Result Vrs. 8-15

“For Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen.”

The sins of the men – “They have provoked by their unblushing wickedness the eyes of Jehovah’s glory” Vr. 8

Rebellious like Sodom	Vr. 9	Ruin of poor	Vrs. 13-14
Reward of iniquity	Vr. 11	Repression of people	Vr. 15
Ruling of women	Vr. 12		

But it will be “well with the righteous” Vr. 10.

II. THE MORAL RUIN Vrs. 3:16-4:1

Isaiah also draws a picture of the women of Jerusalem (cf. Amos Ch. 4), painting them as state dolls who by their baneful influence on the government (3:12) and their unbounded love of finery are undermining religion and morals in the home and poisoning the entire national life.

1. The Sin Of The Women Vrs. 16-26

“the daughters of Zion.”

a. General Description Vrs. 16-17

Proud, wanton, dancing, lovers of dress and ornaments.

b. Particular Description Vrs. 18-23

“Bravery” – finery

“Ornaments” – metal crescent-shaped discs

“Round tires like the moon” – round crescent-shaped head bands

“Chains” – pendants

“Bracelets”

“Mufflers” – light face veils

“Head tires”

“Ankle chains”

“Head bands” – girdles

“Tablets” – scent bottles

“Earrings” – amulets

“Rings”

“Nose jewels” – worn in Palestine today

“Changeable suits” – worn in Palestine today

“Mantles”

“Wimples” – neck binding

“Pockets”

“Mirrors”

“Fine linen” – underclothing

“Hoods” – turbans

“Vails” – long flowing veils

c. Judgments upon Vanity Vrs. 24-26

Corruption for sweet smell

Rope for a girdle

Baldness for hair

Sackcloth for girdle

Burning for beauty

Desolation for plenty

Men shall fall in war

God will deprive them of those things which they love most.

d. Disproportion of the Sexes Vr. 4:1

Seven women to one man – a famine of men

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter presents to us the Restoration of the Remnant.

“The love, the power, the wealth and the sufficiency of the Messiah are set forth in these verses 2-6.” – Williams

The Messiah is spoken of as “the Branch of the Lord”. He is the “Branch of Jehovah” as seen in John’s Gospel: He is “The Man the Branch” (Zech. 6:12) as seen in the Gospel of Luke. He is the “Branch the King” (Jer. 23:5) as seen in the Gospel of Matthew; and He is “The Servant, the Branch” (Zech. 3:8) as seen in the Gospel of Mark.

I. THE REDEEMER 2a

“Branch of the Lord.” This is a prediction of Christ as we have seen and has its N.T. counterpart in the Gospel of John.

In contrast to those on whom vengeance falls, there is a manifestation of Jesus Christ to the “escaped of Israel”. He is seen in His characteristic attributes:

1. Beautiful (Ex. 28:2). Such was the garment of the High Priest. This is a contrast to His First Advent when He came in humiliation and lowly guise.
2. Glorious (Ex. 28:2). Here again we see the contrast to His first Advent. Now He comes in great glory and splendor (Rev. 19:11-16).

II. THE REDEEMED 2b-6

1. The Earth 2b “the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.” In that coming day the land shall be restored to its fruitfulness (See 30:23; Ezek. 34:29; Joel 2:23-25).

2. The Remnant 3-6 “He that remaineth in Jerusalem, ... written among the living.”

a. They are Holy Ones Vr. 3 “shall be called holy.”

Their sanctification is promised as the fruit of their being written in the Book of Life by God’s sovereign love. These are “escaped of Israel”, “left in Zion”, “remaineth in Jerusalem”. This is the elect remnant (Rom. 11:5); and in three great companies: (1) in the return from Babylon; (2) in the escape from Jerusalem’s destruction under Titus; (3) in the still future assault on Jerusalem and deliverance of “the third part”.

These are the “holy” ones (Isa. 52:1; 60:21; Rev. 21:27).

“Written among the living at Jerusalem.” This is the register kept of Israel’s families and tribes.

b. They are Cleansed Ones Vr. 4

“washed away the filth”; “purged the blood”.

They shall be “washed” (Zech. 13:1) from all their moral and spiritual filth (Isa. 1:21-25) and their blood (Isa. 1:15).

God will now use His Spirit as a judge to bring judgment upon the ungodly by means of “burning” (Matt. 3:11-12). The same Holy Spirit Who sanctifies believers by the fire of affliction now dooms unbelievers to the fire of refining (See Mal. 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 3:13-15).

c. They are Defended Ones Vr. 5

“for upon all the glory shall be a defense.” This defense is really a canopy, a “huppah” or marriage canopy. (See again verse 1)

“A cloud and smoke by day and ... flaming fire by night.” So it was to Israel against the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19-20). So it shall be to literal Israel at Jerusalem hereafter. (Zech. 2:5).

The pillar of cloud stood over the tabernacle as symbol of God’s favor and presence (Ex. 13:21-22). Now it shall come upon every dwelling place and on the general sacred assemblies.

d. They are Sheltered Ones Vr. 6

“a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime and refuge from storm and rain.” A portable tent was a needful part of every traveler in the Orient from the heat and the storms. Our Lord is spoken of as “tabernacling among us” (John 1:14; 2:21; Heb. 8:2). Only Christ is our true refuge, our covert from all the wrath of sin’s judgment. No heat or storm can ever do us harm when we are in Him.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter sets forth Israel's spiritual failure. There is a distinct similarity in this chapter to the message of chapter one. The resemblance is indeed striking.

Isaiah Chapter 1:

- a. Zion left like a booth in a vineyard (defenseless).
- b. Israel did not know, they did not consider.
- c. I have nourished and brought up children.
- d. The land desolate (devoured).
- e. Treading the courts (Ramas).
- f. The tow and the spark.

Isaiah Chapter 5:

- a. The house of Israel like a vineyard.
- b. They regard not neither consider.
- c. What could I have done more?
- d. Vineyard laid waste; eaten up.
- e. It shall be trodden down (Ramas).
- f. The fire and the stubble.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD Vrs. 1-7

Allegory in Judges Ch. 9 of the trees and the bramble in which Israel is likened to "the olive tree", "the fig tree", "the vine", and "the bramble". The vine seems to represent Israel's spiritual blessings (see John Ch. 15). This song or parable sets forth the doom of the vineyard, The parable in Luke 20:9-16 sets forth the doom of the husbandman.

"The vineyard of the Lord" ... "is the house of Israel and Judah."

1. Its Characteristics Vrs. 1-3

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Planted in a fruitful hill (1) | e. Built a tower (2) |
| b. Fenced it in (2) | f. Made a winepress (2) |
| c. Gathered out the stones (2) | g. Watched over it (2) |
| f. Planted choicest vine (2) | |

This reveals that God did everything that He could for the well-being and fruitfulness of His vineyard.

How true: "What could I have done more to my vineyard?"

2. Its Condemnation Vrs. 4-7

"When I looked that it should bring forth grapes; it brought forth wild grapes."

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. He took away the hedge (5) | e. It was laid waste (6) |
| b. It was eaten up (5) | f. It was not pruned nor digged (6) |
| c. Broke down the wall (5) | g. There came briars and thorns (6) |
| d. It was trodden down (5) | h. No more rain upon it (6) |

And he "looked for justice (mispah), behold bloodshed (mispah) and for righteousness (sedakah) and behold a cry of wrong (seakah).

Isaiah frequently employs a figure of speech called “play on words” or as it is also called “paronomasia”. This can be seen only in the original Hebrew; the translations do not bring this out.

Isaiah says something like this: “He looked for equity but behold iniquity; for right but behold might.”

II. THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF WOES 5:8-24

There are here six definite “woes” pronounced by God upon His people:

1. Against Covetousness or Monopoly (8-10)

Threatening – Desolation

2. Against Dissipation or Excess (11-17)

Threatening – Carnival and carousing to end in captivity.

3. Against Iniquity or Unbelief (18-19)

4. Against Moral Confusion (20)

Hypocrisy and confusion and dissimulation.

5. Against Conceit (21)

Scorn to submit to God’s correction.

6. Against Perversion of Justice (22-24)

Threatening – Destruction

III. THE PERFORMANCE OF JUDGMENT 25-30

What God pronounces in verses 8-24 He now executes.

These verses tell of the unnamed Assyrian whom God will use to smite them. It is Jehovah’s judgment and there will be no escape.

The judgment predicted in these verses had a partial fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem and the devastation of Palestine by the Babylonians and the Romans; but its complete fulfillment awaits the future.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter Isaiah gets his credentials for speaking on behalf of God to the people as a prophet. It is possible that this chapter precedes the first five as to time and that it records the conversion, regeneration and ordination of the prophet. Chronologically this chapter could be the first. The prophet having pronounced six woes (5:8-24) now pronounces the last upon himself; crying out that he was morally a leper and justly doomed to die.

I. THE VISION FROM THE THRONE 1-7

1. As Seen In the Period (1a)

“the day Uzziah died” (2 Kings 15-6:5; 2 Chron. 26:21).

King Uzziah or Azariah was a leper. The kingdom was at its lowest ebb.

2. As Seen In the Person (1b-4)

“I saw also the Lord.” “Jehovah” here is none other than Christ as seen from John 12:37-

41. What a contrast this is to the leprous king Uzziah that Isaiah had just seen!

a. His Exaltation (1b)

“Sitting on a throne, high and lifted up.”

“Train filling the temple.”

This is truly one of the most majestic scenes of Jehovah outside the Book of Revelation.

b. His Glorification (2-4)

The Seraphim – “The burning ones.” Celestial beings who are named but not explained. The name is also used of serpents because of the burning effect produced by them (See Num. 21:6).

The Speaking – “Cried ... holy, holy, holy.” This is intense and solemn emphasis. Glory given unto God. “Whole earth full of His glory.” This is Messianic and looks forward to that future day when this will be realized.

The Sensation (4) – “posts of the door moved ... The house was filled with smoke.”

3. As Seen In the Purpose (5-7)

The prophet had just pronounced retributive judgment upon those who reject God. He now experiences redemptive judgment in his own life.

1. To Bring Conviction 5a

“Woe is me! For I am undone.” If the angelic beings must cover their faces and feet when they stand before God, how much less can a sinful man stand in His presence? This is the natural outcome of having seen God.

2. To Bring Confession 5b

“I am a man of unclean lips.”

Note who will see God and look upon Him (Matt. 5:8).

3. To Bring Cleansing 6-7

By one of the Seraphim – Seraph, a fiery being – See num. 21:6-9; Deut. 8:15.

“A live coal” – Fire is a type of cleansing. “Our God is a consuming fire.” When gold is refined in the fire only the dross is burned up. When hay, wood and stubble are cast into the fire they are burned up.

“Thy sin is purged” – It is covered (Hebrew – kaphar, meaning to cover). The word is translated also “atonement”.

II. THE VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE (8-13)

This is the voice from the Temple concerning the scattering; corresponding with Isa. 40:3,6 which is the voice from the wilderness concerning the gathering.

1. It Brought Consecration 8

“Whom shall I send, ... Here am I send me.”

We have seen the “WOE” of confession and the “LO” of cleansing; now we see the “GO” of commission. (5,7,9).

2. It Brought Commission 9-10

“Go and tell the people.” The words that God gave to the prophet as a message from Him were not pleasant words. They were words of judgment.

a. “a hearing, hear ye.”

b. “a seeing, see ye.”

c. “make the heart of this people fat” signifying declare that it will be so. This is a Hebrew idiom signifying insensibility and dullness.

d. “Go and tell this people.” They are no longer “my people” for the people were now Lo-ammi (Hos. 1:9) “not my people”.

This prophecy is of the deepest import in Israel’s history. It is written down seven (7) times in the Bible: Matt. 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Rom. 11:8 together with this passage in Isaiah.

Seven is a perfect number. These people were now ripe for judgment and nothing could stay the hand of captivity.

3. It Brought Condemnation (11-12)

“Lord, How long?” Romans 11:25 supplies the answer.

“cities be wasted.” “houses without man.” “land utterly desolate.”

“removed men far away.” “great forsaking of the land.”

Here is a recital of God’s anger and judgment against sinners.

4. It Brought Continuation (13)

“But yet in it shall be a tenth and it shall return.”

God will save a remnant, though it be only a tenth of the whole.

As with terebinth and oak, whose life remains in them when felled, so shall the remnant be. They may be scattered, but will be gathered again.

God has always had “a holy seed” that are faithful to Him and will be ultimately saved and secured in the land.

CHAPTER 7 (2 Kings Ch. 16; 2 Chron. Ch. 28)

INTRODUCTION:

Isaiah's prophetic method is to take the actual facts of current history and with these facts as a basis to look down the centuries to the more complete fulfillment both of the woes and of the blessings. Thus in this section we have both the historic development and prophetic revelation.

I. HISTORIC INVASION 7:1-9

1. Confederacy 1-2

"Syria is confederate with Ephraim."

A confederation has now taken place between the kings and lands of Syria and Israel (here called "Ephraim") to make war with Judah under king Ahaz.

The historical background of the invasion and war is seen in 2 Kings 15:37-16:1; and 2 Chron. Ch. 28.

2. Conspiracy 5-6

"Because Syria, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee."

