



The Good, The Bad, and The Wicked

A Review of Isaiah

Rev. Charles E. Darnell, PhD

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Scripture quotations

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The Good, The Bad, and The Wicked

The title seems to be a strange statement. In bygone days, there was a movie entitled, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. What is it that I'm attempting to explain to you within the words of this book? Aren't the good those of mankind who follow righteousness and obey God's instructions? Aren't the bad of mankind those who rebel against a living, loving and righteous God? Aren't the wicked the worst of mankind who are possessed by an evil spirit that drives these poor souls to kill, slander, and destroy anything that even hints toward God? These folks are like the man at the caves along side the Sea of Galilee who was possessed by evil spirits named Legion. This band of evil spirits knew who Jesus was and begged Him not to torment them because it was not that time and they asked to be sent to a herd of pigs that were nearby.

In the event you are new to my style of writing, I will place my words in **black**. After my words, I place the words from the Bible in **blue** that support my position and my words. I do this so you know that what I am telling you is from scripture. The words of scripture will always be in blue and italicized. Therefore, I will now insert the words from scripture to show you that this story concerning the man and the pigs is true. This passage is recorded in Mark 5:1-20, *¹ Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. ² And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³ who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. ⁵ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶ When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. ⁷ And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." ⁸ For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" ⁹ Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." ¹⁰ Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. ¹¹ Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. ¹² So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." ¹³ And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. ¹⁴ So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ¹⁶ And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. ¹⁷ Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. ¹⁸ And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. ¹⁹ However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." ²⁰ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.* (NKJV)

King Solomon penned a verse in Ecclesiastes that fits perfectly into what I am desiring to tell you. Here is what King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9-11, *⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and **there is nothing new under the sun.** ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us. ¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.* (ESV) Many will tell me that I am wrong in my observation and also with the words spoken by King Solomon. Many will say that the computer, I-phone, electric car, airplane, solar panel, wind turbine and many other items are new and they did not, nor were not, something from the past. You have missed the

point! Items may be created as mankind advances across our journey in time. However, if you consider it, all these items were created by mankind from the influence of a righteous God who inspired mankind to create them in the first place. It is by the influence of Satan that newly created items are turned from something of good, to something bad, to even something that is worthlessly evil. For example, mankind created the wheel, thought a little deeper and built a cart, went a step further and added a beast of burden in front to pull the cart and they had a wagon. All of this is a progression of transportation, and the current mode of train, car, plane or boat are all another step in this progression. It is not something new, just modifications of transportation via a donkey or a camel. Solar, wind and waves are all means associated to weather and God is the master and creator of all weather. It is mankind's disobedience of God's simple rules that have led to the present day situations of forest fires, droughts, floods, storms such as tornados, hurricanes or snow storms, earthquakes and volcanoes. Here is an example from the Bible concerning the creativity of mankind. This illustration comes from Genesis, or beginning, and represents the first book of the Bible. The story is that of the building of Babel, Genesis 11:1-9, ¹ *Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.* ² *And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.* ³ *And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.* ⁴ *Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."* ⁵ *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.* ⁶ *And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.* ⁷ *Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."* ⁸ *So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.* ⁹ *Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.* (ESV) Do you see the point where God becomes upset with mankind's construction project? It wasn't that they had made the brick, or even had the inspiration to build a city. It was their pride that caused God's reaction. They wanted the name recognition, they did not want to praise God or give Him the recognition of His greatness to create mankind with a reasoning intelligence to create items.

Let's take this a little further and illustrate a couple of items that somehow mankind now thinks are new, modern and needed to express independence and identity. One such item is marriage and sexual relationships. God ordained marriage to be the relationship between one man and one woman. It said nothing about same sex, nor a bestiality marriage. To provide the illustration from God's Word pertaining to a godly marriage, I once again turn to Genesis, chapter 2 verses 20-25, ²⁰ *The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.* ²¹ *So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.* ²² *And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.* ²³ *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."* ²⁴ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* ²⁵ *And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* (ESV) These words form God's ideal marriage between one man and one woman. Let us move on to the book of Leviticus and see what is recorded there. First, let us look at sexual relations with a relative. Leviticus 18:6-17 provides the instructions concerning relatives. I am only going to place the principle statement here, verse 6, ⁶ *"You must never have sexual relations with a close relative, for I am the Lord.* (NLT) The verses between 6 and 17 indicate that you must not have sexual relations with your parents, siblings, or your in-laws. Verse 18 reads, ¹⁸ *"While your wife is living, do not marry her sister and have sexual*

relations with her, for they would be rivals. (NLT) Verse 19 reads,¹⁹ *“Do not have sexual relations with a woman during her period of menstrual impurity.* (NLT) God even instructed us to not defile ourselves by having sex with our neighbor’s wife, verse 20,²⁰ *“Do not defile yourself by having sexual intercourse with your neighbor’s wife.* (NLT) When I first read verse 21, I thought it was out of place in its location of placement in Leviticus. However, a little more thought, or inspiration from the Holy Spirit, brought it to its true meaning. First, let’s look at the verse,²¹ *“Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the Lord.”* (NLT) Molech was an ancient idol that required child sacrifices in its worship services. God has never required a child to be sacrificed for a sin offering or for any other reason. To take a child’s life is plain simple murder and is not directed by God, nor in any of His guiding principles. Yet, here we are in the midst of a political struggle over abortion rights for women. The stand taken by the left is pro-choice proclaiming this is a law for the health and well-being of the woman. Not so! This is the result of a lustful exchange between a male and a female. The female has no remorse over murdering the unborn child. There are other means for birth control that do not involve murder. Neither the method of birth control or the sexual act by itself requires the murdering of a child. That is the taking of innocent blood and it offends God greatly. It is also one of the major reasons that God brings judgment upon a race or a nation. I am not a prophet but I will give this country a warning. If this nation takes the political steps to place abortion rights back into the law books of the land, then do not be surprised at the judgment that God brings upon this nation. Every American who has the right to vote needs to read Leviticus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy chapter 28. Do not be surprised at the fire and heat that will be a result. Just for the sake of clarification on how strong God feels about sacrificing a child look at Leviticus 20:2,² *“Give the people of Israel these instructions, which apply both to native Israelites and to the foreigners living in Israel. “If any of them offer their children as a sacrifice to Molech, they must be put to death. The people of the community must stone them to death.* (NLT)

Continuing with the verses in Leviticus chapter 18. We are to verse 22,²² *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.* (ESV) We saw above that there were extra instructions from chapter 18 to chapter 20 pertaining to the act of offering a child to Molech. There are similar instructions as it relates to homosexual relationships. Turn over to Leviticus 20:13,¹³ *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.* (ESV) I have been told that women who practice lesbianism do not have the same curse, nor instruction, placed upon their relationships. Funny, they must have missed the statement from the New Testament! Many of these women will tell you they are a New Testament believer and that items and instructions from the Old Testament do not apply to them. Here is what the Apostle Paul spoke in Romans chapter 1:26-28,²⁶ *That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.*²⁷ *And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.*²⁸ *Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, He abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.* (NLT) Returning to Leviticus, I desire to make you aware of one final instruction pertaining to sexual practices. This verse is verse 23 of chapter 18,²³ *“A man must not defile himself by having sex with an animal. And a woman must not offer herself to a male animal to have intercourse with it. This is a perverse act.”* (NLT)

These are God’s instructions as they pertain to sexual intercourse. The remainder of Leviticus chapter 18 provides us with an explanation of why God directs us to follow these instructions. Those verses are here for your knowledge and understanding. Read them carefully, verses 24-30,²⁴ *“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways.*²⁵ *Because the entire land has become defiled, I am punishing the people who live*

there. I will cause the land to vomit them out.²⁶ You must obey all my decrees and regulations. You must not commit any of these detestable sins. This applies both to native-born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.²⁷ “All these detestable activities are practiced by the people of the land where I am taking you, and this is how the land has become defiled.²⁸ So do not defile the land and give it a reason to vomit you out, as it will vomit out the people who live there now.²⁹ Whoever commits any of these detestable sins will be cut off from the community of Israel.³⁰ So obey my instructions, and do not defile yourselves by committing any of these detestable practices that were committed by the people who lived in the land before you. I am the Lord your God.” (NLT)

The second item, which seems today to be a topic of major discussion, is transgender issues. Go back to the initial verse from Genesis that was provided to begin our conversation concerning marriage. There were only two genders given. One was male and the other was female. There is no other gender! Nowadays, we have such a menagerie of so-called genders that it is hard to believe that mankind has sunk to such a level of ungodliness. Let me give you a case in point. There was a local school board who had to make a decision over a gender type situation. One child declared themselves to be a cat. They had their parents to push the point to such an extreme that a litter box had to be placed in the restroom for the cat person to be able to use it to expel its body functions. There was a meeting of the Parent Teacher Association in conjunction with the School Board. This issue came up for discussion and after a lengthy discussion by the Superintendent of the School Board over the legality of the demand and their response in the placement of the litter box in the restroom, one male parent stood up and addressed the floor saying, “If this person wants to be treated like a cat and have a private litter box, then why not have all parents present at this meeting to bring in dead mice and birds so the cat person will have something to eat at lunch. Oh, please, do not remove the fur or the feathers.” Guess what, the cat person’s parents had a fit because this was against their wishes, but the cat person decided it was more enjoyable to have pizza and a cookie. Pray tell, who is it that is in charge? God is the master creator of the entire universe and King over that universe. All things, including this planet and everyone on this planet, were created by God Almighty. To say or act otherwise is rebellion against God. Most likely, there will be those who oppose this statement on the grounds that not everyone on this planet is an Israelite, or an alien living among the Israelites. You have overlooked a major declaration of God. Look once again at the statement, and/or promise that God gave to Abraham. Genesis 22:15-18, ¹⁵ *And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven* ¹⁶ *and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,* ¹⁷ *I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,* ¹⁸ *and **in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,** because you have obeyed my voice.”* (ESV) Because of Abraham’s obedience to God’s instructions all the nations on this planet have been blessed. The ultimate blessing that goes along with this promise is the redeeming act of Jesus’ death upon the cross. That blessing salvation is a free gift from God to every person on the planet. It is through the saving grace established by Jesus that mankind has the free will choice to choose where they want to spend eternity.

In my last book, *Jeremiah’s Mystery*, I used the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to unravel the six parts of Jeremiah’s commission from God. In doing this, the riddle in Ezekiel clearly illustrates that the planting and building of the transplanted throne of Judah took place in the isles of the sea, in other words, the British Isles. However, at the same time the major scattering of the northern kingdom (divorced Israel) took place throughout what is today Europe. This is not to be taken as replacement theology. It is not the church replacing Israel (the nation) as God’s chosen people. Israel is still Israel and the two kingdoms, the two nations, the two houses will be placed together in God’s plan of redemption. We will now begin to look at more of the causes of Israel’s divorce and God’s planned redemption. For this book, teaching or lesson, we will use the book of Isaiah.

The Book of Isaiah

The historical setting, for the prophetic teachings of Isaiah, was the city of Jerusalem during the reign of Kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. According to Hebrew tradition, Isaiah was martyred by being sawn in two by Hezekiah's wicked son and successor to the throne, King Manasseh. Isaiah is the best known, most educated and influential of the major prophets who wrote. He was married and had two sons. He lived around the same time as the prophets Hosea and Micah. There is a three-part purpose found in Isaiah's writing. First, he confronts his own nation and then other nations with God's message about their sin. Secondly, Isaiah prophesied a message of hope to a future generation of Jewish exiles who would in time be freed from captivity. Finally, in the third part, Isaiah prophesied that God was going to send the Messiah whose message of salvation would encompass all the nations on the earth.

There are nine special features characterizing the book of Isaiah:

- 1) For the most part it is written in Hebrew poetic form and is considered a literary masterpiece.
- 2) Isaiah is considered to be "the evangelical prophet" because, in all the Old Testament books, his prophecies about the Messiah contain the fullest and clearest message about Jesus Christ.
- 3) His vision of Jesus' sacrificial suffering and death on the cross for our sins is the most specific and detailed prophecy in the entire Bible.
- 4) The book of Isaiah is the most theological and comprehensive of all Old Testament prophetic books.
- 5) It contains more revelation about God's nature, character, majesty and holiness than any other Old Testament book.
- 6) Isaiah — whose name means "The Lord saves" — is the prophet of salvation.
- 7) Isaiah mentions the Holy Spirit more often than any other Old Testament prophet.
- 8) Isaiah often refers back to earlier redemptive events in Israel's history.
- 9) Along with Deuteronomy and Psalms, Isaiah is one of the three Old Testament books most often quoted or mentioned in the New Testament.

That establishes our introduction to the book of Isaiah. Now, it's time to get to work to learn some of the lessons that the prophet gave to all of us. Isaiah was a major prophet of God prior to the time of the prophet Jeremiah. Both preached the need for repentance to Jerusalem and the house of Judah. Both also mentioned the house of Israel and the captivity that they experienced 136 years before the exile of the house of Judah to Babylon. Jeremiah proclaimed God's warning for the last 40 years of Judah's existence prior to the exile in Babylon. On the other hand, Isaiah began many of these warnings of God along with the prophetic illustration that God had a plan for the restoration of not only Jerusalem, or Judah, but also for the rejoining of the house of Israel and the house of Judah and the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the entire world. Even with this prophecy, we must all understand that God gave us free will choice and we must make our personal choice as to whether we will obey God and accept Jesus as our LORD and Savior or reject God's free gift and follow the destructive path of Satan. In simple terms, that is the difference between the good of mankind and the bad of mankind. Those of the worst of mankind, the wicked, will be possessed by demonic spirits who enact the full influence of Satan.

In my last book, *Jeremiah's Mystery*, I quoted Bible verses as short jabs to illustrate the warnings that Jeremiah made. I did not expand any of those short jabs with cross-reference verses from the Old Testament to the New Testament. For this presentation, I will add additional statements and, also the cross references to the New Testament verses where they are known. I want to illustrate that there really is a need to understand both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Do not throw out two-

thirds of the Bible just because you are wearing the badge that says you are a Christian. You need to fully act as a Christian and obey God's simple rules and feasts. That makes up seventeen of the simple rules that God established. There are ten commandments and seven ordained feast days. However, if everyone would only follow the only commandment given to mankind by Jesus, all things would work in their proper order and be as God planned. The commandment from Jesus is John 13:34-35, ³⁴ *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."* ³⁵ *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (ESV)

Chapter 1 of Isaiah begins with a harsh statement at the beginning. Through Isaiah, God dictates an unmistakable message and a preview of coming events in His plan of salvation. Turn with me over to 2 Peter 1:16-21, ¹⁶ *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.* ¹⁷ *For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,"* ¹⁸ *we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.* ¹⁹ *And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,* ²⁰ *knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.* ²¹ *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* (ESV) Verse one introduces Isaiah as the prophet speaking God's words. however verse two begins the words of God given to Isaiah for him to proclaim to God's chosen people. Isaiah 1:2 states the words from God as spoken by Isaiah, ² *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.* (ESV) Let us all understand that Isaiah gave these words to Judah, however even in this verse with the word **children** there is a plural meaning hidden in this verse. Look at verses 3 and 4, ³ *The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."* ⁴ *Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.* (ESV) Israel, as used here, means all the tribes, both the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This would also include the scattered peoples as descendants of the Ten Tribe northern kingdom of Israel. If you do not think the United States of America is not included in what Isaiah spoke and what God meant, I want you to look at the condition of this nation. With the LBGTQ movement, the BLM movement, the abortion rights movement, the WOKE agenda and all the various months designated to honor one movement or another, such as PRIDE month for the LBGTQ group, is there any wonder why God is upset?

