

Isaiah

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah prophesied at the most crucial period in the history of Judah and Israel. Both the southern and northern kingdoms had experienced nearly a half-century of increasing prosperity and power. Israel, ruled by Jeroboam and six other minor kings, had succumbed to pagan worship; Judah, under Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, had maintained an outward conformity to orthodoxy, but had gradually fallen into serious moral and spiritual decline (3:8-26). Secret places of pagan worship were tolerated; the wealthy oppressed the poor; the women neglected their families in the quest of carnal pleasure; many of the priests and prophets became drunken men-pleasers (5:7-12, 18-23; 22:12-14). While there would come one more revival in Judah under King Josiah (640-609 B.C.), it was clear to Isaiah that the covenant recorded by Moses in Deuteronomy 30:11-20 had been so completely violated that judgment and captivity were inevitable for Judah, even as it was for Israel.

Isaiah entered his ministry at about the time of the founding of Rome and the first Olympic games of the Greeks. European powers were not quite ready for wide conquest, but several Asian powers were looking beyond their borders. Assyria particularly was poised for conquest to the south and to the west. The prophet, who was a student of world affairs, could see the conflict that was imminent. Assyria took Samaria in 721 B.C.

One of Isaiah's purposes was to declare God's displeasure with and judgment upon sin in Judah, Israel, and the surrounding nations. Almost all the Hebrew words for sin are employed by the prophet. A parallel purpose was to endeavor to turn God's people away from disobedience in order to avert disaster, a purpose that was only partially successful. Perhaps the greatest purpose, however, was to lay a foundation of hope and promise for the faithful remnant of God's people. Thus the book is full of promises of restoration and redemption, of the certain advent of the Messiah, of salvation for all the nations, and of the triumph of God's purposes in spite of intervals of suffering.

(Introduction to Isaiah-Spirit Filled Life Bible, Nathaniel M. Van Cleave)

Isaiah 1:1-31

Moses in his farewell words before his death could say from experience: "*I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah; and how much more after my death?*" And again: "*I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.*" (Deut. 31:27-29)

And this went on and on as far as the great mass of the people was concerned, until Isaiah, seven or eight centuries later, echoing in his inspired lament the words of Moses in this sublime song, exclaims: "*Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. . . . Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward: . . . from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and fresh stripes; they have not been closed, neither bound up, or soothed with oil.*" (Isa. 1:1-6) And this process of progressive self-corruption or self-destruction did not stop even in the days of the prophets and of the kingdom, but continued until the final breaking up of their national polity (government).

Because punishment does not immediately overtake the wicked in their evil doings, they say, "How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" (Ps. 73:11) The elders of the house of Israel who carried on in the dark—"every man in his chambers of imagery"—their defiling idolatrous practices, flattered themselves, saying, "*Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken the earth.*" (Ezek. 7:12, 9:9) But "Jehovah saw it," and knew it all, and in His book every step in the progressive apostasy, and every deed of evil, was written down. Great and marvelous was the patience and long-suffering which He exercised toward them: He sent messenger after messenger to remonstrate with and to warn them; He even condescended to *plead* with them, "*Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate . . . wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls?*" (Jer. 44:4, 7)

And the anger of God, when roused, at last was all the greater because it was provoked by "*His sons and His daughters*"—those to whom He had shown such infinite grace by bringing them into such near relationship with Himself, and from whom He had every right to expect filial reverence and love, instead of persistent "provocation" and rebellion. This is the explanation of the "double" portion of punishment which came upon Israel, and of the fact that "under the whole heaven" there hath not been done to any other city "as it hath been done upon Jerusalem." (Dan. 9:12)

It is not that they were greater sinners than the other nations; no, their *guilt* was greater in that *they*, who stood so near to Him, and whom he had exalted to the position of "His sons and His daughters," mingled with the Gentiles, "and learned of their ways," and practiced the same sins and abominations. And from this we may learn, dear Christian reader, that sin on the part of God's professing people is more grievous in His sight, and more provocative to the eyes of His holiness, than the sins of those who stand in no relationship with Him.

