

Isa 1:1-2:1

1:1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. 2 Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

This vision concerns Judah and Jerusalem which by no means says it has nothing to do with us today. First of all, Jerusalem is an earthly city as well as a heavenly one according to Galatians 4, therefore, all who come to believe upon Jesus are grafted into the natural olive tree. Though Isaiah's primary audience was the tribe of Judah, his message still applied to all 12 tribes and us today.

Isaiah, or Yeshayahu is said to be the son of Amoz which some translate Amos., however, these are two different people. The Jews believed Amoz to be the brother or son of King Amaziah from Judah. This would make Isaiah of royal birth.

Verse 2 tells the heavens and the earth to hear and listen. This means that even the principalities, the created angels are told to hear this message. That makes me want to listen up even more. When God speaks we should give full attention and that sets the stage for our attitude as we begin this study. These aren't words of Isaiah, but of the Lord Himself who created the heavens and the earth.

Even the animals have a clear understanding of their master and realize his dominion over them. Israel, however, lost that understanding and put themselves as masters. The arrogance we people show in ignorance. Today we look for the origin of life, rejecting Life. We look for better ways of doing things never finding the Way. We say that we know the truth while all the time live in darkness because the Truth be not in us.

Verse 2 also tells us God "reared" and "brought up" His children. They are two different words with slightly different meanings. *Giddalti* is used in Genesis 12:2 in reference to Abram, but *romanti* (brought up) is used to describe the exalted position Israel took upon this earth.

4 Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. 5 Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. 6 From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness — only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.

A small, but interesting word is "Ah." It is used 21 times in Isaiah while only 28 times in all other prophets together. It is the particle *hoi* and expresses a deep, loving concern in a very forceful way. This shows the attitude that both God and Isaiah had for Israel. Indeed, any true evangelist ought to have the same concern for the lost.

Israel is described as sinful, guilty, evil and corrupt. They have forsaken, spurned and turned away from God. I'm sure if you asked them, they would have considered themselves to be holy, godly and religious but God clearly saw differently. Because of this grave attitude consequences were inevitable. While some enjoy the pleasures for a season, the piper will eventually be paid. God asks the question why they should be beaten any more because He is about to punish them severely.

From the outward body represented by the head to the inward soul shown by the heart, Israel was corrupt. If God would come to your church today, could he say the same thing? Many might think outwardly they look pretty good but Scripturally speaking, the church has ugly festering sores. We are not united into the body of Christ. Worship is often shallow and heartless, the Sabbath isn't being kept, repentance isn't preached and the poor are shunned. But hey, the pews are full. Is that outward beauty?

Open sores that are not cleansed. The Hebrew says "pressed out." They used to take the puss from wounds and push or scrape it out of the wound. A disgusting symbol of the utter sinfulness of sin. If only the church would "press out" the sin from within them. But instead we welcome sinners into the church (as we should) hoping that the Gospel and social fellowship will change them without scraping away the puss. Truth is, only the law will drive one to the Gospel to be changed. How do we expect a homosexual to be changed if we never preach against homosexuality from the pulpit? Our wounds ooze with disgusting cheap grace, as we trample on the blood of Jesus.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. 8 The Daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a field of melons, like a city under siege. 9 Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.

Note it is "your" country. God brought Israel into this promised land, a land of milk and honey but now it is as a desert. As our country continues to experience drought I must wonder if God is withdrawing His hand of blessing upon us for the same reasons.

Verse 8 tells us that Israel was left as a shelter or hut. Lowly, cheap and unprotected dwellings open for danger.

Verse 9 reveals God's grace among His judgments. God left some survivors to be faithful to His promises to Abraham and his offspring. Without God's mercy our destiny was that of Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11 "The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. 12 When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? 13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations — I cannot bear your evil assemblies. 14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your

hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

God addresses first the rulers and then the people because the rulers are charged with the responsibility of shepherding the people in God's law. Note it isn't the love of God that they are to listen to but the law.

Here we also see that the Israelites were playing church very nicely. They were continuing to bring forth sacrifices of all sorts, even remembering to celebrate the New Moon and the Sabbath. What did God think of all this? He hated it. Just because one goes to church and gives money in the offering plate doesn't mean God is pleased with you or your offering. Anything done apart from faith is sin. Just as today, we say that going to church is honoring the Sabbath these people also assumed that by recognizing the day their religious duty or formula had been taken care of. This is living under the Old Covenant of rule upon rule not understanding the blessings that come from freedom to be conformed into the likeness of Christ so that we want to spend a holy day with our Lord.

Verse 15 shows that even though the outward show of lifting hands in prayer was detestable in God's eyes. God even would turn his head away and plug his ears. So many think they are Christians because they pray at night. Satanist pray to. Proverbs 28:9 says that "if anyone who turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable in God's sight." Do you ignore the laws of God?

The only way for Israel's prayers to be heard was to get their evil deeds washed and to turn away from them. Once they stopped the evil deeds they needed to learn something. Doing good takes practice. This is why we "labor and strive" for godliness according to Timothy. We SEEK justice, ENCOURAGE the oppressed, DEFEND the fatherless, PLEAD for the widow. These are all verbs that seem to be lacking in most churches today. Instead, churches look at the needs and try to fill them. For example, we see so many unchurched kids in our community so we say, hey, let's start a daycare to teach these kids about God. We see families aren't training their children so we say, let's start a Sunday School program. At first glance one may think what is wrong with that? Well, where are Sunday school programs mentioned in Scripture? They aren't because the Fathers of the homes were to be in charge of their children's spiritual training. The Bible says SEEK ye FIRST the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added. I believe if the church lived out the above verbs we wouldn't have a need for a Sunday school program or a neighborhood day care. But instead, we add program upon program trying to fix all the problems that have come about because we sought first materialism, money, and worldly cares. Don't take me wrong, I'm not saying Sunday school is bad, I'm simply saying it reveals an attitude within the churches today that is certainly not Scriptural. Sunday school was started for orphans to encourage the fatherless but today it has become an excuse for fathers to ignore their spiritual role.

I'm sure many of these people came across as sincere worshippers of the Lord but sincerity doesn't and can't replace obedience. Saul found that out just before the Lord took away his anointing. Perhaps that is why verse 14 says "your" new moons. This wasn't how God had prescribed worship. Yet today, we go to church and do things the

way we want to, regardless of what God showed us to do. Fervor and sincere prayer or worship also doesn't replace obedience.

18 "Come now, let us reason together, "says the LORD." Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; 20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

God wants to help. You can't figure this all out on your own, so He invites you to reason together with Him. Go to His word and He will show you that you might have life. True grace can be given when you wash and turn from your sins. Only then can you be made clean. Only two things are called for according to verse 19, willingness and obedience. The antithesis is resistance and rebellion. There is no in between as the Lord has spoken and, therefore, it is final. Your choice.

21 See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her — but now murderers! 22 Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. 23 Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. 24 Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah, I will get relief from my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. 25 I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. 26 I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."

As Israel was one a nation blessed by God, full of justice and righteousness, so too, or country was once the same. But now justice has fled and murderers abound. Our rulers are rebels (v. 23) as politicians are synonymous with falsehood and lies. Now, rather than the children of God we are considered to be enemies of God (v. 24).

Verse 25 begins to show a glimmer of hope however. The enemy will be destroyed as the dross is removed and our rulers will once again be righteous and faithful. When in this? We can't be sure but I believe it is most likely that it is after the second coming of our Lord. Only the remnant that God spared could fulfill such a prophecy. So too, today, God has set aside those who have not bowed the knee to Baal (Rom 11:4).

27 Zion will be redeemed with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness. 28 But rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish. 29 "You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced because of the gardens that you have chosen. 30 You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. 31 The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire."

One thing is clear, Zion will be redeemed by taking all the “penitent” ones and covering them with the blood of Jesus. All those who rebel against God’s law who are considered sinners (A true Christian cannot be called a sinner) will be broken and perish. There will be no everlasting life in heaven for these people. Doesn’t that make you want to go and preach repentance that this may not happen to these people?

Verse 29 tells us one of the symptoms of their rebellion against God. They had taken large oak trees and made them into sacred symbols. They also found more delight in gardens and other material possessions than they did in God’s presence. The end result would be shame and disgrace because they trusted in things that perish and built their houses on sand. Though at one time they were strong and appeared successful, the mighty oak would slowly wither just as the garden that is not watered dies. Only Jesus, the living water, can nourish the soul for eternal life. But when one rebels against God, he rebels against this living water.

The last verse shows that even what they worked for will burn because everything they worked for was material and worldly. We read in Corinthians, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Cor 3:11-15). All the work one does for earthly things will only burn. It may be a good reminder to put little sticky tabs on all your earthly possessions that say, “To be burned.” We also read in Revelation, “Each person was judged according to what he had done” (Rev 20:13-14). Faith and works go hand in hand as faith without works is dead James tells us. Not only will the saints be rewarded for what they have done, those who perish will be judged and punished by what they have done (and left undone). There will be no reward for them as they stored up earthly goods, not heavenly souls. Jesus warned us, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy” (Matt 6:19-20).

Isaiah Chapter 2

**2:1 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:
2 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

Again we see that this concerns Judah and Jerusalem. Israel doesn’t seem to be mentioned and therefore, this prophecy could be only for what we think of as Jews today.

The time of this event is clearly the “last days” when Mount Moriah (the mountain on which the Temple was built) will be the most famous and desired mountain

in the world. All nations, not just the Jews, will run to this mountain for protection. God seems to say that the Lord will dwell there and people will flock there to hear God's true Word and be taught His ways. Why? All so that they can walk in obedience to Christ.

We see a call to go to the mountain of the Lord. This invitation shows what the Christian's attitude should be in taking others with us to the kingdom of God. One must wonder how God will call people to this holy mountain. I believe Scripture gives us some indications. Paul wrote, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17). Isaiah also gives us further information in later chapters, "They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth" (Isa 11:9-12). Clearly this is a time when the Lord comes back and the rest of the Scriptures makes this very clear in other parts as well. Consider the following:

- "The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously" (Isa 24:23).
- On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken" (Isa 25:6-8).
- "And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem" (Isa 27:13).
- "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant — to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant — these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer" (Isa 56:4-7).
- "But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain" (Isa 57:13).
- "'The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,' says the LORD" (Isa 65:25).
- "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations — to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all

your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD” (Isa 66:19-20).

- “Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. 'In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias. But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah” (Joel 3:17-19).
- “I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever” (Mic 4:7).
- “I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will my servants live. Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me” (Isa 65:9-10).
- “The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure” (Zech 14:10-11).
- “The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory. He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD” (Ps 102:15-18).

Verse three tells us it won't be the Gospel going out from Zion but the Law. It is interesting that right after speaking of the reward of those called to his mountain that we see from that mountain the law goes out. Why? Paul wrote, “He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:5-6). I believe it is the Law of God that will be the sword that comes out of the mouth of Jesus to destroy. Isaiah later writes, “This is what the LORD says: "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans — they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to you in chains. They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, 'Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god'"” (Isa 45:14). Isaiah also wrote, “Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you” (Isa 55:5). God will call people from all nations, even those that do not know Him will bow before Him.

4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

God will once again be the judge as He was in the days before Israel had earthly kings to look to. The big question is when does all this take place? Most will say that this is at the time of the millennium. No other time seems to make sense. If so, we

clearly see that there will be disputes going on during that time. With that said, however, the very next sentence states that swords and spears will be turned into farming tools because there will be no war or even training for war. Could this mean that Jesus will judge and settle disputes once and for all?

5 Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD. 6 You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and clasp hands with pagans. 7 Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. 8 Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. 9 So man will be brought low and mankind humbled — do not forgive them.

Verse five begins with a second invitation to walk in God's light but then verse six talks about God having abandoning His people due to their walking in darkness. Is this invitation so that we don't miss the millennium? Israel had become full of the traditions and beliefs of the Philistines and pagans. The way of the ungodly rubbed off on God's people as they began to incorporate pagan ways with God's ways. One must wonder if we have done the same as we adopted Christmas and Easter instead of the Biblical festivals celebrating the same things. Jeremiah talks of this very thing in the last days, "O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit (Jer 16:19). It seems that these traditions of man will be set aside as people will come from the ends of the earth to learn God's ways. I believe these verses predict that a day is coming when man will abandon all the ways of man in clasping hands with pagans, but will we have to wait for the millennium? Can man answer the call Isaiah is giving now. Come, O house of Jacob!

Verse seven seems to describe the United States. Once we became the capitalistic society we are, idol worship and pride overcame. Verse nine speaks in the future tense that man will be brought low and humbled. In other words, pride was what kept them from God. As I look at NASA and other great technologies I see the pride of man and the god of wisdom blinding the eyes of people so that they can not see the light of God's Word. The result is having no forgiveness. Of course the pride of man can't imagine that. Their god is a god of love who forgives everyone. Even though God's love is unconditional, His forgiveness isn't. Forgiveness is conditional depending on whether you are a follower of Christ Jesus.

In verse eight we see a reminder of the end time people that will bow down to the work of their hands as we read in Revelation, "The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands" (Rev 9:20). I think of the incredible feats accomplished by man in recent centuries and at times feel no wonder as to why they think so highly of themselves. God has given man great wisdom and opportunity but the Nebuchadnezzar's of today ignore the fact that God is the one who allowed the success. When first reading these words I naturally assumed idols in the form of statues were made. Upon closer examination we see it to be the god of man's self sustaining wisdom and pride. Going back to verse seven reveals their pride in their many horses, silver and other possessions. Verse eleven also reveals the work of man's hand

had produced arrogance and pride. This is why God will destroy the things man has made, to show them how worthless they really are: “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will destroy your horses from among you and demolish your chariots. I will destroy the cities of your land and tear down all your strongholds. I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells. I will destroy your carved images and your sacred stones from among you; you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands. I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles and demolish your cities. I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed me” (Mic 5:10-15).

The very fact that verse nine says “do not forgive them” leads one into the question of, “when is okay to not forgive someone”? Jeremiah once wrote, “But you know, O LORD, all their plots to kill me. Do not forgive their crimes or blot out their sins from your sight. Let them be overthrown before you; deal with them in the time of your anger” (Jer 18:23). Nehemiah said, “Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders” (Neh 4:5). Even in the New Testament we read, “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven” (John 20:23). But how do you reconcile those verses with Matthew, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matt 6:14-15)? Perhaps John answers this in saying, “If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that” (1 John 5:16-17). It is certainly food for thought.

10 Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty! 11 The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. 12 The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), 13 for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, 14 for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, 15 for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, 16 for every trading ship and every stately vessel. 17 The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, 18 and the idols will totally disappear.

When God humbles man for his rebellion against Him, these pride-filled men will swallow their pride and hide in the rocks to try and hide from the wrath of God’s splendor and His judgment. Revelation 6:16 and Matthew 24:16 both speak of this same event, showing us there is an end time judgment alluded to here as well. We read in Thessalonians, “They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed” (2 Thess 1:9-10). Notice two different people will have different responses to the second coming. The ungodly will hide and the believer will marvel.

The underlying cause of all this pride and arrogance was rebellion against God in unbelief that lead to disobedience: “You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by

which a man will live if he obeys them” (Neh 9:29). With the Ten Commandments so proudly be removed from this country one does not need to wonder what will be next for us.

Verse 12 tells us there is a “day” for all of this. Joel gives us insight as to what this day will be like: “Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes-joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seeds are shriveled beneath the clods. The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up. How the cattle moan! The herds mill about because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep are suffering” (Joel 1:15-18). The Old Testament ends by saying, “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse” (Mal 4:5-6). In verse fourteen mention is made of lofty towers of which Isaiah later talks about, “In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted” (Isa 30:25-26; see also Zeph 1:14).

19 Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. 20 In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. 21 They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. 22 Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?

Verse nineteen repeats what we read earlier in verse ten but adds that this is all when God rises to shake the earth. Later we read in Isaiah that this seems to be an earthquake, “The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls — never to rise again” (Isa 24:18-20). When will this all happen? Revelation seems to suggest at the sixth seal, “I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place” (Rev 6:12-14). Also, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty” (Hag 2:6-7). Many of these focus on what the Bible calls “Babylon.” Could this be the United States?

As verse 20 tells us the idols will be destroyed and later we see when this may be, “Look, here comes a man in a chariot with a team of horses. And he gives back the answer: 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the

ground!” (Isa 21:9). The team of horses could also refer to the seal judgments of Revelation where we see four horses with the first four seals being opened.

This chapter concludes by reminding us not to trust in man whose life is but a breath. Isn't it amazing how much we put our trust in those that cannot help us. Like children who trust their parents in a thunderstorm when their parents have no power or control other than to place their children in God's care.

Isaiah 3

See now, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water, 2 the hero and warrior, the judge and prophet, the soothsayer and elder, 3 the captain of fifty and man of rank, the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter. 4 I will make boys their officials; mere children will govern them. 5 People will oppress each other — man against man, neighbor against neighbor. The young will rise up against the old, the base against the honorable. 6 A man will seize one of his brothers at his father's home, and say, "You have a cloak, you be our leader; take charge of this heap of ruins!" 7 But in that day he will cry out, "I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house; do not make me the leader of the people."

As part of God's judgment, Judah would lose both supply and support. Supplies included the things to take care of life sustaining materials like food and water, but the support included much more. The hero's and strong soldiers of Judah would be no more so that any support from within would be gone. The judge and the prophet were no longer speaking, leaving them with the horror of the unknown and without a spokesman for God. The soothsayer and elder were even silent so that the hope of even false counsel had vanished. The captain and generals of the army were not there to lead their men. The counselor was not there to ease the conscience and nor were the craftsman or enchanters to build or talk their way out of trouble. All hope was dashed.

Even the officials that were left would just be immature boys who know not what to do. Not only is there trouble from without the walls of Jerusalem and Judah, but within the walls men will fight with one another regardless of age and morality.

As Jesus tells us, if we follow Him we have no need of any such things as supply and support: "But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

Verse six shows the desperate state they are reduced to. If any man has a cloak they would be willing to have him a leader. What a sad measure of leadership but that seems to be what we are being reduced to here in America. We don't look at wisdom and relationship with God, instead we look at material and social possessions for qualifications. These people will have no remedy or cure for the unstoppable judgment of God.

8 Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. 9 The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; do not hide it. Woe to them! They have

brought disaster upon themselves. 10 Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. 11 Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.

Now the real reason for all these problems is exposed. Jerusalem and Judah were evil, not recognizing the presence of God in their lives and, therefore, not obeying Him. Verse nine talks about the look on their faces. What look? A look of pride, a smirk of power as they rule their own lives. Jeremiah describes it this way, “Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to blush with shame” (Jer 3:3).

One will not be able to blame God because it is their own actions that have brought upon this trouble.

Interestingly, the righteous will be taken care of and they will be repaid for their good deeds. This certainly doesn't mean that there will be no problems but simply that God's presence and providence will not be taken away from us. While one is rewarded, the other is punished. Abraham realized this quality of God when he said, “Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike” (Gen 18:25).

12 Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path. 13 The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people. 14 The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. 15 What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

Young inexperienced men as well as women, who have not been given the authority to rule, will rule. The people are no longer guided by the King, but instead they have made their own guides that will do what they want them to do. This isn't far from our own politicians today. They all campaign to give the public what they want to hear rather than relaying what God says. God's vineyard has been trampled upon because the tenants felt it belonged to them. Instead of taking care of the poor they crushed them. What we see here is the parable Jesus gave about His vineyard, “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,’ they replied, ‘and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time’” (Matt 21:40-41).

Another interesting thought on verse twelve is that the people will still be held accountable for the leaders they choose. When the Lord returns one will not be able to say, “well Pastor said . . .” or as Adam tried to do when he said, “the woman you gave me, she gave it to me.” God has given us clear instruction in His word so that if we allow ungodly leaders to lead us astray, we are just as guilty.

Verse 13 tells us that the Lord takes His judgment throne against the ungodly. He has the right to do so because He was slain as we see in Revelation chapter 5. The lamb of God will take the seal out of the Father's hand and sit down to judge as He breaks the seals of the judgment scroll (Rev 6). After all, if the poor have been crushed by the leaders and rich, Jesus was crushed by them and He will judge for that. We read in

Matthew of those in the end times who will say, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?” He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matt 25:44-46).