Remember, these are God's words given to Isaiah to speak over 2700 years ago and they still apply today, this day and in this nation! We have only viewed 3 verses (2-4) from Isaiah. Doesn't that alone tell you something of the condition of the heart and soul of this nation? Let's look at verse 5, ⁵ *Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* (ESV) We have only reviewed four of the five verses so far and here we have the simple truthful answer to the entire situation. God addresses two questions: First, why do we continue to do the things that God detests and will not accept His warnings of destruction? Second, why do we continue to rebel, fail to repent and return to being obedient to God? God Himself tells us the answer in the third sentence: *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* As a nation, we have turned to the thoughts of our own minds and not the instructions provide to us by God. Many people in this nation have very little respect of God, refuse to accept His commandments and want our ears tickled with pleasing words as we choose to follow our own desires instead of the righteous desires of God. These people actually have very little faith in anything the Bible teaches. Recall from Ecclesiastes 1:9 the

verse King Solomon spoke, ⁹ *What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.* (ESV) Why do we refuse to observe history and what our forefathers did and what they went through? Why do we desire to have our nation destroyed by God's judgment against us? Our forefathers, of this nation, took time to establish a constitution based upon Biblical principles and we have been blessed when we follow those principles. But, we are now receiving warnings that history is repeating itself. The people of the land are rebelling against the God of our forefathers and turning to pagan beliefs and practices. That is just plain old idolatry and against God's Word. We are bringing destruction upon ourselves if we do not repent and return to the teachings of God, the prophets, Jesus, the Apostles, and even our very own constitutional framers.

Isaiah chapter 1, verses 6-15, continues with God's displeasure against Judah and even compares them and their ways with Sodom and Gomorrah. Surely, you know what happened to those two cities in the book of Genesis. If not, the story concerning these two cities is found in chapters 18-19 of Genesis. I will not insert those two chapters here. Now, please look at God's request for His people to return to Him. First God asks His people to cleanse themselves, verses 16-17, ¹⁶ *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,* ¹⁷ *learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.* (ESV) God then asks His people to set down and talk with Him about their state of mind and what He would do for them if they repented of their sins. Finally, He warns what will happen if they refuse and continue to rebel. Verses 18-20, 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 like crimson, they shall become like wool.* ¹⁹ *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;* ²⁰ *but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."* (ESV) God's forgiveness is now available for all who confess their sins, repent and accept the spiritual cleansing God provides through the blood of Jesus who willingly gave His perfect life to pay the penalty for our rebellion against God, the Father. Those of mankind who refuse God's mercy and stubbornly choose to keep going their own way will be destroyed by being cast into the lake of fire at the end of time. Here are Jesus' words from the book of Luke, Luke 24:44-47, ⁴⁴ *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* ⁴⁵ *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,* ⁴⁶ *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,* ⁴⁷ *and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."* (ESV) Jesus spoke these words to the Apostles after His resurrection from the grave. Read, also, the following from 1st John, 1 John 1:5-10, ⁵ *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* ⁶ *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* ⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* ⁸ *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* ¹⁰ *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* (ESV)

The thoughts we have been seeing resume in verse 27 of Isaiah chapter 1 for those who repent and verse 28 tells us what will happen to those who continue to rebel, ²⁷ *Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.* ²⁸ *But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed.* (ESV) One final verse to look at and review in chapter 1. This verse, also, carries over the idea that the ultimate punishment for rejecting God and rebelling against His instructions would be the casting into the lake of fire. Read verse 31, ³¹ *And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to*

quench them. (ESV) The strong are the stubborn and the unchanging attitude and ideas of their mind is their work. Both will be consumed and there is no way to stop the punishment for their rebellion!

We begin chapter 2 with a specific statement in verse 2, ² *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,* (ESV) The latter days are normally considered to be the period of time between Jesus' resurrection and His second coming. Jesus' first coming was His birth at Bethlehem and His second coming will be when He returns to earth following the tribulation judgments to rescue those who turned to Him during that time and to destroy the forces of the Antichrist.

In verses 3-5 of chapter 2 we see the following, ³ *and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* ⁴ *He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.* ⁵ *O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.* (ESV) What can we learn from these verses? In verse 3, we see that many people from many nations had turned from their rebellion against God and come to God's Holy mountain to learn His ways and to walk in His paths. The 'He' in verse 4 is Jesus who will sit on the throne of David and rule the earth with pure justice. Jerusalem shall become the spiritual center of the earth at that time and the law and the word of the Lord will come from Jesus. We, also, see that the instruments of war shall be reshaped into plowshares and pruning hooks and there will be no wars among the nations. Verse 5 makes a simple statement: Let us walk in the light of the Lord. This verse is stated to the house of Jacob, that would mean all the tribes of Israel. We, also, have a reference to light. We saw the difference between light and darkness in the verses from 1st John on the previous page. In the Bible, light always refers to righteousness and darkness always refers to the ungodly.

Verses 6 thru 22 of chapter 2 describe the spiritual rebellion of the nation of Judah. They had rejected the true God, accepted and worshiped false gods (idols) and took pleasure in the immoral behaviors of surrounding nations, reverting to their pagan ways and beliefs. Isaiah knew that if the people had only a shallow sense of forgiveness based on their religious rituals, they never would truly repent and change their mindset, therefore, things would only get worse. Let's look at three verses within this group of verses. Verse 8, ⁸ *Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.* (ESV) Idols do not have to be made into some type of image. This nation has many idols that are worshiped, They may be an object or possession such as a fancy car or a hobby, sports team or a pet. They may, also, be a handiwork of mankind in the form of health care, science, media or in the form of a digital format (AI). When mankind begins to worship an object or entity other than God, we are worshiping an idol. Verse 11, ¹¹ *The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.* (ESV) Pride is a destroyer! Recall that the angel Lucifer was a majestic being of light until the day his pride and eagerness to be like God changed him into Satan. It was not God who created Satan, it was the choice of the angel Lucifer who was changed into Satan. Verse 17-18, ¹⁷ *And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.* ¹⁸ *And the idols shall utterly pass away.* (ESV) Basically, verse 17 repeats verse 11. One serious consequence of human pride is the belief that we can decide for ourselves—independent of God—how to live and what to consider as right and wrong. On the day of judgment (the Day of the Lord), God will humiliate those who have this arrogant attitude. In verse 18, we see that all idols disappear.

Chapter 3 begins with a strange statement that many people would not understand. Please look at verse 1, ¹ *For behold, the Lord God of hosts is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah support and supply, all support of bread, and all support of water;* (ESV) There will be many who view this statement from God as being unfair. They most likely would question why God would take away their food (bread and water). They will not see this as another, but stronger, warning to repent and change their ways before the actual judgment comes. They, also, will not see the connection between the actions of a few that causes even a nation to be punished. Let's look at verses 2-5 for a little more information. ² *the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder,* ³ *the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skillful magician and the expert in charms.* ⁴ *And I will make boys their princes, and infants shall rule over them.* ⁵ *And the people will oppress one another, every one his fellow and every one his neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the despised to the honorable.* (ESV) If you visualize the word picture Isaiah presents from God, you might get a glimpse of society breaking down. When a society rejects God's ways, it opens the way for injustice, cruelty and violence just as we are experiencing today! In this type of social environment, rebellion against parents and other authorities is common among youth. People slowly lose moral restraint. In other words, people refuse to control their behavior or take responsibility for their actions. Because of the rebellious attitude and action, the society falls apart. To further illustrate the collapse of society, turn over to **Romans in the New Testament** and read what is illustrated in verses 18-32 of chapter 1. ¹⁸ *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.* ¹⁹ *They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.* ²⁰ *For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.*

²¹ *Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.* ²² *Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.* ²³ *And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.*

²⁴ *So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies.* ²⁵ *They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

²⁶ *That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.* ²⁷ *And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.*

²⁸ *Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.* ²⁹ *Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.* ³⁰ *They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents.* ³¹ *They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.* ³² *They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.* (NLT)

Even with all of that stated and illustrated to show mankind what they are doing and what they have done in their rejection of Godly ways and instructions. God shows His love and His mercy toward His creation, those created in the image of God. Look at Isaiah chapter 3, verses 10-12, ¹⁰ *Tell the godly that all will be well for them. They will enjoy the rich reward they have earned!* ¹¹ *But the wicked are*

doomed, for they will get exactly what they deserve. ¹² *Childish leaders oppress my people, and women rule over them. O my people, your leaders mislead you; they send you down the wrong road.* (NLT)

Do you see the difference between the righteous and the wicked? Do you, also, see to whom God places a lot of the blame for the manner that His people are acting? It is the shepherds (priest and preacher), and the leaders (kings, governors and presidents) who are leading the people down the wrong road. In the next group of verses (13-15), we see a preview of the Day of the Lord. ¹³ *The Lord takes his place in court and presents his case against his people!* ¹⁴ *The Lord comes forward to pronounce judgment on the elders and rulers of his people: “You have ruined Israel, my vineyard. Your houses are filled with things stolen from the poor.* ¹⁵ *How dare you crush my people, grinding the faces of the poor into the dust?” demands the Lord, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.* (NLT) In verse 15, the last title (*the Lord of Heaven’s Armies*) is the same thing as the Lord of Host. God continues His judgment of the sins of His people and the next series of verses addresses God’s statement toward the women of Judah. During a time of spiritual, moral and political decline, the women of Judah paid more attention to their outward appearance than to inward beauty and character. Their lives did not reflect love for God and a desire for personal holiness. They were self-centered and obsessed with beauty and sexual attractiveness. I have been using the New Living Translation (NLT) to illustrate much of chapter 3 and will continue to use the NLT because of the ease of reading for the final verses in chapter 3, verses 16-24. ¹⁶ *The Lord says, “Beautiful Zion is haughty: craning her elegant neck, flirting with her eyes, walking with dainty steps, tinkling her ankle bracelets.* ¹⁷ *So the Lord will send scabs on her head; the Lord will make beautiful Zion bald.”* ¹⁸ *On that day of judgment the Lord will strip away everything that makes her beautiful: ornaments, headbands, crescent necklaces,* ¹⁹ *earrings, bracelets, and veils;* ²⁰ *scarves, ankle bracelets, sashes, perfumes, and charms;* ²¹ *rings, jewels,* ²² *party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses;* ²³ *mirrors, fine linen garments, head ornaments, and shawls.* ²⁴ *Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, she will stink. She will wear a rope for a sash, and her elegant hair will fall out. She will wear rough burlap instead of rich robes. Shame will replace her beauty.* (NLT) Verse 25 is stated for the men of Judah, ²⁵ *The men of the city will be killed with the sword, and her warriors will die in battle.* (NLT) We close out chapter 3 with verse 26 illustrating the punishment toward Jerusalem (the city) itself, ²⁶ *The gates of Zion will weep and mourn. The city will be like a ravaged woman, huddled on the ground.* (NLT)

Chapter 4 is a short chapter of only 6 verses. However, in those 6 verses, we see that those who survive the coming judgment will be ‘holy.’ They will reflect God’s character of moral purity, spiritual wholeness and separation from evil in the world. This type of spiritual cleansing and wholeness is only possible because Jesus shed His blood and died to pay the price for our sins and to ‘wash’ them away. Here are those 6 verses, ¹ *And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, “We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach.”* ² *In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.* ³ *And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem,* ⁴ *when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.* ⁵ *Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.* ⁶ *There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.* (ESV)

Chapter 5 is so full of warnings that I really want to insert the entire chapter here for your reading, however, I will not do that. There are certain portions of chapter 5 that I’d like for you to understand. Verses 1 through 4 tells of God’s vineyard (His people in Israel) who were planted and tended in order to produce good grapes, but instead the vineyard yielded wild grapes. Verses 5 and 6 tell us what God is going to do about His vineyard, ⁵ *And now I will tell you what I will do to my*

vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. (ESV)

God, through the voice of Isaiah, identifies who this metaphor actually is in verse 7, ⁷ *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!* (ESV) If you have read several of my works, every reader should understand that the house of Israel represents the ten tribes of the northern kingdom that was given a divorce by God and scattered. That scattering includes being scattered throughout Europe and the British Isles. Judah continues to be the house (southern kingdom) of the Jews. Both houses represent God's people who shall be rejoined at an appointed time. Through the prophet, God pronounces six woes on six types of sins: (1) selfish greed (v. 8), (2) drunken behavior (vs. 11-12), (3) deceit and mockery toward God's power and His intention to judge their sin (vs. 18-19), (4) twisting and misrepresenting God's moral standards (v. 20), (5) boastfulness and pride (v. 21), and (6) corruption of justice (vs. 22-23). There are a couple of items where I'd like to expand on the thought presented. In verse 13 which wasn't used in the explanation of these six sins, there is a portion that is also stated in the book of Hosea. First, the verse from Isaiah, ¹³ *Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.* (ESV) Hosea makes a similar statement in chapter 4:6 of his book, ⁶ *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.* (ESV) The other item I'd like to make a note on is verse 20. Verse 20 was identified as the twisting and misrepresentation of God's moral standards. Here is the verse in full, 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!* (ESV) It is common, in an ungodly society, for people to portray evil as good and wrong as right. Often this misguided thinking is done as an expression of perceived freedom, compassion, understanding and tolerance by misguided individuals. Many people today consider God's laws and standards to be harsh, limiting or even evil. They label Christ's followers—those who resist immoral ideas and behavior—as closed-minded, judgmental, hateful and intolerant. Those who choose to live by God's standards are said to be a danger to society. Followers of Christ must never compromise their commitment to God's standards of good and evil—right and wrong—**as revealed in His Word (the Bible)**. However, they must show a godly compassion to those who disagree with their beliefs on morality, sexuality and women's health issues (pro-life). Tolerance must be a concept for both sides to understand in any disagreement. Without tolerance on both sides of a disagreement, you either have a police state or total anarchy!