(The History of Israel: Its Spiritual Significance, David Baron)

Why does Isaiah compare Israel to the ox and donkey in Isaiah 1:3?

Compare Moses' words concerning the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 31:27-29 with that of Isaiah's in Isaiah 1:1-6.

The most pompous and costly devotions of wicked people, without a thorough reformation of the heart and life, are so far from being acceptable to God that really they are an abomination to Him. It is here shown in a great variety of expressions that *to obey is better than sacrifice*; indeed, that sacrifice, without obedience, is a jest, an insult and provocation to God. (Matthew Henry) **Show how the sacrifices made by these people were seen by God?**

Isa. 1:10-32

What must the people do to get back into a right relationship with God?

Isa. 1:16-19

What is the outcome if they do not turn back to God?

Isa. 1:20, 28-31

What is the faithful city of Jerusalem called in Isaiah 1:21?

Will God's label on Jerusalem change back to something more glorious in the future?

Isa. 1:27

Should we as Christians be so ready to take up stones to cast at the Jews, as if Christendom were in a condition to glory over them in this respect? Can the Jewish nation find its parallel in the apostasy of the professing church?

Isaiah 2:1-4

So far the blessing that has come to the other nations through Israel and Palestine has been only partial. *It is in the future*—after repentant and converted Israel is once more in their land, under the sway of their long-rejected Messiah—that Palestine will become the center from where light, and truth, and *universal* blessing shall proceed for all nations, even unto the utmost limits of the earth. For "*it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.*" (Isa. 2:2-3)

(The History of Israel: Its Spiritual Significance, David Baron)

The vision Isaiah saw here concerned whom?

Isa. 2:1

Was Jerusalem to be the teacher of the world, the focal point of divine instruction and enrichment?

Isa. 2:2-3 Mic. 4:1-8

Elaborate more on this kingdom to come.

Obed. 15 Mic. 4:1-5 Acts 26:26 Gal. 4:26 Heb. 12:22-24

Will future blessings come once more to Gentile nations after repentant Israel is in their land, under the sway of the long-rejected Messiah?

Isa. 2:2-4 Mic. 4:1-5

The missionary movement of the Old Testament has the nations converging upon the city of Zion (eg. (for example) Isa. 49:6, 7; 60:3; 66:23; Jer. 3:17; Zech. 2:11; 8:20 ff (verses following).; 14:16). **What marked change is apparent in the New Testament after the death of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit?**

Acts 1:8

Isaiah 2:5-22

We have two oracles (Isa. 2:1-22), both of which concern the future, although markedly dissimilar in their contents. The ethical appeal of v. 5 links the two sections together. It expresses what ought to have been Judah's response in the light of the promises of the verses following Isaiah 2:2, and contrasts strongly with the actual conduct of the nation (6-22).

Jerusalem will become the center of worship for the entire world, and universal peace will result from the Lord's rule. (But) the day of reckoning (Isa. 2:6-22) is deliberately set alongside this conception, as though to indicate that mercy and judgment are complementary. The frequent references to 'the day' (11, 12, 17, 20) recall the attack of Amos on his contemporaries a generation or two before Isaiah (Amos 5:18-20). They looked upon the Day of the Lord as the time when God would intervene on their behalf to slaughter all their enemies, but Amos corrected their false sense of privilege and insisted that judgment would begin with them. Isaiah has an identical emphasis, and in the terrible judgment of that day all the false supports of Judah, including their reliance upon heathen superstitions (6a), foreign alliances (6b), riches (7), weapons and fortifications (7, 15), idols (8, 20) and their own self-sufficiency (11, 17), would be swept away. Men would be left stripped and helpless, only the Lord would be glorified in that day (11, 17).