The real menace of this attack is found in the words of Isaiah, "and set a king in the midst of it". They would dethrone Ahaz and put another king in his place. Put on the throne a "quisling" who was not of the house of Judah and thus frustrate God's purpose in the royal seed.

3. Confidence 3-4; 7-9

a. Inner Assurance 3-4

"Take heed and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted."

God always takes away inner fear first before removing outward danger. Isaiah's child, Shear-jashub was to accompany the prophet as he went to meet Ahaz, as a symbolic child, meaning "a remnant shall return". Later on another son would predict judgment (8:1).

b. Outward Assurance 7-9

"Thus saith the Lord God, it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass."

In 65 years Ephraim or Israel would be broken and carried into captivity (Vr.8). The prophet then closes this section with the words: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." The Companion Bible says of this statement: "Note the figure Paronomasia for emphasis and to attract attention to the importance of the sentence. Hebrew: 'im l'o tha'aminu, ki l;o the amenu which may be Englisized thus: "If ye will not trust ye shall not b e trusted". Or, have no belief ... find no relief; or, will not understand ... shall not surely stand; or, no confiding ... no abiding. Verse 17 shows that Ahaz did not trust." Isaiah is so much richer in the original Hebrew.

II. PROPHETIC REVELATION 10-25

1. The Sign of Redemption 10-16

It would appear from verse 11 that the Lord was testing the nature and sincerity of the faith of Ahaz, when he said: "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

Ahaz had no excuse for refusing, except that he had made up his mind to appeal to Assyria for help against Syria and Ephraim.

"So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son; come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me" (2 Kings 16:7).

It could well be that Assyria was already on her way when the conversation took place between Isaiah and Ahaz. The refusal of Ahaz has the appearance of humility – “Neither will I tempt the Lord”. But it was in fact a cloak for his apostasy, an evasion act.

First Great Prophetic Type (Verse 14).

“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.” It is assumed that this child like the prophets two sons (7:3; 8:1) was his own son. See 8:18. The word translated “virgin” here is in the Hebrew “almah” and could be translated “young woman” who presumably had not been married nor had children. This sign had a twofold fulfillment: the first in the prophet’s time and experience and secondly at the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:23).

The political bearing of the name Immanuel, “God with us” is seen in 8:10 – “Take counsel together and it shall come to naught; speak the word and it shall not stand; for God is with us.”

The sign of Isaiah was indeed “in the depth, or in the height above; for what could be deeper than the incarnation, the condescension of Christ and higher than the exaltation and glorification of the Savior! Only Christ Jesus could fulfill the “depth” and the “height”.

So “Immanuel” represents both the humanity and deity of Christ.

The curious reference to “Butter and honey shall he eat” (15) constitute part of an infant’s diet. A better translation would be, “curds and honey”. This shows the utter poverty of the land for only spontaneous food was to be found.

Some translators render the connective “that” in verse 15 by “before” or “up to the time of”.

“The received version is the most simple and agrees best with the real scope ... this child, unlike other infants from the first dawn of reason will know to refuse evil and to choose the good. The phrase, like the fact, is unique and never used in Scripture of any other child. Three wonders would meet in Him whose name is “Wonderful” – a miraculous birth, a Divine nature, and sinless choice of the good alone” – Birk’s Commentary.

2. The Symbols of Ruination 17-25

We have now (17) the prediction that Judah would be visited by the “king of Assyria”.

Here is a picture of the change that comes over a land when, owing to the depopulation consequent upon invasion, agriculture ceases and normal crops give place to jungle and patches of scant pasturage. Note that everyone left in the country eat “curds and honey” (22).

Because of the king’s unbelief, Judah is to become the theatre of war between Assyria and Egypt. The land will be left ravaged, depopulated and uncultivated and become the hunting ground of nomads “with arrows and with bows” (24).

All because of the king of no faith.

Isaiah uses three symbols: the “fly, bee and razor” to depict the condition.

The hordes of the Egyptians, like the flies of Egypt, and the Assyrians like the bees of Assyria, would settle down upon the land so thickly that not one acre would escape.

The “hired razor” (20) means the king of Assyria and “the river” is the Euphrates. To shave the head and the feet is to shave all. So this razor (Assyria) would first shave Syria and Israel and then later Judah too.

“A young cow and two sheep” further shows the utter poverty of the land.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter eight belongs to a larger section of this book, namely 7-12. Chapter eight continues with the subject of chapter seven but at a later period (See 8:4 with 7:16). The interval till the accomplishment is shorter now than then.

I. PROPHETIC INSTRUCTION (1-4)

1. The Sign (1-2)

Isaiah is now told by the Lord to take a great roll, or better, a great tablet and write on it with the carving tool of man, “For Maher-shalal-hash-baz. The warning indicated by the meaning of this strange name is clear: “Haste to spoil, he speeds to the prey.” This prophecy was attested by Uriah the priest and Zechariah to son of Jeberechiah; and within 21 month (i.e. nine months before his birth and twelve months after) Damascus had fallen – in the third year of Ahaz. This period (2 Kings 16:9) has been called “The Gordian Knot of Chronology”.

2. The Son (3)

The son is born in due time and given his typical name – maher-shalal-hash-baz.

3. The Sequel (4)

In the third year of Ahaz, Damascus was sacked and Rezin was slain – 732 B.C.

II. ASSYRIAN INVASION (5-10)

In this section the prophet uses pictorial language of water – “the waters of Shiloah” “the waters of the river”.

1. Its Causes (6)

a. Rejected Shiloah – “The waters of Shiloah” were the waters beneath Zion running from Gihon to Siloam. These waters were symbolic of Jehovah’s silent power and gracious rule.

b. Received Assyria – Instead Judah is rejoicing in the waters of the river Euphrates – the power of Assyria.

2. Its Course (7-8)

a. Approach (7) – The Assyrian is now coming. God is slow to judge His people but the time comes when judgment must be meted out.

b. Arrival (8) – “And he shall pass through Judah.” The time for judgment had come and nothing could stay the onrushing waters.

c. Overflow (8) – “overflow and go over.” The language pictures a complete deluge, a submerging in judgment waters.

3. Its Curse (9-10)

“shall be broken in pieces.” Three times this is predicted. It is spoken concerning Assyria. Even though they come against Judah, they shall be ultimately destroyed for this is “Immanuel” land (8) and “God is with us” (10). (Num. 14:9; Ps. 46:7).

III. DIVINE INTERVENTION (11-22)

“For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand.”

1. False Dependence (11-12)

“Call ye not a confederacy.” The Hebrew “kesher” is never used in a good sense. God wants His people to be “a peculiar people” a separated people who trust in Him.

2. True Dependence (13-22)

a. Based Upon Jehovah (13-15)

“Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself.”

Holiness is a dominant feature of Isaiah. “The stone” which should have been a sanctuary became a stumbling. (This was Christ – Isa. 28:16; Ex. 17:6; 1 Pet. 2:8).

“With God on our side as a sanctuary, there is no reason for fear; the only possible conspiracy is when Jehovah fights against us on the side of the enemy” – Robinson.

b. Based Upon The Testimony (16-17,20)

“Bind up the testimony” ... “To the Law and to the testimony.”

However, the prophet’s message of God’s Word – a message of promise and salvation finds no welcome. It must therefore remain bound up and sealed. This “testimony” and “law” entrusted to the disciples of Isaiah.

c. Based Upon The Signs (18)

“I and the children ... for signs and for wonders.”

We have already had the sign of Isaiah himself and his three children:

Isaiah – Salvation is of Jehovah.

Immanuel – God is with us.

Shear-Jashub – A remnant shall return.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz – Haste to the spoil.

d. Dire Results of Rebellion (19,21-22)

(1) In league with demons (19)

“A deeper and more serious confederacy is now indicated. It was a sad departure for the children of Israel to seek an alliance with Syria and for Judah to seek the help of Assyria, but the prophet now visualizes an apostasy that is in league with hell itself. The conflict of the ages is brought before us in the choice of refuge to which Israel descended in time of danger” – Welch.

(2) Economic Depression (21)

Hard pressed, hungry, fret and curse.

(3) Driven into Dispersion (22)

“trouble and darkness.” A true picture even today for the people who crucified Christ and rejected Him (Acts 2:23).

CHAPTER 9 - 10:4

INTRODUCTION:

We have in this chapter a message of Hope and Horror. Our last chapter closed (Vrs. 21-22) with these Hebrews who were despisers of the Light, passing through Immanuel's Land in distress, darkness and hunger. They revile their true God and King and in vain look up and down for help. But there is nothing but gross darkness causing anguish and they are driven away in thick darkness.

Such too has been Israel's experience since she rejected and crucified the Messiah. And greater misery awaits her on her return to Palestine. Yet God has a believing remnant and His promise of the Messiah is still intact.

I. A MESSAGE OF HOPE (1-7)

These verses now carry 7:14 and 8:10 to its future fulfillment. They relate to Messiah, the Son, Immanuel.

1. Historical Background (1-5)

Chapter 8:22 is the background for these verses: "And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness."

1. Darkness (1)

The reference here to darkness and affliction goes back to 1 Kings 15:20. It refers to the time when Ben-hadad, in the reign of Baasha, "smote Ljon and Dan and Abel-beth-maachah and all Cinnereth with all the land of Naphtali" (see also Luke 1:79).

2. Deliverance (2-5)

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." These northern tribes and their lands were the first to be afflicted by the armies of Syria and Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).

"Yoke ... staff ... rod" Assyria took them away as slaves two by two yoked together. But these lands were also the first to see the promised Redeemer in the person of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee. Their joy is abundant and abounding because their long night of oppression is gone.

3. Prophetical Revelation (6-7)

We now get a full picture of the Messiah in His Character and Conduct.

a. His Character (6)

The Nature of the Messiah: "A child born" – here is His humanity revealed; A true Man. "A Son given" – Here is His deity; a true God.

The Names of the Messiah: "Wonderful Counselor" – Infinite in wisdom. "Mighty God" – Infinite in power. "Everlasting Father" – Infinite in love. "Prince of Peace" – Infinite in redemption.

b. His Conduct (7)

A Perpetual Ruler – "there shall be no end."

A Peaceful Ruler – "The Prince of Peace" and "the increase of ... peace."

A Princely Ruler – "the throne of David" – The David Dynasty (2 Sam. Ch. 7).

A Proficient Ruler – "order" "establish" "judgment and justice."

II. A MESSAGE OF HORROR (9:8-21)

In these verses Jehovah makes a confederacy with Israel's enemies as a means of judgment upon His people – "Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries ... and they shall devour Israel." However, in all the destruction and dispersion we read – "But His hand is stretched out still" (12,17,21). It indicates more to come (see 50:2; 59:1). There are four series here:

1. THE FIRST SERIES (8-12)

a. SIN (Self-confidence) (8-10). "the pride and stoutness of heart." The bricks had been broken down by the enemy but they would build with hewn stones and sycamores with cedars.

b. SUFFERING – "shall devour Israel with open mouth." The Syrians before and the Philistines behind.

c. SEVERITY – "For all this His anger is not turned away but His hand is stretched out still." They suffered under Sennecherib and Nebuchadnezzar; then later under Titus of the Romans and in a future day under Anti-christ. So God's hand is still outstretched against them to judgment.

2. THE SECOND SERIES (13-17)

a. SIN – (Impenitence) (13). "Yet the people turned not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts."

- (Iniquitous) liars, hypocrites, evil-doers and fools.

b. SUFFERING – "Therefore the Lord shall cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day" Vr. 14. This depicts all ranks and conditions of society.

c. SEVERITY – "For all this his anger is not turned away but His hand is stretched out still."

3. THE THIRD SERIES (18-21)

a. SIN – Lawlessness (18) "For wickedness burneth as a fire."

b. SUFFERING – (18-21) "Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts is the land darkened and the people be as fuel, ... be hungry and eat their own flesh."

Darkness; Hunger; Internecine war.

c. SEVERITY (21) – "For all this his anger is not turned away but his hand is stretched out still."

4. THE FOURTH SERIES (10:1-4)

a. SIN (Injustice) (1-2) – "decree unrighteous decrees." "turn aside needy from judgment" "take away the right from the poor" "widows become a prey and rob the fatherless."

b. SUFFERING (3-4) – "in the day of visitation and desolation" "bow down under the prisoners and fall under the slain."

c. SEVERITY (4) – "his anger is not turned away; his hand stretched out still."

CHAPTER 10:5-34

INTRODUCTION:

We shall now see the advance against Jerusalem of the arrogant Assyrian conqueror who meets with a sudden check and is foiled when his triumph is apparently secure. Se we see that the very one that God uses to punish His people He also renounces. Why God uses a nation in this way and then punishes it is a part of God's sovereignty and must be seen as such (see verse 15; Rom. 9:14-24).

I. THE ASSYRIAN INVASION 5-11; 28-32

"O Assyrian" – The Assyrian here is no doubt Sennacherib and the "hypocritical" or profane nation is Judah. It took place in the reign of Hezekiah (Isa. Chs. 36,37; 2 Kgs. 18:13-19:36).

1. Its Mission (5-6)

"O Assyrian" – this is not a woe, but a summons. "Against a hypocritical nation" – impious, profane, godless or irreligious. This Assyrian will take spoil, take prey and tread down.