16 The LORD says, "The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. 17 Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the LORD will make their scalps bald." 18 In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, 19 the earrings and bracelets and veils, 20 the headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, 21 the signet rings and nose rings, 22 the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses 23 and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. 24 Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. 25 Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. 26 The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.

NOT DONE

Isaiah Chapter 4

In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, "We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!"

Why would seven women cling to one man and say they only want his name as they take care of themselves. David Wilkerson once had a wonderful newsletter to show that these women represent the modern day church of today. We all want to take upon the name of Christ but not the marital responsibilities that go along with that. We want to be called Christians but don't want to be obedient to the one who makes us a Christian.

2 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. 3 Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. 5 Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. 6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

The Branch spoken of here is Christ, the beautiful and glorious king. The day spoken of is the same time in which all of the above doom and gloom seem to be taking

place. Therefore, here in chapter four we see a light for the righteous people of God. Verse three tells us exactly who these people are. They are the ones who are “left” in Zion and “remain” in Jerusalem. Earlier chapters pointed to us be called to Mount Zion by God raising a banner etc. Our strength and refuge will remain on Mount Zion where we will stay. However, it also seems there will be ungodly people there as well that will not be recorded among the “living.” Perhaps those that are ungodly will be purged out by the judgment of fire. Once they are done away with, God will then provide and take care of His people just as He did in the wilderness after the Exodus by being a cloud in the day and fire within that cloud at night (Exo 13:21). Revelation makes note of this when it says, “Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst” (Rev 7:15-16).

There are many parallels here with the Exodus. Verse three said that those who remain in Jerusalem will be called holy. Moses was to tell the Israelites that God had said, “You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6). This is what Christ has made us. When the Israelites fled from Egypt the Edomites would not let them go through their land so God pronounced a curse on them. Verse four talks of cleansing the bloodstains from Jerusalem. Perhaps Obadiah references this, “But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance. The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau” (Obad 17-18). Technically, the house of Esau was mixed into the culture by the time of Christ. Herod was an Idumean (an Edomite). After 70 A.D. Rome no longer allowed them to be rulers and the Edomites seemed to have disappeared. The question is, could there blood line still be here?

This remnant of verse three could also be spoken of in Zephaniah, “The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid” (Zeph 3:13).

It is also no accident that the place this will all happen is on Mount Zion. We see the fulfillment in Revelation, “Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads” (Rev 14:1). Note the Lord is on Mount Zion here with the chosen ones of Israel.

The Psalms may shed more light on verse six, “For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock” (Ps 27:5). Note the shelter seems to be God's tabernacle; not the building but Christ who, “tabernacled” among us. This was the whole point of the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus, “Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God” (Lev 23:42-43). Perhaps this is why the Festival is celebrated in the millennial reign, “The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name. . . It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure. . . Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles”

(Zech 14:9-16). Could the survivors be those who are cleansed by the spirit of judgment in verse four?

Isaiah Chapter 5

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. 2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. 3 "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? 5 Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. 6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." 7 The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

What an intimate act singing can be. Isaiah here sings the message in hopes that Israel may see God's love and pending judgment. It sounds very much like the parable found in Matthew 21:33 showing that this message applies even to us today.

The loved one is also the owner of the vineyard who doesn't just own it but built it up. His care for it by making sure the ground was prepared and only the best vines planted (God's purest Word and Law). He even put up a tower to watch over and protect it. In addition to all this he prepared a winepress to make use of its fruit. Obviously, God is referring to us when he speaks of His vineyard. God created us and planted the best of all fruit within us (the fruit of His Spirit). He watches over us eagerly anticipating the fruit we produce.

Fruit is an important part of the Christian life, in fact, faith without works (fruit) is dead. Works can not produce faith but faith can not exist without it producing works. This is why on judgment day Revelation states, "Each person was judged according to what he had done" (Rev 20:13).

The problem was no good fruit came from the vineyard (Judah) so God's just choice is to destroy it. The hedge of protection is taken away so that it would be trampled upon. Note that God will allow someone to come in to do the trampling, it isn't just be natural causes that the vineyard is destroyed. Not only will the blessings (rain) be taken away, but the curses will given (thorns). The Garden of Eden should be in the forefront of our minds as God there also pulled his hand of blessing from sinful man and caused the ground to produce thorns.

It may be implied that God was being blamed for the misfortune coming upon Israel, however, God Himself tells them to judge for themselves who was right. God took care of the vineyard, the vineyard just wouldn't produce fruit. This shows an interesting truth about the Christian life. God will not make the Christian produce fruit, it is something that can only come naturally from faith in Christ.

8 Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. 9 The LORD Almighty has declared in my hearing: "Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. 10 A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine, a homer of seed only an ephah of grain." 11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. 12 They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands. 13 Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; their men of rank will die of hunger and their masses will be parched with thirst. 14 Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revelers. 15 So man will be brought low and mankind humbled, the eyes of the arrogant humbled. 16 But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will show himself holy by his righteousness. 17 Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture; lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich.

Verse 8 warns us about building houses one on top of another until great cities are formed and no land is left. By no means is Isaiah saying that it is a sin to live in the city, however, in general, the city draws people into sin. Take Lot for instance who first camped near Sodom, then facing Sodom, and finally in the gates of Sodom. It all started with a faithless choice that caused compromise that caused destruction. So many move to the city based on a faithless choice apart from communication with God. They are looking for entertainment, the big money, to expand their portfolio, little knowing that Satan is reeling them in to compromise and subtle deception.

Verses nine and ten tell us what will happen of these great cities and their mansions. Just as at Sodom, all who placed their hope, trust and life in material and fleshly pleasures, will be destroyed. The mansions will sit empty as nobody will be able to afford them. The vineyards and the fields will not produce the crop they once did because famine seems to come about, just as Isaiah earlier prophesied. Earlier in Deuteronomy God told the Israelites that if they did not obey His commands, "You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it. You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them" (Deut 28:38-40). They can't say He didn't warn them.

Verses 11 and 12 give us a clear picture of city life. So many live for the moment without realizing that a moment is coming that will take their very life. They think of nothing but the flesh as they drink morning and night giving no regard to the Creator or what He has created. There are harps and other sounds of joyful music at their parties but they have no joy, only spurts of drunkenness. Even when they are sober their thinking is so clouded that they have no logic as God blinds them due to their disobedience.

Perhaps this is the importance of fasting mentioned so many times in the Scriptures. The flesh clouds the spiritual understanding. The more the flesh is fed the less the spirit understands. Fasting causes the flesh to be put into submission so the spiritual antenna has better reception. As Hosea said, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6).

Verse 13 shows that their drunken minds will lead them only to exile and the magnification of the famine. They are called men of rank as they follow each other down the broad way of destruction. Death will be everywhere after man is humbled because the fool says in his heart there is no God.

Verse 16 tells us God is just, holy and righteous. His judgments are just as the people had fair warning about the consequences of disobedience and rejection of the Holy Spirit. God is holy and good. Nothing unholy can come from God and, therefore, these judgments are holy made by the righteous and perfect Jesus, the Christ of Nazareth. No one else is righteous as the Scriptures tell us, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom 3:10-12). Since only God is righteous, only He can judge and prove Himself holy.

Verse 17 gives the good news along with all the bad. While all the ungodly are suffering in famine, humility and death, the children of God are like sheep grazing in beautiful pastures and the wealth hoarded by the rich will then be enjoyed by the meek. This sounds so much like the loving Shepherd that Isaiah speaks of, "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isa 40:11). As John said, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:14-17).

18 Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, 19 to those who say, "Let God hurry, let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach, let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come, so we may know it." 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. 22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent. 24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore the LORD's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised. 26 He lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily! 27 Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal thong is broken. 28 Their arrows are sharp, all their bows are strung; their horses' hoofs seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. 29 Their roar is like that of the lion, they roar like young lions; they growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue. 30 In that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks at the land, he will see darkness and distress; even the light will be darkened by the clouds.

We now see how the reprobate mind works right from the Scriptures. God warns that there will be great woe to those who “draw sin along with cords of deceit.” Satan wants to drag as many down as he can and he will use his followers to do so. Many a man have been led down the road of destruction by deceitful lies.

Verse 19 shows that part of the deception is acknowledging God but not truly understanding who He is. Timothy warned of those who were, “Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them” (2 Tim 3:4-5). These people will mockingly invite God’s judgment. They reason that if and when they see it coming then they will turn to Him, but for now, God’s Word isn’t enough “proof” for them to believe it is coming. This same attitude permeates our society today. People say the Bible is man’s word, not God’s. If God really exists why doesn’t He show Himself? If God is real, why did my dad die? If He does such and such, then I will believe in Him. Woe to those who have such a lack of understanding.

Verse 20 also causes us to reflect upon our society today. We live in a world that calls good evil. God is being shut out of our schools while homosexuality and other sins are being paraded around as something good. God is the problem in our society because he won’t tolerate the “sins” going on but yet the prince of darkness is lifted up as something to be enlightened by. People find it sweet to have young men have curses and all other kinds of filth come from their lips while tender blessings of God are deemed as insults. In Romans we see these people spoken of as those whose, “Throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness” (Rom 3:13-14).

Verses 21-23 continue to show that these ungodly men find themselves wise and clever when they are actually blind and dumb. As we do street ministry I stand in awe at the mocking comments against God. These people truly think they are funny and clever but can not see their childish antics are sending them to hell. How wise is that? They take more pride in knowing how to mix drinks than they do in being able to spell a word correctly. We often ask people how many beers they can name followed by how many of the Ten Commandments they can name. Almost always the beers win out by a landslide. These same people would sell their own mother to get money to buy that beer before they would be concerned about truth and justice. The depraved mind doesn’t worry about others but only themselves. That is why Timothy said that in the last days people would be “lovers of themselves.” When we focus on the flesh, the spirit has no understanding of truth. Timothy added, “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their *own desires*, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4). These people have been given over to stupidity by God as Romans clearly tells us, “Furthermore, since *they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God*, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice

them” (Rom 1:28-32). It is a scary thing to be given over to your own heart because you reject your Creator. Out on the street we hear of so many people who have a “good heart.” If these people would read the Bible they would know that, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it” (Jer 17:9)? I don’t want to trust my heart for truth, but only God’s Word.

Verse 24 shows a conscious effort to deny God’s Word and the Holy One who gave it. The Word was first “rejected” and then despised or “spurned.” Deciding that it wasn’t truth was only the first step. Going out of the way to mock it was the next step. Saul, the apostle, was once like this. Rejecting Jesus as the Christ was his first wrong, but even going as far as Damascus to persecute those who believed the truth shows the utter degradation of his mind. Rejecting truth is one thing, but worshipping the lie is another. This is why it is said that the very root of the man is rotten. When the root goes bad there is no hope for it ever being alive again. This is the sad state that the ungodly will one day find themselves in. It isn’t the actions of the people but the spiritual neglect that causes the action to be wrong. Disobedience is only a symptom of the disease of unbelief. God overlooks our individual sins but He can not overlook His law being “cast away.” It is said that Moses, “Chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb 11:25-26). Because the ungodly chase after the flesh for a season, God will destroy them quickly as fire burns dry grass. Note also that it was God’s law that was turned away from. If you have no regard for God you will have no regard for His Law. If you don’t respect your parents you won’t listen to them either. Perhaps that is why disobedient children were stoned to death in Leviticus.

In verse 25 is a “wow” verse. God is so angry that even killing them isn’t enough to subdue His rage. When the owner of the vineyard comes the mountains will shake as prophesied and the people will be destroyed, however, there will be more to come. This is why Revelation doesn’t just have seven seals but adds seven trumpets and seven viles. The dead bodies will be as refuse in the streets. People will not have the heart or the ability to bury the dead.

Verses 26-30 show how God will continue to bring about destruction by calling forth His servants. As God lifts up a banner for all nations, His people will come swiftly. We have seen this banner before. In many cases it refers to Jesus. For example, “In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples” (Isa 11:10, see also Num 21:8). I believe Isaiah 11 will give further insight here as well: “He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth” (Isa 11:12). Note that this banner will gather the “exiles of Israel” from the “four quarters of the earth.” Here in verse 26 they will come from the “ends” of the earth. It seem very likely to be talking of the same thing. Other verses discussing this same Hebrew word for “banner” follow: Num 21:8-10, Ps 60:4, Isa 5:26, 11:10-12, 13:2, 18:3, 30:17, 31:9, 33:23, 49:22, 62:10; Jer 4:6, 4:21, Jer 50:2, 51:12, 51:27; Ezek 27:7. Jeremiah 4:21 and Isaiah 51:7 both reference this banner with the blowing of a trumpet, which also fits nicely into the trumpets of Revelation. Joel says, “Sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes,

such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come” (Joel 2:1-2). Could this be what Isaiah is talking about?

In verse 27-29 we see the people will be taken care of and will have nothing to hinder their travel. Their intent is clearly battle as their arrows are sharp, the bows are strung and the horses are strong without their hooves being worn. The whirling wheels of the chariots show great speed in coming as well. As a lion easily overcome its prey and carries it off so shall God’s people be victorious.

Verse 30 shows darkness will not only cover the hearts and minds of the ungodly in sorrow, but also the physical light of the sun will be darkened as well. The NIV says by clouds but no reference to clouds is made in the Hebrew. Once more we have clear prophesy mentioned many times in Scripture, including the trumpets of Revelation already mentioned above. Perhaps this is a key to understanding the timing of these events.

Isaiah Chapter 6

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus Christ when the year the Uzziah, Israel’s great king, died. Uzziah reigned for over 50 years and it was a great loss for them. However, though this fleshly man is dead, Israel’s true king still reigns.

Even the New Testament tells us that Isaiah was seeing Christ in his glory, “Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him” (John 12:41). Even Yeshua Himself spoke of this glory in His prayer, “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began” (John 17:5).

Christ is seen here seated or enthroned as the Psalms tells us, “The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever” (Ps 29:10). This shows His kingship and authority.

Above Christ there are seraphs with six wings. It seems that the difference between these and cherub is their position. Cherub are under the throne and Seraphs are above it. The Psalms agree with many other verses regarding this creatures in that they are bright as fire, “He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants” (Ps 104:4). They cover their faces and feet because of the holiness of God. In fact, they call to one another pronouncing God’s holiness and glory that fills the earth. Their voices cause the doorposts and threshold to shake. These are the surest and firmest of foundations but upon God’s judgment even they shake. If inanimate objects will shake upon this declaration how much more should we, God’s people, tremble before Him.

The Temple was filled with smoke, the shekinah glory of God. This smoke not only shielded the eyes of man so that they could not look upon the face of God (perhaps

why even the Seraph cover their faces), but it also showed God's glory filling the temple, which was a representation of heaven (Heb 8:5). This is why the Seraph pronounce that His glory fills the earth.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

One of the seraphs flew to Isaiah and strengthened him. One must wonder if it was a seraph that came to Jesus side in the Garden of Gethesame as Luke records, "An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him" (Luke 22:43).

The live coal did not burn Isaiah but gave Him a cleansing and power from the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is often seen in fire (Mat 3:11) and is said to have a cleansing effect (Isa 4:4). Now Isaiah's unclean lips were purified by the Spirit and he was now a willing and capable servant. The coal had to have come from either the altar of burnt offering (representing Christ) or the altar of incense (representing prayer). With the angel declaring his guilt to have been taken away it seems that it was from the bronze altar upon which the blood of the sacrifice was daily poured out upon. Hebrews speaks to us today of the same cleansing preparation for the saints, "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God" (Heb 9:14)!

Proverbs states, "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable" (Prov 28:9). Not until our conscience is clear and our lips cleansed could we even approach God in prayer, making one more reason that the coal came from the burnt offering altar.

God asks the question of who would go to send the message to the people. Moments earlier Isaiah was afraid but now that he is assured of his forgiveness, his thankful heart causes him to be a willing servant. As Paul said, "To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task" (2 Cor 2:16-17)?

It is also important that we do not go without first being called or sent of God. We read in Romans, "And how can they preach unless they are sent" (Rom 10:15)? God was looking for a man for the job but not without first preparing this man with His Spirit. Isaiah recognized that apart from the forgiveness and the strength therein from God, he could not go. It is wise for us to recognize this same calling given to us by the same Spirit: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service" (1 Tim 1:12).

9 He said, "Go and tell this people: "'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' 10 Make the heart of this people calloused; make

their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." 11 Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, 12 until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. 13 And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

Now we hear the message, or perhaps the curse, Isaiah is to pronounce. Israel would not be able to understand truth even though it be right before their eyes.

Unfortunately what they could not understand was the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Isaiah is told how long this blindness will last: Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, fields are ruined and everyone is sent far away. Some may argue that this has already happened and when Israel became a nation in 1948 they were brought back so that the curse was lifted. This could be true, but in context with what we have discussed in the previous five chapters it may leave it open for the future. Verse thirteen adds that even if a tenth of something remains in the land it will "again be laid waste." Did this happen? Has Jerusalem been without inhabitants with houses deserted by all nations? I suppose it may depend on how literal all this is. I know the Jews have been spread out far away and that many have been able to see the Truth, however, even at the time of Christ there were some Jews that, for whatever reason, understood Jesus to be the Messiah. Romans gives us further insight into this blindness and how long it should last: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 'And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins'" (Rom 11:25-27). According to these verses it can not happen until the full number of Gentile believers has come into the kingdom of God. Again we must ask: has this happened?

This will once again take place, but this time the curse will be for the Gentile as well: "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2 Thess 2:9-12). Note that this time it will be a sign of the lawless one where Truth is staring them in the face but no logic or common sense will prevail. I must admit that I see this beginning to happen in our country as logic is no longer logical. We allow all sorts of religion in the schools, but Christianity is shut out. We kill babies moments before birth and yet reason that they aren't human yet. It is a scary thing to fall under God's judgment of blindness. This is why, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44).

Ch 1 God says church is worshipping with lips but no hearts so judgment will come but afterward (v. 26) the righteous will dwell in Jerusalem

Ch 2 Shows that Mount Zion will be center of attention as people stream to it. The law goes out from Zion as other nations live life as normal, but only after judgment and the millennial reign begins. During judgment people flee to the rocks.

Ch 3: Describes the judgment with all supply and support gone. Only verse 10 says that it will be well with the righteous.

Ch 4 Describes the millennial protection at Jerusalem

Ch 5 God describes His people as a vineyard that produced no fruit. Describes city life and then v. 26 refers to the banner calling the people to Jerusalem as the righteous are called to rule over the enemy.

Ch 6 Scene in heaven with seraphs. Pronounce curse on Israel to hear but not understand until Jerusalem desolate.

Isaiah Chapter 7

7:1 When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it. 2 Now the house of David was told, "Aram has allied itself with Ephraim"; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind. 3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field. 4 Say to him, 'Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood — because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, 6 "Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it." 7 Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "It will not take place, it will not happen, 8 for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. 9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.'"

Jotham was the son of Uzziah who had died at the beginning of Chapter six. Jotham ruled for sixteen years and he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord just as Uzziah had done (2 Kings 15:30). However, Jotham did not remove the high places as most of the other good kings ignored as well. Now, in chapter seven we see Ahaz, the son of Jotham as king. Ahaz did evil in the eyes of the Lord, even sacrificing one of his children in the fire (2 Kings 16:1). This causes turmoil among Judah because God allows Rezin, king of Aram and Pekah from Israel to join forces and attack. Ahaz was terrified so Isaiah is told to take his own son and go to Ahaz to prophesy about God's protection, providing Ahaz stand firm in his faith. However, as we see later, Ahaz had no faith in God, "He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree. Therefore the LORD his God handed him over to the king of

Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus” (2 Chron 28:3-5).

Note that God sent Isaiah, Ahaz did not call for him. Ahaz did not deserve these words of encouragement but for the sake of his father David, God sent him. Isaiah’s son, Shear-Jashub, means, “A remnant shall return.” As we will see in 8:18 he was to be a sign to Israel. Indeed his name shows that God would be faithful to his promise to David and the generations after him.

Verse five shows us the plan of Aram and Pekah. They wanted to breach the city, divide it between Israel and Syria, and then put a king over it. The son of Tabeel is an unknown person. I believe the main point here is to show that a foreign country would unite with the fallen church (Israel) against God’s chosen people (Judah) with the intent to set up an evil king among them.