(Daily Devotional Bible Commentary, Arthur E. Cundall)

Compare this Old Testament judgment on the sins of God's people (Isa. 2:5-6, 11, 17-18) with the New Testament picture of the testing of the works of the Christian?

1 Cor. 3:10-17 Heb. 3:7-19 Heb. 10:26-30

Isaiah 3:1-26

When God takes away the earthly stays of men, they have nothing to fall back upon for help. Might, valor, and prudence avail only so long as God is not against a nation. These all fail the moment when the Lord wills it. "Jerusalem is ruined and Judah fallen, because their tongue and their doings were against the Lord, to provoke" Him before His "eyes." (Isa. 3:8) Herein we have a sample of God's principle of dealing with nations and individuals. Shameless sin brings on shameful punishment (Isa. 3:9). Evil recoils on the evil-speaker and evil-doer as the only "reward" of his pains.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What were some of the desolations Isaiah was foretelling that were to come upon Judah and Jerusalem for their sins.

As Isaiah was pronouncing judgment over Judea and Jerusalem you could almost hear the sob in the prophet's soul.

What other prophet had strong feelings over Jerusalem?

Luke 13:34-35 Luke 21:20-28 Luke 23:28

Isaiah 4:1-6

In contrast to the consuming judgments about to fall on the reprobate stand the sparing, preserving, and ultimately sanctifying mercies which are in store for the elect remnant, "the escaped of Israel." Messiah, as "the Branch of the Lord," in that day shall be to them "beauty and glory." The *means* of sanctification are the same in the Church as in the literal Israel. The "fountain opened for uncleanness," the blood of Jesus Christ, "washes away the filth" and guilt of all believers, and the Holy Spirit, by chastening "judgments," convicts of sin, and by the fire of trials purifies and refines them. It is infinitely better now to pass through purifying fires than hereafter to be doomed with the wicked to the destroying fire forever.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Prove the "Branch of the Lord" mentioned in Isa. 4:2 is Christ.

Isa. 11:1-2 Isa. 53:2 Jer. 23:5-6 Jer. 33:15-16 Zech. 3:8 Zech. 6:12

There is a continuation of the pronouncement of judgment upon Judea; from Babylon to Rome continuing right up to the Messiah's second return (Isa. 4:4). **What will be the condition of the people when the Branch returns to restore Zion?**

Isa. 4:2-3

Will there be a physical tabernacle (Isa. 4:6) for refuge and protection or will the refuge and protection be Christ Himself?

Isaiah 5:1-30

Great privileges entail great responsibilities. Where much has been given, there much will be required. The Israelite's were separated from the rest of the world. No loving pains were spared on the part of the Lord to secure its well-being and its fruitfulness. To Israel pertained the adoption, the Shekinah-glory, the covenants, the Law, the temple service, the promises, and the fathers in whose seed, even Christ, all families of the earth are to be blessed. But Israel abused her high trust; so God took from her that which she only seemed to have. The present Christian Church is called to still higher privileges. Therefore still greater fruits are required from her than were from Israel of old. Does Christendom then produce fruits such as are acceptable in the eyes of the Lord of the vineyard? There is doubtless an elect remnant who bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in some measure, and who are accordingly the object of the Lord's delight. But if we try the vast majority of professing Christians by the tests herein set forth, the conclusion must be respecting the outward Church, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

The "Well-beloved" is the Lord of His vineyard. **Who is the choicest vine (Isa.5:2)?**

Who is the vineyard?

Isa. 5:7

What do the "good" and "wild" grapes represent (Isa. 5:2)?

John 15:1, 2, 6 Heb. 4:13

Why have the people gone into captivity?

Isa. 5:13

What were the sins of Israel and Judah?

Isa. 5:23

What are the metaphors (comparisons, figurative language, symbols) used to describe the coming judgment?