2. Its Motive (7-11)

"He meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so."

The spirit of the Assyrian is here seen. He has no idea of his mission, but is fired up by personal ambition and pride. His intention is to "destroy and cut off nations not a few."

The places mentioned (Vr. 9) were all captured by the Assyrians under Tig-lath-pileser, Shalmaneser or Sargon. The Assyrian argument is – how can Judah with fewer gods than Samaria and other nations hope to hold out successfully against him? The blindness of the instrument emphasizes the truth of the prophecy. It is supernatural.

3. The March (28-32)

"He is come" – This is a prophetic description of Sennacherib's advance against Judah. He is drawing closer and closer to Jerusalem – Aiath, Migron, Michmash, Geba, Ramah, Gibeah, Gallim, Laiah, Anathoth, Madmenah, Gebim and finally Nob. Nob was a city of priests in sight of Jerusalem from whence Sennacherib shook his hand against the city.

II. JEHOVAH'S INDIGNATION (12-19; 33-34) (Assyria)

1. The Reason (12-14)

"I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks." "I have done it." Not less than nine times in verses 13-14 we have the personal pronouns "I" and "My". The proud language of the Assyrian king corresponds to that found on the monuments. This put a stamp of integrity upon this book of Isaiah.

2. The Result (15-19)

SHALL:

"The axe boast itself against him that heweth?"

"The saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?"

"The rod should shake itself against them that lift it up."

"The staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood."

THEREFORE: "The Lord shall send"

"Leanness."

"Kindling a kindling ... kindling of fire."

"Burn and devour."

"Consume ... both soul and body."

So few soldiers would survive the plague that a lad could count them (19).

CHAPTER 10:5-34 (Cont)

“The Light of Israel” is a Messianic title (17). Such was Jehovah to Israel when He led them out of Egypt and into the desert. So even here, a “light to His people” but “fire to His foes”. God is a consuming fire.”

“The bough” “the high ones” “the haughty” “the forests” and “Lebanon” are figures of the Assyrian Monarch, his hosts and Generals (33-34). Sennacherib uses these figures (2 Kgs. 19:23). And such will be the end of the Antichrist, who will be destroyed by “The Mighty One” the Messiah.

Jehovah will have the last word. He is a God of righteousness and eventually He will demonstrate also that He is greater than the gods of the Assyrians who seem at this time to prevail and be supreme.

III. JEHOVAH’S INTERVENTION (20-27) JUDAH

“The remnant shall return.” God has always had those, though few in number, who have stood true to Him in every age and clime. His promises in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and in David will be fulfilled. The Godly seed shall not be annihilated.

This remnant shall return after “the manner of Egypt” (26). This refers to Israel’s salvation from Egypt, also now from exile and in the future her last return from captivity. But “after the manner of Egypt” (24) pictures the hatred of the Assyrian as was the hatred of Pharaoh.

“Scourge” in verse 26 should be printed with a capital S; it is a Messianic title. Gideon used a light shining from an earthen vessel, which is a type of the Messiah who will destroy the Assyrian of a coming day with the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2:8).

Dr. R.P. Smith, at one time Dean of Canterbury, says in his “Authenticity and Messianic Interpretation of Isaiah,” “Thus the Prophet at once marks the difference between the two kingdoms. The one has a definite place in the Divine economy, the other is used but for a temporary object. For the moment, therefore, it may triumph; but it has no mission of its own, no settled purpose in the world and therefore no special providence hems it around. But Jerusalem, however unworthy, was the actual center of the world’s history and in spite of her feebleness, in spite of her comparative insignificance, she must outlive the far mightier kingdoms of Nineveh and Babylon, of Persia and Macedon and Antioch; and on her existence depended the accomplishments of God’s unchanging counsels.”

CHAPTER 11:1-16 – THE TRUE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION:

We now come to the closing sub-section of Isaiah's great opening prophecy (Isaiah Chs. 1-12) which is found in chapters 11 and 12. In the earlier section (7:1-9:7) the theme was the Virgins's Son, Immanuel and the Child whose name is "Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace."

In these chapters 11 and 12 the subject is this same glorious Person with a further explanation of His government and its association with the House of David.

In Luke 24:27 we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He (Jesus) expounded unto them in all the Scripture the things concerning himself." On the strength of this statement we look for the true picture of the Messiah in Isaiah.

"Isaiah's vision of Israel's future reached beyond the exile, which was steadily taking place before his eyes, to Israel's return. A prediction to the same effect had already been made by Amos (9:14-15). The downfall of Assyria is the signal for the commencement of a new era in Israel's history. Assyria has no future, her downfall is fatal; Judah has a future, her calamities are only disciplinary. The house of Jesse has not wholly lost its recuperative power. An ideal Prince will be raised up, in whose advent all nature will rejoice, even dumb animals" – Geo. L. Robinson.

This chapter revolves around the two titles of the Deliverer – "The Branch" and "The Root" (1, 10); with the intervening verses in the first and the following in the latter giving the character and extent of His dominion.

I. FIRST PROPHECY OF DELIVERANCE (1 – 9)

1. The New Deliverer (1-5)

a. His Ancestry (1) - "A rod out of the stem of Jesse" "A Branch ... out of His root." A "rod" here can be translated "a sprout" and "a branch" can be spoken of as a "shoot or scion". This opening verse seems to be set in contrast to the closing words of chapter 19 in which the Assyrian is likened to a "bough" that's lopped with terror" the "thickets of the forest" that are "cut down with iron" and "Lebanon" that "shall fall by a mighty one." "The stem of Jesse" links this Deliverer with David and the Davidic Kingdom.

b. His Character (2-3) - Here we find the enduement of the Messiah set forth. "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." The word "rest" is muach, while "spirit" is "ruach." This is called Paranomasia or the rhyming of words. It is evidently intentional. The Spiritual Enduement is sevenfold:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" | 5. "And might." |
| 2. "The spirit of wisdom" | 6. "The spirit of knowledge." |
| 3. "And understanding" | 7. "The fear of the Lord." |
| 4. "The spirit of counsel." | |

In verse three we learn that this spiritual equipment is to make the coming Ruler "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." The Hebrew word translated "quick understanding" is the Hebrew word for "scent" or "smell". It is the verbal form of "ruach" meaning Spirit or breath. This shows the acuteness of the Messiah's recognition of the Father's will and the true need of the people.

c. His Conduct (4-5) - "righteousness ... and faithfulness" these two characteristics are sadly lacking in the world today, as in the days of Isaiah. His "righteousness" will have a twofold effect: It will both bless and curse. The poor and the meek will know the blessing of His righteousness and the ruthless and the wicked will feel the sting of His righteousness. Psalm 72 is a commentary on these verses. (See 2 Thess. 2:8 for a N.T. counterpart.)

CHAPTER 11 (CONT)

2. The New Dispensation (6-9) - Moral
 - a. Special Restoration (The animal kingdom) 6-8

Natural enemies – together

“The wolf ... dwell with the lamb.”

“The cow and bear shall feed.”

“The leopard ... lie down with the kid.”

“The lion shall eat straw like an ox.”

“The calf and the young lion together.”

This is in striking contrast to anything we now know but the God who created the animals in the beginning can change their nature as He has done ours. Here is a picture of a child, leading these animals and a sucking child playing on the hole of an asp, and a cockatrice's den.

- b. General Restoration (The whole earth) (9)

“For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This picture of world-wide bliss has never had its counterpart in human history. It remains for the future to see its fulfillment.

II. SECOND PROPHECY OF DELIVERANCE (10-16)

1. The New Deliverer (10)

The Deliverer is now spoken of as “a root of Jesse” while in verse one He was “a Branch”. Romans 15:12 corroborates this prophecy of Isaiah. This “Root” shall be an “ensign of the people” and “an ensign of the nations”. This “ensign” or “banner” is lifted up both for judgment and for blessing. Out of the twenty occurrences of “nes” the Hebrew word translated “ensign,” ten are found in Isaiah.

2. The New Dispensation (11-16) Political

- a. Return of a Remnant (11-12)

- (1) From all quarters (11)

This is now the second time the Lord will recover His people from foreign lands – from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath and the Islands of the Sea, the four corners of the earth.

- (2) From Both Tribes (12)

“The outcasts of Israel ... the dispersed of Judah.”

- b. Result of the Return (13-16)

Great changes will come affecting moral, political and physical results.

- (1) Moral Results (13)

Ephraim shall not envy Judah and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. The ten tribes and the two tribes will then live in harmony.

- (2) Political Results (14)

Here the prophet depicts the submission of their enemies – The Philistines, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These were constant enemies of Israel. Now they have been subdued and live with their neighbor in peace.

- (3) Physical Results (15-16)

“destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea.”

“and there shall be a highway.”

Even physical changes will take place as they did when Israel came the first time from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea on dry ground.

All these blessings of verses 12-16 could not have been fulfilled in the past; they wait the yet future time of fulfillment.

INTRODUCTION:

With chapter thirteen we enter the second large section of this book of Isaiah which extends to chapter 28. This section is taken up with “Burdens” concerning the nations that come into touch with Israel and their relation to the glorious kingdom that is to be set up at the Second Advent of the King.

The nations that are subject to this series of prophecies are Babylon, Palestine, Moab, Damascus, the Land Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia, Egypt, the Desert of the Sea, Dumah, Arabia, the Valley of Vision and finally Tyre.

A “Burden” means a prophetic oracle or warning. “Isaiah’s horizon was worldwide. He was a close observer of national movements and passed in review the foreign nations whose destinies affected Judah, as did Amos (Chs. 1-2) Jeremiah (Chs. 47-51) and Ezekiel (Chs. 25-32)” – George L. Robinson.

“Babylon” – This takes precedence and stands for Chaldea generally. It reached its height about 100 years later, under Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar. A generation later it was captured by Cyrus and Darius the Mede. Babylon was of little importance at this time.” – The Companion Bible.

“Babylon is first judged. She has been, is, and will be the great enemy. She is Satan’s city in opposition to Jerusalem which is Messiah’s city. She was founded by Nimrod who was a mighty hunter of men against the face of Jehovah (Gen. 10:9). He was a type of the future Nimrod, the last king of Babylon, the Anti-Christ. Perhaps he is the Anti-Christ, for that mysterious prince is to come up out of the abyss (Rev. 11:7)” – The Student’s Commentary.

I. PROPHECY OF RUINATION 13:1-22A. THE INSTRUMENT (1-5)

Before God lifts up an ensign in the person of Immanuel for the blessing of the peoples, another ensign is lifted up to bring the peoples with their armies “to destroy the whole land”.

1. Separated Ones (3)

This refers no doubt to the armies of the Medes and the Persians who were used by God to conquer Babylon. Sanctification or separation has the root meaning of “being set apart” – hence in this sense only is it used of the Medes and Persians.

2. Strong Ones (3)

These nations were mighty heroes that would come upon Babylon.

3. Numerous Ones (4)

The Lord will call many people together, referring no doubt to the joining of the Medes and Persians.

4. Far-away Ones (5)

Coming from a far country in relation to Palestine perhaps.

B. THE INDIGNATION (6-22)1. The Period “The Day of the Lord” (6,9)

The many references to this “Day” throughout Scripture seems to indicate that it is a fixed period in which God shall be vindicated in His holiness among mankind; for it is both a day of destruction and a day of deliverance. His enemies will all be destroyed and of His people, a remnant will be saved.

2. The Performance (6-22)

When God saves us He does a complete job of it, nothing is left undone. His love thought it out and wrought it out and we have a “great salvation”. God is just as complete and

thorough in His work of judgment. That fact runs all through Scripture and certainly in this section.

a. A Day of Destruction (6-19)

“Howl ye, for the Day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty” (6).

(1) Its Advent

“Behold, the Day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger.” Just as sure as the Lord’s coming to save in the First Advent; so shall He come to destroy all the wicked in His Second Advent. This prophecy being fulfilled on Babylon of old may well indicate what He will do in the future on a larger scale.

(2) Its Intent

“And I will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (11). Pride of heart and mind is the forerunner of almost every other evil against the Lord. The Lord will “lay low” the pride of man.

(3) Its Extent

All Inanimate creation – The stars and constellations shall not give their light; sun will be darkened, moon shall cease to shine. The heavens will shake and the earth move. This is a picture of great cosmic changes and upheavals. God has done this in the past and will in this future day.

All Animate Creation – “And I will punish the world ... Everyone shall be thrust through.” While the immediate picture refers to Babylon, it does seem from this that another destruction is to take place of which Babylon is but a forerunner. Even children and wives shall be destroyed. The picture is complete and terrible.

b. A Day of Depopulation (19-20)

Babylon shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah. “It shall never be inhabited.” Neither Arabs nor shepherds shall come there. Babylon has actually remained to this day a place of utter destruction and depopulation.

c. A Day of Devastation (21-22)

“Wild beasts, doleful creatures, owls, wild goats and jackals.” This is a picture of utter devastation. The lowest and wildest of creatures shall inhabit this place. God will certainly destroy the proud in a complete manner.