Verses 8-9 show that Aram and Ephraim are known for two head cities, Damascus and Samaria. Those two main cities are led by Rezin and Pekah. That is all they have going for them and they will not stand before God. Isaiah says that within 65 years Ephraim will be too scattered to be a people. Commentators are confused about this because Samaria captured Israel only 11 years later, causing some to say 65 meant six and five but the original doesn’t really allow this. Others say that it was about 65 years later that Esarhaddon made the final blow to that country while still others say the 65 years begins when Amos first prophesied against Israel. I believe there is meaning here yet to be understood that could fall into end-time events. The context of the first six chapters of Isaiah has been geared towards the millennial reign, why then would this chapter be any different? I confess I have no clear answer on this except to say it is a good possibility that it measures the time up to Esarhaddon which foreshadows a future event.

10 Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, 11 "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." 13 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. 15 He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. 16 But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.

Ahaz also was told to ask for a sign that the events Isaiah just prophesied about were true. When Ahaz stubbornly refused, God gives him one anyway. Interestingly, the sign was Mary giving birth to Jesus which is long after 65 years. Obviously we have a dual prophesy here.

Verse 15 is easily explained by making the boy that grows up to choose the right to be Isaiah’s son. Only about two or three years after Isaiah speaks here Hoshea kills Pekah (2 Kings 15:30). Even before this we see the King of Assyria killing Rezin (2 Kings 16:9). Therefore, Ahaz was safe from these two enemies for now. The name of Isaiah’s son meant “a remnant shall return.” When these two kings were killed this allowed for some of the 200,000 people who had been taken captive by Israel to now

return, thus a remnant did return (2 Chron 28:8-15). However, there must still be some connection with this and Immanuel. Christ was a sign that God would keep His promise to David and though enemies would march against Jerusalem, it would be spared.

WHO IS TABEL: ANTICHRIST? CLOSE TO TUBAL
HOW IS IMMANUEL AS SIGN
65 YEARS: NERO? FALL OF ROME?

17 The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah — he will bring the king of Assyria." 18 In that day the LORD will whistle for flies from the distant streams of Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. 19 They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. 20 In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the River — the king of Assyria — to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take off your beards also. 21 In that day, a man will keep alive a young cow and two goats. 22 And because of the abundance of the milk they give, he will have curds to eat. All who remain in the land will eat curds and honey. 23 In that day, in every place where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels, there will be only briars and thorns. 24 Men will go there with bow and arrow, for the land will be covered with briars and thorns. 25 As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe, you will no longer go there for fear of the briars and thorns; they will become places where cattle are turned loose and where sheep run.

Now came the judgment upon Ahaz. We read of how the king of Assyria was looked to for help but only gave trouble to Ahaz: "Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him trouble instead of help. Ahaz took some of the things from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him" (2 Chron 28:20-21). Assyria was that razor that Ahaz himself tries to hire and in return becomes a razor to him.

The flies and bees could also represent the armies that will march against Ahaz. They will cover the land and destroy it.

At this time so many would be killed that only a young cow and two goats would be enough to feed the few who are left. They will only have curds and honey to eat as all other fruits and vegetables can not grow in the desolate land. The fertile vineyards will now be filled with thorns and are good only for cattle.

Isaiah Chapter 8

Isaiah Chapter 8

8:1 The LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. 2 And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah as reliable witnesses for me." 3 Then I went to the

prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. 4 Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria." 5 The LORD spoke to me again: 6 "Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, 7 therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River — the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks 8 and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel!"

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz means hurry to the spoil or prey. Not only was this title applied to the scroll but also to Isaiah's newborn son. Earlier Isaiah's son Shear Jashub was a sign of mercy whose name meant "a remnant shall return." Now, this child speaks of quick judgment. Mercy was given to Ahaz of Judah, but judgment to Israel and Samaria. Indeed, Assyria did destroy Damascus and Samaria and even scared Judah half to death but God spared them. This fits well with the theme we have seen throughout Isaiah so far. Among all the judgment that is taking place God says, Oh, "Tell the righteous it will be well with them." Those who remain faithful will be taken care of. It may not be a joy ride but they eyes of the Lord will be on us.

Two witnesses were called in Uriah the priest and Zechariah. The Old Testament said, "On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death" (Deut 17:6). This would make Isaiah's prophecy of judgment valid and sure. Before judgment can take place the truth of the judgment must be witnessed to. Not only did this point to the sure judgment of Syria (Damascus) and Israel (Samaria) by the king of Assyria, but also to the judgment of God's people in end times. In Revelation chapter 11 we see two witnesses coming to Jerusalem preaching a message of repentance. These same two witnesses are talked about in Zechariah chapter four as two who are anointed to serve the Lord throughout all the earth. The very next verse in Zechariah five shows a scroll of judgment flying through the air. It is no accident that we see these two witnesses coming before judgment in Isaiah, Zechariah and Revelation.

The cause of this judgment was that God's people had rejected Him. They did not want the smooth flowing waters of Shiloah. Bible dictionaries associated this with the pool of shiloam in the New Testament where people would lay to be healed. It was believed that if the waters were stirred, the first person in the water would be healed. Therefore, we see a healing aspect of these waters. This brings to mind God's Word which said, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron 7:14). Instead, they wanted the things of the flesh. They wanted Rezin, a powerful king with a large army. Just as the people of Israel looked upon the stature of Saul for kingly attributes they now looked to Rezin. We know it was David, the small boy that would lead them to the quiet waters of peace, just as it will be the King of David (Jesus) that will lead us to our quiet waters once the two witnesses of Revelation appear.

If this timing here in Isaiah means anything, from the time the two witnesses appear there would only be a year or two before its destruction. Interestingly, in

Revelation we see the two witnesses preaching for 3 ½ years before a great earthquake overcomes Jerusalem and the seventh seal is broken on the scroll to begin the true judgments of God in the trumpets and vials.

The judgment is viewed as the Euphrates river overflowing and becoming so deep that they are up to their necks in destruction. The quiet waters they should have sought were much better than the raging floodwaters of destruction. The people in Noah's day found this out as well except their waters covered their heads. Assyria was situated upon the Euphrates river which is why that river is used here. Interestingly it is also used in Revelation as the place that judgment shall come from: "It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number'" (Rev 9:14-16). The important thing to also remember is that Assyria was later destroyed just as the place of Satan's throne is destroyed in Revelation chapter 16.

Verse 8 continues with an interesting twist. Though Assyria did threaten Judah and "sweep into Judah, swirling over it" she will not be completely destroyed but only up to her neck. Judah will survive because of Immanuel, God is with us. This very phrase is used only a short time later in verse ten as it speaks of the hopeless attack on Judah. Though it may seem grim for a time, the end has already been decreed.

9 Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Prepare for battle, and be shattered! 10 Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us. 11 The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said: 12 "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. 13 The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, 14 and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. 15 Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."

The great significance to end times events continues. Just as the book of Revelation tells us, the Euphrates River is dried up to make way for the nations to come and attack, but only for their destruction. Verse nine says "all" you distant nations which fits with the message of Revelation: "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the *kings of the whole world*, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty" (Rev 16:12-14). God is the one that dries up the River to literally call the nations to battle against His people.

This message was applicable to Israel in the past as well. The Northern ten tribes of Israel had united with Syria to attack Judah but God would make sure they failed. We see how Hezekiah was spared in 2 Kings 8 and again in Isaiah 36. Though it seemed by all logic that Judah should fall, O' Immanuel, God was with them.

Isaiah 7:2 said that the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken because of what seemed to be sure destruction. In verse 12 we see that Isaiah was told clearly and with spiritual convictions not to fear what the rest of Judah feared. Likewise, we are not to fear end time persecution but trust in the Lord. Again, this does not mean that our circumstances will always be good ones from the world's standpoint. Even now as we go through the trials of life God is with us (Immanuel) but it isn't always easy. God isn't going to deliver you from these trials but He will deliver you through them. As the record of Revelation begins to unfold there will be many fears but we must fear nothing that the world fears, but only God.

Verse 13 reminds us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If we make God our fear, we will make God our hope. God will be our safety and sanctuary. This is what we have been reading about in the past chapters as God becomes a shelter for us over Jerusalem giving us shade in the day and light at night.

Verse 14 gives a sober warning however. Yes, God will be our sanctuary, BUT, to both houses of Israel (Judah and Israel) He will be a stumbling block. Romans explains the purpose of this very clearly, "What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.' And David says: 'May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.' Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring" (Rom 11:7-12). The reason that both houses would stumble is so that the Gentiles could be included in this sanctuary.

Verse 14 also had a purpose in the events of that day. It was the rejection of God, (the smooth waters of verse 6) that caused many in Judah and Israel alike to perish. Not only would Assyria capture the ten tribes of Israel but Babylon would later take Judah captive because they rejected God. It will be no different in the end times when Jew and Gentile alike that do not fear the Lord will perish. Matthew put it this way when speaking of Christ, "He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed" (Matt 21:44).

It is the fear of the Lord in verse 13 that is so important for Jew or Gentiles. In Revelation we see that when the judgment of God is about to begin there is great reason and need for the fear of God: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7). This fear is well deserved as even the angels say, "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed" (Rev 15:4). Who will not fear God? Only those who let their stubborn pride keep themselves from being humbled.

16 Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples. 17 I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. 18 Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. 19 When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. 21 Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. 22 Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

As Daniel was told to seal up the vision until the end so here Isaiah was to bind up the testimony among those who follow Christ. So too was he to seal up the law among those who trusted in the Lord. Why? Only those who follow Christ can understand this great testimony that Isaiah has shared from God and how it fits with the rest of Scripture. Only the Spirit can reveal the law to those who have the Spirit. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14-15). Our judges today make their own rules and become of no effect because their standard is a man-made one. Only the law of God can withstand the test of time.

Isaiah begins to testify that he will wait for the Lord until He reveals His face once again to Jacob. This goes back to the verses we discussed earlier in Romans showing a time when God would reveal himself again to the Jews, the house of Jacob (Rom 11:25 Hos 6:1-2). We must all be patient. Revelation shows many of the saints crying out, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood” (Rev 6:10)? We must not doubt the words of this testimony for they will be fulfilled. Those in the days of Ahaz waited and it came. Those today wait and it too shall come just as it is recorded. Seal up the testimony and law in your hearts you faithful ones for His reward is great.

Verse 18 tells us that the Jews are signs from God. How and to who? They point to God’s promises to all who would believe. It is no accident that every nation upon all of time that has tried to wipe out the Jew has been destroyed themselves and only they remain. God warned, “May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed” (Num 24:9)! In case any doubt that God uses these Old Testament men and stories as examples or signs for us today look at Zechariah, “Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come” (Zech 3:8). Just as the Tabernacle foreshadowed heaven (Heb 8:5) so too these men point to a future fulfillment. We could go on and on with examples because the entire Bible is full of them. Why then should we question the fact that Isaiah is talking to us today about the end times? Israel is a grand sign of end time events. In Romans we see that the Lord will come back when the full number of the Gentiles comes in and take away the blindness from the Jews.

God dwells on Mount Zion, the very place that He is to return seems to be the place He is already at. In Revelation we read, “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand” (Rev 14:1).

But instead of seeking Him there, men go to mediums for answers. We see Saul went to the witch of Endor for advice when the Lord was no longer with him. Too often when we are in dire need of help we reject God rather than humble ourselves and seek Him. Even when the judgment of God comes we see what will happen, “The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood-idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts” (Rev 9:20-21). Their place will be the lake of fire.

Verse 20 tells us where truth can be found, “to the law and the testimony.” The dead are gone and are of no help any longer, but God is alive and can help the living. Christianity is the only faith whose founder is still alive. Why seek answers from Buddha or Joseph Smith or anyone else who has perished. Only in the Living Word will answers be found for the living. In fact, the second part of verse 20 tells us that if we speak anything that does not come from the Word (law and the testimony) there is no light in them. In Revelation we see that only the Word will cause one to overcome, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev 12:11). The only way to overcome Satan is by the Word of God.

Revelation continues to take hold in verse 21 where we see that the ungodly are famished and devastated. All they can do is look upward towards God and curse Him. Revelation chapter sixteen has this same thing happening three times. In the first instance we read, “They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him” (Rev 16:9 See also verse 11 and 21). Note also that they will curse their King and their God. What they think of God does not change who He is. This is why when people say they don’t believe in God I often tell them that doesn’t really matter because truth is not dependent upon their belief. If someone puts a gun to their head and they say, “I don’t believe in bullets.” What good will that do them. Likewise, belief in God makes no difference, the truth of who He is does, however.

Finally, verse 22 closes the chapter with these same ungodly people being cast into the Lake of fire or the second death. Revelation talks of this among this same time of cursing God seen in verse 21, “The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was *plunged into darkness*. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done” (Rev 16:10-11). Can you see how Revelation is simply paraphrasing Isaiah. One other very interesting point to be made is that from verse 21 to verse 22 we have a change in position for the ungodly. Now they are looking “toward” the earth when in verse 21 they were roaming in the land looking upward and when they cursed God, immediately their position changed. The imagery shows the ungodly gazing at the earth as they are cast into utter darkness. What are they seeing as they gaze toward the earth? Darkness, distress and gloom. This fits perfectly with Revelation again. We see the vial judgments of Revelation chapter 16 follow the trumpet judgments. It is at

seventh trumpet that we go to heaven and are “raptured” up (1 Thess 4, 1 Cor 15, Rev 11). Once that happens the ungodly are left for destruction as is the earth so that the new heaven and new earth can be made. This section started with God’s Word being sealed up in the Godly disciples that were signs of the Lord’s return on Mount Zion. They then overcame the godlessness by the Word and testimony of Jesus but the rest would only curse God and be cast into hell.

- V.1 Seal judgments of Rev 6
- V. 2 Two witnesses of Rev 11
- V 6 Antichrist of Rev 12,
- V 7 Four angels of the Euphrates prepare for battle Rev 9
- V 8 God is with us
- V 9 Battle of Armageddon
- V 10-15 God protects his people
- V 16 Saints are sealed and wait Rev 7
- V 18 The Lord stands on Mount Zion Rev 14
- V 19 Ungodly seek anything but God Rev 9
- V 20 Saints overcome by the blood and testimony of Jesus Rev 12
- V 21 Ungodly curse God and are cast into darkness. Rev 16

Isaiah Chapter 9

9:1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan — 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

God brings us back to the current situation in Israel. Though the Jews would be disciplined because of their unbelief, God would give them a bright light to lead them out of the darkness they were in. That light was Jesus as clearly stated in Matthew 4:15. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali is the area where Jesus grew up and did most of His ministry. We often associate Jerusalem with Jesus because that is where He died, however, He actually spent very little time there.

Verse two explains how they were in the valley of the shadow of death. Sure death and destruction was upon them without the forgiveness that the Light would bring. What joy this Gospel truth should bring to people. Isaiah likens it to the dividing of plunder or the joy of harvest. These descriptions bring up images of excitement, laughing, dancing and celebrating. Does the church experience this today? I would go out on a limb to say they do not. I realize certain individuals do, but as a whole, the church has lost the joy of being saved. It has become old hat and we need to be reminded as the church of Ephesus was, "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen" (Rev 2:4-5)! We would do well to contemplate where we would be in darkness for it is upon those who believe that this great light has come.

The imagery of harvest also points strongly that this is the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, suggesting this is certainly talking of the millennial reign. See this commentary on chapter 12 for further explanations.

Verse four talks of the slavery and bondage Israel was in before the "Light." Midian had oppressed Israel for several years until God raised up Judges to deliver them. Now God has raised up for us a great judge: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom . . ." (2 Tim 4:1). Christ is the judge that will deliver us into His kingdom, but what do we need deliverance from? Here in Isaiah we see the same words used with Midian that we do with the law that brings forth sin (Rom 5:13). The Midians were a yoke and a burden to Israel and yet we read, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). Jesus also said, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Mat 11:30).

The clothing of the warrior will be burned as there will be no more need for war. The government will belong to this child or Son of God. Obviously this is Jesus as we are told in the New Testament. We see the Trinity within Christ as the Counselor (Holy Spirit), God the Father and Prince (Son of the Father). His government would increase as more people came into His kingdom through faith in Him. This government will never end as it is eternal. The throne will be David's throne and it would begin from "that time on." Simply put, once Christ came, the government was then put upon His shoulders so that the kingdom could increase. It will go on for an eternity, but I believe in different ways at different times. It seems that the millennial kingdom is surely a part of what is discussed here. Despite the differing millennial views a few facts are certain, Christ reigns, the kingdom is eternal and it begins in certain ways when Christ came to earth. Beyond that we can only speculate but it does seem that He will reign in different ways and under different circumstances throughout eternity. This could explain why there are so many different views of the millennium with Scripture to support each one. Perhaps none are all wrong it is just that none are all right. The amillennial view says we are in the millennium now. According to these verses that would fit. The premillennial say that there is a 1000 years before the new heaven and earth. That also fits with Scripture and is not contradicted by the fact that it began in some way (but different form) when Christ walked the earth. As with the rest of the Bible, there is dual fulfillment in almost every story and lesson. Why could there not be a dual fulfillment here as well. One can read my book on Revelation for a much clearer understanding of this whole idea.

8 The Lord has sent a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel. 9 All the people will know it — Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria — who say with pride and arrogance of heart, 10 "The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the fig trees have been felled, but we will replace them with cedars." 11 But the LORD has strengthened Rezin's foes against them and has spurred their enemies on. 12 Arameans from the east and Philistines from the west have devoured Israel with open mouth.

God had warned about the judgment that would come upon Jacob and Israel. Verse 8 tells us that God sent a word to Jacob and that word would fall on Jacob. Though Jacob will be taken captive by Babylon many years later, the judgments spoken will soon take place upon Israel. They said in pride that though destruction had come, they would overcome, and in the end, be better than they were before. They believe bricks will be turned into the more solid dressed stone while fig trees would be replaced by cedars. What they don't realize however, is that the Lord had strengthened Assyria (Arameans) and the Philistines to devour Israel. This is where it really is disconcerting when applied to the United States. The U.S. was attacked on 9/11 but instead of humbling themselves by repenting and turning to God, we said we will only build it better and bigger.

SEE WILKERSON LETTER

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised. 13 But the people have not returned to him who struck them, nor have they sought the LORD Almighty. 14 So the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm branch and reed in a single day; 15 the elders and prominent men are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail. 16 Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are led astray. 17 Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks vileness. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised. 18 Surely wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns, it sets the forest thickets ablaze, so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke. 19 By the wrath of the LORD Almighty the land will be scorched and the people will be fuel for the fire; no one will spare his brother. 20 On the right they will devour, but still be hungry; on the left they will eat, but not be satisfied. Each will feed on the flesh of his own offspring: 21 Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, and Ephraim on Manasseh; together they will turn against Judah. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

Verse 13 shows that even with the destruction of Israel, God's wrath will not be turned away. Why? Because despite God's loving call to repentance through judgment, Israel, like the U.S, refused to repent.

Verses 14-15 gives us the final outcome. Israel would have both head (government leaders and authorities) and tail (false church leaders) cut off in a single day. The palm branch (protecting shade and beauty) and the reed (supporting strength) would also be destroyed. Moses used the same terminology that we see here in Isaiah: "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the

LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom” (Deut 28:13). This shows that the head was also on top as a leader but because of disobedience neither those on top nor those on the bottom will be able to stand. A “single day” wasn’t just a time thrown out, but indeed one day is all it took for Assyria to get the job done.

Verse 16 reveals another disturbing truth. Those that are leaders are leading those who follow down a path of destruction. This means there was and will be a great falling away from truth in end times. The majority of church leaders will be false guides with lies that seem to be true. They will be giving a gospel that is cheap, not free. A gospel that comes without repentance. A gospel that ignores obedience. A gospel that is a cover for evil as we read, “Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God” (1 Peter 2:16). Paul said, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel- which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned” (Gal 1:6-9)! The true Gospel includes obedience and though free, isn’t cheap. This is why we read, “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess 1:8). I witnessed such an example of compromise when I was speaking at a church recently. The pastor would not allow the congregation to be educated on a political issue that was morally wrong for fear of losing their tax exempt status. That this fear had no merit wasn’t what disturbed me most. I was most perplexed that pastors all over the country were doing the same thing, selling truth out for money. We are being taught that if you say you believe in Jesus that is all that is needed without understanding what belief really means. Faith without works is dead! No one builds a house without first considering the cost. We must take up our cross and FOLLOW Him. If anyone loves money more than me he is not worthy of me. Are we being led astray by false leaders?