Isa. 5:24-25

Describe the work of the Lord when “His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.” (Isa. 5:25)

Isa. 5:26-30

Isaiah 6:1-13

About the time King Uzziah died Isaiah saw this vision of God on a throne. Israel's king dies, but Israel's God still lives. King Uzziah died a leper, but the King of kings still sits on his throne. See God on his throne, and that throne *high and exalted*, not only above other thrones, as it transcends them, but over other thrones, as it rules them.

Hear the song of praise, which the angels sing to the honor of him who sits on the throne, v. 3. With zeal and fervency—they were calling aloud; and with unanimity—calling to one another, without the least jarring voice to interrupt the harmony. The song was the same which is sung by the four living creatures, Rev. 4:8. Here is one of his most glorious titles praised: he is *the Lord Almighty*; and one of his most glorious attributes, his holiness. Power, without purity to guide it, would be a terror to mankind.

Observe the signs of terror with which the temple was filled, at this vision of the divine glory, v. 4. The house *shook*; even *the doorposts and thresholds*, which were firmly fixed, *shook at the sound of their voices*. The house was *darkened*; it was *filled with smoke*. In the temple above, everything will be seen clearly. There God dwells in light; here he *dwells in a dark cloud*, 2 Chron. 6:1.

The consternation that the prophet was put into by the vision which he saw of the glory of God (v. 5): *“Woe is me!” I cried*. One would think, he should have said, “Happy am I, nothing now shall trouble me”; but, on the contrary, he cries out, *“Woe is me! I am ruined.”* We are ruined if there is not a Mediator between us and this holy God, 1 Sam. 6:20.

One of the seraphs immediately flew to him, to purify him. Those who are struck down with the visions of God's glory shall soon be raised up again with the visits of his grace. Here was one of the seraphs dismissed, for a time, from the throne of God's glory, to be a messenger of his grace. The seraph *brought a live coal from the altar*, and touched his lips with it to cleanse them. The blessed Spirit works as fire, Matt. 3:11. The seraph put life into the prophet, for the way to purge the lips from the uncleanness of sin is to fire the soul with the love of God. *“See, this has touched your lips, to assure you of this, that your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.* The guilt of your sin is removed by pardoning mercy. Your corrupt disposition to sin is removed by renewing grace; and therefore nothing can hinder you from being accepted with God as a worshipper, or from being employed for God as a messenger to the children of men.”

(NIV Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry)

Isaiah said in Isa. 6:5b “For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” **Was this the preincarnate (existence previous to taking on human form) Christ Isaiah saw?**

Col.1:15

What did the “live coal” (Isa. 6:6-7) laid on Isaiah’s lips represent?

Why did God ask the question “Whom shall I send” (Isa. 6:8)?

Can the same words from God both soften and harden the heart (Isa.6:9-10)?

John 12:37-41

Isaiah 7:1-25

There was a formidable plot laid against Jerusalem by Rezin king of Aram and Pekah king of Israel, who had made several attacks against Judah, 2 Kings 15:37. But now, in the second or third year of the reign of Ahaz, they entered into an alliance against Judah.

Now the house of David was told that Aram and Ephraim had signed a league against Judah, v. 2. News being brought that the two armies of Aram and Israel had taken the field. *The heart of Ahaz was shaken with fear*, and then no wonder that *the heart of his people was so, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind*. Now that which caused this fright was the sense of guilt and the weakness of their faith. They had made God their enemy, and knew not how to make him their friend.