II. PROMISE OF RESTORATION (14:1-27)

A. IN THE POSSESSION OF THE LAND (1-3)

Israel will only find the blessing of the Lord in the land covenanted to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Hence their blessing is wrapped up in the repossession of the land. Two blessings are here depicted:

1. Rulership – Instead of being ruled by foreigners, Israel shall now rule “their oppressors” being joined by “strangers”.

2. Rest – Rest from sorrow, from fear and from hard bondage. There can be no true rest in sorrow, fear and bondage. Hence Israel shall be liberated from these.

B. IN THE PROVERB AGAINST BABYLON (4-27)

“Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon.” In chapter 13 it was against the people of Babylon, now it is rather against their potentate.

1. A Song of Deliverance (4-6)

Because the oppression has now ceased (4), “they break forth into singing” (7). All the songs of the Bible are songs of redemption and restoration. Israel had no true song in the land of her captivity. There she hung her harps of the willows and said she could not sing.

CHAPTER 13:1-14:27 (Cont)

2. A Satire on the Destroyer (9-23)

a. From Hell Beneath (9-11)

The great chiefs of the past – “the Rephaim” now taunt the coming of this destroyer. Even Hell is moved at his coming. The grave becomes the common denominator of all, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, kings and peasants, potentates and people.

b. From Heaven Above (12-18)

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer.” “Lucifer” means “Morning Star”. He was worshipped by the Assyrians as male at sunrise and female at sunset. It is also a name of Satan. This is the real ruler energizing the wicked rulers of this world. It isn’t exactly natural for man to act diabolical, but being possessed and given over to this Evil One he can do nothing else. This explains much even in our own day.

“For thou hast said in thine heart” –

“I will ascend unto heaven”

“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God”

“I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation”

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds”

“I will be like the Most High”

“I will” is the root of all evil. “Thy will be done” is the root of all good.

c. From the Earth Around (19-23)

This one cannot even remain in the grave. The earth itself must contain him. God will cut off every last one that remains of this wicked seed, so that they shall nevermore make it a city again.

3. A Surety From The Lord (24-27)

“Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass.”

“As I have purposed, so shall it stand.”

“This is the purpose” (Upon the whole earth)

“For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed.”

“Who shall disannul . . . who shall turn it back.”

Could stronger language than this be spoken? It reveals the absolute impossibility of anyone standing against the Lord. While men and demons and the Devil may have their day, they shall not ultimately be victors.

“Men may win their battles, but God wins the war always.”

GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE!

CHAPTER 14:28-32 – THE BURDEN UPON PHILISTIA

INTRODUCTION:

In the previous verses of chapters 13 and 14 we have seen the prophecy made against Babylon, both a religious as well as political world system. It is the opponent of the throne of David. This is first judged as is to be expected, then the other nations hostile to Israel:

Philistia (14:28-32)	Moab (Chs. 15-16)
Syria (Ch. 17)	Egypt (Chs. 19-20)
Idumea (Ch. 21)	Arabia (Ch. 21)
Tyre (Ch. 23)	The earth at large (Ch. 24)
The Serpent (Antichrist – Ch. 27)	

This oracle or burden against Philistia is dated in the year that King Ahaz died (727 B.C.). Tiglath- Pileser III died in the same year.

Philistia was Israel's ancient foe. She never really conquered them. They were a constant source of trouble – a “thorn in the flesh”.

This prophecy is given to warn the rebellious; but also to encourage the faithful remnant in the land.

I. NO PRESENT HOPE (29-30)

The Philistines are here bidden not to rejoice over the death of the great Assyrian “Serpent” Tiglath-pileser III. He will be succeeded by an “adder” Shalmaneser IV. Then he, in turn, will be succeeded by “a fiery flying serpent “Sargon II”. Each one will be more destructive than his predecessor.

So God will use one foreign nation to punish another. This has been the pattern down through the history of time.

II. NO FUTURE HOPE (31-32)

Isaiah now warns Philistia of the Assyrian approach. Jerusalem to whom she had appealed for help and would not form an alliance.

Faith in Jehovah now renders Jerusalem inviolable and her poor shall feed and lie down in safety and trust in her.

The messengers of the nation will receive the message that Zion is founded and the people will trust in it; while all else shall be destroyed.

CHAPTERS 15 & 16 – THE BURDEN OF MOAB

INTRODUCTION:

“This ancient oracle against Moab, whose dirge-like meter resembles that of chapters 13 and 14, is composed of two separate prophecies belonging to two different periods in Isaiah’s ministry (16:13).

Chapters 15:1-16:12 describe Moab’s warful condition in 734 B.C. just after Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, had over-run Galilee and the region east of the Jordan, probably threatening Moab (2 Kings 15:29). Chapter 16:13-14 is a brief epilogue to the former prophecy, predicting the actual capture of Moab within three years (711 B.C.)” – Geo. L. Robinson.

“Moab had been subdued by Saul (1 Sam. 14:47) and David (2 Sam. 8:2) and paid tribute to Ahab (2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-5). Jehoshaphat gained victories (2 Chron. 20:1-30) and (2 Kings 3:4-27). Tiglath-pileser carried away tribes east of Jordan and received tribute from Moab as well as from Ahaz (2 Kings 16:10)”- Companion Bible.

I. INSTRUCTION OF MOAB (15:1 – 16:12)

We have in this section a series of weepings, reasons and finally results.

1. WEEPING (1-5)

We have such expressions here as “weep” “weeping” “cry” “cry out” and “weeping abundantly”.

a. The People Weep (1-4)

Not only do they shed tears and cry aloud, they appear as those who are in deep mourning - Baldness of the head. Beard cut off. Girded with sackcloth. These are the mourning customs among the people of the East.

b. The Prophet Weeps (5) (16:11)

We also see the tender affection of the prophet for Moab in her affliction. Isaiah mingles his own tears with those of the Moabites, which shows the greatness of the prophet. They were blood relation through Abraham and Lot.

“There is no prophecy in the Book of Isaiah in which the heart of the prophet is so painfully moved by what the Spirit beholds and his mouth must prophesy” – Delitzsch.

2. REASONS (6-7)

“Waters of Nimrim – desolate”

“Grass faileth – no green thing”

“Hay withered away”

“Carry away – abundance”

All God needs to do is to withhold the rain from Heaven and send his chosen enemy; and weeping and wailing ensues. How utterly dependent we are upon God!

3. WEEPING (8)

Crying and howling “about the borders of Moab, ... unto Eglaim, ... unto Beer-elim.” It shows the extent of the weeping and the devastation that had taken place.

4. REASONS (9)

a. Blood upon Dimon

God will send the sword and blood will flow. Dimon is east of the Dead Sea.

ISAIAH CHAPTERS 15-16 (Cont)

b. Beasts Upon the Remnant

Lions will finish those who escape the sword - could mean Nebuchadnezzar. See also Jeremiah Ch. 48.

5. ADVICE (16:1-4)

They are told to send “the lamb to the ruler of the land”. This must be to Judah, as Mesha king of Moab had done (2 Kings 3:4). They are pleading for Judah’s aid and protection. They were also to execute judgment, perform an arbitrator’s duty and harbor the outcasts.

6. REASONS (5-6)

a. The Power of God (5)

Mercy and truth and righteousness shall ultimately come from Zion. Then and not until then shall the remnant of Moab be blessed. No blessing for Gentile nations outside of this.

b. The Pride of Moab (6)

This is the seat of his trouble. It seems that pride is the father of all sins and the real cause of why God punishes a nation or an individual.

7. RESULTS (7-12)

a. Outward Devastation (7-8)

There is mutilation of the land and utter devastation on every hand.

b. Inner Devastation (9-12)

“weeping like water ... gladness gone and all joy ... no singing ... no shouting ... nothing but a plaintive sound.”

Moab shall come to his “high place”. These were centers of worship; the two most important were Nebo and Medeba (Vr. 15:2). They haste to seek help but all in vain.

II. DEVASTATION AND DELIVERANCE (16:13-14)

This is to take place within three years from the death of Ahaz. But a remnant shall be redeemed (See Jer. 48:47).

CHAPTER 17:1-14 – THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS

INTRODUCTION:

“Damascus is the oldest city in the world. It is first mentioned in Genesis 15:2. It contains today about 150,000 inhabitants. It stands in one of the most beautiful and fertile plains in the world. It was, and is, the capital of Syria. Naaman the leper lived there and on the road there the Apostle Paul was re-born” – The Student’s Commentary.

“In the oracle concerning Damascus, which also includes North Israel in its scope (17:1-14) Isaiah predicts the fate of the two allies – Syria and Ephraim- in the Syro-Ephraimitic War (734 B.C.) with a promise that only a scanty remnant will survive (17:6)” – Geo. L. Robinson.

I. RUINATION PREDICTED (1-5)

1. For Damascus (1-3)

a. The Declaration (1)

“Damascus is taken away from being a city.” This was accomplished by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria. He also killed king Rezin (see 2 Kings 16:9). This took place about 632 B.C.

“a city ... a heap.” In the Hebrew for these two words we have meir ... mei. The Hebrew often uses words which are similar in sound but not in sense to express ideas.

b. The Destruction (1-3)

1. “Ruinous heap.”

2. “Cities forsaken.”

3. “Fortress shall cease.”

4. “Kingdom gone.”

The strongholds shall all be destroyed and the people scattered.

2. For Ephraim (4-5) – Ephraim stands for the Ten Tribes.

“This ... lean.” “Rephaim” – southwest of Jerusalem. So called after one “Rapha” a mighty one among the descendents of the Rephaim or Nephilim, as Anak was, who gave his name to another branch. Here we find the often repeated lesson of God’s Word, that alliance with and dependence upon the world, involves the servant of God in ruin and loss. The advantages and opportunities one is looking for are never realized.

II. RESTORATION PROMISED (6-8)

A few poor inhabitants shall be left in Israel, like two or three olive berries on the topmost branches which it is not worthwhile taking the trouble to reach. Here there is seen a remnant. These will look away from the earthly and idolatrous altars and look to their Maker, the Holy One of Israel.

III. RUINATION PERFORMED (9-14)

After this interlude of restoration of the remnant, which is so often found in prophecy; we return to ruination, but in reverse order – Israel, then the other nations.

1. Concerning Israel (9-11)

“Forsaken bough.” The misery of that day is pictured by the action of a woodman throwing aside branches of a felled tree as worthless for transport. The land shall become a desolation; its cities, likened to noble trees, should be thrown down. Nothing would be left, but a few obscure villages of no value. The reason is given: “forgotten the God of thy salvation and forsaken the rock of thy strength”. They had substituted foreign gods spoken of as “strange slips” and planted them together with “pleasant plants”.

ISAIAH CHAP. 17:1-14 – (Cont.)

Many well-meaning Christians think by alliance with the world and an accommodation of the Gospel to its false religions, it will secure a harvest of international peace; but the harvest will be a “heap” of stones and not bread, a “day of grief and sorrow”. Compromise never solved anything, it only postpones the solution.

2. Concerning Many Peoples (12-14)

Here we have the march of the northern nations under Sennacherib upon Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah and the destruction of that army in one night (Isa. 37:36).

The word pictures here are extremely graphic and suggestive:

“Noise like the noise of the seas.”
“Rushing like the rushing of mighty waters.”
“Chased as the chaff of the mountains.”
“Rolling thing before the whirlwind.”

The end will come suddenly and with swiftness – between the evening and the morning.

CONCLUSION:

Both Jews and Gentiles suffer when God’s people are out of fellowship with their Maker. This explains much that takes place in this world in which we live.

As members of the Church we are thrown into this world of strife and struggle between the apostate Jews and Gentiles. But we look up to our citizenship in the Heavens.

CHAPTER 18:1-7 – THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS

INTRODUCTION:

These verses seem difficult to interpret. There are as many versions as there are those who seek to interpret. The general idea seems to be a prophecy to a land in the region of Ethiopia and Egypt and her relation to Israel in the time when Israel is plagued with the Assyrian invasion. Ethiopia wishes to round up other nations in the vicinity and come to Israel's help. The prophecies to these foreign nations to Israel have no point except as they come in contact with Israel for the prophecy is "concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 1:1).

Geo. L. Robinson seems to have caught the right idea when he says: "The first (chapter 18) describes Ethiopia as in great excitement, sending ambassadors hither and thither – possibly all the way to Jerusalem – ostensibly seeking aid in making preparations for war. Assyria had already taken Damascus (732) and Samaria (722 B.C.); consequently Egypt and Ethiopia were in great fear of invasion. This fear of Ethiopia was no doubt caused by the triumphant march of Assyria under Sennacherib in 701 B.C.

The word "woe" that opens the chapter should be translated "Ho". It is not a "burden" against, but a "Ho (come) to the land protecting with wings".

I. THE DESCRIPTION (1-2)

1. The Land (1)

It is to the land beyond "Cush". Isaiah pictures the envoys coming from their own country, a land where the silence is continually broken by the buzz of insects' wings, in swift vessels of papyrus down the Nile. These may come from the present Sudan.

2. The People (2)

They are described as "scattered and peeled" meaning "tall and smooth-faced". They are "terrible." They formed the armies of the "So" or Shabaka and are the backbone of the Anglo-Egyptian army today – "whose land the rivers have spoiled"; the Sudd or swamps – The Sudan.