Verse 17 tells us that God would find no pleasure in any age of people because the leaders will have polluted all their minds. Everyone will speak in vileness since what is in man’s heart comes out of his mouth. If Israel was anything like it is today I can understand what God is saying here. Just go sit on a bench in the mall and listen to the casual talk that goes on. Listen to the conversations that go on between friends in a home or at school. Watch the television and see the topics and speech that spread vileness to our youth and, indeed, our own minds. Everywhere God looks, He must see vile wickedness as same sex marriages and sexual lusts run rampant. Worst of all, He sees the leaders of the people doing nothing but being silent. As we read in Romans, “Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them” (Rom 1:31-32). God’s wrath will not subside even after falling upon the young, the widows or the fatherless because the cup of God’s wrath is full. The Psalmist writes, “In the hand of the LORD is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs. . . I will cut off the horns of all the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up” (Ps 75:8-10).

In verse 18 we see that there will be a great destruction by fire. Not only will the lowly thorns be burned but the thickets and trees that rise up in society will also be consumed. No one will be safe. The wickedness of man will cause this fire to come. In essence, man's own wickedness brought upon judgment for themselves and it will be a raging fire that burns quickly. The smoke will rise up to the heavens as a testimony against the wicked as we read in Revelation, "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come'" (Rev 18:9-10)! Note that this destruction will come upon everyone in a certain land or location. There will be others far off that will later share in their doom. Likewise, God is speaking here in Isaiah of Israel or Ephraim and Manasseh.

Verse 19-21 leaves no doubt that this is God's judgment upon wicked man. It will not just be the land that is destroyed, but the people as well. Part of the judgment will involve civil war against those in the same land. There will be great famine so that the people will hunger for food and violence. All around them, even with their own children, there will be no compassion or care. We see in Israel this very thing happened when they ate their own children because of hunger when the Arameans captured Samaria (2 Kings 6:29). Though Ephraim and Manasseh are enemies, they will unite to attack Judah. One can be certain that when enemies unite God's hand is involved.

Isaiah Chapter 10

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, 2 to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. 3 What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? 4 Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

It seems most probable that God is still focusing on Israel here due to the close of chapter nine repeating the fact that He was still not satisfied with the wrath. With that said however, verse eight of chapter nine said these words were spoken to Jacob (Judah) but would come upon Israel and, therefore, apply to both as well as us today.

The rulers who had been leading people astray with lies were also oppressing the people with unjust laws. The rich had more "rights" than the poor. Rather than taking care of widows and orphans they now used them for their own purposes. Today we often overlook the importance of God's command to take care of the orphans and widows. Most churches have no "widows list" as they did in the New Testament church. As far as orphans go we think of kids running around on the street, but that isn't necessarily so. Thousands of children need to be adopted, being saved from either abortion or foster care. Yet we think, oh two or three children is all I can handle. Have you prayed about this? Do you take God's command seriously or do we fall into the same trap of not taking care of the widow and orphan?

One of the most common excuses for a number of sins is money. God tells us in verse 3 that when the day of reckoning comes all the money in the world won't do you any good. There is a "day" coming when people will come from "afar" to take away the peaceful and high lifestyle we live in now. One message is that storing up money isn't the answer. So many are buying gold because the green won't be any good. Others invest in silver but God is saying the only way to invest is in God. Obey His commands and you will be able to run to Him and He will provide. I firmly believe that if we invest our money in the poor and orphans right now, we will have nothing to fear when this "day" soon comes. James said, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

Verse 4 shows that those who hoard material things and ignore the poor will find themselves among the dead or those taken captive, leaving their money to someone else or just plain losing it. Yet with all of this God's anger is not satisfied and there will be more wrath to come for the unrighteous.

5 "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! 6 I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. 7 But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. 8 'Are not my commanders all kings?' he says. 9 'Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? 10 As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria — 11 shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?" 12 When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.

During the time of Israel here, it was Assyria that God was going to use to bring judgment upon His people. The question is, who will God use to bring judgment on the church today? Why the church? Because they are the "godless nation" God is talking about. Judgment begins in the church according to the Scriptures. Here we see God using a pagan country to humble Israel, the godless nation that trusted in themselves. It is interesting that America is being attacked by countries that are very religious in a pagan way, yet America isn't religious at all, we believe in ourselves. God often uses pagan countries as instruments, even though they believe it is their own strength conquering they could do none of it apart from God giving them that power. It is just as Pilate could do nothing if it were not permitted from above (John 19:11).

Sennacherib was the tool God used in 2 Kings 18 during the sixth year of Hezekiah. He destroyed town upon town in Israel before reaching Hezekiah in Jerusalem. Hezekiah represents the true church who had repented and turned towards God. Then God brought judgment upon the Assyrian army and rescued the righteous. This is how it shall be in end times. The church will go through a massive persecution but the righteous shall be protected. This doesn't mean that there won't be righteous people who will perish, but as a whole there will be a remnant spared. Those that do die will also be with

the Lord in paradise. This is why we read in Revelation, "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood'" (Rev 6:9-10)!

Even the people God uses to bring judgment will be judged. "Woe to the Assyrians" who are simply the instrument God uses to bring wrath. God wants them to take the plunder and trample the people down, however, this is only the first step. God's final plan is for the godless church and many pagan nations to be destroyed.

Many people struggle with the fact that the church will be judged because they do not realize that the church isn't following God, but running a business. This isn't the true Church. In Revelation we read, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters" (Rev 17:1). A prostitute is shown as the unfaithful and this term is applied to Israel many times in the Bible. When the church is unfaithful to God they prostitute themselves to other gods. In Revelation God explains that the water she sits on is many nations, therefore, this attitude will permeate many cultures throughout the world who have made their own form of religion. In Amos we see the compromising church being referred to as Bethel. God warns, "On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground" (Amos 3:14). The horns were a sign of God's protection as anyone who had sinned could cling to the horns and be saved. Once judgment begins there will be no horns to cling to. Jesus explained this in a parable when he showed that no one would be hired in the last hour (Mat 20:9). In case you don't think Amos was actually talking to the church verse two made it very clear, "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins" (Amos 3:2). God will judge the church first.

In verse eight we see that when God employs people for His purpose He makes them as powerful and famous as Kings.

Verse nine shows the hopelessness that Israel and the false converts into Christianity have. Calno is probably the same as Calneh, a city built by Nimrod in Genesis 10:10. Many early historians associated as "Ctesiphon," a city on the bank of the Tigris, opposite of Selcucia. The location could easily be identified as Babylonian which would also tie into Revelation's description of fallen Babylon. Charchemish was an Assyrian city on the Euphrates. It was captured by Necho, king of Egypt, and later taken from Necho by Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiachin, king of Judah (2 Kings 23:29). Hamath was a city of Syria referred to in Gen 10:18 as belonging to one of the tribes of Canaan. Very near Hamath was Arpad and was called Epiphania by the Greeks (2 Kings 18:34). Samaria was the capital of Israel, or Ephraim while Damascus was the capital of Syria. The Septuagint translation is considerably different from the Hebrew and says of these verses, "Have I not taken the region beyond Babylon, and Chalane, where the tower was built? and I have taken Arabia, and Damascus, and Samaria." Here we see a better outline geographically, however, the main point still remains as the total control and power of the King.

Verse ten and eleven show that the countries in verse nine lump Israel together with the pagan countries. Likewise, God will view the "lukewarm" Christians as pagans at His return. I fear for the churches today because I see very few following what is true Christianity. I know God's grace and mercy flows over many a sin but there must be a

line where faith is no longer true faith. Thankfully it isn't my place to judge that, we can only hold those within the church accountable. The king of Assyria called the God of creation an image just like all other pagan gods. This not only shows the atheistic attitude of Assyria but also the reason it was destroyed.

This section closes with God saying that once the church is punished, He will punish those that He used as instruments of this judgment. The reason is the same that the church was judged, their haughty pride. Assyria, like the church, believed in their own strength, not the Lords.

13 For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. 14 As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp." 15 Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood! 16 Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame. 17 The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briars. 18 The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick man wastes away. 19 And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few that a child could write them down.

The King of Assyria took credit for all the nations he captured and did not realize or honor God by acknowledging that he could do nothing apart from God.

Verse fourteen show that when God is for you, who can be against you. Assyria was able to conquer almost without any resistance at all.

The very next verse shows that Assyria was only the tool in God's hand and, therefore, had no right to boast. As always, when the leader of the people is ungodly, those under him suffer. We must be careful who we follow. The soldiers in the Assyrian army were killed by the Light of Israel, God Himself. In one day He will destroy ALL who are a thorn in His side. Even the land that they live in will slowly waste away until there is hardly a tree left.

20 In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. 22 Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. 23 The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land.

Only a remnant from both Jacob and Israel will repent and seek their Lord. This is exactly what history has shown as Paul became a preacher to the Gentiles to reach those who had mixed with their captors and became Samaritans. Paul also reached many other's

who were not of the nation of Israel. The same will be true in end times. Though churches will be full, only a remnant will repent of their business style worship and their tolerance of sin. This is why we see in Revelation, "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place" (Rev 2:5), and "Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev 2:15-16). But it doesn't stop there, "You tolerate that woman Jezebel. . . so I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways" (Rev 2:20-22), "Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief" (Rev 3:3), "I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars-I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you" (Rev 3:9), and "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm-neither hot nor cold-I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev 3:15-18). In all of these passages Christ was talking to the church, making it clear that many within those churches would fall under His judgment.

A remnant shall return is the very name of Isaiah's son Shear-jashub. This remnant will no longer look to Assyria for help, but only to the true God. Likewise today there are many who look to mortal man for help. When bad things happen we first go and consult man getting advice upon advice but so few times do we seek only God and wait for His voice. When Paul became a Christian he went to Arabia and spent time with Jesus as he said, "But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus" (Gal 1:15-17).

Destruction has been decreed and it is a righteous destruction because the people had fair warning and yet continued to deny the Lord of all creation. The destruction will also be overwhelming. It will be more than anyone can handle or imagine. When Assyria attacked Israel and when Babylon attacked Judah it was one of the greatest destructions in Israel's Old Testament history. However, this will pale compared to the righteous destruction we read of in Revelation and prophesied throughout the Scriptures. These Old Testament examples, even the Roman attack on Jerusalem will be nothing in comparison to the wrath to come. Matthew wrote, "How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (Matt 24:19-22). For the sake of the elect, that remnant chosen by God, those days will be cut short so that they will be protected and kept safe through this great trial.

24 Therefore, this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "O my people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians, who beat you with a rod and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did. 25 Very soon my anger against you will end and

my wrath will be directed to their destruction." 26 The LORD Almighty will lash them with a whip, as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb; and he will raise his staff over the waters, as he did in Egypt. 27 In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat.

We have another promise that those who are God's people will have a special protection over them. This doesn't mean those who go to church, but those whose hearts are following God as evidenced by their actions. The second part is that these are those in Zion, the place that is under attack by Sennacherib. We see from history that the King of Assyria came with threats and forcing a tax on Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:14). Likewise we see in Revelation that Satan is going to attack: "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12:17). However, God protects his people from Satan even though he raises a club against them by forcing many to take upon his mark. When that happens Jesus warns that, "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Rev 14:12). This does not mean that obedient Christians will not die, but rather in general they will be protected from physical harm. There will be those who will be protected in Spirit as they go through these trials as Revelation continues to say in the next verse, "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them'" (Rev 14:13). At the beginning of Revelation 14 we see it is on Mount Zion that the Lord comes with 144,000 of saints redeemed from the earth and sealed by God's Spirit. Perhaps there is a connection here in Isaiah saying that it is those in Zion who are protected from Satan and his servants. There is no question that Revelation and many other prophetic books show a great army marching up against Jerusalem (Zion) and her people. Sennacherib appears here in Isaiah prophetically for this very reason.

Sennacherib treated Hezekiah as the Egyptians had treated Israel. The point isn't as much to show the suffering as to remind the righteous of the Exodus and how God delivered them from the Egyptians' hands.

Very soon, or literally as the word means, "a little little while" God would step in to deliver. This means that the trial will be severe but short. Earlier we looked in Matthew 24 and saw that God would cut the end time trial short "for the sake of the elect." Hezekiah was delivered from Sennacherib in a manner of days. Prophetically, the Scriptures seem to suggest there will be 3 ½ years of tribulation under the antichrist (half of the seven years). However, during this time God's anger is directed towards the church that has compromised on the Word, not those who were righteously following Christ. When this is over, God's wrath would turn upon the instrument of God's wrath, Assyria or Satan and his followers.

Verse 26 shows how God will defend His name by lashing back and making the enemy like Oreb. Back in the days of Israel there were two Midianite leaders who were attacking God's people because God had allowed Israel to be enslaved during the time of the judges due to their falling away from Him. However, God raised up Gideon to deliver them so the Midianite kings, Oreb and Zeeb, were beheaded bringing rest to Israel. Almost the same story will be told of Hezekiah. While God allowed much of Israel and

Judah to be destroyed because they had fallen away from the Word of God, there were those that were willing to humble themselves. Sennacherib marched up against Jerusalem to attack Hezekiah but God stepped in and had 185,000 of the Assyrian army killed in one night by a plague. This event is actually recorded in their historical records as a plague, but they failed to mention that it was from God. Sennacherib went back to Assyria only to be killed by one of his own sons while he worshipped his false god, Nisroch. In Egypt, God drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea by raising His staff (Ps 136:15). So shall it be in the end times. Because of the churches compromising attitude on the Ten Commandments and the Word of God, they will be handed over to the enemy as clearly stated here in Isaiah. However, there will be those who follow the Word and hold to the testimony of Jesus who will be delivered in miraculous ways just as God delivered Israel from Egypt.

It is also interesting that in all of the cases mentioned in Isaiah the enemy was boastful of their own pride and rejected God as they went against His true followers. In the case of Oreb we read in Psalms: "Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, 'Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God'" (Ps 83:11-12). In the case of Sennacherib we read of his words as he lumped the God of creation together with other false gods, "Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my forefathers deliver them" (2 Kings 19:10-12)? We see in the case of Egypt all the plagues were judgments not only on Pharaoh but also on their false gods that they relied upon. Pharaoh continued to reject the true God and King as he went against His people. It is no different for end times. The antichrist will set himself up as king and speak boastfully against God (Dan 7:20) and attack His people (Rev 13:7). As the book of Revelation shows, however, we win by the grace and Word of God: "They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings-and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers" (Rev 17:14).

Verse 27 tells us that "in that day" the yoke of our enemies will be broken because of God's upraised hand against them. We will finally be free. Hezekiah was spared from Assyria in Jerusalem on Zion as we will be spared on Zion (Isa 4:3) from the antichrist. The NIV tells us that the yoke will be broken because we grow fat but the Hebrew actually reads, *mipneey shemen*, meaning "from the face of oil." I believe the KJV translates this better "because of the anointing." The reason we will be protected is because of the oil or anointing of God. Perhaps this is the seal that is talked about in Revelation 7:4. The cause of our safety will be due to the following of the one who can keep us safe. By obeying God's commands (out of love, not duty) and holding to the Testimony of Jesus we will be anointed with the Spirit. However, an even more prophetic interpretation and in line with the rest of the teachings in Isaiah, they will be free from the yoke of slavery "because of the anointing" of Jesus Christ as we will see the beginning of Chapter 11 say.

28 They enter Aiath; they pass through Migron; they store supplies at Micmash. 29 They go over the pass, and say, "We will camp overnight at Geba.

"Ramah trembles; Gibeah of Saul flees. 30 Cry out, O Daughter of Gallim! Listen, O Laishah! Poor Anathoth! 31 Madmenah is in flight; the people of Gebim take cover. 32 This day they will halt at Nob; they will shake their fist at the mount of the Daughter of Zion, at the hill of Jerusalem. 33 See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low. 34 He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.

Verse 28 begins to show the route which Sennacherib took as he moved from the northeast to the southwest towards Jerusalem. As he gets closer and closer there is a sense of rising fear within the text. Aiath is the same as Ai where Joshua conquered after entering the promised land. Migron is mentioned in 1 Sam 14:2 near Gibeah. Micmash was within the tribe of Ephraim (Ezra 2:27) and about 9 miles northeast of Jerusalem. From there they went over a pass between two mountainous hills to camp at Geba near Gibeon on the Northern border of Judah. Ramah, mentioned in Matthew 2:18, was situated on a hill, about six miles from Jerusalem. Gibeah is where Saul was born (2 Sam 21:6). Apparently, they were so scared the town all ran away as Sennacherib approached.

Now the intensity increases as they "cry out." Gallim is only mentioned here and in 1 Samuel 25:44. Laishah is mentioned in the extrabiblical book of 1 Maccabees 9:9 right outside of Jerusalem but it is not mentioned in the Bible. Anathoth is where Jeremiah was born (Jer 1:1) less than 3 miles from Jerusalem. Madmenah and Gebim are unknown but obviously are very near Jerusalem. The last stop was Nob, the city that David fled to when running from Saul and received supplies (1 Sam 21:1-6). It was probably situated on the Mount of Olives where Jerusalem could be seen clearly. Perhaps Nob was close enough to Jerusalem that one could "shake their fist" at the people on the walls and be seen.

Verses 33-34 describe the Assyrian army as a forest that is about to be chopped down with an ax in the hands of God. Though the forest be "lofty" and "tall" they will be brought low and humbled by their Creator whom they ignored. We know this happened by a plague that God brought, killing 185,000 men in one night.

Perhaps this is the way the final Armageddon battle will take place as they march up against God's people in Jerusalem. Though they think they will attack, God's people need only to trust in Him.

Isaiah Chapter 11

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD — 3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

It has been said that all prophecy points to Christ and I believe that, but not necessarily as most interpret that phrase. The Scriptures do not just point to Christ's first coming, but also to His second coming. We know that this is a prophecy of when Jesus was baptized and "because of the anointing" (Isa 10:27) was able to free us from the yoke

of slavery to sin. We also saw earlier that, “In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel” (Isa 4:2). It seems that we are continuing to talk of the same prophecy, however, note that here the shoot (descendant) comes from Jesse (David’s father) and becomes a Branch (Christ) that brings forth the Spirit of God and will be beautiful and glorious so that the “survivors” in Israel will live among fertile land. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). We often think of Jesus death and resurrection but leave out the ascension. Likewise in prophecy we focus on his death and resurrection, forgetting there is more. It was the ascension that allowed the Spirit of God to come upon us. Putting all the above verses together we can see aspects of both the first and second coming of Christ to make a full prophetic message. Stopping at the cross leaves us incomplete because we don’t have anything to look forward to without thinking of the Kingdom of God that lies ahead and He left us His Spirit that we may understand.

In regards to Christ coming from Jesse we know that David was promised a descendant that would reign on the throne, “But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne” (Acts 2:30-31). Many times in Scripture, therefore, we see Jesus referred to as the son of David or in some cases, David himself: “Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king” (Hos 3:4-5).

Verse two tells us that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on Christ, the Branch. We saw this happen when a dove landed on Him after His baptism (Mat 3:16). Jesus even began His ministry by saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

We also see this verse referred to many times in Revelation as it speaks of the “seven spirits of God.” Here we see the seven attributes of the Holy Spirit. There is the spirit of the Lord, wisdom, counsel, understanding, power, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. Paul spoke of the one spirit giving different gifts that, in many cases, match this description, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of **wisdom**, to another the message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, to another faith [**fear of the Lord**] by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous **powers**, to another prophecy [**understanding**], to another distinguishing between spirits [**counsel**], to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Cor 12:7-11).

The Spirit did not come and then leave but rested and remained on Christ as He does in our lives when we believe. That same Spirit is available 24/7 it is just a matter of how much of our lives we allow that Spirit to penetrate. It will be this Spirit that will allow us to understand and live in end times, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams” (Acts 2:17). Though this was partially fulfilled at Pentecost the verses following make it clear that this deals with end times when the moon turns to blood and the sun is darkened.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

When Christ returns He will not judge by the outward actions but by the heart that shows the motives behind the actions. Anything done apart from faith is sin (Rom 14:23). Jesus warned in Revelation, "I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Rev 3:1). This is one reason for His eyes being like fire that penetrate and see the soul and spirit. "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With *justice* he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns" (Rev 19:11-12). It goes on as if it were right out of Isaiah and speaks of the breath of God's lips bringing about destruction, "Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter" (Rev 19:15). We must also remember that those who follow Christ until the end will join Him in this judgment, "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations- 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'" (Rev 2:26-27).