God had kindness for Ahaz for his father's sake, who must not be forgotten, and for his people's sake, who must not be abandoned. He ordered Isaiah to take his little son with him, because he carried a sermon in his name, *Shear-Jashub—A remnant shall return*. This son was so called for the encouragement of those of God's people who were carried captive, assuring them that they should return. He directed him where he should find Ahaz, *at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool*, where he was planning how to order the water works, so as to secure them to the city (Isa. 22:9-11; 2 Chron. 32:3, 4), or giving some necessary directions for the fortifying of the city. He put words in his mouth, else the prophet would not have known how to bring a message of good to such a bad man, but God intended it for the support of faithful Israelites. The prophet must rebuke their fears (v. 4): *Be careful, keep calm*. Pick up your spirits and be courageous. He must teach them to despise their enemies, not in pride, or security, but in faith and dependence on God. Ahaz' fear called them two powerful wise princes, for either of whom he was an unequal match. "No," says the prophet, "they are *two smoldering stubs of firewood*; they are angry, they are fierce, as fireballs, and they make one another worse by being in a alliance, as sticks of fire put together burn the more violently. But they are only smoldering firewood, *stubs* of smoldering firewood, in a manner burnt out already; their force is spent; you may put your foot on them, and tread them out." He must assure them that the present scheme of these high allies (so they thought themselves) against Jerusalem should certainly be defeated and come to nothing, Isaiah 7:5-7. Judah had done them no wrong; they had no pretence to quarrel with Ahaz; but, without any reason, they said, "*Let its invade Judah: let us tear it apart.*" They count on dividing the kingdom into two parts, one for the king of Israel, the other for the king of Aram, who had agreed in one viceroy (governor)—*to make the son of Tabeel king over it*, some obscure person, it is uncertain whether an Aramean or an Israelite. So sure were they of gaining their point that they divided the prey before they had caught it. God himself gives them his word that the attempt should not take effect (v. 7): *This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "It will not take place, it will not happen."* They should neither of them enlarge their dominions, nor push their conquests any further: *The head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin*; this he glories in, and this let him be content with, v. 8. *The head of Ephraim has long been Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Pekah Remaliah's son*. These shall be made to know their own; their bounds are fixed, and they shall not pass them, to make themselves masters of the cities of Judah, much less to make Jerusalem their prey. Ephraim, which perhaps was the more malicious and eager enemy of the two, should shortly be quite rooted out, and should be so far from seizing other people's lands that they should not be able to hold their own. It was the greatest folly in the world for those to be ruining their neighbors who were themselves marked for ruin, and so near to it. He must urge them to mix faith with assurances (v. 9): "*If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all*. The things told you are encouraging, yet they will not be so to you, unless you be willing to take God's word."

God, by the prophet, makes a gracious offer to Ahaz, to confirm the previous predictions by such sign or miracle as he should choose (v. 10, 11): *Ask the Lord your God for a sign*. He considers our frame, and that, living in a physical world, we are apt to require proofs, which he has favored us with in sacramental signs and seals. See how gracious God is even to the evil and unthankful; Ahaz is bidden to choose his sign, as Gideon about the fleece (Judges 6:37).

Ahaz rudely refuses this gracious offer (v. 12): *I will not ask*. The true reason why he would not ask for a sign was because, having dependence on the Assyrians, their forces, and their gods, for help, he would not thus far be indebted to the God of Israel. Yet he pretends a pious reason: *I will not put the Lord to the test*.

The prophet reproves him and his court for their contempt of prophecy (v. 13): "*Is it not enough to try the patience of men with your oppression and will you try the patience of my God also with the your insults against him?* In insulting the prophets, you think you only slight men like yourselves, and do not consider that you insult God himself, whose messengers they are."

The prophet, in God's name, gives them a sign (v. 14), a sign in general of his goodwill to Israel and to the house of David. Of your nation, of your family, the Messiah is to be born, and you cannot be destroyed while that blessing is in you. You have been told that he should be born among you, I am now further to tell you that he shall be born of a virgin, which will signify both the divine power and the divine purity with which he shall be brought into the world. This, though it was to be accomplished above 500 years after, was a most encouraging sign to the house of David, and an assurance that God would not cast them off. The Messiah shall be introduced on a glorious errand, wrapped up in his glorious name: *They shall call him Immanuel—God with us*, God in our nature, God at peace with us, in covenant with us. This was fulfilled in their calling him *Jesus—a Savior* (Matt. 1:21-25), for, if He had not been *Immanuel—God with us*, He could not have been *Jesus—a Savior*. The promised one shall be Immanuel, *God with us*: let that word comfort you (Isa. 8:10), that *God is with us*, and (Isa. 8:8) that your land is Immanuel's land. "Before *this* child (so it should be read), this child which I have now in my arms"—not Immanuel, but Shear-Jashub, his own son—v. 3, "*knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right*, before this child is three or four years older, *the land you dread*, these allied forces of Israelites and Arameans *will be laid waste*." This was fully accomplished; for, within two or three years after this, Hoshea conspired