Chapter six begins with Isaiah having a vision of being in the presence of God. He declares the holiness of God but at the same time expressed the fact that he was a person of unclean lips who dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. One of the angels serving God at His throne brings a burning coal and touches Isaiah's lips and states, *Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.* Isaiah then receives a commission from the Lord. This is told in verses 8-13, ⁸ *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."* ⁹ *And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' "* ¹⁰ *Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."* ¹¹ *Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, ¹² and the Lord removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. ¹³ **And though a tenth remain** in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains*

when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump. (ESV) In reviewing things to occur in the future, we must, out of necessity, turn to the book of Revelation to locate statements that fulfill the prophecies of old. If we consider a remnant, we understand that only a portion of mankind will be alive at the close of the Great Tribulation. We looked through Revelation to gather some facts and find the following in Revelation 6:8, ⁸ *And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.* (ESV) In Revelation 8:11, we see that many people died because of the bitter water. Since the term one third is used repeatedly throughout the trumpet judgments, I would expect that one third of mankind died from the bitter water. Verse 8:11, ¹¹ *The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.* (ESV) Revelation 9:20-21 gives us another statement of the death of people who refuse to repent and turn back to God. Verses 20 and 21, ²⁰ *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.* (ESV)

In returning to the book of Isaiah, we once again are reviewing what Isaiah’s commission in chapter 6 indicates. Notice that only a tenth remain (Isaiah 6:13). If we did some quick calculations from the verses in Revelation, we would find these facts: There are approximately eight billion people now on planet Earth. If one fourth are killed in Revelation 6:8, we loose about two billion souls. We are down to six billion, and if we kill off another third of those remaining in Revelation 8:11 that’s another two billion lives. We are down to half of the current population and we see in Revelation 9:20 that others are also killed. Use verse 13 and read that only a tenth remain. Ten percent of 8 billion would be about 800 million people remaining. That is a little more than twice the population of the United States. There is one other tid-bit of information that is given in this verse from Isaiah. Notice that it will be burned again. The ‘it’ is assumed to be the earth, but when was it first burned? I do not know! However, I can tell you two things. First, at the time of Noah, God destroyed all living creatures from off the face of the earth because of their sinful nature. The eight persons saved were not on the face of the earth, they were in the ark and saved from the flood. God made a covenant with Noah and his sons at that time that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood. Turn to Genesis 9:13-15 to see the covenant, ¹³ *I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.* (ESV) Second, the next time the earth is destroyed and created again it shall be by fire. Turn to 2 Peter 3:1-13, ¹ *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word **the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire,** being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

⁸ *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (ESV)

We see in chapter 7 that Isaiah was sent to King Ahaz to deliver a message from God to the king. At this time, Jerusalem was being surrounded by King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Ephraim (Israel—the northern kingdom). King Ahaz became fearful, along with the people of Jerusalem, and all became anxious. The important portion of this first encounter is contained in verses 7-9, *⁷ thus says the Lord God: “ ‘It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass. ⁸ For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. And **within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.** ⁹ And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.’* “ (ESV) Notice the words I have made bold type. From the mystery of the book of Jeremiah to the prophecies of Ezekiel and Hosea, I have attempted to show that there is sufficient proof that the northern kingdom—called Ephraim in the book of Isaiah—was scattered from being a people and their scattering was throughout Europe and the British Isles. Once again, I make the statement that I am not attempting to have you believe that this is some type of replacement theology. That is not my message and that is not my thought. The church is the bride of Christ and not the chosen people of God. The chosen people of God are the Hebrew people. It just so happens that some of these people are Israelites (house of Israel) and some are Jews (house of Judah). Both are the true descendants of Abraham. One house holds the birthright (Israel) and the other holds the scepter (Judah). At some date in the future, both houses will be brought back together and rejoined. I will make one more statement pertaining to the church. As the bride of Christ, the church needs to prepare herself as a respected bride and not a whore. Neither God, nor Christ, desires a whore as the bride. As long as the church endorses the named abominations, sexual practices, idolatry and immoral acts that God forbids, there will be a delay in the next prophetic event on God’s calendar. That event is the Rapture, or the removal of the bride from the earth. I have not received a vision, nor have I dreamed of the date for the occasion of the Rapture. However, I have two possible thoughts. First, God could allow all the true believers who are elderly to pass naturally, and that could be one means to remove that portion of the church. At the same time, all children under the age of accountability could also be removed. That would leave a society made up of people between the ages of 12 to 70. The other thought is that there is a younger generation who does not agree with all the immoral acts. They are seeking the truth, they clean up the churches filth, reestablish godly morals and teach the truth of God’s Word. By the blood of Jesus, the price of sin has been paid and by forgiveness from God, the church’s sins are forgotten. The church would be prepared as the bride of Christ and be removed when this happens. All who remain on earth at that time will be the ungodly and the wicked who, at the Great White Throne Judgment on the Day of the Lord, will be judged and thrown into the lake of fire. There will be few who change their heart during the tribulation and escape this punishment. Think about it!

This is all terrible, terrible stuff we have been told will happen, but this seems to be the desires of mankind as a whole. The Bible teaches us time and time again that these things have happened before and we are only repeating history by following the wrong path!

Returning to Isaiah chapter 7, we now see one of those great illustrations of the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. We begin with verse 11, *¹¹ “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”* (ESV) It appears that God was testing King Ahaz. God offered to show the king a sign that God would do what He said He would do. However, the king answered in the following

manner, verse 12, ¹² *But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.”* (ESV) Pretending he was too humble, Ahaz rejected the proposal pertaining to a sign from God. Instead, Ahaz depended on his own limited understanding and looked to the power of Assyria for help. In order to show you that King Ahaz did not trust God and went to the king of Assyria for help, I must show you text from 2nd Kings and also from 2nd Chronicles. First, the recorded facts from 2 Kings 16:5-18, ⁵ *Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to wage war on Jerusalem, and they besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him.* ⁶ *At that time Rezin the king of Syria recovered Elath for Syria and drove the men of Judah from Elath, and the Edomites came to Elath, where they dwell to this day.* ⁷ *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, “**I am your servant and your son. Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me.**”* ⁸ *Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king’s house and sent a present to the king of Assyria.* ⁹ *And the king of Assyria listened to him. The king of Assyria marched up against Damascus and took it, carrying its people captive to Kir, and he killed Rezin.*

¹⁰ *When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, he saw the altar that was at Damascus. And King Ahaz sent to Uriah the priest a model of the altar, and its pattern, exact in all its details.* ¹¹ *And Uriah the priest built the altar; in accordance with all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, so Uriah the priest made it, before King Ahaz arrived from Damascus.* ¹² *And when the king came from Damascus, the king viewed the altar. Then the king drew near to the altar and went up on it ¹³ and burned his burnt offering and his grain offering and poured his drink offering and threw the blood of his peace offerings on the altar.* ¹⁴ *And the bronze altar that was before the Lord he removed from the front of the house, from the place between his altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north side of his altar.* ¹⁵ *And King Ahaz commanded Uriah the priest, saying, “On the great altar burn the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering and the king’s burnt offering and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their grain offering and their drink offering. And throw on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice, but the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by.”* ¹⁶ *Uriah the priest did all this, as King Ahaz commanded.*

¹⁷ *And King Ahaz cut off the frames of the stands and removed the basin from them, and he took down the sea from off the bronze oxen that were under it and put it on a stone pedestal.* ¹⁸ *And the covered way for the Sabbath that had been built inside the house and the outer entrance for the king he caused to go around the house of the Lord, because of the king of Assyria.* (ESV) Notice that this is basically the same story as told in the book of Isaiah in chapter 7. Notice, also, what King Ahaz did instead of trusting in the Lord God of Israel. He honestly denied God and ran off to the king of Assyria to kiss his butt. We now have confirmation of the story in Isaiah 7, but I gave you two reference passages and the second passage is in 2nd Chronicles 28:16-21, ¹⁶ *At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help.* ¹⁷ *For the Edomites had again invaded and defeated Judah and carried away captives.* ¹⁸ *And the Philistines had made raids on the cities in the Shephelah and the Negeb of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages. And they settled there.* ¹⁹ *For the Lord humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had made Judah act sinfully and had been very unfaithful to the Lord.* ²⁰ ***So Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.*** ²¹ *For Ahaz took a portion from the house of the Lord and the house of the king and of the princes, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria, but it did not help him.* (ESV)

Allow me to continue with the actions of King Ahaz and show you how far he was willing to disregard the instructions that Isaiah was given from God to give to King Ahaz. God said He would protect His Holy City (Jerusalem) if the king and the people would trust God, honor God and obey

God. Review verses 22 through 27 in 2nd Chronicles, ²² *In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the Lord—this same King Ahaz.* ²³ *For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus that had defeated him and said, “Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.” But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.* ²⁴ *And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem.* ²⁵ *In every city of Judah he made high places to make offerings to other gods, provoking to anger the Lord, the God of his fathers.* ²⁶ *Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.* ²⁷ *And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.* (ESV)

For the moment, I'd like to teach you another hidden truth. The Bible is God's puzzle book! You have to study the Bible from cover to cover to even begin to understand where the pieces are to bring a truth to full light. The passage that we just completed was an example of this. Here is a truth that has taken me many years to fully understand. Contained in God's word is the passage that when you bring a charge against someone you must have two or three witnesses to prove yourself. This same principle applies to God's Word. During the time of your reading or studying you happen to realize that there are similar statements made in two or three different places. That is when you have found one of God's cardinal principles. The story we were viewing came from Isaiah. Then we inserted the passages that added information to our story from 2nd Kings. In reading further, we found even more information in 2nd Chronicles that added to our story. The information should illustrate the principle of obeying God and trusting in God's words when the segments are added together.

Returning to Isaiah chapter 7, we finally get to the prophetic statement that is made in verses 14-17, ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* ¹⁵ *He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.* ¹⁶ *For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.* ¹⁷ *The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”* (ESV) This sign had both immediate and future applications. The immediate sign would refer to a new bride, who would be a virgin until the time of her marriage. Then before her son would be old enough to know right from wrong, the kings of Syria and Israel would be destroyed. The future prophetic sign would be the birth of Jesus. Mary was a virgin and remained a virgin until after the birth of Jesus. The virgin's son was to be named 'Immanuel,' which means 'God with us.'

Chapter 8 begins with the illustration of the two or three witnesses spoken of above. Verses 1-2 follow, ¹ *Then the Lord said to me, “Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, ‘Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.’”* ² *And I will get reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me.”* (ESV) Verses 3-4, ³ *And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, “Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz;”* ⁴ *for before the boy knows how to cry ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria.”* (ESV) Since this is Isaiah speaking, the prophetess must be his wife and the son born would be Isaiah's second son. The first son was named Shear-jashub (Isa 7:3), meaning, 'a remnant shall return.' This name highlighted God's intention to preserve a faithful group of people to carry out his plan for salvation. The second son, named Maher-shalal-hash-baz, means 'the spoil speeds, the prey hastens.' There are a lot of the older generation of today that laugh at Johnny Cash's song, *A Boy Named Sue*. Names from the past had a lot of different meanings that we wonder about today. God is showing to Isaiah what is going to happen in the future

and He is even using the naming of children as a sign or as an event. This second son's name pointed toward the destruction of both Syria and Ephraim by Assyria. But this gets taken one step further. Look at verses 7-8, ⁷ *therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks,* ⁸ *and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.*" (ESV) This verse is a visual image. 'Waters of the river' is the Assyrian army under the king of Assyria and all his glory. We see in verse 8 that the Assyrians would sweep over Judah. Didn't we see this turning of the king of Assyria upon Judah is the passage from 2 Chronicles 28. Notice the last two words of this passage *O Immanuel*. Remember Immanuel means, 'God With Us.' God is attempting to show Judah that there will be a remnant for the future.

Isaiah had been attempting to persuade Judah to depend on God rather than foreign alliances for help. As a result, he was accused of conspiracy and treason. This has been a pattern for God's people throughout the history of the church. Ungodly people have rejected and persecuted those who have challenged them not to rely on their own unbiblical methods and programs, but instead, to repent and return to their original Source of power and purpose. That Source is God Almighty! Through this time of opposition, God reminded Isaiah that he had no reason to fear other people. He was to continue to fear and honor only the Lord (vs. 12-13). In times of difficulty and danger, God alone is the One we must fear. He is the One we must depend on to rescue and free us from trouble. The majority of God's people were living in rebellion, but there were a few people who remained faithful to the Lord and his will. They were the ones who were to guard and preserve God's Word. In every period of history, the Lord's true disciples must take a stand and defend God's unchanging truth so they can pass that truth along to the next generation. This concept and truth remains today. The current majority of people do not have the desire to stand upon God's Word as a Christian, or as a unified church, when opposition challenges their beliefs.

Chapter 9 includes a very familiar passage that is used by many during the Christmas season. ⁶ *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.* Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV) There are several things that I could bring up at this juncture of our study of Isaiah. First, this is a future prophecy pertaining to Jesus, the Messiah and Savior of the world. Second, all should know that while this pertains to the coming day of Jesus' birth, His birth was not on the 25th day of December. Older generation farmers and any shepherd would tell you that shepherds would not be out in the fields with their flocks at the end of December in the northern hemisphere. They would have moved their flock into the penned area around their home or a stable area to protect them from the cold.

We also must understand that there is a definite difference between our current calendar and the structure of the Jewish calendar. The Jewish calendar has not changed from the time of Isaiah even to today. I propose to you that the true birth of Jesus occurred at either the 10th or 15th day of Tishrei. I know, you just had a thought that I just shifted my allegiance from a Christian perspective to a Jewish point of view. I assure you I am not Jewish. I was raised Southern Baptist, but even the largest Protestant denomination in the United States has fallen short of the message of Jesus. I have come to the conclusion that most of those who call themselves Christians are following a counterfeit religion. Here is an example from my days as a youth. While growing up Baptist I heard repeatedly that 'Once saved, always saved' and also, 'Six day sinner, one day Baptist.' Neither meant much to me during my youth, teen years or even those early years as an adult. After my marriage to my third wife, a Methodist, I was

shown that being a backsliding Christian can take away the saving grace of Jesus' death on the cross. My eyes began to open to more truths that I had no truthful knowledge of. As a Gentile, there are many things that we are not taught, even though they are clearly stated in the Bible. As a believer in Christ I have to follow what Jesus modeled during His earthly ministry. Jesus was a Jew, born in the land of the Jews, of a Jewish mother who was a descendant of King David through his son Nathan. Jesus' earthly step-father Joseph was a descendant of the royal line of David through his son Solomon. Jesus walked, talked and taught under a Jewish calendar and followed the feast days of God. Why is it that Christians of today do not follow in the footsteps of Jesus? We are not perfect, only Jesus was perfect, however, it should be every Christians' desire to follow Jesus' ways as closely as possible. Therefore, the truth is that Jesus was born in either the month of September or October and not in December. The 25th day of December is more of a pagan feast day than most Christians understand. This is a feast day of the worshipers of the sun god celebrating the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice. From this day forward, the days would be getting longer with the passage of each day until the summer solstice in our month of June.

After Isaiah reveals the prophecy of the coming Messiah, he speaks of the arrogance and oppression of Jacob, but he goes further and specifically mentions Israel, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria. Recall that Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. Ephraim was the son of Joseph, and God elected him as the leader of the two sons of Joseph. Manasseh was the first born of Joseph, but in the blessing given upon the head of the two boys, the lead was in the right hand of Jacob. He placed that hand on Ephraim and not on the head of Manasseh. Joseph attempted to correct this but Jacob (Israel) told him 'no' that the younger would rule over the older. To show the words of Isaiah I am going to give short statement portions of chapter 9, verses 8-9, ⁸ *The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will fall on Israel;* ⁹ *and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:* (ESV) Verse 10 shows us the arrogant pride of Israel, ¹⁰ *"The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place."* (ESV) We can almost see the same arrogant pride as the people had while building the tower of Babel. Verses 11 and 12 tell us who God has sent to discipline Israel, ¹¹ *But the Lord raises the adversaries of Rezin against him, and stirs up his enemies.* ¹² *The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.* (ESV) The people continue to maintain their misguided ways and do not repent of their sins. Verses 14-16 inform us what God does, ¹⁴ *So the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—* ¹⁵ *the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;* ¹⁶ *for those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up.* (ESV) Even after the Syrians and the Philistines attack Israel, we see that they do not change their attitude of rebellion against God. Verse 21 shows us how bad things have gotten, ²¹ *Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours Manasseh; together they are against Judah. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.* (ESV) If you read all the verses of chapter 9, you will find this statement, *For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still*, used 4 different times (vs 9:12, 17, 21 and 10:4).