As it earlier described Jesus in Revelation we see that He is "dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest" (Rev 1:13-14). Therefore, He judges with righteousness and the golden sash must be His faithfulness to His promises.

In Jesus day He did see the heart of man and knew the very thoughts of the people. He did make righteous judgments and made decisions of healing for the poor and needy. However, He offered hope for the ungodly who would repent whereas here it seems to be too late. Here He will strike the earth and destroy the wicked, making this more of an end time prophecy, making verse six much more fitting as well.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. 9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

The wolf and lamb as well as other predator and prey will no longer be enemies because death will be no more. The Edenic paradise will be restored so that as Adam was able to lead the T-rex so a child could lead any of the wildest animals. Just as in Eden no animal would eat another (causing death) so in the future will animals eat only vegetation so that no "life" or blood will be shed.

Verse nine tells us where this will all take place; on "all" of God's "holy mountain." This seems to be Mount Zion of Jerusalem and not the entire earth. Though the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh it may be possible that only on His holy mountain will this unique relationship of man and animals be. Habakkuk talks of

this same event, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk. . . You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory” (Hab 2:14-16). Here we see that while the Godly are filled with glory and knowledge of God, at the same time the ungodly will drink from the cup of God’s wrath as described in Revelation 16 and 18.

Many other parts of Scripture show a time that Zion will be a place of glory while simultaneously other parts are desolate. Consider Joel who writes of end time events: “Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. 'In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias. But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood. Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon.' The LORD dwells in Zion!” (Joel 3:17-21). Ezekiel wrote, “For *on my holy mountain*, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land the *entire* house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices. I will accept you as fragrant incense when *I bring you out from the nations* and *gather* you from the countries where you have been *scattered*, and I will show myself holy among you in the *sight of the nations*. [Obviously someone else is observing from outside the holy mountain] Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I *bring you into the land of Israel*, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your fathers. There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done. You will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, O house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD” (Ezek 20:40-44). Isaiah will later write, “I will *set a sign among them*, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations — to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD” (Isa 66:19-20). Zechariah also seems to speak of day when there will be people outside of Jerusalem that will know of God’s glory, “Then the *survivors* from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem [Survivors maybe didn’t take part in the rest of the nations attack] will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the *peoples of the earth* do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain” (Zech 14:16-18). I do not believe we will understand this fully until it occurs but one thing is for sure, God’s glory will fill the earth and His holy mountain will be inhabited in ways that it is not presently so. Verse 10 will continue to show us more.

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.

The Root of Jesse will stand as a banner in “that day” for all the people to see. We have seen this “banner” mentioned many times in reference to calling God’s people to Jerusalem (See Isa 5:26, 13:2, 18:3, 49:22,, 62:10; Jer 50:2, 51:12,27). The nations will rally not to a place but to a person, Yashua the Messiah. The place that Yashua calls us to, however, will be a place of rest and glory.

Verse 11 shows us that Yahweh will reach out to the remnant for a second time. The first time was at Christ’s time here on earth. Now, for the second time when He returns as the banner. There are 65 verses in the Bible talking of this remnant showing this is not an isolated verse. We read, “I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel” (Mic 2:12). Also, “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing, declares the LORD” (Jer 23:3-4).

God’s people had been scattered throughout all the earth when Assyria captured Israel. Even at the time of Christ the Samaritans were those who had intermingled with the foreign nations after 722 B.C.. Anyone from any of the 12 tribes will be called out and brought back so that “all Israel will be saved.”

The word “islands” is often translated as “coastlands” and doesn’t necessarily mean a place surrounded by water.

12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. 13 Ephraim's jealousy will vanish, and Judah's enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. 14 They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. 15 The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals. 16 There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt.

Once again we see the banner (Christ) is raised so that all the nations can see it. The goal is that the exiles of Israel that had been scattered (James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1), would now be gathered. Both Israel (The ten northern tribes) and Judah (Two southern tribes) are mentioned and thus alludes to the fact that they will be brought together again to be one. In Ezekiel we read, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph-which is in Ephraim's hand-and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood” (Ezek 37:19).

Verse 13 explains that Ephraim would no longer look at Judah in envy, while at the same time, Judah [Jews] would no longer have enemies or jealousy toward Ephraim. This sounds much like Paul in Romans, “Just as you [Gentiles or Ephraim] who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their [Jews or Judah] disobedience, so they [Jews] too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you [Gentiles]. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all” (Rom 11:30-32). Here in Romans we see this was a prophecy of end time events when all are brought into the Kingdom of God so that all Israel would be saved. Because Ephraim had been scattered throughout the nations and intermingled with them, they are called the 10 lost tribes. Though not all Gentiles are Ephraim, most of all Ephraim would be considered Gentile. In short, the house of Judah will unite with the house of Israel (Jer 3:18) and be one nation (Ezek 37:22); so the Jews and Gentiles are made into one body (Eph 2:15).

Verse 14 lists the surrounding countries of Israel that were enemies throughout all of history. No longer will they be a threat because God will make them subject to His people. Perhaps this is the millennial reign the disciples were looking for (Acts 1:6).

Verse 15 shows the miraculous ways God will bring about deliverance in uniting all of Israel together and gathering them to Himself. Other prophecies seem to speak of this same event, “They will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria's pride will be brought down and Egypt's scepter will pass away. I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will walk” (Zech 10:11-12). In Revelation we read, “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East” (Rev 16:12). Even Isaiah 4:5 showed God's providence in the cloud just as during the Exodus. In any case, Isaiah is telling us that God will dry up the tongue of the Red Sea as He did during the Exodus by the breath of His mouth (Exo 14:21). The Euphrates River will be dried up, making it easy to get across without obstruction (Rev 16:12) on the way to Jerusalem.

Ultimately, there will be a free and easy passage from Assyria to Jerusalem. We see that there is a remnant that will be taking this path, the same remnant Isaiah spoke of earlier, “In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth” (Isa 11:11-12). Also, “In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return” (Isa 10:20-22).

I'm not sure as to the timing of all of this, however, it seems to indicate that this will be just before the Armageddon battle on Revelation. For now, we must be patient and wait upon the Lord for He will raise the Banner and it will be seen by all who believe and are looking for it.

Isaiah Chapter 12

12:1 In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

In each chapter we have had at least one verse of encouragement for the righteous. Now we have a chapter dedicated to the righteous at the millennial reign. Once again we see the words, "in that day." It seems that in Isaiah this mostly refers to the time in which scattered Israel is gathered. Of the 71 times this phrase occurs it is found 43 times in Isaiah alone. We have been hearing how God's anger was not satisfied even after much destruction. However, for God's people who are gathered that anger has now turned into comfort but for the ungodly His anger will continue to only grow. The deliverance God brings will cause His praises to be sung. It is interesting that Isaiah is talking to God for the people but is saying that "you" have comforted "me." It is as if someone else is talking. Prior to this it was Isaiah talking of "Israel," "Jacob," or "they" but now we are talking of "me."

Salvation is the cause of this praise. The Lord is our "strength," "salvation," and "song." Miriam said the same thing when she was delivered out of Egypt, "The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him" (Ex 15:2). It is no accident that Isaiah has referred to the deliverance from Egypt many times in reference to our deliverance from the wrath of God in end times. The deliverance we will see will be just as miraculous and divine as it was for Moses.

Lest anyone think this is just a prophecy of Christ coming and dying on the cross, Hebrews says, "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Heb 9:28).

Verse three tells us the waters of salvation are drawn out. It is widely accepted that the millennial reign will be the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated at the time of harvest. Zechariah 14 talks of this festival being celebrated during the millennial reign as well. Even Isaiah said earlier, "You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest" (Isa 9:3). On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews would bring a golden pitcher of water taken from the fountain of Siloam and pour it on the sacrifice on the altar. This is why Jesus' expressed these words on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-39). The pouring out of water always indicated repentance (1 Sam 7:6) which was a prerequisite to faith and the kingdom of God. This is why God will bring forth the cleansing waters in end times, "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zech 13:1). Zechariah also tells us that there will be an outpouring of the Spirit like that on Pentecost (Joel 2:23) which

seems to be at the time of the Millennial Feast of Tabernacles, “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced” (Zech 12:10). In Revelation we also see reference to this living water, “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev 7:17).

4 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

What a joyous time this will be as we give thanks and call on Yahweh. By our deliverance and proclamation of it, the nations will know that there is one God. This is also one of the goals of the Exodus where God said, “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them” (Ex 7:5). One could paraphrase this for the future saying, “And all the nations shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon the earth, and bring out the children of Israel from it.”

Just as Miriam sang a song to the Lord after the great deliverance of Exodus, so too will we sing to Yahweh because He is worthy as we see in Revelation, “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever’” (Rev 5:13).

The people doing the celebrating are those of “Zion” who have been gathered to Him as they saw the Banner raised. These people are the focus of Isaiah 1:8 as well. One of the most exciting of all thoughts, however, is that verse six says God is “among you.” Zephaniah shows us that we will not be the only one singing at this time, “The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph 3:15-17). Zechariah also speaks of the Lord walking among us, “Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the LORD. Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people” (Zech 2:10-11).

Isaiah Chapter 13

**13:1 An oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:
2 Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles. 3 I have commanded my holy ones; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath — those who rejoice in my triumph.**

Isaiah turns away from talking of the righteous that are under being protected and points to the destruction of the ungodly by the using His righteous ones. Historically we know that Babylon was destroyed by the Medes and Persians, however, this can not be what Isaiah saw here because it is the “holy ones” that God will use to carry out His wrath. Though Cyrus allowed the Israelites to rebuild the temple, he doesn’t fit the description of verse three as “rejoicing in God’s triumph.”

So who is Babylon? Some think the papacy, others the United States and still others a rebuilt Babylon. Truth is, nobody can say for sure at this time, however, it will be known when the time is right. All I know is that Revelation says that Babylon made other nations drink of her adulteries (Rev 14:8), she is the mother of prostitutes (those who are unfaithful to God) and abominations on the earth (Rev 17:5). In Revelation chapter 18 we have a lengthy description and prophecy of her doom:

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries. Then I heard another voice from heaven say: Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her" (Rev 18:2-8).

The word “oracle” here in the NIV is the Hebrew *masaa* and is almost exclusively translated as “burden.” It speaks of the solemn and heavy message that this is. In chapter one we see a “vision,” in chapter two a “word” came to Isaiah, but here it is a “burden.” Any Godly minister can relate to this today. They carry a burden in love. Because of the love for the people, they so want them to hear the truth, but instead, the hearers reject the Word. This doesn’t stop the evangelist who will continue to feel the heavy, but loving hand of the Spirit of God saying, “come out of her my people.”

We saw in 11:10 that the Banner is the Root of Jesse, or Christ Himself who calls the people together for their battle instructions.

God’s people are going to be sent through the gates of the nobles. This tells us the Babylon is full of wealthy and important people.

4 Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. 5 They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens — the LORD and the weapons of his wrath — to destroy the whole country.

Verse four shows us the great multitude of people that are gathered to make war. Satan will also do the same (Rev 16:14; 20:8) to fight against God. Here, however, it is the Lord's army gathered from all parts of the earth to destroy the whole "country" of Babylon. As we read in Revelation there is no question that "Babylon" will fall by God's hand, but it is never really explained as to how God does this or with what instruments (Rev 14:8, 16:19, 8:2). It is possible that Isaiah is answering that question in these verses, but I must admit, there are things that are unclear to me and we must watch carefully as things unfold. The confusion comes in when we see that God musters this army. We saw in Israel's day that God simply used the ungodly Medes, Persians and Arameans to do His bidding. This chapter seems to indicate that the instruments of God's wrath are "holy" and follow God. Yet in Revelation, though we are not told by what means Babylon falls, we do see a army of Satan marching up against Jerusalem to war against those whom God gathered under his protection. We also see in Revelation chapter 19 that in the great Armageddon battle (which the fall of Babylon is not) Christ rides on a white horse with the army of the saints behind Him. In any case, this is a "heavy" message about the fall of Babylon according to the opening verse.

6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. 7 Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt. 8 Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. 9 See, the day of the LORD is coming — a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger — to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. 10 The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. 12 I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Verse six opens with a warning that people should wail. This message is not for the believer as we wait expectantly for the return of our Savior, but for the ungodly, this day is one of destruction and wrath from the God that created the entire universe. It will be a day that will take away the strength of the strongest of warriors when their heart melts. This actually happened to the king of Babylon later, "The king of Babylon has heard reports about them, and his hands hang limp. Anguish has gripped him, pain like that of a woman in labor" (Jer 50:43).

Not only will there be pain but also anger that is so intense even that hurts. As a woman in labor helplessly strains and writhes in pain, so too these men will helplessly writhe in what their deeds have brought about. In Thessalonians we see the same imagery used for the second coming, "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape" (1 Thess 5:2-3).

Verse eight tells us that they will look at one another and be aghast as they see their faces on fire, only to realize that what they are observing is happening to themselves.

The day of the Lord will be a cruel day filled with wrath and anger from God. It is hard to imagine God, the most powerful existence, being angry at you. No place to hide and no end to look forward to. Not only will the people be destroyed but so will the land they live in. There is absolutely no hope left for the sinner.

Verse ten tells us that during this dreadful time, the moon and stars will not give their light while the sun itself will be darkened. We have many Scripture verses telling us the same truth, “For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD will roar from Zion” (Joel 3:14-16, see also Isa 34:4, Ezek 32:7, Joel 2:10, Mat 24:29, Luke 21:25). Perhaps the darkness comes from the atmosphere being clouded with smoke in the morning, hence the “rising sun.” We read in Revelation, “When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth” (Rev 9:2-3). On the other hand perhaps the stars literally fall from the sky, “I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place” (Rev 6:12-14). Perhaps both are true but at different times of judgment. Perhaps at times there is only a partial “falling” or darkening, “The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night” (Rev 8:12). All I can say for sure is that the sun, moon and stars will be darkened during the end times.

Another interesting thing about verse ten is that the “stars and constellations” seem to be repetitive. The Hebrew word for “constellations” here is *uwkciyleeyhem* and is used 4 times in Scripture. In the three cases outside of this verse it refers to the constellation of Orion. According to the astrology, Orion was Nimrod (founder of Babylon) who was deified in the heavens but chained there to the sky. This is why we read in Job, “Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion” (Job 38:31)? The root of *uwkciyleeyhem* is *kciyl* translated as “fool” seventy times in the Bible. Therefore, though literally the stars shall fall, it is a judgment upon the foolishness of the false gods in the sky that the Babylonians and many today hoped would save them. In the past it was Orion or Zeus but today we simply look for the ET life that could give us the answers about life. In either case, they look to the heavens rather than the Creator of those heavens and so become fools. But this hopelessness will no longer shed any light.

Verse 11 shows that because of God’s wrath even the proudest of men will be humbled and there will be no more arrogance or mocking of God, no disbelief or atheists, only acknowledgment of their Creator even though it may be in anger.

The destruction will be so great that mankind will be few just as it was in the days after the Flood of Noah. We see Revelation 9:18 shows a third of mankind being killed by plagues. This doesn’t include all the righteous who were killed for the Name of Jesus

(Rev 6:11) the people killed during the other plagues of Revelation or in the earthquake (Rev 11:13) or in the first great battle (Rev 19:21).

With God's anger, the earth will shake from its place in the heavens and the heavens themselves will tremble.

14 Like a hunted gazelle, like sheep without a shepherd, each will return to his own people, each will flee to his native land. 15 Whoever is captured will be thrust through; all who are caught will fall by the sword. 16 Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be looted and their wives ravished.

The Babylonian fall around 586 B.C. foreshadowed end time events as well. We see that the ungodly were and will be hunted and the hunter is God and the armies He calls so it won't be much of a sport. The hunted will be like dumb sheep without anyone to lead or help them. All they will know how to do is return to their native land. Jeremiah wrote of the many foreigners that lived in Babylon, the pagan capital of the world as this time, "A sword against her horses and chariots and all the foreigners in her ranks! They will become women" (Jer 50:37). Even the mightiest and proudest of warriors had become afraid of anything and everything.

I'm sure it will be the same when the Lord returns. Everyone will want to go "home" but will have no leader to guide them. They will feel as though hunted, not by a mere army of mortal men, but by the immortal, omnipotent Creator. We read of the day that the sixth seal is opened, "Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand"" (Rev 6:15-17).

Anyone who was caught fleeing was killed by the sword. Even their women and children died. Some might have a hard time with this but it is not the first time God has allowed this. Surely there were infants that died in Noah's Flood. God told the Israelites to kill women and children who possessed the promised land, "Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys" (1 Sam 15:3). I believe it will be no different in end times either. In this case here in Isaiah we know that the Medes killed the Babylonians without compassion regardless of age. Noteworthy, however, is that they did not kill the Israelites. God did not give them permission to do so (probably without them consciously knowing it) so the righteous were kept safe amidst the battle around them. Likewise, this has been the theme throughout Isaiah, those who follow and love Christ will be protected in some ways when other nations are called against the ungodly.

17 See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. 18 Their bows will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants nor will they look with compassion on children. 19 Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 She will never be inhabited or

lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherd will rest his flocks there. 21 But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. 22 Hyenas will howl in her strongholds, jackals in her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.

We are continuing to see the woe that comes upon Babylon. God raised up the Medes and the Persians who came and attacked Babylon, allowing Israel to go build the temple of God. Daniel spoke of these kingdoms showing Babylon to be the head of gold on the statue of the king's dream. The Medes and Persians were the chest of silver. They were not as powerful or great as the Babylonian kingdom. After them came the Greeks, represented by the bronze thighs and then the Romans represented by the iron legs and the toes mixed with iron and clay were the ten kings of the end times.

The Medes weren't interested in conquering Babylon for the gold or silver, but the hatred of the Babylonian kingdom. Isn't it interesting that the United States isn't being attacked for its wealth either. As the Medes had no concern for children or infants but had their hearts set on destruction so to we see with the Muslim religion today. We are attacked without any concern for women or children, only hatred brought upon by God's calling them against us. At the time Isaiah is writing this the Medes were subject to Assyria. Arbaces, who was the satrap of Media, revolted against Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, and destroyed the capital city of Nineveh, becoming King of Media. It is this same Sardanapalus that will conquer Babylon.

Verse 19 reveals that the golden head, the beautiful Babylon would be humbled and destroyed, never again to be the rich, luxurious power that it was. Even though the Medes carry this out we see it isn't their power, but God's power displayed just as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah. This means it is a supernatural destruction, not by man's strength. Jeremiah 50:40 is an almost identical quote of verse 19.

There is much talk today about the rebuilding of Babylon. Indeed, Sadaam Husein had been rebuilding the city of Babylon, but it was never completed or inhabited. Because Revelation speaks of Babylon as a great city that will fall, some believe that this city will be finished and inhabited once again. However, according to verse 20 this will be impossible because it will be uninhabited for "all generations" and only people by will use it as a place of shelter and rest. Desert jackals and other wild animals will fill their "houses" indicating that at least buildings will be there. When the Medes had conquered Babylon, they took over and inhabited it so these verses speak beyond the time of the Medes.

An interesting commentary on the term "wild goat" is that it can also mean "devils." The Hebrew word is *sa`iyr* and is translated as goat most often but at times is used for "devil." On such example is "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils" (Lev 17:7). Chronicles also states, "And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made" (2 Chron 11:15). The context seems to lean towards interpreting it as goat but there could be a demonic aspect as well. We see that in Revelation Babylon is a seat of demonic influence.

Isaiah closes by saying that "her time is at hand" or "near." God is patient as it would be another 174 years before this would be fulfilled.

Isaiah Chapter 14

The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob. 2 Nations will take them and bring them to their own place. And the house of Israel will possess the nations as menservants and maidservants in the LORD's land. They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors.

The message shifts again to Israel. Now that Babylon has been destroyed, God is going to settle them in the promised land once again. Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return once Babylon fell, fulfilling, in part, this prophecy. Not until the events in Revelation occur, however, will this be fulfilled completely. The fact that this isn't just the earthly Babylon is made clear later in verse 12.