against Pekah, and slew him (2 Kings 15:30), and, before that, the king of Assyria took Damascus, and slew Rezin, 2 Kings 16:9. Indeed, there was a present event, which happened immediately. *Shear-Jashub* means *The remnant shall return*, which doubtless points at the wonderful return of those 200,000 captives whom Pekah and Rezin had carried away, who were brought back, by the Spirit of the Lord Almighty. Read the story, 2 Chron. 28:8-15. The prophetic naming of this child having thus had its accomplishment, no doubt this should have its accomplishment likewise. Aram and Israel should be deprived of both their kings.

After the comforting promises made to Ahaz as a branch of the house of David, here follow terrible threats against him, as a degenerate branch of that house. His iniquity shall be *chastened with the rod*.

The judgment threatened is great, v. 17, brought on the prince himself and on the people, and on the royal family, *on all the house of your father*.

The enemy employed as the instrument of this judgment is the king of Assyria. Ahaz reposed great confidence in that prince for help against the allied powers of Israel and Aram, 2 Kings 16:7, 8. Now God threatens that that king of Assyria whom he made his support instead of God should become a scourge to him. Henceforth the kings of Assyria were, for a long time, grieving thorns to Judah.

The Lord will shave your head and legs and beards; (v. 20) he shall sweep all away. God will make that to be an instrument of his destruction which he hired into his service. Many are beaten with that arm of flesh which they trusted in rather than in the arm of the Lord.

(NIV Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry)

What metaphor (comparison) does Isaiah use concerning Syria and Israel who planned to afflict Judah?

Isa. 7:4

On what does the deliverance of Jerusalem depend?

Isa. 7:14-15

Is Matthew Henry correct when he says the "Child" spoken of in Isa. 7:16 is Isaiah's son, Shear-Jashub?

Isaiah 8:1-22

In these verses we have a prophecy of the successes of the king of Assyria against Damascus, Samaria, and Judah that the two former should be laid waste by him, and the last greatly frightened.

That Aram and Israel, who were now in alliance against Judah, should in a little time become an easy prey to the king of Assyria (v. 4): "*Before the boy, now newly born and named, knows how to say, 'My father' or 'My mother' "*", that is, "in about a year or two, *the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria*, those cities that are now so secure, *will be carried off by the king of Assyria*, who shall plunder both city and country as trophies of his victory."

That forasmuch as there were many in Judah who were secretly in the interests of Aram and Israel, and were disaffected to the house of David, God would chastise them also by the king of Assyria. What was the sin of the discontented party in Judah (v. 6)? *This people*, whom the prophet here speaks to, *has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah*, despise their own country and love to run it down, because it does not make so great a noise in the world, as some other kings and kingdoms do. Because they *reject the gently flowing waters of Shiloah the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River*, the river Euphrates. They slighted the land of Judah, because it had no river to boast of comparable to that. "Well," says God, "if you are such admirers of Euphrates, you shall have enough of it; the king of Assyria, whose country lies on that river, shall come with his great army. God shall bring that army against you." Let us be best pleased with the gently flowing waters of Shiloah, for rapid streams are dangerous. It is threatened that the Assyrian army should break in on them like a deluge, bearing down all before it. *It will reach up to the neck*, that is, it shall advance so far as to lay siege to Jerusalem. In the greatest deluge of trouble God can and will keep the head of his people above water. Though the stretching out of the wings of the Assyrian, that bird of prey, though the right and left wing of his army, should fill the breadth of the land of Judah, yet still it is *your land, O Immanuel*. It was to be Christ's land; for there He was to be born.