II. THE DECLARATION (3-6)

Here we get a picture of mingled blessing for Judah and a curse upon her enemies. In courteous tones Jehovah bids these people return to their own strong and ancient people and there await the Lord's signal – "lifteth up an ensign ... bloweth a trumpet" (3).

The course of events is slowly working out the Lord's purposes, just as the sun and dew ripen the fruit for the harvest. But before the fruit is ripe the Lord will come and suddenly intervene. The effect of his intervention will be known when Assyria is spread over the mountains and fields, a prey for birds and beasts (4-6). The Assyrian plans are maturing under seemingly favorable condition, but suddenly they are thwarted and a reaping takes place.

III. THE DEMONSTRATION (7)

Like all prophecy, it has a preview fulfillment before the great and final fulfillment. This is a messianic prediction in which there will be a present brought to Zion by these people. No doubt Ethiopia and Egypt will be converted to the religion of Israel some day. This is seen in other passages – Isa. 45:14; Zeph. 3:10; Psa. 68:31; 87:4.

CONCLUSION:

Gentile nations who have befriended the Jew will receive their reward in the coming kingdom – See Matt. 25:31-46.

CHAPTER 19:1-25 – THE BURDEN OF EGYPT OR “THE SMITING AND HEALING OF EGYPT”

INTRODUCTION:

This is now the fourth of the seven “Burdens” in this section. We have already seen “Burdens” upon Babylon, Moab, and Damascus. This chapter sets forth the “Smiting and Healing of Egypt” (Vr. 22)).

The first 17 verses are Historical in character and the last 8 are Prophetical in character. The prophetic structure is built upon the historical, thus prophecy must be interpreted in the historicist-futurist method of interpretation. Thus the time element is both past and future as we see the prophecy today.

“The second oracle (chapter 19) contains both a threat (Vrs. 1-17) and a promise (Vrs. 18-25) and is one of Isaiah’s most remarkable foreign prophecies (720 B.C.). Egypt is smitten and thereby led to abandon her idols for the worship of Jehovah (Vrs. 19-22). More remarkable still, it is prophesied that ‘in that day’ Egypt and Assyria will join with Israel in a triple alliance of common worship to Jehovah and of blessing to others (Vrs. 23-25). The prophecy is a marvelous ‘missionary sermon’ worthy of a place along side Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill” – Geo. L. Robinson.

I. THE CURSE (1-10)

1. Confusion (1-4)

“The Lord is riding on a swift cloud.” This no doubt refers to the mighty swift marching army of Sargon, King of Assyria. Although Sargon did not know it, yet God controlled that army as a rider does his horse. God is active in history, especially prophetic history.

a. Idols (1,3)

“Moved at His presence” (1). Though idols in themselves are nothing, yet they are connected with demons – their presence and power. The demons energize the worship addressed to them. 1 Cor. 10:19-21 confirms this idea. These demons were moved at Jehovah’s presence in Egypt, as they were when Jesus entered Gadara (Mk. 5).

“Sought for counsel” (3). Those who reject help from God will go to the only other source – the demons.

b. Wars (2,4)

Her wars were first civil – “Egyptians against Egyptians”. They will fight against each other to the extent of brother against brother, city against city. This refers to the anarchy consequent on the defeat of Egypt by Sargon. It seems that Egypt from earliest times had been cursed with civil wars according to Breasted – “History of Egypt”. “A cruel Lord ... a fierce King” (4). The Hebrew here is plural and meaning, no doubt, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, Greeks, Romans and Moslems. Sargon defeated the Egyptians or Raphia in 720 B.C. and also in 711 B.C.

2. Desolation (5-10)

a. Inanimate Things (5-7)

The Waters:

“shall fail” – dried up (nashath)

“the river” – The Nile

“the brooks of defense” – the canals of Matzor

Egypt was dependent upon its river and canals for fertilization of the land.

CHAPTER 19:1-25 – CONT.

The Vegetation

“Reeds and flags ... and everything sown.” How complete the curse shall be.

b. Animate Things (8-10)

Waters – fishes in them (8). This is a natural outcome. Let God but take away His natural blessing and man suffers. How dependent we are upon such an element as water!

Vegetation – workers in them (9-10)

No flax – no work for the weaver.

No water – no need of a sluice and pond for fish. “Fish” here is nephesh or “living things.”

II. THE CAUSE (11-17)

Failure of human wisdom. In this section we have an indictment by “the Lord of Hosts” against the Princes of Zoan. These princes were priest-princes. They were a travesty of God’s kings and priests. They claimed superhuman power and knowledge. They also claimed royal descent. Twice Jehovah calls them “fools” (11,13). These “fools” are the cause (14).

The term “in that day” occurs six times in this chapter at verses 16,18,19,21,23 and 24. The first in verse 16 belongs to the day of God’s wrath upon Egypt; the remaining five to the day of God’s mercy. Thus one day of wrath, but five for grace. Such is our God in His ways! Zoan was the seat of the Egyptian court. It was here that Moses announced the “Ten Plagues”.

III. THE CURE (18-25)

After the smiting comes the healing.

1. New Cities (18)

“Five cities” – These may be Heliopolis, Leontopolis, Daphne, Migdol and Memphis. “The city of destruction” here is an unfortunate translation. A suggested reading, which without a doubt is the true one, would be: “Each one shall be called The City of Righteousness”. The primitive reading was doubtless ha-zedek, “righteousness,” which the LXX transliterates asedek. “Language of Canaan” means the Hebrew language.

2. New Altar (19-22)

“An altar to the Lord.” “And the Lord shall be known to Egypt and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day.” Egypt will be cleansed of all idolatry. This will be a great change for such an idolatrous country and one filled with “familiar spirits” (See verse 3).

“Shall do sacrifice and oblation ... vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it.” This is what Israel had not done and why she was sent into captivity.

3. New Pillar (19-20)

“A pillar at the border thereof.” This shall be for a sign and witness unto the Lord of hosts. Instead of pyramids and sphinx, the work of men’s hands, Egypt will have an altar and a pillar unto the Lord.

CHAPTER 19:1-25 – CONT.

4. New Highway (23)

Egypt and Assyria will be linked with a new highway. There will be commercial interchange of goods and ideas. Both of these will then know and serve the Lord.

5. New Triple Alliance (24-25)

“In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria.”

- a. “Egypt my people.”
- b. “Assyria the work of my hands.”
- c. “Israel Mine inheritance.”

Thus the three sons of Noah: Shem or Israel; Ham or Egypt; and Japheth or Assyria become one and servants of the Lord. Thus the whole world will be servants unto Jehovah.

CONCLUSION:

Onias IV, six hundred years later, used this prophecy (21-25) when seeking permission from Ptolemy and Cleopatra to build a temple for the Hebrews in Egypt. The Egyptian king and queen replied that Onias might do so if it were not forbidden by the Law of Moses. As the Law did forbid the erection of any temple other than that at Jerusalem, it is evident that the Egyptians had some knowledge of the existence of the Bible.

Some years ago an Aramaic papyri was discovered in Egypt near Elephantine. In this papyrus the Jewish colony of soldiers beg the High Priest in Jerusalem for aid to build or repair the temple to God (Yahweh) which the natives had demolished.

CHAPTER 20:1-6 – CAPTIVITY OF EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

INTRODUCEION:

It could be that this prophecy was not given at the same time as that of chapter 19, but there is a sense in which it belongs with it. Chapter 19 deals with Egypt and looks forward to the kingdom blessings for this nation.

I. THE COMING OF ASSYRIA (Vr. 1)

“Tartan” means “Commander-in-chief.”

“Sargon” is never mentioned by name in secular, classic writers and in Scripture only here. The monuments show that he was the son of Shalmaneser and the father of Sennecherib.

“Ashdod” was a Philistine city on the Mediterranean coast. This taking of Ashdod by Tartan is mentioned on the monuments found at Khorsabad. A usurper, called “Javan” or the Greek had been put on the throne of Ashdod by Hezekiah in the place of “Akimit”.

II. THE CONDEMNATION BY ISAIAH (Vrs. 2-3)

Jehovah is the speaker and Isaiah the object lesson.

1. By a Personal Symbol (Vrs. 2)

The prophets often had to be symbols personally of the condition of their people (See Ezekiel, Hosea).

2. By a Prophetical Symbol (Vr. 3)

“Three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia.”

“By donning a captive’s garb for three years, Isaiah attempts to teach the citizens of Jerusalem that the seize of Ashdod was but a means to an end in Sargon’s plan of campaign and that it was sheer folly for the Egyptian party in Jerusalem, who were ever urging reliance upon Egypt, to look in that direction for help” – George L. Robinson.

III. THE CAPTURING BY ASSYRIA (Vrs. 4-6)

1. Its Reality (Vr. 4)

“So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners and the Ethiopians captives.” So complete was this captivity that in the enslavement of the Egyptian warriors they were not even given loin cloths.

2. Its Result (Vrs. 5-6)

“And they shall be afraid and ashamed.”

Sargon, the king of Assyria, was coming out of the north with a vast army led by the commander Tartan. The Philistines (Vr. 6) (“isle” should read “coast”) and the men of Judah and Jerusalem were terror-stricken. They turned mutually to Egypt for help.

In this symbol of Isaiah and message from Jehovah they are told that the Egyptians of whom they boasted and on whom they set their expectations should be carried away naked as slaves to Assyria. Hence they had reason to be afraid and ashamed.

CONCLUSION:

The lesson for Judah and all is that of the bitter fruit that the servants of God must taste when the arm of flesh is leaned upon and not the arm of God.

As in chapter 17 Samaria was associated with Damascus in its doom because Israel trusted Syria and not God, so in this chapter Judah is associated with Egypt in its destruction because the people of Jerusalem trusted Egypt rather than Jehovah.

CHAPTER 21:1-17 – THE BURDENS OF BABYLON, IDUMEA AND ARABIA

INTRODUCTION:

Three times we have the word “burden” in this chapter (1,11,13). It comes from the Hebrew word massa, meaning a heavy, weighty thing. It is “heavy” because the wrath of “God is in it and was “grievous” for the prophet to declare. So there are three messages from God through the prophet in this chapter: the first, to Babylonia (1-10); the second to Idumea (11-12); and the third to Arabia (13-17).

The Babylonians were descendents of Shem who had forsaken Jehovah God for idols. The Idumeans, or Edomites, were sons of Esau who had similarly apostatized. The Arabians were sons of Ismael and of Keturah, distinguished for their hatred to Israel rather than for a relapse to idolatry.

I. THE BURDEN OF BABYLON (1-10)

1. The Vision (1-2)

“The desert of the sea” meaning here the waters of the Euphrates in flood time. The Nile was also called the same (19:5). In these days of Isaiah and for many years to follow, the plains of the Euphrates were a paradise and far from being a desert. But this is a vision and the prophet sees the day when that paradise will become a desert, as it indeed did and is today. This is therefore a striking oracle “the desert of the sea”. It all looks forward to Revelation chapters 17 and 18).

The command to Elam and to Media to go up and besiege Babylon was a divine command. The occasion for the fulfillment of this prophecy was the destruction of Babylon two hundred years later by the Medes and the Persians on the night of Belshazzar’s feast (Dan. Ch. 5).

2. The Effect (3-4) (On the Prophet)

In these verses the prophet supposes himself a citizen of Babylon on the night of the capture by Cyrus.

Note the striking words: “loins filled with pain,” “pangs ... of travail,” “bowed down ... dismayed,” “my heart panted” and “fearfulness affrighted me.” “The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear” was the night of Belshazzar’s feast.

As was so often done the prophet is made to relive in his own mind the prophecy he is given to speak.

3. The Victory (5-10)

The poetic force of verse five is fine: “Prepare the table; spread the carpets; eat, drink; arise ye princes and anoint the shield.”

The tables are loaded with ever delicacy; rich carpets spread for luxurious ease; Belshazzar and his princes eat and drink. Suddenly a terror – a stricken officer bursts into the banqueting hall and shouts out: “Arise ye princes, grasp your shields and defend yourselves! Anoint the shields, i.e. stand to arms.” But that night was the king of the Chaldeans slain. The masses of infantry and cavalry seen by the watchman, in vision, were the hosts of Media and Elam.

II. THE BURDEN OF DUMAH (Idumea) 11-12)

“Dumah” is Edom, an abbreviated form: the fuller form being Idumea. It means “silence”. This is prophetic of its end. (See Isa. Ch. 34; Ezek. Ch. 35; Obadiah).

CHAPTER 21:1-17 – Cont.

“Seir” – the inhabitants of Esau, or Edom.

“What of the night?” How far is it in the night?

How far gone is the night? This is Edom’s inquiry.

II. THE BURDEN OF DUMAH (Idumea) (11-12)

“The morning cometh and also the night.” The prophet predicts a morning but also a night. This may be the oracle of silence implied in the name “Dumah”.

This anxiety of the Edomites which prompted their appeal to the prophet was caused by the approaching invasion of the Assyrians.

Edom has long since passed away into the night.

III. THE BURDEN OF ARABIA (13-17)

“Arabia” means “in the evening, or at sunset.”

“Dedanim” means Dedanites, descendants of Abraham by Keturah: Dedan, son of Midian (Gen. 25:3; I Chron. 1:32).