Aliens will join with Jacob, uniting them together. I believe these aliens are Gentiles. We see this happening in a few places in the New Testament as well. One example was in Thessalonica: "Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks" (Acts 17:4). Paul spoke of the many gentiles that were "grafted" into the kingdom of God: "If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches" (Rom 11:17-18). In Revelation we see 12,000 from each tribe being sealed by God and then immediately after it says, "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from *every nation, tribe, people and language*, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Rev 7:9). Zechariah prophesied, "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, "Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you."'" (Zech 8:23). Obviously Isaiah is not alone in saying that aliens will join Israel in going to their promised land.

Verse two says that nations will bring Israel home and that these foreigners will serve Israel gladly. In chapter 60 Isaiah may be referring to this when he says, "Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor. Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion" (Isa 60:9-10).

The second half of verse two tells us the captors would be captives. I don't think these are the same people who are maidservants and menservants who willingly brought Israel home. These are most probable those outside of Jerusalem who did not come to the Lord as we read in Zechariah, "Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain" (Zech 14:16-17). Micah recorded, "The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest" (Mic 5:8).

This also fit the time that Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and commanded, “And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:3-4).

3 On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, 4 you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! 5 The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, 6 which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression. 7 All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing. 8 Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you and say, "Now that you have been laid low, no woodsman comes to cut us down."

When the Lord brings deliverance to His people and takes away their suffering and tears, they will rejoice by proclaiming the victory to the ungodly. The king of Babylon is specifically mentioned, which again, fits a type of antichrist as well as the actual king during the time of Daniel. Ezekiel describes this day as, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God” (Ezek 28:25-26)

The KJV says the “golden city” has ceased in verse four. This is actually closer to the original. The problem is that the Hebrew word for “golden” here doesn’t appear anywhere else in the Scriptures. We do know that Babylon is described in this way: “Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad. Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken” (Jer 51:7-8). Likewise in Revelation, “She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev 17:4-5).

God put an end to his fury and oppression, both of which show his ungodly practices. The king of Babylon had killed many people relentlessly to feed his own pride and arrogance just as the antichrist shall do. But when the roaring line is chained up, there will be peace and rest among the lands so that God’s people may rejoice. Perhaps this is what we read about during the millennial reign, “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time” (Rev 20:1-3).

Even the creation itself will rejoice as there will be no need for its destruction. This is why we read in Romans, “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice,

but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom 8:18-21).

9 The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you — all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones — all those who were kings over the nations. 10 They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." 11 All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.

These are powerful and disturbing words. The word for grave is *sheol* and from what we see in the Bible, both good and bad people went there. Abraham went to *sheol*. Without Christ having come, there was no “paradise” or “heaven” to go to. Even today we hear people say that those who have died went to heaven. This isn’t true. Yes, Jesus said that the thief on the cross would be in paradise with Him that very day, and I believe that, but, the new heaven and new earth are not created until the Lord’s return and after the millennial reign. I don’t know exactly what it is like when one dies outside of the fact that they are with Jesus, providing they believed and had faith in Him. Jesus once told us of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Some have said that this is not a parable but a true story because in no parable does Jesus ever use a personal name as He did with Lazarus. This seems to suggest that Jesus was saying that Lazarus was a real man who died and went to *sheol* to “Abraham’s bosom” not Christ’s because He hadn’t come yet. There was a great “chasm” between the two suggesting there are two parts of *sheol*. Also, in Ephesians we read, “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men” (Eph 4:8). When Jesus “ascended” he led “captives.” Who are the captives? I believe they are those who were in *sheol* and Jesus led them in His train as He took them before His father as the firstfruit offering (Jesus ascended on the day of firstfruits). This is also why Jesus went and proclaimed His victory to the “spirits in prison,” as Peter states: “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built” (1 Peter 3:18-20). It is almost as if Peter is saying that He went there to bring those people to God but also while He was there He proclaimed to those who rejected the truth in the lower portion of *sheol*. This may be why, in reference to Saul’s death, Samuel said that, “The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me” (1 Sam 28:19).

Regardless, the *sheol* Isaiah is referring to in these verses is not a good place according to the description of worms and maggots. The grave is anxious with excitement to meet and greet the newcomers. I can understand this occurring in paradise where loved ones will greet one another with excitement and welcome them warmly. However, here the warmth won’t be coming from the welcome. The departed spirits are excited to “rub it in” and to drag others down in the suffering that they will take part of. It is just as when a school child gets into trouble and wants the rest of the class to get punished with him.

Many leaders and kings will be among the doomed who begin the torment of unchangeable news. They will share with the newcomers that they too have become “weak.” Though the kings rise from their thrones, obviously they aren’t in power because they have been “brought low” and the beautiful noise of the harps has stopped. What awaits at their feet are maggots and worms that will eternally feed upon them.

The word used for the “dead” is rapaiym which is translated as Rephaim in English. The same Hebrew word is used nearly 20 times as “giants” as in Joshua 15:8. These “giants” or Rephaim were also evil and would have gone to the lower part of sheol. These men were giants among the people both in stature and status but their pride has brought them low because they learned from the master of pride, satan himself.

12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." 15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. 16 Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, 17 the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?"

This morning star is the devil himself. We just read of the King of Babylon being placed among other kings who were joining the worms and maggots. Obviously the devil wasn’t the one welcomed by kings and leaders as we read in the previous verses. Satan always tries to imitate God, that is why we find Jesus also called the Morning Star (2 Pet 1:19, Rev 2:28; 22:16).

Satan had been cast out of heaven (past tense) to the earth where he lays the nations low. These verses are prophetic and look back in time but for us it is a future event when satan will be brought down to the depths of the pit.

This prophesies about the coming of the antichrist, in whom satan will dwell. The very reason satan was cast from heaven is the deception he tries to use on people today. He wants you to think that “you too can be like God.” The antichrist will continue to attempt the same thing to get others to follow him, “He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all” (Dan 11:37-38). The antichrist will also set up a throne on the “mount of assembly” or the temple of God, “He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess 2:4). Interestingly, the Hebrew for cloud is singular, suggesting a symbol of God’s divine presence as it appeared during the Exodus. Perhaps this is one of the false “signs” he will use to deceive people by making them think that he is the divine one.

Verse 13 tells us that satan would sit enthroned on the “utmost heights.” This phrase in Hebrew means on the “sides of the North.” It is generally not understood what this means because the North doesn’t represent the Temple or Mount Zion in Scripture. It was common opinion among the ancients that a mountain in the North is where the gods resided. It was the center of the world and the stars revolved around it. The Babylonians

viewed this mountain in Armenia and it could be that this would be the modern day Babylon of Revelation.

Verse sixteen could easily refer to the antichrist or Belshazzar, king of Babylon. The antichrist will attempt to destroy the world and take captive souls to hell with him. Even those in the grave will ponder his fate as his evil will be stacked so high that his punishment will be great. The king of Babylon refused to let Israel go home which could foreshadow a future event as well.

18 All the kings of the nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. 19 But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, 20 you will not join them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people.

While all the other bodies of the kings were laid in the grave, the antichrist will even be rejected by the grave. Interestingly, if all the kings are in their own tombs who are the slain that cover the antichrist or satan? Those killed by the sword who descended down to the inner depths. Perhaps this speaks of the different levels of sheol and hell itself. No doubt that it speaks of the utter disgust of the evil one. Though most kings are buried with respect, he will receive none.

Belshazzar was hated by most of the people when he was alive, perhaps just as much so in the grave. All this seems to be not understandable, even by the commentaries, because we deal with a realm outside of our experience.

The offspring of the wicked will never be mentioned again. 21 Prepare a place to slaughter his sons for the sins of their forefathers; they are not to rise to inherit the land and cover the earth with their cities. 22 "I will rise up against them," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will cut off from Babylon her name and survivors, her offspring and descendants," declares the LORD. 23 "I will turn her into a place for owls and into swampland; I will sweep her with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD Almighty. 24 The LORD Almighty has sworn,

We continue to run into the same problem in identifying who is being spoken of here. If it is simply the king of Babylon's offspring then why has this whole prophecy up to this point been an individual. Also, the kings of Babylon seem to have been buried and that leaves this prophecy unfulfilled. One exception could be the last king of Babylon who was Belshazzar. He fits this most closely because he was the son and nephew of those in power before him. These are the same words of the Hebrew where the NIV translated "offspring" in verse 22. He had no offspring to mention and they never rose up in power to inherit the land.

However, we are still left with a few problems. Earlier verses clearly, at least typified, this man to satan and his future destruction. Does Belshazzar fit the bill in earlier verses. In most cases, yes, but verse 12 is especially puzzling even for Belshazzar. This is why there must be a double fulfillment here. We know that Antiochus Ephiphanes foreshadowed the antichrist. Likewise, it seems that Belshazzar foreshadows the antichrist as well.

Therefore, historically speaking, once Belshazzar fell and his children apparently slaughtered, there was no more threat or hope of his offspring trying to regain power and build cities any longer. God was against him on account of his pride. Also, God was against Babylon and would make it a desolate wasteland. Today we see that, though it took centuries to become so. The text says that the land would be actually turned into a swampland. Some have reasoned that this was when Cyrus flooded the area by redirecting the waters of the river so that they could march in under the walls of the city to attack Belshazzar.

Prophetically speaking, Belshazzar seemed to have reigned part of the time his father was living, perhaps simultaneously for a time. Nebuchadnezzar eventually was humbled and seems to have repented and worshipped the true Lord (Daniel 4) while Belshazzar remained proud and arrogant. He began to drink out of the goblets from the temple of God, claiming himself to be a god (Dan 5). He was against God's people as well as God. All of these fit the antichrist and could explain why verse 12 obviously speaks of satan. Interestingly, it was during the first year of Belshazzar's reign that Daniel had the vision about the antichrist (Dan 7:1).

"Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand. 25 I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders." 26 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. 27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

The Lord has a plan that will be fulfilled regardless of what we do or try to change. Assyria would be crushed "in my land" and "on my mountains," indicating that the battle will be fought in Israel, not on foreign soil. Historically, we see the plague that killed 185,000 outside of Jerusalem fitting this prophecy. The great burden they had been to Hezekiah was lifted in just one night. Technically, Assyria and Babylon are one and the same as Assyria according to Strabo and other historians. Babylon was just a principle city within Assyria. Yet in some sense they are different in that the main power seems to have shifted from one place to the other. While Isaiah talks of the king of Babylon being destroyed he also talks of Assyria in the same breath. I don't believe it is the location of these cities that is the focus but the fact that God's people were being attacked by them. Assyria first attacked the ten tribes successfully but were stopped before Judah could be captured. About 140 years later Babylon captured and deported Judah but at Babylon's fall the Jews would return 70 years later.

Verse 26 seems to show that there was a further future fulfillment in God's plan for the "whole world." It won't just be Assyria, but "all nations" that will be trampled upon in the holy land. Could this be talking of Armageddon? In the end time prophecy we see Ezekiel talks of God and Magog, which seems to be satan's throne: "On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will send fire on Magog" (Ezek 39:4-6). This sounds almost identical to what Isaiah is speaking here, suggesting the same event is in mind.

Once God's Word is proclaimed, there is no turning back the wrath that is to come. The only thing that can change is the outcome for a person who would turn from His wrath by repenting and facing the light of Christ. Daniel said, "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done'" (Dan 4:35)? The ungodly will have no place to put the blame but on themselves and the godly will have no place to put the praise but on Christ. Indeed, the armies of satan will try to blame God and overtake His plan but they will have no success.

28 This oracle came in the year King Ahaz died:

29 Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent. 30 The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors.

31 Wail, O gate! Howl, O city! Melt away, all you Philistines! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks. 32 What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? "The LORD has established Zion, and in her his afflicted people will find refuge."

Most commentators say that these verses belonged in another chapter. The Philistines had initially rejoiced when Ahaz died around 726 B.C.. Uzziah had been a thorn in their flesh (2 Chron 26:6) but when Ahaz became king they threw off that yoke and began to attack (2 Chron 28:18). They considered their yoke broken during the time of Ahaz. The Philistines had considered Uzziah a "serpent" that destroyed and held them captive to fear but now that they were gaining power under Ahaz they were pride filled. However, from this root an even more poisonous viper, (tsepe in Hebrew) to them than Uzziah would come about. This viper would be Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8). This imagery is strongly related to Isaiah 11:1 which stated a shoot would come from the stump of Jesse in reference to Christ.

Hezekiah would bring peace and safety to his people. Even the poorest of people would have food to eat while the Philistines would waste away by famine and other plagues. The enemy of God's people would wail because the cloud of smoke from the north was coming to destroy. This was Hezekiah as he attacked them successfully (2 Kings 18:8). The message that will go out to all the nations is that the Lord is with His people and is taking care of them.

Prophetically, I think this goes well with the chapter before it. As earlier mentioned, the story of Hezekiah is prophetic of when the nations will march against God's people in Jerusalem but will be destroyed by the breath of God. Therefore, Hezekiah is obviously foreshadowing some end time events.

If the historical events of these verses foreshadow end times we see an ungodly country will be attacking God's people and feel confident that they will continue to do so until out of a "root" comes a viper that will subdue them. Could this be Christ foreshadowed as coming from the root of Jesse? This is only speculation and thought, but could there be a Godly leader like Bush (Uzziah) that attacks the ungodly Philistines (Iraq etc.). When Bush leaves a new president will come in that is not as much of a threat to the enemy and they attack our country. Though feeling confident they will only be

surprised to see that Christ comes to gather His people to Jerusalem and protect them there where they will be fed well and walk among the green pastures. This may be why verse 31 talks of “establishing Zion.” The “cloud from the North” could be the destruction Christ will bring upon the enemies of God’s people causing them to howl and be destroyed. Again, this is only speculation that seems to fit with the context of Isaiah thus far. Time will tell.

Isaiah 15

15:1 An oracle concerning Moab: Ar in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Kir in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! 2 Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. 3 In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping. 4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint.

So far Isaiah has talked about Assyria, Babylon, the Philistines, the “nations” and now Moab. Some commentators believe that this may have begun during the first years of Hezekiah's reign, and fulfilled in his fourth year, when Shalmaneser, on his way to destroy Israel, captured the strongholds of Moab.

Ar was the capital of Moab so even the greatest of cities would be destroyed overnight. Virtually every sign of the deepest and greatest mourning is shown. The beard was such an important part of a man that if his beard was cut off, he would not be seen in public until it had grown back. To cut off ones beard was a sign of absolute despair. Wearing sackcloth was also a sign of great grief. In times of trouble people would go to their roof or in the streets to wail loudly. In some cases they would hire people to do so, but here “every” head is shaved and all are in mourning.

Heshbon was the pride of Moab according to Jeremiah 48:2. All hope and pride will be lost in this great day of judgment. In fact, Jeremiah 48 seems to be speaking of the same event as Isaiah 15.

5 My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the way to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. 6 The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. 7 So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. 8 Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. 9 Dimon's waters are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon — a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land.

Zoar was a town that Lot had fled to when escaping Sodom (Gen 19:23). There will be some who attempt to flee from God’s wrath to Zoar once again. Jeremiah talks of the exact same thing happening, “The sound of their cry rises from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz, from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah, for even the waters of

Nimrim are dried up. In Moab I will put an end to those who make offerings on the high places and burn incense to their gods,' declares the LORD" (Jer 48:34-35).

Adding to the problem of economic destruction we see that geologically and biologically there will be judgment. The waters of the river will be stopped and all vegetation withered up. This will cause great famine and no hope of pulling themselves out of this problem. They will attempt to carry anything they can to survive with them as they flee.

There is also evidence of much bloodshed or a supernatural event. The waters of Dimon will turn to blood and those fugitives who were fleeing will be killed by wild beasts. Again the images here are the same we read of Revelation: "I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (Rev 6:8). It could be that God's two witnesses will bring about some of this destruction of famine, drought and blood, "These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want" (Rev 11:6).

Isaiah Chapter 16

16:1 Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of the Daughter of Zion. 2 Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. 3 "Give us counsel, render a decision. Make your shadow like night — at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. 4 Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer." The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. 5 In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it — one from the house of David — one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.

In 2 Samuel 8:2 we see that David subjected the Moabites and made them pay tribute. In 2 Kings 3:4 we see that the king of Moab even had to give a large number of sheep as a tribute to David.

The message of verse one is that Sela must pay a tribute to Jerusalem. Sela means "rock" and many scholars say it is the same as the city of Petra. In any case, they are to give tribute to those in Zion.

Verse two tells us that the women would flee from their homes like birds out of a nest and go to the Arnon River on the Northern boundary of Moab in an attempt to escape.

Verse three reveals a request of safety and refuge. Who the advice is being sought from is unclear. Some believe it is the Jew and others think it is God. In any case, they are seeking a sanctuary where the hot sun would no longer beat upon them because they will have a shelter like a night sky that will "hide the fugitives" who have repented and sought counsel.

Verse four continues the theme that the fugitives will be protected by God or Judah until the “destroyer” is destroyed. Once this happens, a throne will be set up in love and one from David’s line will sit on that throne to be faithful and just to the Moabites.

Historically that all seems fine even though we do not have all the answers, however, prophetically it makes even more sense. It seems that this could be speaking of the tribulation era when God calls His people to Zion. But before that can happen, the abomination that causes desolation is set up in the Temple and the antichrist demands tribute while he pretends to be God (Mat 24:15). Meanwhile there are those who refuse to do so and flee (Mat 24:16) becoming refugees and call upon God for refuge from satan (the destroyer). In chapter 15:7 we see that the fugitives fled so perhaps they go to Petra. Once satan is put down, Jesus reigns of His throne in faithfulness during the millennial reign (Ps 72:2; 96:13; 98:9). This also fits nicely with chapter 15 where we saw that before the abomination that causes desolation is set up we have all kinds of war, famine and plagues coming upon the earth (Mat 24:6-14).

Why is Moab described? It is possible that out of Moab there are some from the lost tribes of Israel. Therefore, God is calling and bringing back those whom he scattered. Jeremiah speaks of these days, “‘Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in days to come,’ declares the LORD. Here ends the judgment on Moab” (Jer 48:47). As you read Jeremiah 48 we see it parallels what we have been discussing in Isaiah. We see there that only a few in Moab that repent are “restored.” Therefore, it will only be those who get rid of their high places, repent and seek counsel from God who will find refuge.

6 We have heard of Moab's pride — her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and her insolence — but her boasts are empty. 7 Therefore the Moabites wail, they wail together for Moab. Lament and grieve for the men of Kir Hareseth. 8 The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea. 9 So I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah. O Heshbon, O Elealeh, I drench you with tears! The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled. 10 Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards; no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting. 11 My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth. 12 When Moab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail.

Moab had mocked and put down Israel. These words and actions had been heard and seen by God who said, “‘I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. Therefore, as surely as I live,’ declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, ‘surely Moab will become like Sodom’” (Zeph 2:8-9). Pride comes before destruction and just as it was in Sodom, so shall it be with Moab when only a few survived its destruction.

Verse seven tells us the Moabites will wail for fellow Moabites. They will grieve for the men of Kir Hareseth as the parallel account tells us (Jer 48:31). A land that was once filled with lush vines and vegetation will be trampled down and destroyed. A main focus of these verses seems to be on the destruction of the harvest that usually brought

joy, however, as we saw in earlier verses, the destruction is much deeper than a bad year of crops.

A major source of Moab's pride was ungodliness. There were high places and shrines that kept them from seeing God clearly. We know there are a few who will survive and call upon the Lord so it wasn't that they were not acquainted with God, they only had rejected Him. Unfortunately the same is true today. People know who God is, they just don't want to follow Him or obey His commands. Even some of the good kings of Judah worshipped God but did not get rid of the high places. In some cases, they even worshipped God at these high places by mixing the true God with pagan rituals and traditions. This worship did not please Yahweh. Their prayers were in vain as Proverbs tells us, "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable" (Prov 28:9).

13 This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. 14 But now the LORD says: "Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab's splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble."

Most commentators believe that from the beginning of Chapter 15 up to this point was already prophesied by an earlier prophet but we do not know who this would be for sure. Verse 14, however, is a new prophecy telling us that within three years Moab's splendor would be taken away, her few surviving people despised. Whether this is an explanation as to when the earlier prophesied destruction was to take place or this being a new and separate destruction we can not be sure.

Isaiah Chapter 17

17:1 An oracle concerning Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. 2 The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. 3 The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites," declares the LORD Almighty. 4 "In that day the glory of Jacob will fade; the fat of his body will waste away. 5 It will be as when a reaper gathers the standing grain and harvests the grain with his arm — as when a man glean heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. 6 Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs," declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

More and more countries are added to the list of destructions. Here Damascus, the capital city of Samaria will be destroyed. Verse two adds the cities of Aroer, which most commentators tell us was an area associated within the range of Damascus. Ephraim, the ten lost tribes, would also be associated with Samaria and thus would also fall in this destruction.