Chapter 10 continues with Isaiah uttering the words of God of those he used to judge Israel, that would be Assyria, verses 5-8, ⁵ *Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury!* ⁶ *Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.* ⁷ *But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few;* ⁸ *for he says: "Are not my commanders all kings?"* (ESV) Even so, God says in verse 11 the following, ¹¹ *shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?"* (ESV) God had used those who did not believe in Him (the Assyrians) to punish His unbelieving people. Now God would punish

Assyria for their pride and cruelty. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah predicted Assyria's destruction (vs. 16-19). This specific prophecy was fulfilled when God sent one angel to put to death 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian camp in Judah. We will see this when we review chapter 37.

After the calamity of the Assyrians has taken place against Judah, God directs Isaiah to prophesy about the hope and the remnant that shall return. This is recorded in verses 20-27, ²⁰ *In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.* ²¹ *A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.* ²² *For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.* ²³ *For the Lord God of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.* ²⁴ *Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did.* ²⁵ *For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction.* ²⁶ *And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt.* ²⁷ *And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat."* (ESV) Isaiah, once again, assures God's faithful followers that after the Lord had judged Israel, He would restore a small but strong group of people who trusted Him and His Word. These faithful people would represent the true Israel. God's plan of salvation for the world will always be carried out by those few who truly believe and obey God's Word, not by those who say they believe but do not show it in their actions. That would again be those who wear the badge of Christian, but do not do anything which reflects the teachings of Jesus.

The first two verses of chapter 11 read as follows, ¹ *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.* ² *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.* (ESV) If you question this and would like to see how the generations flow from Jesse, through King David to Jesus go to my website, www.vqpub.org and click on *Our Charts* and then click on the *Adam & Eve Family Tree™ (More Info)* to see the full (earthly side) ancestral chart of Jesus. There are over 1,550 names on this chart and it breaks out the tribes of Jacob (Israel). On the other hand, you may want to see the full listing of verses for each and every name on that chart. In that case go to my website and click on *Our Books* then select and click on *Lineage of the King of Kings (More Info)*. One version of the book is fully hyperlinked to take you from the list of names in the Index to the location of the name on the chart and, from the reference verse on the chart, back to the full listing of the verses for that name (with certain restrictions). There are over 3,700 hyperlinks in that book. Together (the chart and the companion book), you have a wonderful means to study the relationships between Adam and Eve, to the different tribes of Israel, and on down the line of Judah to Jesus. The *Spirit of the Lord* in verse 2 represents the Holy Spirit. Isaiah mentions the Holy Spirit more often than any other Old Testament prophet. Verse 4 refers to Christ's return to earth to judge everything properly and to destroy all the wicked. This will be necessary in order to establish His reign of perfect justice. Doing what God says is right and staying in a right relationship with Him are necessary elements of the Messiah's reign as stated in verse 5. These qualities are also requirements for all who would have leadership roles and authority in Christ's church. At that future time, when Christ reigns on earth, there will be such peace, safety and restfulness that formerly wild and ferocious animals will not even harm a child who takes charge of them or plays alongside them (vs 6-9). This is a picture of how Christ's reign will totally transform, not only people's behavior, but nature as well. Verses 11-16 of chapter 11, ¹¹ *provides an image of how God's remnant shall be regathered, 11 In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.*

¹² He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. ¹³ The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. ¹⁴ But they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them. ¹⁵ And the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals. ¹⁶ And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt. (ESV)

The restoration of both Israel and Judah will involve the following: (1) the faithful remnant, or small portion of Israel, that is left; (2) a gathering of Jews to Christ; (3) a spiritual cleansing and renewal for Israel; (4) blessing and prosperity in the land; (5) blessing for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike; (6) judgment on the ungodly; and (7) complete restoration of the nation in ‘the latter days’

Chapter 12’s six verses represent a song of praise toward God in that day. ¹ You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. ² “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” ³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴ And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ “Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. ⁶ Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.” (ESV)

The chapters between 13 and 23 record judgments pronounced on foreign nations and on a spiritually rebellious Jerusalem. Isaiah starts with Babylon and Assyria and continues with prophecies against smaller nations. These chapters teach that all nations and peoples are accountable to God. Those who oppose and reject God and His plan of salvation will be judged and condemned, while those who accept and follow Him will triumph in the end. Isaiah prophesies, in chapter 13:1, that Babylon would be overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah. Babylon was the center of a wicked and ungodly culture, defying the Lord and His ways from the early days of human history. Ironically, God used this wicked nation to punish His own rebellious people by allowing Babylon to conquer Jerusalem and take its residents into captivity for a period of seventy years. In the New Testament, Babylon symbolizes the world’s false religions and political systems that oppose God and His people. In the end, Babylon would meet the worst ending, or destruction, more so than many of the nations it once conquered. Doesn’t this go back to the promise that God gave to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (NKJV) Here are verses 6 through 13 of chapter 13, ⁶ Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! ⁷ Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every human heart will melt. ⁸ They will be dismayed: pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame. ⁹ **Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.** ¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless. ¹² I will make people more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir. ¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger. (ESV) For a moment, I would like for you to look at two things with me. Before I begin what I intend to say, look one more time to the verse that is highlighted above. Do you see where the land is made desolate and the sinners are destroyed from it?

Now, think about two things in this nation. First, look at the abortion issue. Do you have any idea where the top ten states are that performed abortions in 2019? Here is a list showing the total number of abortions performed in these states:

1. California — 154,060
2. New York — 110,360
3. Florida — 77,400
4. Texas — 58,030
5. Illinois — 52,780
6. New Jersey — 48,830
7. Georgia — 41,620
8. Pennsylvania — 32,270
9. North Carolina — 31,850
10. Michigan — 31,510

That's a total of 638,710 unborn babies murdered in just one year in ten of our 50 states. Think about it!

Secondly, according to the Internet, the porn capital of the United States is in the San Fernando Valley in California. But, the top ten cities where porn is either sold or rented on pay-per-view follows:

1. Orlando, FL
2. Las Vegas, NV
3. Wilmington, DE
4. Raleigh, NC
5. Charlotte, NC
6. Minneapolis, MN
7. Atlanta, GA
8. Tampa, FL
9. Anchorage, AK
10. Austin, TX

Take a moment to think what the data and the prophecies of Isaiah say. What would you think if you lived in any of these states, or cities and God said that He was going to destroy them for their sinful acts against His Word and His instructions. Would you want to live in these places? Would you be Christian enough to stand up and attempt to make changes with the politicians concerning the laws in these states and cities?

The prophets of the Old Testament were God's truth bearers and spiritual leaders who warned, and warned again, about the sinful nature of those God had chosen as His people. They were meant to live according to God's instructions and to pass those instructions on to other nations. They didn't do that too well and the prophets told the people how upset God was, including what He was going to do to get them to change their ways. These were selective warnings to discipline and correct the actions of the people. These warnings increased and the people were told what would happen if they didn't change their attitude toward God. God would take the next step and judge them with wrath, destruction and length of time they would be exiled from the land that God had given them. Today, we can call all of that history. It has happened before and we should take the time to understand what happened, how it happened and what the people of that time were doing to cause God to become upset in the first place. I understand that it will be Jesus' anger for the first three and a half years of the tribulation. But, it is God's wrath that shall be poured out during the last three and a half years in the Great Tribulation. There really is a shift at the midpoint of the seven year tribulation period.

We are reviewing the prophecies against some of the nations that had fought against Israel or Judah. In chapters 15 and 16, we see an oracle concerning Moab. Let's recall who Moab is as a person and not a nation. The nation just took the name of the ancestor and we need to turn back to Genesis,

chapter 19, verses 36-38, ³⁶ *Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.* ³⁷ *The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day.* ³⁸ *The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.* (ESV) We should understand that the Moabites are cousins to the Israelites. Just as we have fights among families today, we see that even these fights are not new, just a continuation of what has happened previously. Even though the Moabites had opposed God and His people, God expressed compassion for the Moabite victims in their terrible suffering. Isaiah felt compassion as well. In the same way, we should feel compassion and pity for those who destroy themselves by pursuing sin and evil. God takes no pleasure in the destruction and death of the wicked, but He desires to extend mercy and forgiveness to those who turn from their own ways and follow Him. We can see this compassion of God in the following verses from chapter 16 (vs. 4-5), ⁴ *let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land,* ⁵ *then a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness.”* (ESV) The person who sits on the throne in verse 5 is Jesus.

In chapter 17, we find an oracle concerning Damascus. Damascus was, and is, the capital of Syria. During the time of Isaiah, Damascus was to be overthrown. Ephraim, meaning the northern tribes or the house of Israel, would also suffer because of its political partnership with Damascus against Assyria. The downfall and destruction of many of the nations mentioned in these chapters are examples of how people can be ruined by associating with those who oppose God. God’s judgments on Israel would cause a small group of His people to stop depending on false ‘gods’ and turn back to the true God, their Maker. Through times of trouble and war, they would finally realize the uselessness of idols and how powerless other ‘gods,’ or humans, are to save them. Forgetting or neglecting God has always been a persistent sin among God’s people. Jesus warns that the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth, the pursuit of material things and the pleasure of sin can distract us from devotion to God and can keep His Word from being effective in our lives. As a result, we might forget God, stop praying daily and no longer find pleasure in serving Him and obeying His Word. When this happens, we lose the blessing of God’s presence. The hedge of God’s watch care is removed and we find Satan stepping in to fill the void that we have created. We really do punish ourselves when we turn from God’s ways and His blessings. It is these times that we need to repent, pray, change our ways and return to God earnestly and honestly.

Godly men and women should have no problem in finding other references to God’s instructions to follow in His ways and to keep His Word in our hearts. There was a night vision that God sent to King Solomon that illustrates what many of the prophets teach. Turn with me to 2nd Chronicles to see this in the following verses, ¹² *Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.* ¹³ *When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people,* ¹⁴ **if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.** ¹⁵ *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.* ¹⁶ *For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.* ¹⁷ *And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules,* ¹⁸ *then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.’* ¹⁹ *“But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them,* ²⁰ *then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my*

sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ²¹ *And at this house, which was exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?'* ²² *Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore he has brought all this disaster on them.'* “ 2nd Chronicles 7:12-22 (ESV) There are two things I would like you to understand in this passage. First, notice in verse 18 the restating of the promise that God made with King David. God told King David that there would always be a person of his line holding the throne of Israel until the return of Shiloh, meaning the return of Jesus. Secondly, because of King Solomon's turning from God, the pledge made in verses 19 and 20 was acted upon by God and He removed the throne from the land of Judah. That is the mystery hidden in the book of Jeremiah. The planting and the re-building did not occur in Judah. However, it will return to Judah with the second coming of Christ. There are a few verses to mention from chapter 17 of Isaiah. Look at verse 3 to see that Ephraim is a part of this oracle, ³ *The fortress will disappear from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus; and the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the children of Israel, declares the Lord of hosts.* (ESV) Next, look at verses 7-8, ⁷ *In that day man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will look on the Holy One of Israel.* ⁸ *He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands, and he will not look on what his own fingers have made, either the Asherim or the altars of incense.* (ESV) Finally, look at verse 10a, ¹⁰ *For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge;* (ESV) Do you see both God the Father and Jesus, the Son in this verse? God, the father, is the God of your salvation and the Rock of your refuge is Jesus.

Chapter 18 is an oracle concerning Cush. Cush, meaning ancient Ethiopia, was south of Egypt. Its king, at that time, ruled all of Egypt. The king probably had sent messengers to Israel in order to make an alliance against Assyria. But, it would not be human powers that would defeat the Assyrian enemy God would do so in His own time. Following the defeat of Assyria, the people of Cush would bring gifts to Jerusalem.

An oracle against Egypt is stated in chapter 19. Isaiah prophesies about the judgment that would come to Egypt. As a result, it would do Judah no good to join herself politically with Egypt to fight the invading Assyrians. However, Isaiah gave four prophecies to be fulfilled 'in that day' when God's judgment came on Egypt. (1) The Egyptians would fear Judah when they realized their judgment had come from God (vs. 16-17). (2) After a time of hardship and suffering, some people in Egypt would worship God and build altars to honor God (vs. 18-19). (3) The Egyptians would cry to God, who would then send them a Savior, and many would turn to Him (vs. 20-22). (4) Egypt, Assyria and Israel all three would worship God together (vs. 23-25). Though 'that day' is not clearly defined here, other passages suggest that it refers to end-time events associated with the tribulation period when God executes his final judgments on the earth, and to Christ's thousand-year reign on earth immediately following the tribulation.

Chapter 20 represents a sign against Egypt and Cush. Isaiah was to appear in public without wearing his outer clothes for three years to represent what would happen to Egypt and Cush when the Assyrians took them into captivity. The message was a warning to the people of Judah not to trust an alliance with Egypt. Instead, they were to depend on the Lord their God for help and security. Isaiah may not have been completely naked. Instead, he may have removed all but his undergarment or loincloth. Perhaps he presented himself in public in this shameful manner for only a part of the day. This action by Isaiah refers to a warning that something unpleasant is about to happen. Isaiah obeyed God even through it meant shame and embarrassment for three years. If we obey God, speak up for truth and separate ourselves from ungodly beliefs and behaviors, then we can expect to suffer rejection, embarrassment and humiliation. Standing for what is right and suffering persecution often go together.

God gives Isaiah a second vision of the downfall and destruction of Babylon in chapter 21. When the enemy of God's people was defeated, it would shatter Judah's dependence of false gods. The first defeat took place in 689 B.C. when Sennacherib conquered Babylon and smashed its idols. John, one of Jesus' original disciples and the author of Revelation, heard the same words in his vision (Rev 14:8; 18:1-2). He prophesied that the end-time Babylon—a symbol of all nations and people that oppose Christ and His followers—would be destroyed. Then Christ will complete His people's redemption. Christ's followers should pray for the fall and destruction of end-time Babylon as the symbol of sin and false religion.

An oracle concerning the valley of vision is found in chapter 22. This name refers to Jerusalem, or to the valley near Jerusalem, where God had revealed Himself in prophetic visions. God sharply criticizes the people of Jerusalem for rejecting His personal revelation and for their careless and rebellious attitude in the face of great danger (vs. 1-14). Isaiah, a true prophet, shared the deep feelings of trauma over the tragedy that resulted from the people's spiritual rebellion. Though the people were destroying themselves, many were unaware and blind to their sin and destruction because they had been so far from God for so long. Some even celebrated their ungodly way of life (vs. 12-13). But Isaiah grieved for the people, and for God, whom they had betrayed. The prophet shared God's sorrow. When God's people imitate and compromise with the world by tolerating, accepting and even practicing ungodly behaviors, God always gives them opportunity to admit their helpless spiritual condition and turn to Him again. Christ wants all churches to examine their spiritual condition in the light of Biblical standards. Like Isaiah, today's true prophets should challenge people to turn from their own self-destructive ways and to cry out humbly to God for mercy and help.

An oracle concerning Tyre and Sidon is spoken by Isaiah in chapter 23. Tyre was an ancient Phoenician port city—a center for world commerce—on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of the regions occupied by Israel and Judah. Its citizens were wealthy, but also evil and full of pride. Isaiah prophesied that God would bring that city down for 70 years and then restore it for a time (vs. 7-8; 17-18). Then God's people once again would engage in trade with Tyre. Tyre would carry out trade with merchants from many nations by practicing dishonest business practices, along with other immoral activities, to attract business and gain wealth from those nations.