“Tema” – descendants of Abraham through Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 25:15; 1 Chron. 1:30).

Both are mentioned in Jeremiah 25:23; Job 6:19.

“Kedar” – another descendent of Abraham by Hagar through Ishmael (Gen. 25:13).

For these people there is an evening of sorrow – but not a night eternal with silence. They “shall be diminished” but not utterly destroyed (Vr. 17).

This remnant is the Arab of today; and they are, though few in number; yet free from idolatry.

CHAPTER 22:1-25 – THE BURDEN OF THE VALLEY OF VISION

INTRODUCTION:

“The Valley of Vision” is Jerusalem. Just as we saw Babylon her great rival in chapter 21 pictured as “The Wilderness of the Sea” so Jerusalem here is pictured as “The Valley of Vision”. Man’s city is a “desert” morally and spiritually, but God’s city is a center of visions. Both the Septuagint (LXX) and the Arabic versions render it Jerusalem. Similar names are “Inhabitant of the Valley” “Rock of the Plain” (Jer. 21:13); “Mountain of the Fields” (Jer. 17:3).

“Isaiah pauses, as it were, in his series of warnings to foreign nations to rebuke the foreign temper of the frivolous inhabitants of Jerusalem and in particular Shebna, a high official in the government. The minatory (threatening) tone of the oracle points to the year 711 B.C. when Sargon invaded Judah, rather than to a temporary raising of the blockade of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C.” – Geo. L. Robinson

I. THE INVASION Vrs. 1-14 (Enemy Without)

1. A Day of Impious Joy (1-3)

“Gone up to the housetops” (1) this denotes a time of popular rejoicing. Here we get a picture of a “tumultuous” and “joyous” city. It is a picture of a reckless and God-ignoring populace who indulge in hilarious eating and drinking when the enemy is standing before the gates. The future tense is used here and it should read – “Thy slain shall not be slain with the sword”. But they will be slain with moral and spiritual death.

2. A Day of Inflicted Trouble (4-5)

“It is a day of trouble.” Very different is the attitude of Isaiah. He sees the impending catastrophe and weeps bitterly and refuses to be comforted because of the destruction of his people.

3. A Day of Invading Enemies (6-11)

“Elam” ... “Kir” – The south and north limits of the Chaldean forces. Light armed troops carried a quiver; heavy armed troops a shield (6). When not in use the shields were covered with leather for protection from rust.

There follows now a description of Hezekiah’s activity in preparing the city for defense. This is also recorded in 2 Chron. 32:1-6. He stripped the temple of its gold covering, which had been given by David and Solomon in an effort to buy off the Assyrians. “The house of the forest” (Vr. 8) was built by Solomon with cedar wood from Lebanon (1 Kings 7:2; 10:17). It had now become an armory. However intelligent Hezekiah’s vision may have been the people did not really lean upon God for deliverance. (Vr. 11)

4. A Day of Invitation (12)

God calls the nation to repentance – “weeping, mourning, baldness, sackcloth” and again, in the midst of judgment we see mercy.

CHAPTER 22:1- 25 Cont.

5. A Day of Impious Joy (13-14)

As the chapter begins, so this section now comes to a close. “Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.”

The revelers were now really taunting Isaiah saying, “This Joy-kill Isaiah says we shall all die, but there is no truth in his gloomy preaching”.

II. THE INDICTMENT (15-19) (Enemy Within)

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts.” Three times in this chapter (5,15,25) we have the statement that God hath spoken this. This puts a stamp of Divine inspiration on the chapter.

“In verses 15-19 Isaiah directs a personal message – the only philippic (bitter discourse) in his book – to Shebna, the comptroller of the palace, in which he predicts his deposition from office and degradation to a lower and less honorable position in the royal service.” – Geo. L. Robinson

This Shebna seems to have been a foreigner, perhaps a Syrian, or paganized Jew, or an Egyptian who imitated the Egyptians in building a sepulcher for himself. Only the rich had rock-hewn sepulchers.

The imagery is that of a slinger firmly placing a ball, or stone, in the leather pocket of the sling and then whirling it round and round and shooting it to a great distance. Thus would Shebna be slung out in captivity to Assyria – “a large country”.

III. THE INSTRUMENT (20-29) God’s true servant

Eliakim represents God’s true servant – Shebna was but a usurper.

In an Eastern house, a large wooden nail is fastened into the wall and on it are suspended the family ornaments.

Verse 25 seems to refer back to verse 19 – the day of Shebna’s overthrow. This would be the day of Eliakim’s exaltation.

God’s judgments seek out and strike individuals as surely as they strike nations.

Christ is our sure nail fastened in a sure place in the very heavenlies today. No one suspended upon Him shall ever fail and be destroyed.

CHAPTER 23:1-18 – THE BURDEN OF TYRE

INTRODUCTION:

Tyre was one of the great commercial centers of the ancient world. At this time it was the chief city of Phoenicia who was the mistress of the Mediterranean Sea and of its many colonies. The word “Tyre” means “a rock”. The old city stood on the mainland, but the new city was built on an island about half a mile from the shore. Both cities were founded by the Sidonians who were a tribe of the Canaanites. They were under the curse of Gen. 9:25.

I. PROPHECY OF RUINATION (1-14)

1. Declaration of Fact (1)

Tyre had rejoiced in the misfortunes of Judah (Amos 1:9-10) so it is punished by the king of Babylon (Vr. 13). See Ezek. 26:2-21 for the second destruction. Since then it has never been rebuilt. This first destruction took place under Nebuchadnezzar king of the Babylonians. The city was recovered under the Persians but completely destroyed again under Alexander the Great.

Tarshish, one of the colonies of Tyre is the modern Tartessa in southwest Spain.

Chittim was the original name for Cyprus – but also extended to other islands of the Mediterranean.

“No house, no entering in” means neither warehouse nor harbor. Both were destroyed by the Chaldeans.

2. Description of City (2-5)

a. Mart of the Nations (2-3)

Here is a picture of crossing and criss-crossing in trade over the Mediterranean Sea. They carried over the waters of the sea the corn of Sihor (Egypt or Nile, Sihor meaning black). The Egyptian wheat was exchanged for the wealth of Spain.

b. Lament in Shame (4-5)

This is a picture of shame and sorrow. As an Eastern woman is ashamed at being childless, so Tyre would no longer plant colonies. Tyre and Zidon would be childless of colonies. Thus a city of merchandising and merrymaking is turned into a city of shame and sorrow. When this report comes to Egypt she will be sorely pained.

3. Demonstration of Judgment (6-14)

This section begins and ends with “Howl ye inhabitants of the isle ... Howl ye ships of Tarshish”.

a. The Direct Cause (6-12)

“The Lord of Hosts hath purposed.” (9)

He it is who will “stain the pride of all glory” and “bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth”. “He shook the kingdoms.” God will have the final say unto all the nations of this earth and like Tyre He will abase all their pride in human glory and cover with contempt the great ones of the earth.

CHAPTER 23:1-18 – CONTINUED

b. The Indirect Cause (13-14)

“The Chaldeans ... he brought it to ruin.”

Tyre boasted antiquity and impregnability. She thought no one can conquer me. If they take the city on the mainland, I can flee to the island fortress. The Chaldeans “was not” i.e they were not a people until Assyria came to power. Thus God can raise up a nation from afar off and use a people not considered mighty to confound and destroy the proud.

II. PROPHECY OF RESTORATION (15-18)

1. The Time (15,17)

“Seventy years” predicted by Jeremiah 25:9-11; 27:2-7. This took place from the first year of Nebuchadnezzar to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. “One King” – a compound unity – “one of a dynasty – The Babylonian dynasty. During these 70 years Jerusalem was in captivity and Tyre was a desolation (Jer. 25:11).

2. The Picture (16-17)

Tyre is here pictured as a harlot for she was also a great center of idolatry. She is now as an abandoned woman seeking by music to attract her lovers. This takes place after her restoration by the Persians. She seeks to attract merchants and commerce and succeeded in doing so up to the time of her destruction by Alexander the Great of Greece.

3. The Future (18)

“And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.”

This prophecy looks forward to a future day.

Abilities and energies, debased to the service of sin and luxury, will be under the power of conversion, consecrated to the service of the people of the Lord. This is no doubt a kingdom scene.

Here again retribution and restoration are so closely allied in prophecy that no time interval seems apparent.

CHAPTER 24:1-23 – RETRIBUTION AND RESTORATION

INTRODUCTION:

1. We come now to the third section (Chapters 24-25) of the first main division of the book which we designated – Pronouncements of Judgments and Deliverances.

2. The leading thought of this chapter is that of Tribulation which will come both upon the Land and the People.

3. “It is difficult to distinguish between prophecy and apocalypse. Prophecy however usually foretells a definite future which has its foundation in the present; apocalypse directs the mind more abstractly to the future in contrast with the present. Strictly speaking chapters 24-27 are prophecy, not apocalypse. No one ascends into heaven or talks with an angel, as in Daniel 7 and Revelation 4.” – Geo. L. Robinson

The chapters are divided into two sections – (1-15) and (16-23) and both sections are balanced in a symmetrical manner.

I. PRECEDING THE FORST ADVENT (1-15)

1. The Land (1)

The word translated “earth” is haaretz and occurs some sixteen times in this chapter. It is rendered “land” in verses 3, 11, 13. It has reference to the land of Palestine, the Holy Land.

Note the striking imaginative terms used here for destruction – “empty,” “waste,” “upside down” and “scattereth abroad”.

“Behold the Lord maketh” etc. The land of Jewry becomes a woeful desolation. He makes havoc of persons and things, everything topsy-turvy.

2. The People (2)

The inhabitants of the land are divided into six groups or couplets:

“As with people, so with priest”

“As with servant, so with his master”

“As with the maid, so with the mistress”

“As with the buyer, so with the seller”

“As with the lender, so with the borrower”

“As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to Him”

Here is a great leveling process. Six is the Biblical number of man and man in imperfection. It is one short of seven. The super-man will number 666 (Rev. 13:18).

3. The Land (3-5)

Again the author takes up the judgment upon the land which is Palestine.

“Utterly emptied” – Hibbck tibbok

“Utterly spoiled” – hobboz tibboz

“Mourneth and fadeth away” – ablah nablak “Languisheth and fadeth away” – umlelah nablak
tebel umlalu.

CHAPTER 24:1-23 – CONTINUED

Like a setting sun lost in the darkness; like a beautiful flower that withers in the heat of the day. See 1 Peter 1:24

“The haughty people” – nothing brings the pride of man down so much as to lie on the bed of affliction.

The very land itself is affected by the sin of the people. It is decayed and wasting away because they transgressed the law, changed the ordinance and broke the covenant.

4. The People (6-15)

A judgment day is coming and did come when the mighty monarch Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and carried the people into captivity. Romans 8:20-22 speaks of creation itself being liberated from the curse. “Man not only governs nature, he infects it” – G.A. Smith.

There are but a few inhabitants left. Joy is gone and the cities lie wasted (6-12). This actually took place at the time of the captivity. It shows how thorough was God’s judgment. However, there will be a remnant left, likened to a handful of olives and grapes. This is the elect remnant in exile (13-15). They shall glorify Messiah from beyond the seas, in the east and west, and uttermost parts of the earth. The drunkards weep and howl for their wine (See Joel 1:5).

II. PRECEDING THE SECOND ADVENT (16-23)

1. The Land (16)

“My leanness, my leanness” – The figure is used here for emphasis. It is also seen in 26:3; 29:1; 41:27; 65:1. “Treacherous dealers” – These are the traitors that have betrayed.

2. The People (17-18)

The inhabitants of the earth or land are brought to the “fear, pit, snare”. This is repeated in verse 18 for solemn emphasis. It could be put into English as “scare, lair and snare”.

3. The Land (19-20)

The intensity of the judgment is terrific. The land and earth have seen nothing like this:

- a. “reel to and fro” – Heb. “staggering, staggereth.”
- b. “removed – Heb. “rocketh to and fro.”
- c. “utterly broken down” – Heb. “breaking, break up.”
- d. “cleaned, dissolved” – Heb. “bursting, bursts up.”
- e. “moved exceedingly” – Heb. “tottering, tottereth.”

4. The People (21-23)

We see here that the greatest of earth’s kings and the guardians or princes, evil principalities and powers in high places shall not escape. Even God’s creation will be affected – the sun and moon will lose their brightness in token that God is angry. But beyond the judgment of the Great Tribulation there lies a glorious salvation. The reign of Christ is the only hope of Israel and all earth inhabitants.

CHAPTER 25:1-12 – SONGS OF THE SAVED

INTRODUCTION:

In chapters 13-24 we had a series of Burdens. In chapters 25-27 we have a description of Blessing. In this chapter the prophet first transports himself to the period after The Babylonian Captivity and identifying himself with the redeemed, puts into their mouths songs of praise and thanksgiving. The whole scene is also millennial and looks forward to the future.

I. DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON (1-5)

Israel now begins with a song of praise – “I will exalt thee, I will praise Thy name.” In Hebrew we have three words here, making for a solemn emphasis to attract our attention – ‘aromimka, ‘odeh shimka.