Historically, Syria and Israel had joined together, (Isa 7 and 8) by the time Tiglath-pileser had carried away those of Damascus to Kir, in the fourth year of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:9). Now, however, during Hezekiah's reign, another overthrow is foretold (Jer 49:23; Zech 9:1). Also, Shalmaneser carried away Israel from Samaria to Assyria (2 Kings 17:6; 18:10-11), in the sixth year of Hezekiah of Judah.

Historically, the remnant of verse three would be those who were left after the attack of Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings 16:9). Prophetically, this deals with end time events when the ungodly will be "harvested" (Rev 14). The glory of Jacob will sarcastically be like that of Israel since verse four tells us it is no glory at all.

The valley of Rephaim was a very fertile valley so the image is one of a great harvest, however, Judah is losing its glory. Why? In 2 Samuel 5:18 we see that the Philistines had gathered in the valley of Rephaim and David inquired of God to see if he should attack. The Lord told him to do so and he was successful. This happened a second time, but now the Lord told David to listen for the sound in the balsam trees as a sign that God was going before David and so God attacked the Philistines. This makes me wonder about end time significance and that we are not talking about harvesting grain at all, but the souls of people who are being harvested here. We see in Revelation 14:14-20 there are two harvests, one for the wicked and one for the righteous:

14 I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. 17 Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." 19 The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. 20 They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

Here we can see that that the first harvest is of the Godly few that are removed from the judgment and it seems placed in Jerusalem. Then verse 17 begins the harvest of the ungodly who are deposited in the valley of destruction. Here in Isaiah, it says some gleanings would remain. Historically, there were a few from Israel that were not deported by the Assyrians. Prophetically, these few would be the spared remanant, though the order seems to be different from that of Revelation, it is the same order given in other parables such as the wheat and tares where the chaff is first burned. I claim no certainty as to the interpretation of these verses outside of the fact that it foreshadows end times in some unclear way to me.

7 In that day men will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. 8 They will not look to the altars, the work of their hands, and they will have no regard for the Asherah poles and the incense altars their fingers have made. 9 In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation.

When this time of judgment begins it will be God on whom all eyes are fixed. Specifically we see the “Maker” and the “Holy One of Israel,” or both Father and Son in a unified way. No longer will they turn to false gods in false hope, finally realizing that these idols are in vain. After all if man makes the idol, what kind of god can it be that does not at least make itself. The true God is even one up on that, He is eternal! There was plenty of idol worship going on in Israel. Ahaz once fell in love with an altar which he saw at Damascus on a visit to see Tiglath-pileser. When he got home he had Urijah the priest make one exactly like it in Samaria (2 Kings 16:10-13). Also, the kings of Israel and Judah often made idol altars in the high places or in the groves (see 2 Kings 21:3-5). In fact, the Ephraimites were especially guilty of this (Hos 8:11): 'Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.'

Verse nine talks of strong cities left abandoned and destroyed on account of the Israelites. The Hebrew may suggest that it wasn't “because” of the Israelites that these towns were left abandoned, but rather, “in the face of” the Israelites these towns were abandoned. Commentators have a number of ideas, none of which are completely historically substantiated. One idea is that it was the few cities spared by God in the invasion of Tiglath-pileser, allowing for the Israelites to remain in them. Another idea is that the Assyrians chose to save a few towns for some unknown reason. The main point, however, is that the entire area will finally become desolate.

Prophetically, it seems that God is showing us that at the time of judgment, all will give Christ His proper respect, even though they may not be His children. We read in Revelation, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen” (Rev 1:7). This is in reference to Zechariah 12:10 as the Lord comes back to judge both the living and the dead. It happened as Jesus hung on the cross (John 19:37) and it will happen when He returns in the clouds (Rev 1:7).

It will be a time of devastation and sorrow as the “harvest” takes place and only a few are spared. We have talked earlier how judgment begins first in the house of God. This is only a small portion of that judgment.

10 You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, 11 though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud, yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain.

The saga continues as the Lord reminds them once again of the reason for this judgment. It is on account of the fact that the people forgot their God. They took charge of their own lives as they thought it was them who set out the plants, made them grow, and brought food to their table. God warns them that even though the best of plants are

put in the ground and they are well taken care of, a disease ridden harvest will occur. Not that the plants won't produce well, but the fact that even if there be an abundant harvest there will be no joy because of the judgments surrounding the harvest. Finally, man's life will be put into perspective when they see that the cares of this world are no cares at all. They should have been remembering God and not getting so caught up in taking care of themselves. This is what Luke says, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-31). When the Son of Man is revealed, coming in the clouds, it will be just like the old days. Note the people weren't recorded as practicing homosexuality, getting drunk or killing. They are recorded as doing normal everyday good things, but without any regard to God. They forgot their first love and became too busy for God.

Earlier in this chapter we saw the harvest referred to people, not grain. If this be the case here we could possibly infer that what we plant is the Word or seed of God and what we take care of are the buds produced by that seed. The harvest will be as nothing to those who expect it to be a day of deliverance, yet did not recognize the truth of God's Word (Literally Jesus Christ Himself). The KJV show the harvest to be a "heap" showing the heap to be disease and destruction, not fruit. The plants that were sown were special imported plants, not ordinary ones, supporting the idea that this could refer to the Word. Though these people talked Godly and even went to church, they never walked Godly in the faith. Amos speaks of these people who look forward to their harvest but yet think it was they who "deserve" it: "Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light" (Amos 5:18). This day will be one of disease and INCURABLE pain. The seed is good but the heart or ground it was sowed on was bad. As the parable of the sower showed, those who received the seed on rocky or thorny ground receive the Word but it does not produce fruit. Only that which falls on the good soil (heart) will produce fruit unto salvation.

12 Oh, the raging of many nations — they rage like the raging sea! Oh, the uproar of the peoples — they roar like the roaring of great waters! 13 Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them they flee far away, driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale. 14 In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us.

All the nations that are under the hand of God's wrath roar against Him. However, they talk big but when it comes down to it know their place because when God rebukes them they flee. They have no choice because both flesh and spirit tremble within the presence of He who made them.

It is interesting that those who roar against God are of many nations. They have united together under one purpose and will, for a common goal, to despise their Maker.

Most commentaries say that these few verses do not match up with those before or after them and, therefore, are a prophecy in themselves. I believe the reason for this misunderstanding is the lack of making a connection to end times with the previous verses. Understanding that this is not just about Assyria or Damascus, but Christ's second coming we can see that this is exactly what the Scriptures say about end times. "His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" The theme of this chapter has been one of harvest, planting and getting rid of the chaff. Luke tells us this chaff will be burned (hell) while the wheat is taken into the barn (heaven). This is why verse 14 speaks of terror that comes upon them "suddenly." Judgment won't drag on, because by morning the chaff is gone, burned up and never to be seen again. This is the future of those who persecute and plot against the true church of God because in so doing they go against God Himself.

Isaiah Chapter 18

Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush, 2 which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers. 3 All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it, and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it.

Now we move on to the land of Cush as the string of judgments continue. Commentators are once again confused as to what land this is beyond Cush. Some think Egypt, others Ethiopia and some Assyria. Point being, it doesn't seem to be an easy identification, perhaps because the country did not exist at the time of this being written. Gal 3:18. If this is end time prophecy and we are in end times, then it would make sense that the world power would be mentioned.

Different translations of the Bible have translated "tall" and "smooth" in varying ways. The KJV says "scattered and peeled." The Hebrew word that is translated "scattered," or "tall" is *mashak* and means to remove, to be tall or to develop. It can also mean to be brought together. The Hebrew word translated, "peel" or "smooth" is *mowrat* means to be obstinate or independent. The context of these verses would suggest that smooth is to be translated more along the lines of independent and proud making tall a good translation for *mashak*. However, it could also be possible that these are the scattered people of Israel who are brought together who were once obstinate against God (Rom 10:21).

Messengers are to be sent out to this mysterious land where the people are tall and independent or obstinate against God. This nation is feared by all nations, has a language of non-Arabic origin, is aggressive, and is divided by many rivers, seeming to make it a large nation geographically. This certainly could fit the U.S. who are proud and obstinate. We are feared by all nations, we do have a strange language, we are divided by many rivers and we are aggressive. Verse one speaks of this land also having whirring or

shadowing wings. The U.S. has been the “protector” of Kuwait, Iraq and many other countries. So many countries lie in the shadow of our protective wings as well. Are these swift messengers being sent to say, “Come out of her my people (Rev 18:4)?” One can’t say for sure, but I believe we must watch with expectant eyes.

Verse three tells us that a banner is being raised to all the people of the “world.” We are not just talking of one country but once again the calling of believers to Jerusalem as discussed in earlier chapters. We are to be watching a listening for the banner and trumpet. The entire earth will see it as Christ promised when speaking of end times in Matthew 24, “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken” (Matt 24:27-29). As I read this from Matthew one must ask himself, “If Matthew is indeed speaking of the same event here in Isaiah saying that we will see the banner all over the earth as lightning is visible then the context following this in Matthew should hold true in Isaiah as well. Matthew says that immediately after this there will be signs in the heavens. Isaiah 24:23 also tells us of these signs in the heavens, “The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.” We have already talked about this banner and that is Christ Himself.

The trumpet that sounds will be a call to look up to Christ as well. Many think the trumpets of Revelation are symbolic and we obviously won’t literally hear a trumpet sounding in the sky. I disagree strongly. When Moses was about to receive the Ten Commandments, there was a trumpet coming from heaven that made the strongest of men tremble and beg Moses to make God stop speaking (Exo 19:19; 20:18). This tells us that the trumpet sound may be God’s voice and also that it is a literal sound that will be heard by our ears. All will see and hear but only the Godly will understand.

4 This is what the LORD says to me: "I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place, like shimmering heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." 5 For, before the harvest, when the blossom is gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives, and cut down and take away the spreading branches. 6 They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter. 7 At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers — the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty.

When will all this take place? Verse four tells us that God will remain quiet as He looks down from heaven. His blessings will be shining down upon this country in warmth and dew. However, at the time that these obstinate and independent people are about to take in a plentiful harvest the crop will be cut down. In other words, the people will be living happily and joyfully going about their own way, enjoying economic blessings and “While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly”

(1 Thess 5:3). Not only are the grapes going to be cut off but also the shoots and spreading branches, keeping any fruit from ever producing again. The pruning hook will become destructive.

Once more I believe we are not just talking about vines and branches but people who disobey God's Word. The destroyed fruit and branches will be left for the birds of prey and wild animals. Birds of prey are often referred to in Scripture as demons or Satan as seen in the parable of the sower. Revelation also speaks of a similar event if it be not the same one, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great" (Rev 19:17-18).

Verse seven goes on to tell us that "at that time," or while the birds gorge themselves on the cut off branches, good will be going on elsewhere. Some of the people from this feared foreign land will now bring gifts to the Lord on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. These are the ones spoke of in verse three that heard the trumpet and saw the banner being raised calling them to Jerusalem. These are the ones who "came out of her" before the destruction of the pruning knife. Once again this fits the descriptions Christ gave in the New Testament of the great harvest in Revelation 14 where He first harvested the righteous and sets them down in Jerusalem and then harvests the ungodly and sets them down in the valley of destruction.

Isaiah Chapter 19

19:1 An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. 2 "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian — brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. 3 The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. 4 I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them, "declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

Once again we see the exodus mirrored as the Lord goes into Egypt on a swift cloud. Even the idols of Egypt tremble before the presence of God. The plagues of Egypt were actually judgments against the Egyptian gods as well. For example, the sun be darkened showed the Egyptians that Ra, the sun god, was powerless in the presence of Yahweh. Numbers says in regards to the Egyptian plagues, "For the LORD had brought judgment on their gods" (Num 33:4).

Ultimately, it is those that put Israel into bondage that will lose heart as God judges them. As pharaoh consulted his false gods to know what to do when God was judging Egypt, so too at the end people will consult the demonic spirits for advice. Those demons will give advice, but it will be the counsel of rebellion against God. The ungodly Egyptians will be handed over to a cruel master, literally, the antichrist.

It is interesting that this is not the only case where we see the Lord riding upon swift clouds, "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of

man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence” (Dan 7:13). Matthew talked of these days too, “They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matt 24:30-31; See also Hab 3:3-10, Ps 18:9).

Historically, Egypt was made subject to Babylon and then Persia, however, this must foreshadow end time events as well as already discussed in earlier chapters.

5 The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry. 6 The canals will stink; the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up. The reeds and rushes will wither, 7 also the plants along the Nile, at the mouth of the river. Every sown field along the Nile will become parched, will blow away and be no more. 8 The fishermen will groan and lament, all who cast hooks into the Nile; those who throw nets on the water will pine away. 9 Those who work with combed flax will despair, the weavers of fine linen will lose hope. 10 The workers in cloth will be dejected, and all the wage earners will be sick at heart.

The river will dry up and the canals would turn into stinky swamps. Though the Nile is not specifically mentioned it is very possible that is what is being referred to. The word could also mean “sea” but the context seems to suggest it is the Nile. Because of this great devastation on the land, Egypt would be destroyed economically.

11 The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools; the wise counselors of Pharaoh give senseless advice. How can you say to Pharaoh, "I am one of the wise men, a disciple of the ancient kings"? 12 Where are your wise men now? Let them show you and make known what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt. 13 The officials of Zoan have become fools, the leaders of Memphis are deceived; the cornerstones of her peoples have led Egypt astray. 14 The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit. 15 There is nothing Egypt can do — head or tail, palm branch or reed.

The counsel of the wise will be frustrated when there is no understanding from the Spirit of God. Though for a long time these men probably did give wise advice and help their leaders, God has planned against Egypt. We see that the Lord will allow evil spirits to cause confusion due to rebellion.

The end result will be utter hopelessness. Neither head or tail, leader or follower, strong or weak will have source of deliverance.

16 In that day the Egyptians will be like women. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. 17 And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them. 18 In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction.

As a whole, the country of Egypt is ungodly and because of that the Lord will bring down destruction. However, when this event takes place is not clear. Judah will be such a powerful presence that even the name being said will send fear to Egypt. Historically, I don't believe this has ever happened. It makes one wonder if it could be speaking of the millennial reign when some in Egypt will come to worship God (Zech 14). Five cities will faithfully follow Yahweh and one's name seems to center around destruction for the ungodly. Commentators seem to be confused as to these verses and I admit that as well. I believe when this begins to be fulfilled we will understand.

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the LORD at its border. 20 It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. 21 So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. 22 The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.

Among those five cities there will be an altar to Yahweh somewhere in the center of Egypt, be it geographically or politically. Some have brought up the fact that Alexander the Great was a type of savior for Egypt because he was welcomed openly by them due to their hatred of Persia. Apparently God used him as a means of fulfilling this prophecy. However, I do not see this as it is Yahweh that will be worshipped and bring deliverance Himself. Alexander the Great did not bring a widespread knowledge of Yahweh to Egypt.

Verse 21 shows that the Egyptians will worship, sacrifice, offer thanks and dedicated their lives to the LORD. Perhaps it is because of their great destruction that many will come to the repentance needed for faith.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. 24 In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. 25 The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."

Note that Egypt and Assyria both worship the LORD. They go to each others country and not up to Jerusalem. This fits with Zechariah 14 as well. It seems that Zechariah is describing the events here in Isaiah. Egypt, Assyria and Israel will be the three countries that God's abundance will be poured out upon after the destruction that is.

Assyria was God's handiwork just as we are today, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). Israel is God's inheritance as we read, "For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise" (Gal 3:18). It is also interesting that it

doesn't really seem that God is our inheritance but that we are His inheritance. Jesus did in fact purchase us with His blood. Egypt is described as God's people. Usually this is something used to describe Israel. If Israel has been intermingled within these countries that would explain why they are God's people.

Isaiah Chapter 20

20:1 In the year that the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it — 2 at that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said to him, "Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet." And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot. 3 Then the LORD said, "Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, 4 so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared — to Egypt's shame. 5 Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be afraid and put to shame. 6 In that day the people who live on this coast will say, 'See what has happened to those we relied on, those we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of Assyria! How then can we escape?'"

The year mentioned here is not known for sure but the people living at this time would have no doubt known. Sargon was king of Assyria at the time. Some believe this is Sennacherib while others believe it was his predecessor. Other translations say Tartan was the "supreme commander." Tartan was one of the generals of Sennacherib. Ashdod, was called Azotus by the Greeks and was a seaport on the Mediterranean, between Askelon and Ekron, about 30 miles from Gaza today. The whole point in attacking Ashdod was simply to clear the way to attack Egypt.

Isaiah was a sign to the people of Israel. At times one can question why God would have Isaiah do such crazy things but each event had meaning that would literally come true. Isaiah was told to take off his sackcloth, the typical clothing of a prophet and go stripped for three years. Whether this was absolutely naked or basically like running around in your underwear is disputed. The Hebrew doesn't necessarily require that it be naked. Some suggest that a prophet taking off his sackcloth was removing his identity and thus "feel as if naked." The Egyptians were very proud people and they were about to be humbled greatly. The fact that the exiles would be led away with their buttocks bared indicates it could be naked but many believe God would not have him do such a thing. However, if Hosea was told to marry a prostitute it would not be entirely impossible, nor sinful for Isaiah to do such a thing.

In 2 Kings 1:8 we see Elijah wore rough clothing as did John the Baptist in Matthew 3:4. Zechariah 13:4 shows that even those who pretended to be prophets wore this type of clothing to fit the part. No doubt prophets had learned to put their flesh into submission and live by the spirit. Perhaps we could learn from this today. I fear for what so many will do if their physical comfort is taken away. We would do well to fast and train ourselves not to give into the flesh.

The main lesson of this chapter was to show Israel that when Egypt fell, they would be put to shame themselves because they looked to Egypt for security rather than

God. We must be careful not to make the same mistake, especially as the end draws near. If and when God sends those to bring destruction around us we must not look to our army, president or personal gun stockade, but we must trust in and pray to the living God. However, one other lesson to be learned is that we must learn to trust Him before the destruction comes because if we wait until then, it may be too late. Isaiah had three years to be a sign to the people but they would not repent and turn toward God. Today is the day of salvation!

Isaiah Chapter 21

21:1 An oracle concerning the Desert by the Sea: Like whirlwinds sweeping through the southland, an invader comes from the desert, from a land of terror. 2 A dire vision has been shown to me: The traitor betrays, the looter takes loot. Elam, attack! Media, lay siege! I will bring to an end all the groaning she caused. 3 At this my body is racked with pain, pangs seize me, like those of a woman in labor; I am staggered by what I hear, I am bewildered by what I see. 4 My heart falters, fear makes me tremble; the twilight I longed for has become a horror to me. 5 They set the tables, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink! Get up, you officers, oil the shields!

Babylon is here called the Desert by the Sea. Though many commentators have no explanation as to why this is, Jeremiah may have a simple answer. “You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your end has come, the time for you to be cut off. . . Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry’” (Jer 51:13,36, see also Is 19:5). Babylon was a flourishing country that used waters from the Euphrates. Cyrus removed these dykes that diverted the waters and so converted the whole country into a desert.

The whirlwinds of the south could be symbolic of the Lord’s return to judge Babylon. We read in Zechariah, “Then the LORD will appear over them; His arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; He will march in the storms of the south, and the LORD Almighty will shield them” (Zech 9:14-15). Literally speaking, we see Babylon would be conquered by the Medes and Persians.

Verse two shows that this would be a terrible destruction and that Elam and Media would attack. It literally reads that the destroyer would be destroyed and the looter would be looted. Media is obviously the Medes and Elam is the Persian empire. Elam means “horseman” and the name first appears in Genesis 10:22 as one of the sons of Shem. The name Persia was not put into use until the captivity which is why the name doesn’t appear before as a country until Daniel and Ezekiel.

Verses 3-4 shows Isaiah being overcome with grief over this vision he sees. The destruction of the enemy even brings forth emotional pain as the love of Jesus loves even the enemy.