Chapters 24 through 27 deal with end-time events using apocalyptic language about future events and disasters, the type of language used in the book of Revelation. These chapters speak of God's judgment against the world for its rebellion against God, but they also describe the blessings God has in store for His people. Chapter 24 describes God's coming judgments that will destroy most of the earth and its inhabitants. This time of unmatched horror and utter destruction is called the Great Tribulation in the New Testament. After this worldwide judgment, Christ will return to rule the earth with those who remained faithful to Him. Here are a couple of verse segments that I'm using to show you what this prophecy predicts. First, verse 3 of chapter 24, ³ *The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the Lord has spoken this word.* (ESV) Follow that with verses 5-6, ⁵ *The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.* ⁶ *Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.* (ESV) There seems to be two sharp contrast in chapter 24. The first one is in verse 14-16a where we have singing, and praise, ¹⁴ *They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the Lord they shout from the west.* ¹⁵ *Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord; in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.* ¹⁶ *From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.* (ESV) The second sharp contrast is verse 16b where the singing and rejoicing is replaced with the grief and distress Isaiah feels for all the dishonesty and rebellion around him. ^{16b} *But I say, "I waste away, I waste away. Woe is me! For the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed."*

(ESV) Verse 21 informs us of the punishment the satanic and demonic spiritual forces opposed to God will receive. At the end of history, they will be restrained, imprisoned, judged and punished. This includes Satan himself. Finally, in verse 23, we see that the Lord of Hosts reigns. After tearing down all evil powers, God's kingdom will be established on the earth, and the Lord Jesus will reign there. God will finally receive, from those on earth, the glory and honor that He deserves.

Chapter 25 provides two important statements in the 12 verses of that chapter. Verse 6 illustrates the banquet feast that God will have with His people. The second item (in verse 8) states that God will 'swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces'. Here is what I understand from these verses. Isaiah praises God for the ultimate defeat of everyone and everything that opposed His kingdom purposes and for His role as the faithful Savior and Comforter of His people. Isaiah prophesies about the future kingdom, salvation and celebration that will follow Christ's return to earth. 'This mountain' refers to Mount Zion, or Jerusalem. 'All peoples' indicates how the gospel—the 'good news' of Jesus—will have spread throughout the world, bringing people from all nations into a personal relationship with God. The abundant and bountiful banquet that will be enjoyed in God's kingdom represents the wonderful blessings His followers will experience in His presence. In God's future kingdom, all the trouble, sorrow, humiliation, misery and death that now exist on the earth will be removed forever. Like a loving parent, God Himself will wipe away all the tears from His children's eyes and never again will there be a reason for sadness and grief. Promises like these should cause us to see the Lord's great love and compassion for us. They should also inspire us to pray with passion for the completion of His purpose to restore His perfect relationship with those who accept His Son, Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The first three words of chapter 26 state, 'In that day' and tell us the song that will be sung at that time. In verse four of this song, we see the pure truthful statement, *⁴ Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.* (ESV) The more impressive statement is given in verses 7-9, *⁷ The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous. ⁸ In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul. ⁹ My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.* (ESV) I must add the following: One of the strongest and most direct Old Testament declarations of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is stated in verse 19, *¹⁹ Your dead shall live; **their bodies shall rise.** You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and **the earth will give birth to the dead.*** (ESV) God reminds us that during the difficult and stressful days at the end of history He will give us perfect peace if we have been faithful to Him and hold fast to His ways. During the final days of history, those who know God will wait with great anticipation for Christ's return. Isaiah describes that expectancy as a deep longing or desire for Christ to finally appear and fulfill God's greater purposes on earth—to establish perfect justice and a reign of complete righteousness.

We see some of God's redemption of Israel in chapter 27. Verse one is a little strong in its statement, but necessary to see what God does to those who spread evil upon the earth. *¹ In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.* (ESV) Isaiah uses this imagery to symbolize evil and the sinful world in revolt against God. Satan has been called a serpent since the book of Genesis. He has also been called the great dragon. Notice that God will slay (destroy) the dragon that is in the sea. The sea, in many passages of scripture, is a metaphor for peoples or nations. In other words, God is going to destroy Satan and all evil from among the peoples of earth. Look at verse 6, *⁶ In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.* (ESV) I will continue to emphasize who **Jacob, Israel and Judah** are from scripture. Jacob is our third patriarch, Abraham was first, then Isaac and then Jacob. Jacob is the father

of all twelve tribes. Israel may have a dual meaning. On one hand, Israel is the house of Israel and represents the northern ten tribes who were given a divorce by God and cast off. On the other hand, Israel is the national name for all the tribes and is interchanged between Jacob and Israel many times. The difficult part is the attempt to separate this dual name in its proper place. Isaiah knew that Assyria had taken the northern ten tribes into captivity. He even tells of King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Ephraim (king of the northern ten tribes) in chapter 7 (vs. 7-9) as he speaks to King Ahaz, king of Judah. Judah represents the southern tribes and is identified in Strong's Concordance as item 3 in the listing for Judah. In the statement in verse 6, above I would say that the Jacob and Israel are references to the same group of people in this case. Why do I say that? Okay, look at what Isaiah is presenting; he presents the imagery of root, bloom and shoots all interconnected parts of a plant or flower. Therefore, in this case, the terms Jacob and Israel herein are interchangeable. But, to show you how much this is truly important, look at the four Gospel writers and the facts relating to Jesus. Jesus' ministry was in Judea (a Roman province) and the term Judah is not used in the New Testament. Matthew 10:6 has a very interesting statement made by Jesus. I will use the King James Version to first show you this. Matthew 10:6, ⁶ **But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** (KJV) That is the verbiage used to identify the northern ten tribes. But look at what has been done to this passage:

⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt 10:6 (NKJV)

⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt 10:6 (Darby)

⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt 10:6 (ESV)

⁶ but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. Matt 10:6 (NLT)

⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. Matt 10:6 (NIV)

I probably have ten different translations of the Bible and use them all to get the gist of what is said or, possibly, a simple statement that is not in old English. I was not born into a world using old English, was not taught it in my school years and do not find it to be the easiest Bible to read. Even so, all the various translations use 'the house of Israel' except the two shown here; the New Living Translation (NLT) and the New International Version (NIV). Allow me to show you what I see in this passage from Isaiah 27:6. *In days to come Jacob shall take root.* That indicates to me that the Jews will finally accept the fact that Jesus is their long awaited Messiah. They will be shocked to see the scars on His hands and feet, and understand that it was their forefathers who crucified Jesus in approximately the year 33 CE. Their zeal for a relationship with God and His son Jesus will be like a bloom (*Israel shall blossom*), and their encouraging word to the nations of earth will be the shoots (*put forth shoots*) that fill the whole world with fruit. Praise God for that coming day! There are two more passages that I'd like you to see from chapter 27. The next is verse 9, ⁹ *Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing.* (ESV) No idol or portion of pagan religion will be in their midst. Finally, in verses 12-13 we find the following, ¹² *In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel.* ¹³ *And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.* (ESV) This will be the entire nation of Israel who will gather with the Raptured church to be God's children and all will worship God and Christ in Jerusalem on God's ordained feast days.

Isaiah's message in chapter 28 turns back from distant-future events to a message that pertains to his own time. Again, he prophesies of Israel and Judah. He harshly condemns their sin and spiritual rebellion, and reveals God's coming judgment. Yet, God will discipline His people only as much as necessary to remove their rebellious attitude. See verses 5-6, ⁵ *In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people,* ⁶ *and a spirit of justice to him who*

sits in judgment, and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. (ESV) God's focus is on separating those who will follow Him faithfully and remain spiritually pure, though the suffering is great. Isaiah describes Israel's sin in terms of the shameful conduct of drunkenness resulting from their use of intoxicating wine. Both the people and religious leaders had traded goodness and truth for vomit and distorted judgment. Verse 7, *7 These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed by wine, they stagger with strong drink, they reel in vision, they stumble in giving judgment.* (ESV) Their drunken immorality and lack of self-control showed their clear rejection of God's commands. God's people should be filled with His spirit rather than wine that makes them drunk and out of control. The question arises in verse 9, *9 "To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast?"* (ESV) Isaiah gives a proclamation to the people of Jerusalem that foretells of a cornerstone laid in Jerusalem and the justice that will be executed under Jesus' rule. Read verses 14-29, *14 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem! 15 Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter"; 16 therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.' 17 And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter." 18 Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. 19 As often as it passes through it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be sheer terror to understand the message. 20 For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in. 21 For the Lord will rise up as on Mount Perazim; as in the Valley of Gibeon he will be roused; to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work! 22 Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord God of hosts against the whole land. 23 Give ear, and hear my voice; give attention, and hear my speech. 24 Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continually open and harrow his ground? 25 When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and emmer as the border? 26 For he is rightly instructed; his God teaches him. 27 Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin, but dill is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod. 28 Does one crush grain for bread? No, he does not thresh it forever; when he drives his cart wheel over it with his horses, he does not crush it. 29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.* (ESV)

I have previously shown you the fact my loving wife showed to me concerning backsliding. She clearly showed me that the concept of 'once saved always saved' doesn't always work if you are doing your thing for six days and attending church on one day. Look at what Isaiah says in chapter 29 as part of the siege of Jerusalem. Ariel is a symbolic name for Jerusalem. Although Jerusalem's residents felt secure and continued their religious festivals as usual, God would bring severe judgment upon them because of their sin. When people who have known God's standards and expectations stubbornly continue to reject them, there comes a point when they no longer recognize their rebellion and their need to turn to God. As a result, God removes them from their place in his kingdom. Woe to this backsliding nation of today who is more interested in themselves than God and more in tune toward humanism than righteousness. They fail to repent and many have become the scoffers who mock God's promise of a return of Jesus to the earth to correct all things and judge the earth in truth and honesty. Look at verses 13-16 in chapter 29, *13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a*

commandment taught by men, ¹⁴ *therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.*” ¹⁵ *Ah, you who hide deep from the Lord your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”* ¹⁶ *You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?* (ESV) How many of the confused transgender group of society are saying the same things today. Don't they claim that God did not know what He was doing when He made them? Don't they say that God made a mistake in their gender? Remember this statement was said by Isaiah about 2,700 years ago.

Consider the fruitful field that Isaiah illustrates in verses 17-24. Isaiah's prophecies of judgment always include an element of hope because one of his main themes is Israel's restoration. **These verses give a glimpse of the last days of this age when the humble and needy of Israel will turn to God** (vs. 18-19 and **the wicked will be destroyed** (vs. 20-21). **Israel's full restoration will occur shortly before Christ's return to reign on earth.**

The next portion of Isaiah's prophecies is God's warning to the people of Judah instructing them not to go to Egypt. Chapter 30, verses 1-5, ¹ *“Ah, stubborn children,” declares the Lord, “who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; ² who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! ³ Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation. ⁴ For though his officials are at Zoan and his envoys reach Hanes, ⁵ everyone comes to shame through a people that cannot profit them, that brings neither help nor profit, but shame and disgrace.”* (ESV) Judah had sought an alliance with Egypt in an effort to gain protection from Assyria. By doing so, however, they were rejecting God's counsel, refusing to believe His promises and throwing aside His principles of holy living. They showed open disrespect and dishonor toward God as they preferred to seek the help of human power and ability rather than the power of God's Spirit. Isn't that the mindset of people today? They do not trust God in watching over them and protecting them. **We now believe more in the false gods of science than we do in God.** COVID-19 has proven to us that there is no faith in God, we now believe science, CDC and the media for our medical care. Between big pharma, big business, the deep state, United Nations and several very wealthy individuals, we are witnesses to an ever increasing march toward the one world government of the end times. The day will come when we find out that all previous prophecies will have come true. Mankind as a whole has no regard for God, or His Christ! This will not be the only time that God instructs people of Judah not to go to Egypt. In the book of Jeremiah the remnant of Judah, after the captives are led to Babylon, ask Jeremiah to seek an answer from God whether they should go to Egypt or not. The answer was 'NO!,' but the people told Jeremiah that God didn't say that, and they went to Egypt anyway. It says in Jeremiah that all who went to Egypt perished except a few who escaped.

There are some heavy statements made by Isaiah in chapter 30. The verses from 8-14 is one of those heavy statements, ⁸ *And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever. ⁹ For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord; ¹⁰ who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, ¹¹ leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.” ¹² Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, “Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on them, ¹³ therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging out, and about to collapse, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant; ¹⁴ and its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a shard is found with which to*

take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.” (ESV) The people could not bear to hear a prophetic message that condemned their ungodly lifestyle. They were tired of hearing about God and the holy lifestyle He required. They wanted to hear encouraging and pleasant messages that were not offensive. They will reject God’s messengers who proclaim the truth and instead choose leaders who preach what they want to hear. They will insist on pleasant, fun and flattering messages that do not challenge and expose their sin and worldliness. These messages give them a false sense of security by saying that God loves and accepts them no matter what they do. God’s reply is made in verse 15, ¹⁵ *For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” But you were unwilling,* (and Judah’s reply in 16a) ^{16a} *and you said, “No! . . .* (ESV) To return, or repent, means to have a change of heart, mind and direction, turning from our own way and following God and His way. Judah could be saved if only its leaders and people would humble themselves, abandon their sin, return to God and put their confidence in Him. Otherwise, they would be defeated and abandoned since they would not listen and respond to God, They would stand out as a clear example of the consequences of rejecting God. Recall what happened to King Ahaz on pages 14 and 15.

The greatness and mercy of God is shown in the verses from 18-26, ¹⁸ *Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.*

¹⁹ *For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.* ²⁰ *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.* ²¹ *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.* ²² *Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “Be gone!”*

²³ *And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures,* ²⁴ *and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork.* ²⁵ *And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.* ²⁶ *Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow. (ESV)* Though they do not deserve it, God desires to show mercy and favor to his people if only they will express a sincere desire to know and follow Him. Even after punishing His people, God again will favor them with His comfort (v 19) and guidance (v 20). If they will reject false gods, the Lord will restore His covenant blessings to those who remain faithful to Him (v 23). The underlined portion of verse 25 is most likely an indication of the battle of Armageddon at the end of the Great Tribulation.

Chapter 31 continues in the instructions not to go to Egypt. Here is what the first 3 verses read. Verse 1, ¹ *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!* ² *And yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.* ³ *The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together. (ESV)* Isaiah pronounces grief and distress on those who had done evil—who were trusting in Egypt’s military might rather than relying on the Lord. We must be careful not to commit the same sin as Judah. We must not rely on human strength, knowledge and skill while ignoring God and His purposes. We must

trust the Lord, honor His commands and pray daily for His guidance. He will help us face any situation and will meet all our needs in His own way and in His own timing.