This song celebrates two things relative to Jehovah:

1. His Might – “done wonderful things.” This might is shown in the destruction of Babylon. Babylon was not only a mighty city but also the most beautiful city. Now she is pictured as “an heap” “a ruin” “a palace of strangers” “no city” “never be built.” The city will be rebuilt again and then finally destroyed.

2. His Faithfulness (4-5) – “Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” His faithfulness in defending and delivering Jerusalem. “Strength to the poor, “strength to the needy” “Refuge from the storm, “shadow from the dust” “Bring down the noise of stranger.”

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE BANQUET (6-8)

“This mountain” – Mt. Zion. The greatness of the feast that will follow the ushering in of the kingdom is vividly suggested by the way the words are heaped together in verse six. This is much more apparent in the Hebrew text:

“a feast”	“of fat things”
“of fat things”	“full of marrow”
“a feast”	“of wines on the lees”
“wines on the lees”	

See Matt. 8:11 and Luke 13:28-29

Besides all this, He will:

“Destroy all ignorance”	Wipe away tears from all faces
Swallow up death in victory	Take away all rebuke

See 1 Cor. 15:54 and Rev. 21:4

CHAPTER 25:1-12 – CONTINUED

Verses 6-8 describe Jehovah's bountiful banquet on Mt. Zion to all nations, who in keeping with 2:2-4 come up to Jerusalem to celebrate "a feast of fat things" rich and marrowy. While the people are present at the banquet, Jehovah graciously removes their spiritual blindness so that they behold Him as the true dispenser of life and grace. He also abolishes violent death, that is to say, war (2:4) and its sad accompaniment, tears, so that "the earth" (Judah in particular) is no longer the battlefield of the nations, but the blessed abode of the redeemed living in peace and happiness" – Geo. L. Robinson.

III. DELIGHT IN THE LORD (9)

"Lo, this is our God."

We see here the intimacy of Israel with her God. She has now come to fully realize her need of Him and is in sweet fellowship with Him. This is in great contrast to her former wanderings and backslidings.

IV. DESTRUCTION OF MOAB (10-12)

Moab is likened to straw that is trampled down in a dunghill.

This is all done by "the hand of the Lord" – the manifested power of His might.

"Spread forth his hands ... as he that swimmeth." In the East all swimmers swim hand over hand and beat the water with a loud noise. So shall all the might of this enemy be beaten down. We note the emphasis of certainty and reality in all this: "bring down, lay low and bring to the ground."

We see that Babylon and Moab are morally united in this prophecy. Babylon is a political oppressor of God's people; while Moab is her religious corrupter (Numbers Chs. 22-24).

This vision is prophetic of a coming day when both Babylon and Moab in the persons of Antichrist and The False Prophet will plague God's people Israel, but finally are put in the Lake of Fire.

CHAPTER 26:1-21 – THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE REPHAIM

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter we have Israel's Song of Redemption. There is here a contrast between the righteous and the Rephaim, translated "dead" and "deceased". The distinction between the righteous and the fallen ones or evil seed may not always be seen now, but it will be evident. "Let them both grow together until the harvest" said our Lord in the parable of the Tares and Wheat (Matt. 13:24-30). "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" Mal. 3:18.

The harvest time is coming when all the wicked will be harvested, cut down, and destroyed; then the righteous will receive their reward for faithfulness.

I. THE RIGHTEOUS – THEIR REDEMPTION (1-4)

"In that day" – this refers to the Day of the Lord. It will be a day of utter defeat for God's enemies and one of salvation for His people Israel. A song will then be sung in the Land of Judah and especially in the City of Jerusalem – the land that had to be laid waste. What are the reasons for the song?

1. Strength (Vr. 1) – "We have a strong city."

This strength will not be in horses, in armies, in weapons of warfare – but in salvation – "salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks". In that day Jerusalem will be the impregnable city.

2. Truth (Vr. 2) "Keepeth the truth."

This truth according to the prophet is based upon righteousness. The lie is from the Devil. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

3. Peace (3) – "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

The Hebrew has, "Peace, Peace" (Shalom, shalom). No more terror of destruction because Judah is trusting in Jehovah. The way of peace is by the way of Christ to God. He is the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

4. Foundation (4) – "The Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

He is their "Rock of Ages". So sang Moses in Deut. 32:4,18,30. They shall not be moved because they no longer build upon the shifting sands of their own making, but upon the sure foundation which is Christ and His Word (Matt. 7:24-29).

II. THE REPHAIM – THEIR DEFEAT (5-6)

As a contrast to God's people we have here the wicked seed whom God is to utterly destroy. Of the Rephaim, translated "dead" and "deceased" in verses 14 and 19, the Companion Bible has this to say: "The Rephaim – this is a proper name and should not be translated. Where it is translated it is always rendered "giants" or "dead" (Isa. 26:14,19; Job 26:5; Psa. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9). These Rephaim will not rise. They were the progeny of the fallen angels; these latter who are kept in prison (1 Pet. 3:19); in chains (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) "reserved unto judgment; but their progeny will not rise or be judged for they have been "visited" "destroyed" and "perished."

CHAPTER 26:1-21 – CONTINUED

“The lofty city” here is Babylon. The prophet sees other cities inhabited by the wicked laid low. They are leveled to the dust. Such cities as Nineveh, Babylon, Petra, Tyre, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ashdod, Alexandria, Memphis and Thebes are gone. Most of these cities are but a dust heap to mark their once glorious pride. Only “poor” and “needy” tread upon them.

III. THE RIGHTEOUS – THEIR REMEMBRANCE (7-9)

“Remembrance” in verse 8 is the same as “memorial” in Exod. 3:15. They remembered the covenant with their fathers and His faithfulness. The Rephaim could have no such remembrance. Their desire was toward His Name. It is only in the name of Christ that there is salvation. Looking back over their past experience the redeemed community at length recognize that by patiently waiting on God to come to judgment they were taught righteousness.

IV. THE REPHAIM – DEVoured (10-11)

The wicked who are incapable of learning righteousness will be judged and destroyed, being subjected to fire. There is an evil seed that is growing in this world and will ripen into destruction. When iniquity has ripened into judgment then there is no hope. Show them favor and they will not learn righteousness and in the land of uprightness, they will only deal unjustly. Hence it is mercy on the part of God to devour these wicked. They will be subjected to fire.

V. THE RIGHTEOUS – THEIR REDEEMER (12-13)

As with all believers, so with Israel, her salvation is ordained of God and accomplished by God. We note such expressions as “Thou wilt” “Thou hast” and “Thee only”. It is God who hast wrought all our works for us.

VI. THE REPHAIM – DECEASED (14,19)

We have already discussed the Rephaim No. II. These passages may seem somewhat difficult to interpret. However, the language is very strong and pictures utter destruction or annihilation. If these beings are the progeny of fallen angels with fallen women then Israel’s real enemies are not human but super-human and diabolical in nature. This would go far to explain evil in the world even for us today.

VII. THE RIGHTEOUS – THEIR RESURRECTION AND RESTORATION (15-19)

Israel as a people are increased. God has enlarged and extended her borders. She speaks of calling upon God in her trouble. She has not brought forth children to God – merely “wind”. She has not been a leader for others to the truth.

As a contrast to her enemies – The Rephaim, her “dead ones” shall live. Here there is resurrection. This is the first clear statement of resurrection in the Bible. Jehovah will bring life from the dead.

VIII. THE REPHAIM – DESTROYED (20-21)

“The indignation” refers to that day of God’s wrath to be poured out upon His enemies and Israel’s tormentors. “Just as Noah prior to the flood heard the same voice saying: “Come thou into the ark” and found safety there from the destruction that came upon the world; and just as the first-born found safety in the house sprinkled by the blood of the Pascal Lamb, so will God’s people find a Divine shelter in the day when Messiah comes forth out of the heavens to punish the inhabitants of the earth.” – Student’s Commentary

CHAPTER 27:1-13 – RETRIBUTION AND RESTORATION

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter closes a section which began with chapter 25, in which we have seen the triumph of God's people over her enemies. That these predictions await a future fulfillment is most certain. If Israel's dispersion and past judgments are literal then this too is literal. These prophesies cannot be spiritualized or allegorized to mean something or someone else. The dispersion of Israel is a historical fact, so will her re-gathering and conversion be likewise.

I. INSTRUCTION OF LEVIATHAN (1)

"In that day" i.e. the period of judgment just spoken of in 26:21.

1. The Lord's Weapon (sword)

A hard, great and strong weapon. We are told in other Scriptures that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword" (Rev. 19:15; see also Rev. 1:16; 2:12; 2:16; 19:21).

2. The Lord's Wrath "shall punish ... shall slay."

"Leviathan" – There seem to be three great aquatic animals mentioned here: probably referring to Israel's three great enemies – Assyria, with Nineveh on the Tigris; Babylon, on the Euphrates; and Egypt, on the Nile. "Leviathan" is no doubt another word for Satan, especially as he is associated with a "serpent".

"piercing serpent" – fleeing or fugitive, like the Tigris river.

"crooked serpent" – tortuous, like the winding Euphrates.

"dragon" – the crocodile of the Nile.

The real power behind all wicked men and nations is this Leviathan, the "old serpent" – Satan.

II. RESTORATION OF THE VINEYARD (2-6)

The vine is a symbolic plant or tree in Israel's history (Judges 9:12-13; Isa. 5:1-7; John chapter 15). The day that will witness the destruction of Leviathan, and all his hosts, will witness also the restoration of Israel as Jehovah's vineyard. This is the vineyard of chapter five. There it is judged; here it is blessed. Note the emphasis upon God's sovereign purpose in His covenant relationship with Israel – "I will" "I would" "My strength". It is by Jehovah's mercy and strength alone that it will be accomplished.

"The briars and thorns." Leviathan and his evil followers are the outward enemies of the Vineyard; the briars and thorns are the inward. God promises that the vine of His planting and nourishing will blossom, bud and bear fruit. Her fruit will cover the earth. So all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26).

III. CHASTISEMENT OF ISRAEL (7-9)

The prophet now pauses to review the chastisement of God upon his people.

ISAIAH – CHAPTER 27:1-13 CONTINUED

1. A Comparison (7-8)

He now compares Israel's chastisement with the judgment of her enemies. They are light in comparison with the wrath poured out upon the evil nations. Theirs was punitive; Israel's remedial. Israel is sifted; the nations destroyed. In Israel it is cleansing and conversion; in the nations utter degradation and destruction.

2. A Condition (9)

- a. Return – Israel must come back to God as the Prodigal Son did to his father.
- b. Repent – She must do away with all false altars, groves and images. Idolatry must go.

In that day Israel will make all the altar stones as chalk-stones, easily broken and beaten to pieces.

IV. DESOLATION OF THE CITY (10-11)

The “Defenced City” here is none other than Jerusalem. Her boughs are the unconverted and wicked citizens. These are the branches that are withered and die and thus pruned away (see John 15:1-6).

V. RETURN OF THE REMNANT (12-13)

The true branches are in these verses compared to grain which shall be gathered grain by grain from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt.

“The great trumpet” will summon Israel to her Jubilee – the great feast of Tabernacles. They shall then worship Jehovah in the Holy Mountain in Jerusalem (Matt. 24:31).

“Waked by the trumpet's sound
I from the grave must rise,
And see the Judge with glory crowned
And see the flaming skies.

How shall I leave my tomb?
With triumph or regret?
A fearful or a joyful doom,
A curse or blessing, meet?

I must from God be driven,
Or with my Saviour dwell;
Must come, at his command, to heaven,
Or else depart – to hell.

Show me the way to shun,
Thy dreadful wrath severe,
That when thou comest on thy throne,
I may with joy appear.”

CHAPTER 28:1-29 – WOES AND GLORIES (Ephraim and Judah)

INTRODUCTION:

With this chapter we enter a new section which runs to chapter 35. It deals mainly with “woes” and “glories”. This chapter is rich in imagery: We read of a “crown of pride” “strong drink” “overflowing waters” “precept upon precept” “stammering lips” “a covenant with death and hell” “a bed too short” “the ploughing of land” and “cultivation of corn”.

I. DENUNCIATION OF EPHRAIM (1-4)

Ephraim refers to the kingdom which had its seat in Samaria. The plain fact of history concerning Samaria is recorded in 2 Kings 18:9,10 and 12.

1. Its Cause (1,3) – “Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards.”

Pride and drunkenness – the forerunners of all evil. 2 Kings 18:12 says: “Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God but transgressed against His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded and would not hear them nor do them.” The men of Ephraim were drunkards both actually and morally. Intoxicated with all evil.

Beneath the imagery here we find the physical glory of the land and of Samaria in particular expressed – “glorious beauty” “fat valleys. But there is the moral corruption of its people and the Advent of the King of Assyria. “It would be difficult to find in all Palestine a situation of equal strength, fertility and beauty combined” – Dr. Robinson.

2. Its Course (2) – “The Lord hath a mighty and strong one.”

This is the Assyrian who would come as God’s “mighty and strong one”.

He comes: “as a tempest of hail,” “as a destroying storm,” “as a flood of mighty waters.”

3. Its Curse (1-4)

“A fading flower” (1,4) “Cast down to earth” (2) “Hasty fruit” – such as early figs (4). It is a picture of utter denunciation.