Verse 5 may predict the banquet or party that Belshazzar is having when the handwriting on the wall appears, the very night that Babylon is attacked (Dan 5). This is also very symbolic of the attitude during end times. When people should be watching, they will be partying and carrying on as if nothing was wrong. Destruction will come on them suddenly like a thief in the night (1 Thess 4). God’s people, however, were not and

will not be surprised as it has been foretold, the handwriting is already on the wall for the destruction of Babylon (Rev 16-18).

6 This is what the Lord says to me: "Go, post a lookout and have him report what he sees. 7 When he sees chariots with teams of horses, riders on donkeys or riders on camels, let him be alert, fully alert." 8 And the lookout shouted, "Day after day, my lord, I stand on the watchtower; every night I stay at my post. 9 Look, here comes a man in a chariot with a team of horses. And he gives back the answer: 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!'" 10 O my people, crushed on the threshing floor, I tell you what I have heard from the LORD Almighty, from the God of Israel.

Verse 6 seems to indicate the message is for Isaiah and God's people. The lookout doesn't seem to be there to warn Babylon but rather to announce when Babylon has fallen. It is very significant that he is told what he will see, chariots and horses as well as riders on other animals. The lookout is ready and watching and not surprised at the fall of Babylon. The imagery is right out of Revelation where we read, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit" (Rev 18:2). All of this takes place shortly after we see four horsemen as the seals in Revelation bring forth judgment in chapter 6.

The warning to stay alert is also the same warning given us in the New Testament about end times, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into" (Matt 24:42-43). "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him" (Rev 16:15), and "But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled" (1 Thess 5:4-7).

Verse 10 also indicates some of God's people being crushed on the threshing floor. Either some will perish because of unbelief or it is a trying time. Crushing indicates destruction and that may be why Revelation warns immediately after the announcement that Babylon has fallen, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes" (Rev 18:4-5). Paul tells us to "Therefore come out from them and be separate" (2 Cor 6:17). No doubt faith in Jesus sets us up for a higher calling and we would do well to stay alert that this day does not surprise us.

11 An oracle concerning Dumah: Someone calls to me from Seir, "Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?" 12 The watchman replies, "Morning is coming, but also the night. If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again."

Dumah could possibly be descended from Ishmael as that was the name of Ishmael's sixth son in Genesis 25:13-14. Others think that because Mount Seir is

mentioned it is talking about the Edomites from Esau. In either case, there is someone calling from Seir to ask Isaiah what is about to come. Isaiah answers by telling them that there is a short light or period of peace but only for a time. Soon afterward, darkness and trouble would come again. This is exactly what God does. He allows time for people to repent before He brings about His wrath.

Isaiah also adds that this man should ask again because even though the answer was favorable right now, he should keep a watch out and not become complacent. We read of the same thing in Thessalonians, "But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet" (1 Thess 5:4-8).

13 An oracle concerning Arabia: You caravans of Dedanites, who camp in the thickets of Arabia, 14 bring water for the thirsty; you who live in Tema, bring food for the fugitives. 15 They flee from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow and from the heat of battle. 16 This is what the Lord says to me: "Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end. 17 The survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar, will be few." The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.

Arabia is the next country to receive warning. Among them are the Dedanites who descended from Dedan, Abraham's son through Keturah (Gen 25:3). They are coming from the thickets or forests of Arabia which may indicate that they, too, are hiding from the enemy. Apparently the men from Dedan would need to bring water for those of Tema. In Job we see that Tema was a dry land that looked for water (Job 6:19). They will have been fleeing from the sword and need refuge, food and water.

Isaiah warns that in exactly one year, these fleeing refugees would be destroyed. Only a few would survive to be left with no glory. It is a promise coming right from the mouth of God and would serve as a good warning for the people to repent or they would perish.

Kedar is also son of Ishmael (Gen 25:15) as Dumah in verse 11 was. This may be picking up on a theme of the Muslim nation of today. The Muslims are a violent and ungodly nation that are actively against Christ and Christianity because they oppose the doctrine of their faith. Israel is the number one enemy of the Muslim nations and God may be warning them that their futile battle will only destroy them.

Isaiah Chapter 22

22:1 An oracle concerning the Valley of Vision: What troubles you now, that you have all gone up on the roofs, 2 O town full of commotion, O city of tumult and revelry? Your slain were not killed by the sword, nor did they die in battle. 3 All your leaders have fled together; they have been captured without using the bow. All you who were caught were taken prisoner together, having fled while the enemy was

still far away. 4 Therefore I said, "Turn away from me; let me weep bitterly. Do not try to console me over the destruction of my people." 5 The Lord, the LORD Almighty, has a day of tumult and trampling and terror in the Valley of Vision, a day of battering down walls and of crying out to the mountains. 6 Elam takes up the quiver, with her charioteers and horses; Kir uncovers the shield. 7 Your choicest valleys are full of chariots, and horsemen are posted at the city gates;

The Valley of Vision is referring to Judah and Jerusalem which did lay between mountains. It was the place of visions in which God had sent prophet upon prophet to warn and lead them, yet they refused to listen.

The event at hand begins in the 14th year of Hezekiah when Sennacherib brought his army and surrounded the city as predicted back in chapter ten and again mirrored in 2 Chronicles 32:4-5. It will again be viewed as a past event in chapter 36. However, the events described seem to stretch all the way to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and perhaps even into the future events of Revelation.

Jerusalem used to be a town filled with activity and revelry, causing the people to forget about God and His providence. As a result, the mighty warriors are not dying in battle but by famine inside the city walls as we see historically and Biblically back in chapter ten. Other leaders had not trusted in the Lord and fled, only to be captured without a fight.

In verse four Isaiah is showing not only his grief over the destruction of the people, but God also is distressed by His people and their rejection of Him. He desires that none should perish, yet sin must be punished. The walls of Jerusalem will come down and people will flee to the mountains. Though Sennacherib did not do this, shortly after, Nebuchadnezzar would come and destroy the city and take the people captive. This also may have prophetic significance as seen in Matthew where Jesus told His disciples "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel-let the reader understand- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house" (Matt 24:15-17).

Elam (Persians in Ezra 4:9) and Kir (the Medes) will come in great numbers, trampling on the fields and surrounding the city. During the time of Hezekiah these countries were under the rule of Assyria (2 Kings 16:9) and could have joined forces with them.

8 the defenses of Judah are stripped away. And you looked in that day to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest; 9 you saw that the City of David had many breaches in its defenses; you stored up water in the Lower Pool. 10 You counted the buildings in Jerusalem and tore down houses to strengthen the wall. 11 You built a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the Old Pool, but you did not look to the One who made it, or have regard for the One who planned it long ago. 12 The Lord, the LORD Almighty, called you on that day to weep and to wail, to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth. 13 But see, there is joy and revelry, slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep, eating of meat and drinking of wine! "Let us eat and drink," you say, "for tomorrow we die!"

14 The LORD Almighty has revealed this in my hearing: "Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for," says the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

The people of Jerusalem were operating in the flesh as they sought every human way to prepare for this battle. The Palace of the Forest, which was built by Solomon in 1 Kings 10:17, stored many weapons for such an event. There were many weaknesses within the walls of the city but repairs were done (2 Chron 32:5) and other preparations made, one of which was to store up water in reservoirs (2 Chron 32:3-4). They also brought water between the inner and outer wall so that the enemy could not get to it and the people within the city would have water. It has been well documented that Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:20) had cleverly brought water into the city from under ground so the enemy could not block the waters. It is possible that this is what is being referred to here. Some of the homes were torn down and the rubble used to strengthen the walls.

Verse 12 is clear that every preparation that could be made physically was taken care of, but the people refused to look to God and repent, which was the preparation God was looking for. God even calls them to mourn and repent but they refuse to listen (Much like people today). Instead, there was a foolish joy and revelry as people decided that since death was obvious, they might as well party rather than get right with God. We see many people like this today. They know they have rejected God and that hell awaits them, but rather than turn away from sin, they run to it hoping to ignore God's call and live in denial of truth. As we saw in the first verses of this chapter they had gone up to the roof of their homes to party and watch what was about to happen. They could have repented and turned to God for help, but in stubbornness and rebellion they decide to party and have fun since that was the whole of life. Ignorance was bliss. This rejection of God and lack of understanding would be counted against them and not forgiven. Some manuscripts even reflect this to be an eternal judgment and they will never be forgiven even unto the second death. What a sad commentary not only on their future, but on their present state as well. We see that this ignorance and denial of their future is actually a reflection on the hopelessness they had in their hearts. It was the only way they knew how to deal with having no hope. If you know not God and have no more strength within yourself what can you do? Paul shows this hopeless attitude of the pagan in contrast to the hope we have in Christ "If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (1 Cor 15:32). When we know our sins have been atoned for, we have no need to try and deny or ignore our current circumstances or drink our sorrows away because we will find true joy and peace in Christ, our Deliverer.

Again, prophetically, we see the same thing will happen in the end times. Revelation shows us that there will be great judgments and armies surrounding Jerusalem. In Revelation chapter 11 we see that two witnesses will come to preach repentance but the people will refuse and reject God. Eventually, the two witnesses are killed and the people celebrate until a great earthquake from God destroys most of the city and its people. Even after many awful events that come upon the earth, people will still refuse to repent and even curse God on account of the plagues. Mankind will try to save themselves and will not turn to their Creator with a broken and contrite heart. Luke warns us, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day

Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-29).

15 This is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "Go, say to this steward, to Shebna, who is in charge of the palace: 16 What are you doing here and who gave you permission to cut out a grave for yourself here, hewing your grave on the height and chiseling your resting place in the rock? 17 "Beware, the LORD is about to take firm hold of you and hurl you away, O you mighty man. 18 He will roll you up tightly like a ball and throw you into a large country. There you will die and there your splendid chariots will remain — you disgrace to your master's house! 19 I will depose you from your office, and you will be ousted from your position.

Shebna was the treasurer of the palace (Isa 36) who had become corrupt and filled with pride. Shebna had attempted to make a tomb for himself in the high places where kings and respectable people were to be buried. Not only did he not have permission to do so, nor had he earned the right. Even more, he wouldn't be around to be buried there anyway. God was about to violently remove him to a large country, perhaps Assyria. Wherever it was, he would die away from Jerusalem.

Shebna was a disgrace to God and his master. His position as treasurer was going to be removed, and with it, his pride would be brought down to the ground.

20 "In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiyah. 21 I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 23 I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father. 24 All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots — all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars. 25 "In that day," declares the LORD Almighty, "the peg driven into the firm place will give way; it will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down." The LORD has spoken.

Eliakim is an unknown man outside of these verses and Isaiah 36 where we see that he was the palace administrator under Hezekiah. Whoever he is, he was a trusted man of God who held authority and the key of David. It is no coincidence that these words are spoken of Jesus as well, "These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David" (Rev 3:7). The key of David shows authority to let in or keep out. The fact that the key is on his shoulder is also significant in that Isaiah earlier prophesied of Christ saying, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders" (Isa 9:6). There is no doubt a connection here with the return of Christ as the only other reference to this type of authority with keys was given to the apostles, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt 16:19-20).

Verse 23 shows that Eliakim would be driven as a permanent peg in a firm place. These pegs were not typical tent pegs driven into the ground but pegs that were built into the house and often used to hang things upon. Perhaps this is why the “glory of his family will hang on him.” He will have the seat of honor or the ruling throne of his father’s house. We read in Luke of Christ, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:32-33).

In verse 25 there is a shift from Eliakim back to Shebna who was introduced back in verse 15. Shebna’s authority, influence and reputation will be cut off and destroyed because he had no right to be on the throne. In his place, Eliakim would rule in righteousness.

There is a bit of a mystery here that may not be solved until the end times. Isaiah 36 will talk about the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem and God making a great deliverance. This “historical” event that took place in 2 Kings 18 seems out of place among this very prophetic book. This leads me to believe that this historical event has prophetic meaning. With that said, this Eliakim who holds the keys of David with authority on his shoulders and who is a firm peg reigning on David’s throne may be representing Christ. Eliakim was the palace administrator and Shebna was the secretary at this time. I am not sure what significance this may be but I am convinced there is something here I haven’t seen yet. These events don’t seem to appear anywhere in Scripture (which doesn’t mean it didn’t happen in the past) maybe indicating that this will be a future event. One more interesting connection to support this theory is that immediately in the next chapter we see an oracle against Tyre who represents Satan in Ezekiel 28. The next chapter deals with the destruction of Tyre just as we see Satan’s throne destroyed in Revelation after the Lord returns. Therefore, it may be possible that Shebna represents the antichrist being taken away from his throne and Christ taking over to rule. Furthermore, after the destruction of Tyre in Isaiah 23, chapter 24 goes into the destruction of the earth and chapter 25 shows the Lord being praised and a banquet of aged wine being had. This is the same order of events seen in Revelation where the wedding banquet of the Lamb occurs after the destruction of Satan’s throne in chapter 19. There is no question that the order of events in Revelation are being strictly followed here in Isaiah. I can’t be sure of all the details but as I said, there is more than meets the eye here. Perhaps the Spirit will reveal it to you or to all of us as these events begin to unfold.

Isaiah Chapter 23

23:1 An oracle concerning Tyre: Wail, O ships of Tarshish! For Tyre is destroyed and left without house or harbor. From the land of Cyprus word has come to them. 2 Be silent, you people of the island and you merchants of Sidon, whom the seafarers have enriched. 3 On the great waters came the grain of the Shihor; the harvest of the Nile was the revenue of Tyre, and she became the marketplace of the nations. 4 Be ashamed, O Sidon, and you, O fortress of the sea, for the sea has spoken: "I have neither been in labor nor given birth; I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters." 5 When word comes to Egypt, they will be in anguish at the report from Tyre.

This could just as well be coming right from the book of Revelation chapter 18. Shihor was a river that led to Egypt, upon which Tyre traded. All the nations around Tyre weep because they traded with her and she is now destroyed. Ezekiel tells of this cities economical influence as she was, "Situated at the gateway to the sea, merchant of peoples on many coasts" (Ezek 27:3).

Sidon is considered to be the mother of Tyre according to verse 12 just as Babylon is considered to be the mother of harlots in Revelation 17.

Even the sea will reject Tyre as the earth spits her out as foreign and rejected. When Egypt hears of her destruction there will be great wailing over the loss of her trade just as we see in Revelation, "Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come! The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more" (Rev 18:10-11).

6 Cross over to Tarshish; wail, you people of the island. 7 Is this your city of revelry, the old, old city, whose feet have taken her to settle in far-off lands? 8 Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are renowned in the earth? 9 The LORD Almighty planned it, to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth. 10 Till your land as along the Nile, O Daughter of Tarshish, for you no longer have a harbor. 11 The LORD has stretched out his hand over the sea and made its kingdoms tremble. He has given an order concerning Phoenicia that her fortresses be destroyed. 12 He said, "No more of your reveling, O Virgin Daughter of Sidon, now crushed! "Up, cross over to Cyprus; even there you will find no rest." 13 Look at the land of the Babylonians, this people that is now of no account! The Assyrians have made it a place for desert creatures; they raised up their siege towers, they stripped its fortresses bare and turned it into a ruin. 14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish; your fortress is destroyed!

The inhabitants of Tyre would flee to Tarshish, which is here called a city of revelry and uncontrolled partying. This could be likened to Lot wanting to flee to another city that was just as evil as Sodom. In the end, he realized that his place of refuge was no refuge at all.

During the time of the historian, Herodotus, a priest of Tyre bragged about this city being around for 2300 years at that time. That probably isn't accurate, however, it shows that it was viewed as a safe and secure city. Her bragging rights were over as her own feet would walk away in captivity to foreign lands when Nebuchadnezzar would capture her.

Her influence had spread to far off lands as she was a very busy trade port. She had bestowed upon herself the glory of many princes and rich businessmen whom she had made rich by her trade (Ezek 27:33).

The cause of her destruction is that God brought upon punishment for their pride. No longer would it be a place inhabited by many people with busy ship harbors, now it would hold few people that could use the land for farming.

Verse 11 also addresses the fact that this punishment affects no only Tyre and Tarshish, but all the Phoenician cities. All of them had corrupted themselves with pride

over their wealth and self satisfying parties. Even the city of Cyprus would be destroyed and there would be no place to flee.

Verse 13 shows the Babylonian or Chaldean people were at one time nothing until the Assyrians raised them up. Babylon was founded by Nimrod and remained a small and insignificant land into the time of Job (Job 1:17). Belus or Bel, was an Assyrian who came to reign in Babylon in about 1322 BC. This was the time of the Israelite judge, Shamgar. Bel was succeeded by Ninus and Semiramis, who is the focus of the pagan side of Christmas and Easter. According to Herodotus, Semiramis also built dikes and made Babylon the capital city. Herodotus also records that many pillars and towers were set up for their pagan temples that we still have not weeded out in our culture today. Thus, the Assyrians are responsible for the rise of Babylon. This city, once counted as nothing, would now destroy Tyre and leave it as Babylon once was before being raised up. Herodotus does record how Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city but the siege took so long that by the time it was over most had already escaped and, thus, the plunder was not what he had hoped.

15 At that time Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king's life. But at the end of these seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute: 16 "Take up a harp, walk through the city, O prostitute forgotten; play the harp well, sing many a song, so that you will be remembered." 17 At the end of seventy years, the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire as a prostitute and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. 18 Yet her profit and her earnings will be set apart for the LORD; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before the LORD, for abundant food and fine clothes.

Tyre fell just shortly before Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, and although we have no record of this, it is assumed that when Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem, he also let some return to Tyre. There can be no question that in the days of Nehemiah Tyre was beginning to rebuild since we read, "Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah" (Neh 13:15-16).

Jeremiah records that other nations around Jerusalem would also go into captivity for these seventy years, "This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer 25:11). Also, the seventy years is referred to in verse 15 as the span of a single king's life. It was when Cyrus took over in place of Nebuchadnezzar after 70 years that the Jews were allowed to go home.

Rather than returning with repentant hearts, the pride and immorality of Tyre would remain in her. She will apply her earlier trade secrets to capture the hearts of those nations around her but will again be conquered by Alexander the Great around 326 BC. Jesus used this city as an example and warning to cities of His day by saying, "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt 11:20-22).

Although Tyre didn't seem to repent after being rebuilt, Jesus made a trip there and no doubt shared the good news (Mat 15:21). Later, Paul goes there and we see that

there are Christians living and preaching there (Acts 21:3). Historians also substantiate this as we see Eusebius (Hist. x. 4.) says that “when the church of God was founded in Tyre, and in other places, much of its wealth was consecrated to God, and was brought as an offering to the church, and was presented for the support of the ministry agreeable to the commandments of the Lord.” Jerome also says, “We have seen churches built to the Lord in Tyre; we have beheld the wealth of all, which was not treasured up nor hid, but which was given to those who dwelt before the Lord.” The city remained predominately Christian until it was conquered by the Saracens in 639 AD. Later in 1124 it was again taken over by Christians until 1280 when it was conquered by the Mamelukes. Then again in 1516 it was taken over by the Turks, and now it is ruled by the Sultan as part of Syria. In any case, we see this prophecy was fulfilled, perhaps only so far in part. As discussed earlier, it seems that there may be more here than meets the eye and it could yet still point to future events.

Then next four chapters will continue to give a descriptive prophecy about the scattering of the Jews (Isaiah 24:1-2) and their repentance (Isa 24:13-16). We will also see the judgments that will be upon those who oppose God (Isa 24:16-Isa 25) and the rewards of those who follow Him (Isa 26). Also, chapter 27 will show the judgment on satan and his throne. Clearly, we are seeing a double prophecy where actual historical events in the past foreshadow events in the future.

Isaiah Chapter 24

24:1 See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants — 2 it will be the same for priest as for people, for master as for servant, for mistress as for maid, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. 3 The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. 5 The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. 7 The new wine dries up and the vine withers; all the merry-makers groan. 8 The gaiety of the tambourines is stilled, the noise of the revelers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent. 9 No longer do they drink wine with a song; the beer is bitter to its drinkers. 10 The ruined city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred. 11 In the streets they cry out for wine; all joy turns to gloom, all gaiety is banished from the earth. 12 The city is left in ruins, its gate is battered to pieces. 13 So will it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest. 14 They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the LORD's majesty. 15 Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; exalt the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. 16 From the ends of the earth we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous One." But I said, "I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!" 17 Terror and pit and snare await you, O people

of the earth. 18 Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare.

The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. 19 The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. 20 The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls — never to rise again.

21 In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. 22 They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. 23 The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.