We also see in this chapter the action that God takes against Assyria—if the people of Judah would only trust Him—in verses 6-9, ⁶ *Turn to him from whom people have deeply revolted, O children of Israel.* ⁷ *For in that day everyone shall cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you.* ⁸ *“And the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of man; and a sword, not of man, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor.* ⁹ *His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,” declares the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.* (ESV)

Isaiah, once again, changes his themes from one of grief and sinfulness to the theme of restoration and the full grace of Christ as King when He reigns upon the earth after the Great Tribulation. We see this in verses 1-8 of chapter 32, ¹ *Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice.* ² *Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.* ³ *Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention.* ⁴ *The heart of the hasty will understand and know, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly.* ⁵ *The fool will no more be called noble, nor the scoundrel said to be honorable.* ⁶ *For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the Lord, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink.* ⁷ *As for the scoundrel— his devices are evil; he plans wicked schemes to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right.* ⁸ *But he who is noble plans noble things, and on noble things he stands.* (ESV) There is a difference stated in the remaining passage from verse 9 through 20. In verses 9-10, we see the people are ‘at ease’ meaning they are carelessly content or complacent about their ungodly lifestyles even though their sin was destroying their families and their nation. What we see in verses 17-18 is completely different, ¹⁷ *And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.* ¹⁸ *My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.* (ESV)

For chapter 33, I will show you several verses and then make a few comments. Verses 1-2, ¹ *Ah, you destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed, you traitor, whom none has betrayed! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have finished betraying, they will betray you.* (ESV) The immediate application is to the Assyrians who showed no mercy and would soon be destroyed. However, this statement also applies to the Antichrist and to Satan himself who both will be conquered and thrown into the lake of fire for eternity. Verse 2, ² *O Lord, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble.* (ESV) This is the prayer of those who have remained faithful to God. They are asking the Lord to fulfill His promise to save them and destroy the enemy. Verse 10, ¹⁰ *“Now I will arise,” says the Lord, “now I will lift myself up; now I will be exalted.”* (ESV) The Lord God now rises to have His say. Verses 14-17, ¹⁴ *The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”* ¹⁵ *He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,* ¹⁶ *he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.* ¹⁷ *Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar.* (ESV) Isaiah describes God’s faithful people who will come through the ‘fire’ of His judgment. Notice that it will be only those whose conversations, actions and attitudes flow from hearts that are right with God and who are accepted as faithful. According to this passage, a godly person is described specifically as one who: (1) lives by the righteous requirements of God’s law, (2) speaks sincerely without dishonesty, (3) rejects making money by unfair means, (4) refuses to be involved in criminal violence and (5) refuses

to think about doing evil or taking pleasure in the wicked behavior of others. Finally, verse 22, ²² *For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.* (ESV) This portion of prophecy looks forward to the time of Jesus on His throne ruling over His people.

Chapter 34 begins with the following 2 verses, ¹ *Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it.* ² *For the Lord is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.* (ESV) These verses give an overview of the terrible judgment that will affect all nations at the end of time. They speak of God's wrath—His justified anger, vengeance and punishment—against all sin and rebellion. The content of this passage refers to God's destructive judgment on the Edomites as enemies of God and His people. Isaiah also prophesies a coming judgment on all who are opposed and hostile to God and His Word.

While the preceding chapter described God's judgment, chapter 35 describes a time when the prophetic landscape is changing from a spiritual desert to a wilderness blossoming with life and beauty. This great change occurs as a result of God's majestic and glorious presence among His people. Along with this revelation of God's glory will be a display of His miracle-working power, a clear path for those who follow God in purity and holiness and an overwhelming sense of joy among God's people. Chapter 35 has several levels of application and fulfillment, beginning with the spiritual salvation made available through Jesus Christ. It also applies to how the church would spread that message about Christ and his kingdom around the world. These things will reach their highest level of fulfillment at Christ's second coming. Read with me verses 3-5, ³ *Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.* ⁴ *Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."* ⁵ *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;* (ESV) Read also verses 8-10, ⁸ *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.* ⁹ *No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.* ¹⁰ *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* (ESV) Isn't 'the way' the name Jesus used to define His ministry? Don't those who are redeemed and believe in Christ walk there?

At the beginning of our study of Isaiah, I mentioned that Isaiah would deal with four different Kings of Judah during the time he prophesied for the Lord. We are now entering that portion of Isaiah's prophecies that involved King Hezekiah. In chapter 36, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against Judah to destroy it. The field commander (the Rabshakeh) stood and mocked King Hezekiah, and indirectly God, by using the words that all the other kings could not stop the Assyrian army from capturing who they pleased. How did Hezekiah think that the God of Israel was going to stop them from taking the city of Jerusalem? The men of Jerusalem were told to remain silent during this speech by the field commander.

King Hezekiah tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth then he went to the temple after hearing these words of the field commander of the Assyrian army (chapter 37). It was right for King Hezekiah to take his concerns to God in prayer. This godly king humbly relied on God and accepted His direction through the prophet Isaiah. Things changed and the field commander went to assist his master to fight in two other places. But, the mocking of the God of Israel continued and King Hezekiah received a message from Assyria. He took the message to the temple and laid it out before the Lord and prayed. Isaiah gave the king an answer that the king of Assyria would fall. Here are the verses showing what the results were, verses 36-38, ³⁶ *And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the*

morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁷ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁸ And as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (ESV) There is one other item I'd like to insert in my presentation. Please look at verses 31-32, ³¹ And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³² For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (ESV) I'm going to travel out on a limb and make a statement. This actually happened, however, it did not occur at the time of Isaiah. It happened at the time of Jeremiah. Look at Jeremiah Chapter 44:13-14, ¹³ I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, ¹⁴ so that none of the remnant of Judah who have come to live in the land of Egypt shall escape or survive or return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return to dwell there. For they shall not return, except some fugitives." (ESV) There would be eight people who managed to escape from Egypt and return back to Judah. These eight people are the three daughters of King Zedekiah, their three handmaids, the prophet Jeremiah and Jeremiah's faithful scribe Baruch. That is the total remnant of the house of Judah that escaped from Egypt. Remember, Judah is in exile in Babylon and this is the remnant from Egypt of the remnant left in Judah. I find it interesting that there were eight people who were saved. That matches the number of people that were on the ark to escape the flood. God is an awesome God who does watch over his people. Praise God for His grace.

Chapter 38 illustrates the God loop. The people, even the king, could pray to God and the answer from God would come from the prophet in many cases. We find King Hezekiah in bed sick and Isaiah comes to him and tells him that God said he would die. King Hezekiah turns toward the wall (actually he prayed in the direction of the temple) and prayed to God. Immediately, Isaiah receives an answer and informs the king that God heard his prayer, saw his tears and would add 15 years to his life. Here are the two verses that show this sequence, verse 1, ¹ In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." (ESV) Verses 4-6, ⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: ⁵ "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. ⁶ I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city. (ESV) There is one other item I'd like to place here. Look at verses 7-8, ⁷ "This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he has promised: ⁸ Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined. (ESV)

God's statement, that Hezekiah must prepare for death and Hezekiah's response in prayer to God teaches us some important truths about our relationship to God. All the things that God declares about the future are not necessarily unchangeable. Often God will describe a situation the way it will be if people continue on a particular path or do not respond as they should to his message. No matter what happens when we are confronted with tragedy, we can be assured that God cares about what happens to us. He is compassionate and sensitive to our experiences and will always do what is best. Our prayers do have an effect on God, His purposes and the way He works out His perfect plan. We cannot force God to change His plans or cause Him to do things He does not want to do. Rather, our prayers often allow us to understand what God desires us to do, if we are willing to change and come into agreement with His purpose. God gives us a real part in deciding our course of action, directing the outcome of situations and fulfilling His plans. We always must be convinced of the Scriptural truth that prayer does influence things. Finally, the exact nature of the sun's shadow being reversed on the stairway is not explained. What is clear is that it happened just as God said it would, as a sign to Hezekiah that God

had heard his prayer, seen his tears and would heal him. **I love it!** God can make a shadow move in reverse on a stairway but mankind now says that the effects of the weather are a result of global warming. How absurd can mankind become in the truth and facts of God and His control over **all** creation? Even the weather, even today!

Chapter 39 is a short chapter of only 8 verses. The gist of what this chapter says is that an envoy came from Babylon because they heard that the king had been sick. Hezekiah was pleased and showed them everything that was in the treasury, the palace and the armory. Isaiah came to Hezekiah and asked him what was said and what did he show to them of the treasures of Judah. Hezekiah said he showed them everything. We find Isaiah's response in verses 5-8, ⁵ *Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: ⁶ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. ⁷ And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."* ⁸ *Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days."* (ESV) It seems to me that this was very unwise for Hezekiah to do. It would appear that his pride overtook his head (i.e., his God given common sense) and he went too far in an attempt to impress these representatives from Babylon. Look at the resulting statement from Isaiah that all these items belonging to Judah would be taken to Babylon at a future time. The last verse seems to me to be a very self centered statement from Hezekiah. Hezekiah seems to be more worried about peace than he is concerning the treasures of Judah.

Ah! The flip of a page brings us a new concept. Chapter 40 begins the last portion of Isaiah's book and these last 26 chapters reveal hope, restoration and the coming of the Messiah. These chapters were written during the later years of Isaiah's life, but they really applied to a more distant time. God revealed these prophecies in order to offer hope and comfort to His people during their captivity in Babylon 150 years after Isaiah's time. They are filled with prophetic revelation about the coming Messiah—how His life would change things—and His future kingdom on earth. Some of the events foretold here were fulfilled in connection with Judah's captivity in Babylon and their eventual restoration while others reflect a more distant time. Some of the prophecies given here are yet to be fulfilled. In general, chapters 40-48 focus on deliverance for God's people. Chapters 49-57 focus on redemption through God's Servant, Jesus Christ. Finally, chapters 58-66 focus on God's glory, favor and judgment.

Let us begin with chapter 40. The first word in this chapter is comfort, comfort for God's people, read verses 1-2, ¹ *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.* (ESV) Isaiah comforts God's people by prophesying to a future generation, encouraging them with the good news that their period of correction and discipline was nearly over and that God's salvation and blessing were coming. Even so, God reminds them through Isaiah that they had to pay double for their sins before all of this would come about. Verse 3, ³ *A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* (ESV) This verse, like much prophecy in Isaiah, has several levels of meaning and application: (1) It refers to the Jews' return and restoration from exile; (2) Also, the referring of the coming of the Messiah and the salvation He would bring; (3) Finally, it refers to the complete liberation of God's people at the end of time when God establishes a new heaven and a new earth. Verse 5, ⁵ *"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."* (ESV) Israel would see the wonder and greatness of the Lord when He freed them from Babylonian captivity. However, God would reveal His Glory and power in even greater ways through Jesus Christ, who would free people from captivity to sin and bridge the gap of separation from God. Verses 7-8, ⁷ *The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass.*

⁸ *The grass withers, the flower fades, but **the word of our God will stand forever.*** (ESV) One of the greatest statements in the entire Bible is stated here. All of nature is frail and destined to come to an end, but God's Word endures forever. His promises will be fulfilled, His purposes will be accomplished and His unchanging truth will never fail. Verse 10, ¹⁰ *Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.* (ESV) Salvation, blessing and comfort are all associated with the Lord's coming and with his presence among His faithful people. He comes with power and authority like a mighty ruler, yet His presence is like that of a compassionate Shepherd tending His lambs. This truth should fill God's people with faith, hope and a deep desire to experience His nearness while they look forward to Jesus' return. Verse 11, ¹¹ *He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.* (ESV) The Bible describes God and/or Jesus as one who picks up an individual lamb in order to rescue and protect it and to keep it close to Him. Even if God is all powerful, and the nations of the world are like dust to Him, He still cares for each of His own in a personal way. We must never think that God, or Jesus, is so majestic and detached from our situations that He ignores our individual needs, concerns and problems. Verses 13-15, ¹³ *Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? ¹⁴ Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?* (ESV) These verses point to God's limitless wisdom, greatness, majesty and creative power. The truths expressed here should inspire God's people to trust Him even more. He is the One who can help and rescue us in any situation; and His kingdom will last forever. Verses 29-31, ²⁹ *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.* (ESV) To wait for, or hope in, the Lord means to trust Him completely with our lives and to serve Him faithfully. We are to wait patiently for His promises and purposes to be fulfilled. Those who truly have put their hope in God will turn to Him quickly as their source of help in times of need.

Isaiah was even blessed by God in his prophecies as he foresaw Cyrus more than 150 years before Cyrus' birth (verse 2 of chapter 41). ² *Who stirred up one from the east (Cyrus) whom victory meets at every step? He gives up nations before him, so that he tramples kings underfoot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.* (ESV) Follow that verse with verse 4, ⁴ *Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.* (ESV) The main portion of chapter 41 lies between verse 8 and verse 16, ⁸ *But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; ⁹ you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; ¹⁰ **fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. ¹¹ Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. ¹² You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. ¹³ For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." ¹⁴ Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵ Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff; ¹⁶ you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in the Lord; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.*** (ESV) Israel was the name given to Jacob after his struggle and victory with God described in Genesis 32:28, ²⁸ *And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."*

(NKJV) In the passage from Isaiah the prophet encourages Israel not to fear destruction because God had chosen them as the channel through which He would reveal His promise and plan of spiritual salvation to the rest of the world. Verses 21-24 represents a challenge from God for the nations to bring forth their idols and to have them predict the future. None can speak of the future as accurately as Isaiah had done because his prophecies came from the Spirit of God. The idols were the creation of the hands of men with no ears, no eyes or no spirit to inform anyone anything. Verses 21-24, ²¹ *Set forth your case, says the Lord; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.* ²² *Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come.* ²³ *Tell us what is to come hereafter; that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified.* ²⁴ *Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you.* (ESV)

Behold! Chapter 42 are verses proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. Verses 1-9, ¹ *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.* ² *He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;* ³ *a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.* ⁴ *He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.* ⁵ *Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:* ⁶ *“I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,* ⁷ *to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.* ⁸ *I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other; nor my praise to carved idols.* ⁹ *Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”* (ESV) Isaiah foresees a time when Gentiles and faithful people of Israel will all praise the one true God. People from nations all over the world will honor the Lord because of the glorious salvation and spiritual victory they have experienced through their relationship with Jesus. Because of the spiritual blindness and deafness of God’s people, they were being attacked and completely robbed by their enemies. There was no one to rescue and restore them. Verses 23-25, ²³ *Who among you will give ear to this, will attend and listen for the time to come?* ²⁴ *Who gave up Jacob to the looter, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey?* ²⁵ *So he poured on him the heat of his anger and the might of battle; it set him on fire all around, but he did not understand; it burned him up, but he did not take it to heart.* (ESV)

Chapter 43 speaks about Israel’s rescue and release from Babylonian captivity. God’s discipline, as well as His deliverance, was an act of love for His people. Verse 1, ¹ *But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.* (ESV) Verses 4-7, ⁴ *Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.* ⁵ *Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.* ⁶ *I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth,* ⁷ *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”* (ESV) In this section, God expresses His love for Israel and the benefits of that love. All the blessings mentioned here apply even more to those who have become God’s children through faith in Jesus Christ. Verses 10-13, ¹⁰ *“You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.* ¹¹ *I, **I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.*** ¹² *I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are*

my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and I am God. ¹³ Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?” (ESV) Although the people of Israel still were spiritually blind, God had a future for them in His plan of redemption. They still would be witnesses of this plan. They would also serve His purposes to help reveal that plan to the rest of the world. Verses 14-15, ¹⁴ Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice. ¹⁵ I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.” (ESV) Verse 22, ²² “Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel! (ESV) At the time of Isaiah’s writing, Judah was not yet seeking God or calling on Him for forgiveness and help. They continued willfully in their prideful acts of sin. If they refused to give up their spiritual rebellion, turn from their sin and turn back to God, they would certainly face destruction and disgrace. This is shown in the last group of verses in chapter 43, verses 25-28, ²⁵ “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. ²⁶ Put me in remembrance; let us argue together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right. ²⁷ Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me. ²⁸ Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling. (ESV)

Chapter 44 begins with God making a statement to both Jacob and Israel that they are His chosen people. Verses 1-2, ¹ “But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! ² Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. (ESV) Continue with verse 5, ⁵ This one will say, ‘I am the Lord’s,’ another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.” (ESV) One of the obvious results of the Spirit being poured out upon individuals is their bold testimony that they belong to the Lord. The Spirit is God’s seal upon our lives. This ‘seal’ confirms that we are God’s people and guarantees our place in God’s kingdom. In verses 6-8, God confirms that He, and He alone, is God. ⁶ Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. ⁷ Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. ⁸ Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.” (ESV) Through these verses, God establishes two things. First, God declares that He is God and then He sets up the next statement He gave to Isaiah. The second item God wanted to be known by everyone was the folly of idolatry. Verses 9-20, ⁹ All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. ¹⁰ Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? ¹¹ Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together.