II. DECLARATION OF GLORY (5-6)

Here are bright rays in the midst of a gloomy picture. It promises glory, beauty, intelligence and victory to the residue of His people. This is characteristic of Isaiah who puts a “crown of glory” in a setting of judgment (See Isa. 2:1-4; 4:2-6).

III. DISSIPATION IN JERUSALEM (7-8)

“But they also have erred through wine.” The prophet now turns to the scoffing politicians of Jerusalem, rebuking especially the priests and prophets. These were drunk in the pulpit and tipsy on the bench – “err in vision” “stumble in judgment”.

IV. INSTRUCTION TO THE REBELLIOUS (9-13)

How are we to understand the words, “precept upon precept”? Are they indicative of an approved method of instruction? Or are these the words of scornful men and mockers? Bishop Loweth has the following comment: “What say they, doth he treat us as mere infants just weaned? Doth he teach us like children, perpetually inculcating the same elementary lessons, the mere rudiments of knowledge; precept after precept, line after line, imitating at the same time and ridiculing in verse 10, the concise prophetic manner? God by His prophet retorts upon them with great severity their own contemptuous mockery. Yes, saith He, it shall be, in fact as you say; ye shall be taught by a strange tongue and a stammering lip in a strange country; ye shall be

ISAIAH 28:1-19 – CONTINUED

carried into captivity by a people whose language is unintelligible to you, and which ye shall be forced to learn like little children.”

“We must conceive the abrupt, intentionally short, reiterated and almost childish words of verse 10 as spoken in mimicry, with a mocking motion of the head and in childish, stammering, taunting tone” – Ewald.

The Hebrew of verse ten is in monosyllables – Zav Lazav, zav, lazav Lav La Kav, Kay La Kav Ze Er Sham, Ze Er Sham.

It corresponds to our disgust of long-winded speakers: “Blah, Blah.”

V. DESTRUCTION OF EVIL DOERS (14-22)

Israel had refused the “rest and refreshing” of verse 12 and instead made a “covenant with Sheol and an agreement with Hell”.

1. False Security

Israel had made for herself “a refuge of lies” but it would be of no avail (See Dan. 9:27). When Cromwell was encamped at Musselburgh in 1650 he sent a letter to the opposing party in which the following passage occurs: “I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken ... There may be, as well a carnal confidence upon misunderstood and misapplied precepts, which may be called spiritual drunkenness. There may be a covenant made with death and hell ... I pray you read the twenty-eighth of Isaiah from the fifth to the fifteenth verse.”

2. True Security

In contrast to the False Security that Israel had made in entering into an agreement with heathen nations, we read of her true security, “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste” (Vr. 16).

This foundation was laid in the counsels of eternity; in Abraham’s Promise (Gen. Ch. 12); in Daniel’s Covenant (2 Sam. Ch. 7). This passage is quoted in Rom. 9:33 and 1 Pet. 2:6). This passage is Messianic and reveals that Messiah is not only a foundation but also a plummet (17). All who cannot stand in His judgment shall be swept away. All their hopes will be gone in that day (Amos 7:7-9).

The parable of the short bed and the narrow covering (Vr. 20) is an allegory referring to the false security that any alliance with Sennacherib would achieve. Just as God broke forth at Gibeon (Josh. 10:10) and at Perizim (2 Sam. 5:20) so He is about to speak forth unto His own people now (Vr. 21). But this is for God a strange work and a strange act.

VI. DISCERNMENT OF JEHOVAH’S DOINGS (23-29)

“Give ear and hear my voice; hearken and hear my speech” (Vr. 23). “For His God doth instruct him to discretion and doth teach him” (26).

The argument here is that as the farmer plows in order to secure a harvest and threshes in order to secure bread, so God plowed and threshed His people with a wise and beneficent purpose. The farmer does not keep on plowing. He plows sufficiently and then sows. Nor does he thresh corn into powder but only till the chaff is separated from the wheat. Thus with God there is a definite purpose with the process of plowing, harvesting, threshing and grinding.

Judgment with its accompanying misery is God’s “strange act” but He permits the judgment to fall so that He may ultimately restore and bless.

CHAPTER 29:1-24 – REJECTION AND RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION:

In chapter 28, Isaiah spoke of the sin and punishment of Samaria. In this chapter he turns to the rulers and people of Jerusalem and Judah and denounces in them the self-same spirit that brought the downfall of Samaria.

I. THEIR REJECTION (1-16)

1. Because of False Religion (1-14)

a. Judgment upon the city (1-8)

(1) Its Process (1-4)

“Woe to Ariel.” “Ariel” stands for Jerusalem and means either “A lion of God” (2 Sam. 23:20) or “the altar-hearth” (Ezek. 43:15-16). This latter seems to be the true interpretation as it deals with “sacrifices”. It is so interpreted in the Targums – (A translation of some portions of the O.T. into Aramaic of Judea). God will distress Ariel until it becomes a true Ariel – a true altar-hearth. His immediate instrument will be Assyria. Note in verse 3 that it says, “I will camp against thee,” “lay siege,” “raise forts.” How suggestive of the curse are the words “brought down ... out of the dust” (4). God cursed the serpent to “eat dust” (Gen. 3). So now Jerusalem is to be laid low. Its beautiful temple is to be destroyed.

(2) Its Passing (5-8)

However, God’s judgment will not last forever. “He will not always chide.” So He turns now upon the enemies of Israel. The tables are now turned. The One who must punish His people, now turns to punish the enemies. There will be the defeat of the foes (5). The foes laying siege to the city would be driven like dust and chaff and that suddenly.

The foes will be utterly discomfited (6-7) ... “shall be as a dream of the night vision”. This would be brought about by the visitation of Jehovah in thunder, earthquake, noise, whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a devouring fire. Distress would then come upon the foes (8). Here is a description of a man who dreams of possessing something and finds himself defeated. They have dreamed of eating and drinking but in the moment of awaking they find themselves faint and hungry.

b. Judgment Upon The Citizens (9-14)

(1) Blindness (9-10)

They are drunken and they stagger because Jehovah has withheld from them prophets who are eyes and seers who are the true heads of the people.

(2) Sealed Book (11-12)

The true vision or outlook upon all national and religious affairs is concealed, so that neither the learned nor the illiterate are able to read and understand the signs of the times.

CHAPTER 29:1-24 – CONTINUED

(3) Reason (13-14)

False religion stands as the reason for all this. No more heart in their religion. It was only an outward profession. There was no fear toward God. That which they did they had simply learned by rote. Yet God would do “a marvelous work ... and a wonder” so that they would discover the folly of the wisdom of their wise men.

2. Because of False Intrigue (15-16)

After thus delivering his message against the false religion, out of which the false hope sprang, the prophet proceeded to utter his woe against false intrigue by which the rulers were hoping to secure the safety of Judah.

1. Attempt At Secrecy (15)

These rulers thought they could hide their counsel from Jehovah. The reference here is to the secret negotiations between the rulers in Jerusalem and the king of Egypt.

2. Its Real Meaning (16)

The prophet now unmask the real meaning of their intrigue. They were but reversing the true order of things – “Surely your turning of things upside down”. The clay became the potter and the finished product the workman. “Such has been human folly and divine sovereignty in all ages of the world’s history. Every attempt to hide from God and act with self-will insures defeat and sorrow” – Student’s Commentary.

II. THEIR RESTORATION (17-24)

These verses are prophetic of that coming deliverance of God’s people. Lebanon a fruitful field.

1. To Sensibility (17-18)

We note that the deliverance is a complete reversal of the judgment resulting from false religion. The first characteristic is that the deaf would be able to hear the words of the book which had been sealed and the eyes of the blind would see. (Note Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:13-15).

2. To Security (19-21)

The meek and the poor who had been suppressed and oppressed would rejoice. The “terrible one” and “scorner” would be brought to naught. Judgment had been perverted but in the hour of deliverance this would be so no more.

3. To Spirituality (22-24)

Their final deliverance will be to true religion:

“Sanctify my name”

“Sanctify Holy One of Israel”

“Fear the God of Israel”

The restoration of religion and spirituality will also bring the restoration of true statesmanship.

CHAPTER 30:1-33 – WOE AGAINST ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT

INTRODUCTION:

Chapters 28 to 35 contain various judgments and promises. There are among other things six woes that are uttered. This chapter 30 contains the fourth woe.

“The threatened invasion of the Assyrian king struck such fear into the men of Jerusalem that they resolved to send ambassadors to Egypt, bearing gifts, in order to make a league with the Egyptian monarch.” This was in opposition to the word of God which said: “That walk to go down into Egypt” (Vr. 2).

This confederacy proved to be a false one. The prophet names the policy against which his protest was uttered. He now named and denounced the false treaty with Egypt.

I. ITS USLESSNESS (1-14)

1. Because of Their Rebellion (1-2)

The people are seeking counsel but not of Jehovah: are wearing a web to hide themselves, but not of His Spirit. They go down to Egypt to seek help from Pharaoh without taking counsel of Jehovah.

2. Because of its Shame (3-5)

“Your shame and confusion.” The Egyptians were unable to render help.

“At Zoan” – Here the Exodus began. In the time of Moses it was the capitol or court of Pharaoh and the scene of his miracles (Ps. 78:12,43) and also the seat of wisdom (19:11,13). “Hanes” – called Tahapanes (Jer. 2:16).

3. Because of its Reversals (6-7)

“Burden” here refers to the lading of the animals of the ambassadors who were going down to Egypt with rich gifts to secure an alliance and thus reversing the steps of their national deliverance. This is the land of the “young and old lion, the viper and fiery/flying serpent.” Their going will bring no help, no aid, and no profit. Instead, “Their strength is to sit still.”

4. Because of its Deceit (8-11)

The prophet is now instructed to write all this in a book that it might be a witness to them forever. It was conceived in rebellion by those who declined to hear the Law of the Lord; who charged the seers not to see and demanded that their prophecies should be “smooth” and deceitful without any reference to Jehovah.

5. Because of its Confusion (12-14)

Such action must issue in confusion. If they put their trust in oppression and perverseness, the sin of such action would constitute a wall of defense which would inevitably give way before Jehovah. He will break it in pieces so small that not one shall be found to carry neither fire from the hearth nor water from the well.

CHAPTER 30:1-33 – CONTINUED

II. ITS NEEDLESSNESS (15-33)

1. The Secrets of Safety (15-18)

a. Waiting on God (15-17)

From his stern word of denunciation vibrant with thunder, the prophet turned to a speech full of tenderness and of grace. He is now showing the needlessness of a treaty with Egypt. “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” The secret is to stop and wait upon God. But Israel failed to do this. She said: “We will flee upon horses ... We will rise upon the swift”. But all this is in vain.

b. Waiting of God (18)

“Therefore will the Lord wait.” And for two reasons: “May be gracious unto you” and “He will be exalted.” Even if they refuse to wait He will wait until they are restored. A Russian Patriarch said during the Russian revolution: “God sits in the corner and waits”.

2. The Subjects of Safety (19-26)

a. Restored People (19-22)

We now get a description of the blessings of salvation which will result from returning and rest, from quietness and confidence. There will be an end of their sorrow (19). Tears and weeping are signs of sorrow, suffering and death. There will come a renewed vision (20). They had tasted of the “bread of adversity and the water of affliction”. Yet a renewed vision shall come. There will come definite guidance (21). “This is the way, walk ye in it.” They will be led by an inner voice. There will be a cessation of idolatry (22). They will defile their idols and cast them away as a filthy garment.

b. Restored Possessions (23-26)

As a result of the restoration of the people and the doing away of idolatry there will follow a restoration of land and possessions. Godliness is profitable in all things. Harvests will come (23). Rain, growth, harvest. All God needed to do was to withhold the rain. Pasture and cattle (23-25). Pastures will be provided for grazing purposes because the rivers and streams will flow again from the mountains and hills. Light (26) will come about in a day that the prophet calls: “in the day of great slaughter when the towers fall”. In other words judgment will usher in this time of plenty. God is Holy and He must exercise judgment. There will be intense light in this day. Accompanying the judgment the sun and moon will lose their brightness (Joel 2:31).

3. The Surety of Safety (27-33)

a. By a Demonstration of Jehovah (27-28)

“The exhibition of amazing grace will synchronize with an exhibition of appalling judgment” – Student’s Commentary. Here are figures of speech full of fierce force:

CHAPTER 30:1-33 – CONTINUED

“Burning with anger.” “Breath, as an overflowing torrent.”
“Lips fill of indignation.” “To sift the nations.”
“Tongue as a devouring fire.” “Bridle in the jaws of the people.”

b. By the Delight of the People (29)

“a song, as in the night.” “a holy solemnity is kept.” This refers to the former habitual keeping of the feasts. This will be a spontaneous song springing from the gladness of the heart.

c. By the Destruction of the Assyrian (30-33)

“The Assyrian shall be beaten down.”

This will be accompanied by the “voice of the Lord”. The Assyrian was destroyed as a political power in 612 B.C. It is a final and complete destruction for a fire, kindled by the breath of the Lord will be like a stream of brimstone.

“Tophet” – the place of burning - In the Valley of Hinnom, the place where continual fires consumed the refuse of Jerusalem. See also Rev. 19:20; 20:10.