¹² The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. ¹³ The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. ¹⁵ Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!” ¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”

¹⁸ They know not, nor do they discern, for he (Satan) has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?”

²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (ESV) God exposes how foolish it is to make an idol or image out of man-made material and then pray to the useless object for help. I have stated previously that today’s society has created new gods, such as science, health and weather as something to worship. Not to mention the devotion that is given to sports, material objects and pets. All of these items are false gods that cannot answer you, nor help you. God remains as God and there is no other! After this statement concerning idolatry is made, God returns to providing hope and encouragement toward repentance and return to the ways of God. Look at verses 21-23, ²¹ Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. ²² **I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.**

²³ Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel. (ESV) Once again Isaiah’s vision jumps ahead 150 years and God provides Isaiah with a view of Cyrus decreeing that the Jews are to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and its temple after the 70 year exile is completed. All things were in the control of God for Cyrus’ birth, rise to power, victory over the Babylonians and the release of the Jews would all go together just as Isaiah proclaimed they would. The actual prophecy of Isaiah is in verse 28 of chapter 44, ²⁸ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’ “ (ESV)

Chapter 45 continues foretelling the place that Cyrus held within God’s master plan. Although Cyrus was not a worshiper of God, Cyrus is called ‘His anointed,’ the same title God later gave to His Son, Jesus. Cyrus was anointed with authority in the sense that God used him to set Judah free from captivity so that God could continue to use the nation of Israel to reveal His plan of spiritual salvation for the human race. I will use various verses within chapter 45 to illustrate these facts. Verses 1-7, ¹ Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: ² “I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, ⁶ that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things. (ESV) Verse 11, ¹¹ Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him: “Ask me of things to come; will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? (ESV) Verse 13, ¹³ I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,” says the Lord of hosts. (ESV) Verses 15-17, ¹⁵ Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior. ¹⁶ All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in confusion together. ¹⁷ But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. (ESV) Verses 19-20, ¹⁹ I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in vain.’ **I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right.** ²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who

carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. (ESV) Verses 22-23, ²² “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’ (ESV)

A day will come when all nations will acknowledge that the God of Israel is the only God, and Israel never again will be put to shame. God invites all individuals on the earth to repent, to change their heart, mind and direction toward God, turn from their own rebellious way and give up their sin, and turn to Him for spiritual salvation. The Lord desires to save all people! Read this for yourselves in 2nd Peter 3:9, ⁹ *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance.* (ESV) Through God’s saving grace He wants to have a personal relationship with anyone who will accept His forgiveness and trust Him with their life. Paul shows us through his writings in Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10-11 that although not every person accepts Christ and commits himself or herself to the Lord during this life, all people one day, either voluntarily or involuntarily, will bow before Christ and confess that He is Lord! Romans 14:11-12, ¹¹ *for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.* (ESV) Philippians 2:10-11, ¹⁰ *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (ESV)

I am including a major portion of chapter 46 out of necessity. God speaks to Isaiah and instructs him to compare the idols of Babylon to Himself. Verses 3-10, ³ *“Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; ⁴ even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. ⁵ “To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? ⁶ Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! ⁷ They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. ⁸ “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, ⁹ remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ (ESV) Verses 12-13, ¹² *“Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from righteousness: ¹³ I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.” (ESV)**

Chapter 47 prophesies Babylon’s destruction. Babylon represented a self-centered and proud pagan culture. Its people lived for sensual pleasure satisfying the desires of the physical senses in a lustful and unrestrained way and trusted in their own knowledge and magic. Such people have always been destined for sudden and overwhelming judgment. In the last days of the tribulation—when God unleashes His most severe judgment on all the earth—Babylon, representing all ungodly and humanistic cultures of the world, will be overthrown by God. Verses 5-8 appear to me to give the main theme of this chapter, ⁵ *Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms. ⁶ I was angry with my people; I profaned my heritage; I gave them into your hand; you showed them no mercy; on the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. ⁷ You said, “I shall be mistress forever,” so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. ⁸ Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, “I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children”:* (ESV)

Chapter 48 reveals that Judah was full of people who claimed to follow and worship God, but in reality they had broken their covenant with Him. They had rejected the truth of His Word and were

living in rebellion against Him. They had a form of religion yet they denied God His rightful place in their lives. Verses 1-2, ¹ *Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord and confess the God of Israel, but not in truth or right.* ² *For they call themselves after the holy city, and stay themselves on the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is his name.* (ESV) Verses 9-12, ⁹ *“For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.”* ¹⁰ *Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.* ¹¹ *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.* ¹² *“Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.* (ESV) God’s Holy name will be vindicated by His people Israel. Verses 17-19, ¹⁷ *Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.* ¹⁸ *Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; ¹⁹ your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me.”* (ESV)

Chapters 49-57 contain many prophecies about the ‘Servant of the Lord,’ who ultimately is God’s Son, Jesus Christ. His ministry brings atonement for sin and the opportunity of salvation to people of all the nations. Christ also brings hope of restoration for Israel and the certainty of judgment on the wicked. In chapter 49 verse one, we see the prophecy of Jesus’ Messianic calling as being in effect even before He was born to the virgin Mary. Verse 1, ¹ *Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.* (ESV) Verses 5-7, ⁵ *And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—⁶ he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”* ⁷ *Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”* (ESV) The servant role in verse 3 cannot apply only to the nation of Israel, since part of the servant’s task was to bring Jacob back to God. God’s servant-Son, Jesus, became the living example of the ideal Israel, and He fulfilled all that God had required from national Israel. The prophecy in verses 5-6 describes two key purposes of Jesus’ mission: (1) To bring Israel back to God. This includes Jews who accepted and followed Christ in the New Testament church up to the present time, as well as the portion of Israel that will be restored to God during the final end-time age; and, (2) to light the way to God and bring His message of hope and spiritual salvation to all nations. Scripture tells us that God the Father has given the nations to God the Son as an inheritance because of His personal sacrifice on the cross. Verse 6 in Isaiah chapter 49 is sometimes called the ‘Great Commission of the Old Testament’ because it seems to match Christ’s command to His followers in the New Testament. In verse 7 above, we see that Jesus would be hated and rejected by many, yet His enemies, no matter how powerful they may be in this life, at some point will bow down and submit to Him as Lord. Verse 14, ¹⁴ *But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”* (ESV) These words are the words of the Israelites who felt that all of the troubles they had experienced were a sign that God had turned away from them and forgotten them. God’s response gives assurance to any of His followers who are going through difficult times. (1) His love for us is much greater than the natural affection a loving mother has for her children. It is unthinkable that He will ever forget us, especially in our times of despair and grief. (2) No circumstance can remove God’s compassion from us. He is always looking out for us, and we can take comfort in the fact that He will never leave us nor forsake us. (3) The evidence of God’s great love is that He has engraved us on

the palms of His own hands so that He can never forget us. The scars in His hands are always there as a reminder of the sacrificial love He has shown for us, and of His continual desire to do what is best for us. Verses 22-26 tell of a time when Israel would be restored to a right relationship with God. Yet people from all other nations also would have access to a personal relationship with God. In fact, it is these people from other nations who actually would be the ones to lead a future generation of Jews back to the Lord.

Chapter 50 opens with a strange question. ¹ *Thus says the Lord: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.* Isaiah 50:1 (ESV) Of all the nations over the face of this planet, there has only been one nation that God became so upset with that He gave them a certificate of divorce and cast them out of their homeland. That nation was Israel, the house of Israel, the ten-tribe northern kingdom of His chosen people. The idolatry became so prevalent and the people so wicked in their ways that God called them a whore nation with such sinful habits that God could not stand it any more. Yet, today, this very day, God's Word proclaims that God will take them back, forgive them of their sins and forget their transgressions. In verses 4-11, Isaiah illustrates his own experiences and challenges to the people and at the same time he prophesies about the Messiah's character and suffering. The Messiah would comfort the weak and the troubled while He Himself would find comfort, strength and encouragement 'morning by morning' through personal time with God, His Father. Christ would endure suffering, humiliation and disgrace in fulfilling His purpose of rescuing people from the consequences of sin and restoring their relationship with God. Christ knew that His suffering and death would result in spiritual salvation for all who would trust Him and accept His sacrifice for their sins. Because Jesus looked forward to a personal relationship with these faithful people, He could 'set His face to go to Jerusalem' where He would give His life to make it all possible. The prophet Isaiah challenges those who trust God to remain faithful to Him even though they may have to endure the dark and difficult times brought on by the nation's rebellion against God. Those who walk in the light of their own fires—who follow their own ideas and plans rather than submitting to God and what He has shown them through His Word—will 'lie down in torment.' They will experience the tragic results of rejecting God and His purposes for them.

I want to give you one more fact just because we are where we are in the prophecies pertaining to Jesus and the characteristics of His life. In the New Testament, we have Jesus being tried and sentenced to death on the cross. Notice that Jesus never really said much during the mock trials that were held with the Chief Priest, and later by Pilate. There was a reason that Jesus spoke very little. Recall the beginning of the night when He goes to the Mount of Olives and prays until the temple guards come to arrest Him. There is a point where Jesus tells all who were at the Mount of Olives that He could call forth 12 legions of angels, however, that would not fulfill what was to be done. Reason for a moment, and do the math. We saw in Isaiah 37:36 that one, that's only one, angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. A legion of soldiers is accepted as 6,000 men. If one angel killed 185,000, then 72,000 angels would be able to kill 13,320,000,000 in one night. That is enough to wipe out the population of the earth in less than a day. Jesus said He could ask His Father and more than 12 legions would be at His disposal. Here are the verses from Matthew that tell this, Matthew 26:51-54, ⁵¹ *And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.* ⁵² *Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.* ⁵³ *Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?* ⁵⁴ *But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"* (ESV) Look at the major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. They all proclaim that all God desires is for His people to be obedient to His Commandments and His Sabbaths. It is us, God's creation, that have caused all the turmoil and trouble. Eighteen simple rules

and we can't even do that without going astray. No wonder God warns and warns prior to the release of His wrath. Mankind does have a choice! We can follow the modeling of Jesus or we can follow the lies and deceptions of Satan. We must make our own choice and we will live, die and spend eternity in one place or the other by that choice.

In chapter 51, we see this care and concern for God's people continuing. God encourages those few, a remnant, who have remained faithful to Him and lived by His standards to have full confidence that one day He will establish His kingdom on earth. This promise is repeated in the New Testament. Although most of the world is under the deceptive influence of sin and Satan, the Lord will return to destroy evil and to reign in joy and peace. Look at the first three verses of chapter 51 to pick up this concept from Isaiah's prophecy. Isaiah 51:1-3, ¹ *"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. ² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. ³ For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.* (ESV) Do you really want to know where the Garden of Eden was? Read very carefully verse 3 and understand what it says! Please realize that God's kingdom on earth at the end of time will bring complete salvation, truth, justice and freedom to all the nations of the world. See verses 4-5, ⁴ *"Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. ⁵ My righteousness draws near; my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.* (ESV) The present heavens and earth will be destroyed before God establishes His eternal kingdom on earth. All traces of sin and imperfection will be destroyed including all who have continued to oppose God. God will replace what we have known with a new heaven and a new earth. He will live and reign with His faithful people, those He rescued from sin and death. We have this confirmed by verses 6-8, ⁶ *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed. ⁷ "Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations."* (ESV) We must respond to God's promises about the final redemption of His faithful followers and the earth by praying with a deep desire for these things to come to pass. Verses 12-13, ¹² *"I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass, ¹³ and have forgotten the Lord, your Maker; who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you fear continually all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor, when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the wrath of the oppressor?"* (ESV) In the verses from 17-23, Isaiah prophesies about Israel's (both the house of Israel and the house of Judah) exile because of God's judgment for rebellion. But the prophet goes on to reveal God's promise of future rescue and freedom from this oppression. He foresees a time when God's judgment would end and their suffering would cease. God would then judge those who mistreated them.

Chapter 52 speaks so much of the Lord's coming salvation. Isaiah envisions a time when God would rescue and restore His people, not because they deserved His favor, but for His own honor. He would keep His promise, and Jerusalem would be rebuilt. See verses 1-6 of chapter 52, ¹ *Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. ² Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.*

³ For thus says the Lord: “You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.”

⁴ For thus says the Lord God: “My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. ⁵ Now therefore what have I here,” declares the Lord, “seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail,” declares the Lord, “and continually all the day my name is despised. ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.” (ESV) The exodus from Babylon, like the exodus from Egypt over 900 years earlier, represented a rescue or liberation from the corrupt world and all that is spiritually unclean. The freed people were carefully instructed to separate themselves from anything that did not fit with God’s instructions and character. In the same way, when individuals accept Christ as Savior and leader of their lives, they too must separate themselves from the ungodly beliefs and behaviors of the world. This requires trusting God for help in developing morally and spiritually pure lives, free from all evil.

The section between 52:13 and 53:12 is given together because it covers the prophecy of the first coming of Jesus. The Servant—who will completely fulfill God’s plans and purposes—is the coming Messiah. This section speaks of the suffering and rejection Christ would endure. Isaiah prophesies that through Christ’s suffering many would be forgiven, justified and healed. Christ’s suffering also would lead to His own honor and glory. The New Testament includes quotations from this portion of Scripture more than from any other Old Testament section. Here are some of the verses from chapter 53, verses 3-5, ³ *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.* (ESV) Do you see that by Jesus’ stripes we are healed? Stop and think about what this truly says. Mankind wants you to believe that you have to be inoculated against viruses, such as flu or COVID-19. However, by God’s own Word, we are healed because of what Jesus did for mankind at the will of the Father. Why is it that mankind will not, and it appears cannot, accept the statement made by God pertaining to the suffering Jesus did for payment against our sins and transgressions? Look closely at verse 7, ⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.* (ESV) Turn back to page 39 and read again the reason that Jesus spoke little at the mock trials. Verses 10-12, ¹⁰ *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.* (ESV) It was part of God the Father’s perfect plan to send His Son to die on the cross for a spiritually lost and rebellious world. Since part of God’s character is perfect justice, the price for humanity’s rebellion against God had to be paid, but the payment had to be perfect and complete. Only Jesus Christ’s life could have fulfilled that requirement. By making Christ an atoning sacrifice for all sin, God accomplished His purpose of providing forgiveness for people and bringing those who accept Him back into a relationship with Himself. That is the meaning of the phrase “*he shall see his offspring*”—His spiritual descendants. He will “*prolong his days*” means that Christ would rise from the dead and live to reign forever. Christ’s suffering would accomplish God’s purpose and provide spiritual salvation—a personal relationship with God and the opportunity to live forever with Him—for the ‘many’ who believe.

Chapter 54 illustrates the eternal covenant of peace between God and those who believe in Him. The long range view would be this eternal covenant between God and all who would believe in Him through Jesus. Review verses 4-10, ⁴ *“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵ For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶ For the Lord has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷ For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. ⁸ In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord, your Redeemer. ⁹ “This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. ¹⁰ For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.* (ESV) Finally, look at verses 16-17 in chapter 54, ¹⁶ *Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; ¹⁷ no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord.” (ESV)*

Chapter 55 illustrates the compassion of the Lord for us. At the time of Isaiah, God mercifully invites the Israelites, who have rejected Him and His Word, to return to Him and renew their relationship with Him. Then they will be restored to a place of satisfaction and blessing. An essential prerequisite for salvation is a genuine spiritual hunger and thirst for forgiveness and a right relationship with God. This spiritual salvation is based on the sacrificial death of the Servant-Messiah, Christ. We must repent and approach God in faith, trusting Him to take control of our lives. As we live for Him, a continued hunger and thirst for God’s purposes and power are necessary for receiving the fullness of His Spirit. God has given people a limited amount of time to receive His salvation—the opportunity to accept a personal relationship with Him. **A day is coming when it will be too late for people to respond to His invitation.** They will look for Him, but not find Him. For understanding this last statement I’m placing Hebrews 3:7-18 here, ⁷ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹ where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ ¹¹ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’ “*

¹² *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵ As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” ¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ **So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.** (ESV) Returning to chapter 55 of Isaiah please look at verses 8-9, ⁸ *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.* (ESV) Finally, verse 11, ¹¹ *so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (ESV)**

Isaiah sees in chapter 56 the need to address justice, salvation and foreigners among God's people. Promoting justice and doing what is right are a spiritually natural result of a true relationship with God. These characteristics are directly linked to the influence God's kingdom has on His followers and the influence His followers should have on others. God's justice and salvation cannot be separated. See verses 1-2, ¹ *Thus says the Lord: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.* ² *Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil."* (ESV) The term 'eunuch' is used in Isaiah's text and I feel the need to explain this term prior to inserting the text from chapter 56. The term eunuch usually referred to a man whose testicles had been removed or were missing from birth. Eunuchs often served as chief attendants or heads of household for rulers or people of high status because they were considered especially trustworthy—particularly in regard to moral behavior. Becoming a eunuch by choice did not eliminate a man's heterosexuality, it simply meant that he was willing to practice abstinence and to be fully committed to what was considered more noble purposes. The eunuch lifestyle must not be confused or associated with homosexuality or transgender issues. A very good example of the lifestyle or duties of a eunuch can be seen in the book of Esther. The eunuch who assisted Esther was named Hegai and all Esther asked for was his advice. Eunuchs were considered a part of the community of God's people, However, at one time, eunuchs because of their service to foreign leaders, as well as their physical disability and perceived imperfection, were excluded from public worship. The Messiah's coming would change that. In Christ's kingdom, the door would be opened for those of all nations and backgrounds to participate in worship if they willingly surrender their lives to Christ and His purposes. Under the new covenant—God's plan to bring people into a personal relationship with Himself based on Christ's sacrifice for sins—all who surrender to the Lord are accepted with the same rights and privileges as the rest of God's people. No matter their nationality, background, social status or personal disabilities, God loves and accepts each of His followers as one of His precious children. Confirm this by reading verses 3-8, ³ *Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."* ⁴ *For thus says the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, ⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.* ⁶ *"And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."* ⁸ *The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, "I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered."* (ESV) Allow me to make this perfectly clear! In the pages of God's Holy Word, the homosexual is an abomination, either gay or lesbian. Those who desire to play silly games with their gender identity need to understand that God only created two genders, male and female. Plainly stated here in the words of Isaiah, we see that the eunuch who keeps God's Sabbaths and His covenant are to be honored in God's future coming kingdom. Those who are an abomination are not permitted to enter that future kingdom. These are warnings against the evil wicked ways of misled people, even those who are the leaders of congregations. God condemned Israel's corrupt leaders and priests because they lacked knowledge of His Word, were greedy for selfish gain and were drunkards. Read the final three verses of chapter 56 to confirm this, ¹⁰ *His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. ¹¹ The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all. ¹² "Come," they say, "let me get wine; let us*

fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure.” (ESV) Also review 2nd Corinthians 11:13-15, ¹³ *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴ *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.* ¹⁵ *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.* (NKJV) There truly are those who are righteous, those who rebel against God’s ways and those who are wicked and full of evil, deceiving many into accepting confused ideas and beliefs of their own making.

Isaiah’s 57th chapter brings Israel’s idolatry to the forefront and contains some strong wording. Those who follow God in true commitment were being mistreated and even killed by Judah’s cruel and corrupt leaders. By their death, these martyrs were delivered from the terrible horrors of God’s judgment that would soon come upon the nation. See verses 1-2, ¹ *The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity;* ² *he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness.* (ESV) The people of Judah rejected the Lord and chose instead to worship the false gods of foreign nations. This idol worship involved immorality, prostitution, sorcery and human sacrifices. Verses 4-5, ⁴ *Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit,* ⁵ *you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks?* (ESV) But God would make them answer for their sin. Those who were unfaithful to God and disobedient to His law would experience the consequences of their selfish and immoral actions. In the end, they would lose much more than they had hoped to gain by their rebellion. Verses 11-13, ¹¹ *Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied, and did not remember me, did not lay it to heart? Have I not held my peace, even for a long time, and you do not fear me?* ¹² *I will declare your righteousness and your deeds, but they will not profit you.* ¹³ *When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain.* (ESV) God, who is “high and lifted up”—who has no limit to His holiness in person, character and power—still promises to live with those who are “contrite and lowly in spirit.” Contrite, meaning crushed, refers to those who are brokenhearted because of their own sinfulness or because of spiritual opposition. As a result, they cry out to God for help. Having a ‘lowly spirit’ refers to those who are humble about their own abilities or because of difficult situations. God responds to the desperate cry of such people in order to revive, refresh and inspire them with His presence. Those who are faithful to God can rest assured that even when He seems far away, He is always there to guide, protect and comfort them. Verse 18, ¹⁸ *I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners,* (ESV) God has designed the human conscience in such a way that there will never be real peace for those who defy Him and live wickedly—neither inward peace nor outward peace. As long as people persist in sin, their lives will be like the troubled sea—full of ‘mire and dirt.’ Verses 20-21, ²⁰ *But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.* ²¹ *There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”* (ESV) However, while God is opposed to their rebellion, He still desires to save them if only they would turn to God and allow him to change their lives.

We continue with the section of Isaiah’s prophecies, chapters 52-66, that foretell some of the deepest and most insightful prophecies in the Bible about the greatness of God. This includes the extensive vision of His plan of redemption, salvation and restoration of His broken relationship with sinful humanity. These chapters are full of prophetic revelation about God’s wonders, power and promises to restore a faithful and spiritually influential line of people in Israel’s future. This would include people from all nations as evidence of God’s love for all of His creation. His utmost request of humanity is to be obedient to His commandments, His covenant and His Sabbaths (feast days). In chapter 58, we

see Isaiah crying out against the people's sins like a mighty trumpet blast sounding a warning to all who will listen. There is the most important statement made, 'to all who will listen.' Even today we have ministers and messengers of God who fail to point out the sins of God's people and warn them of His coming judgment. There are many so called believers who worship the Lord outwardly and appear to have a true desire to follow God. However, their lifestyles—particularly how they behave outside the church setting—is no different than most other people in the world who do not know the Lord as their personal Savior. They do not study and apply God's Word to their lives, and their 'worship' is an insult and a disgrace to God. They simply wear the badge of 'Christian' on their sleeve, but not in their heart. Remember, God searches the heart for the true feelings of a person, not what comes out of their mouth. The comparison between false fasting and true fasting is shown in the following examples from Isaiah chapter 58. First verse 3, ³ *'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?'* Behold, *in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers.* (ESV) The counterpart to this is shown in verses 13-14, ¹³ *"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; ¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."* (ESV)

Chapter 59 describes additional sins that have prevented the people from receiving God's promised blessings. See verses 2-4, ² *but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. ⁴ No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity.* (ESV) Continue with verses 6b-8, ^{6b} . . . *Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. ⁷ Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. ⁸ The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.* (ESV) Verses 12-13, ¹² *For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: ¹³ transgressing, and denying the Lord, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.* (ESV) Verse 20 declares a redeemer will come to Zion. Zion here is used as a general reference to Israel—geographically it applies to the Jews' return from exile, spiritually it refers to Christ's coming for all those who would receive Him. This redeemer is Jesus Christ. He will come to those who truly turn from their sins and serve His purposes. Such people are part of the true Israel. Verses 20-21, ²⁰ *"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord. ²¹ "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore."* (ESV)

Chapter 60 illustrates the coming glory of Israel, verse 4, ⁴ *Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.* (ESV) The nations will contribute materially and financially to the establishment of God's reign in Jerusalem. Those who oppose Christ's kingdom will be destroyed. Verses 10; 12, ¹⁰ *Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. . . . ¹² For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.* (ESV) Verse 18, ¹⁸ *Violence shall no more be heard in*

your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. (ESV) Verses 21-22, ²¹ Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. ²² The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it. (ESV)

Chapter 61 begins with the verses that Jesus used from Isaiah to declare Himself to be the Messiah. Verses 1-3, ¹ *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. (ESV) Verse one (1) hints to the doctrine of the Trinity—the three in one nature of God: The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Lord God is God the Father and Me is Jesus, the Messiah. Verse 8 makes a righteous statement, ⁸ *For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (ESV) After Christ's return, all who are part of His kingdom will rejoice. They will be clothed with "garments of salvation" simply meaning they will be unmistakably identified with God and His other faithful followers whom He freed from sin and purchased as His own. They also will wear "the robe of righteousness," that means they will live by God's perfect standards of goodness and truth.**

I shall give three references from chapter 62 to declare what this chapter means. First, verses 1-2, ¹ *For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. ² The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. (ESV) Followed by verses 6-7, ⁶ *On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, ⁷ and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. (ESV) Closing with verses 11-12, ¹¹ *Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." ¹² And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken. (ESV)***

Chapter 63 illustrates God's vengeance upon the ungodly people of all nations as a visual image of people being trampled as grapes in a winepress. Verses 3-6. ³ *"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. ⁴ For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. ⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. ⁶ I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." (ESV) Isaiah praises God's compassion and kindness, confesses Israel's sin, pleads for their rescue from judgment and prays for God's promised salvation. Verses 7-14 recounts the Lord's mercy, ⁷ *I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely." And he became their Savior. ⁹ In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ¹⁰ But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹ Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, ¹² who caused**

his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, ¹³ who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. ¹⁴ Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name. (ESV)

The section between chapter 63:15 and 64:12 is Isaiah's prayer for mercy. Isaiah praises God's compassion and kindness, confesses Israel's sin, pleads for their rescue from judgment and prays for God's promised salvation. Because this is a single prayer of Isaiah, I'm including all the verses in this range. Chapter 63:15-19, ¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me. ¹⁶ For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. ¹⁷ O Lord, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. ¹⁸ Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary. ¹⁹ We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.

64:1-12, ¹ Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—² as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³ When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. ⁵ You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? ⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

⁸ But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Be not so terribly angry, O Lord, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people. ¹⁰ Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. ¹¹ Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. ¹² Will you restrain yourself at these things, O Lord? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly? (ESV)

In chapter 65, God responds to Isaiah's prayer by describing His constant plea to the rebellious nation, urging the people to return to Him. Because of their wickedness, God would repay them with judgment which would happen mainly through the Assyrian invasion (house of Israel) and the Babylonian captivity (house of Judah). Verses 1-3, ¹ I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that was not called by my name. ² I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; ³ a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; (ESV) Verse 9, ⁹ I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of my mountains; my chosen shall possess it, and my servants shall dwell there. (ESV) Verses 11-12, ¹¹ But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, ¹² I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in." (ESV) Verses 17-25, ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create

Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord. (ESV) Notice two entries in verse 22; first, notice that life expectancy will be that of a tree. Do you know how long the old Redwoods may live? Let me tell you a little about the Redwoods. Redwoods only grow on the west coast of the United States and there are approximately 5 percent of the Redwood forest remaining. They are a remnant of the original number that grew in that area. They may reach a height of over 350 feet and they can live for over a thousand years. Their roots may extend for several hundred feet and become intermingled with the roots from other Redwoods. This binding of the roots gives them stability and a sharing of ground nutrients. The roots also help to clean the ground water so the streams in the northwest are able to provide a habitat for endangered Coho salmon to lay their eggs. The bark may be over a foot thick and is part of the reason that Redwoods survive forest fires and the needles help filter the air that we breathe. In many ways the Redwoods canopy, bark and roots protect the forest beneath their greatness as God protects His people who are on earth below Him. Think about all the forest fires on the West coast. Now, consider that some of this remnant could be burned. Isn't this what Isaiah is attempting to get mankind to understand by the numerous warnings that God told him to tell to the people of Judah. True Christians are like Redwoods attempting to help clean the air, water and root structure of our surroundings from the threat of an everlasting fire. Another way to ask or say this is that mankind will go back to the ages of those recorded in Genesis, hundreds of years old; second, did you notice that those living at that future time will long enjoy the work of their hands. It seems to me that mankind will also revert to an agrarian society. All the bells and whistles of modern technology will not be there in that future age.

Chapter 66, verses 1-2, ¹ Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? ² All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.** (ESV) Verse 10, ¹⁰ "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; (ESV) Verses 13-14, ¹³ As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies. (ESV)

When God secures Jerusalem and the Messianic kingdom, He will also execute judgment on His enemies. This will happen immediately following His return to earth to rescue His followers and destroy the Antichrist's forces at the battle of Armageddon. At that time, Christ will begin His millennial reign of peace on earth. God will gather Christ's followers to witness His glory. Having survived His judgment against the wicked, God's faithful people will be sent throughout the world to bring all remaining Jews to the Lord, the God of Israel. This gathering will occur at the end of this present age as Christ is beginning His millennial reign of righteousness and peace on earth. At the end of history, following Christ's millennial reign on earth and the final judgments, God will create the new heavens and the new earth. All of God's people will be with the Lord forever. All those who rebelled against

Him and rejected His Word, however, will spend eternity in hell. Here are the final verses from the book of Isaiah to confirm all that is stated in this paragraph. Verses 15-24,¹⁵ *“For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many.*

¹⁷ *“Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the Lord.*

¹⁸ *“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory,*

¹⁹ *and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰ And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. ²¹ And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the Lord.*

²² *“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your offspring and your name remain. ²³ From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord. ²⁴ “And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (ESV)*

That concludes my presentation of the Book of Isaiah and I must make several statements. First, I am not a prophet and my ministry is via the written word and not speaking before a congregation. If you have found this work and you read it, I can only hope that you find encouraging words among its pages. If you notice, most of the scripture used for this work came from the English Standard Version (ESV). I have used the ESV because it is easy to read in modern English. I have also used the ESV because of the running commentary written by Donald C. Stamps. My Bible program includes the ESV, however, it does not bring over the notes, references and cross indexing. Therefore, I have typed Mr. Stamps notes in many places, making changes where I feel I can without being verbatim or attempting to change the meaning of Mr. Stamps original work. In all cases, I have carried over the text from the Bible as published and have not added to or taken away any word or punctuation from that which is printed by Crossway Bibles. I make the admission that I have done this and have attempted, in all cases, to stay within the permission guidelines of Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, Life Publishers International and Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

One more statement: If your lifestyle is such that you feel I have stepped on your toes please take your argument to God and do not bring it to me. I am a messenger who is only expressing what Almighty God has had His prophets to record and present, to not only God’s chosen people, but to every person on the face of this planet as a warning. These words are there to warn you of the end result for disobedience toward God’s Word. It really is your choice! Where will you spend eternity? You alone make your own selection by the actions that you practice in your life. Make it a good choice! Trust God and do not be deceived by Satan and his demonic spirits.

Maranatha



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