The prophet here returns to speak of the present distress that Ahaz and his court and kingdom were in on account of the threatening alliance of the ten tribes and the Arameans against them.

He triumphs over the invading enemies, and, in effect, bids them do their worst (v. 9, 10): "*Raise the war cry, you nations, give ear to what the prophet says to you in God's name. We do not doubt that you will now make your utmost efforts against Judah and Jerusalem. You prepare for battle, and again you prepare for battle. You devise your strategy. You propose your plan; you determine what to do, and are confident that the matter will be accomplished with a word's speaking. All your efforts will be ineffective. You will be shattered. Not only shall your attempts be ruined, but your attempts shall be your ruin; you shall be broken by those plots you have formed against Jerusalem. For God is with us: He is on our side, to take our part and fight for us; and, if God is for us, who can be against us?"*

He comforts and encourages the people of God with the same comforts and encouragements which he himself had received.

The prophet tells us how he was himself taught by God not to give way to such amazing fears (v. 11): "*The Lord spoke to me with his strong hand not to follow the way of this people, not to say as they say nor do as they do, not to approve of making peace on any terms, or calling in the help of the Assyrians.*" God instructed the prophet not to go down the stream (not to walk in the way of the people). There is a proneness in the best of men to be frightened at threatening clouds, especially when fears are epidemic.

Now what is it that he says to God's people?

(1) He cautions them against a sinful fear, v. 12. It seems it was the way of this people at this time, and fear is catching. He whose heart fails him makes his brother's heart to fail, like his heart (Deut. 20:8); therefore *Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy.* Do not join with those who are for making an alliance with the Assyrians, through unbelief, and distrust of God and their cause. Do not, when any little thing is amiss, cry out, There is a plot, a plot. When they talk what dismal news there is, *Aram is joined with Ephraim*, what will become of us? Do not fear what they fear.

(2) He advises them to a gracious religious fear: *The Lord Almighty, he is the one you are to fear*, v. 13. The believing fear of God is a special preservative against the disquieting fear of man; see 1 Pet. 3:14, 15, where this is quoted, and applied to suffering Christians.

(3) He assures them of a holy security and serenity of mind in so doing (v. 14): *He will be a sanctuary*; make him your fear, and you shall find him your hope, your help, your defence, and your mighty deliverer. He will be your sanctuary, to which you may flee for safety, and where you shall not need to fear any evil.

He threatens the ruin of the ungodly and unbelieving, both in Judah and Israel. They have no part nor lot in the previous comforts. The prophet foresees that the greatest part of both the houses of Israel would *not fear the Lord Almighty*. What was a savor of life to life to others would be a savor of death to death to them. "*So that many of them will stumble and fall.*" (Isa. 8:15)

(NIV Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry)

What prophecy is spoken of here by Isaiah in Isaiah 8:13-15 and whom is it against?

Matt. 21:33-44

What does the name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Isa. 8:1) mean and what does it intimate or foreshadow?

What were the people of Judea being driven by?

Isa. 8:12-14

What or who do many of these people seek during this desperate situation?

Isa. 8:19-22

Were there others in the Bible who went in a similar direction during desperate times?

1 Sam. 28:7-22 2 Kings 1:1-3

Read Isa. 8:19-22 and explain what darkness they are in and how they will be driven into even further darkness (Isa. 8:22).

Ps. 9:17 Ps. 55:15 Eph. 2:1 Rev. 21:8

Isaiah 9:1-21

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed. (Isa. 9:1) In the worst of times God's people have to ally and balance their troubles; they are persecuted, but not forsaken (2 Cor. 4:9), sorrowful yet always rejoicing, 2 Cor. 6:10. And it is a matter of comfort to us, when things are at the darkest, that he *who forms the light and creates darkness* (Isa. 45:7) has appointed to both their bounds and set the one over against the other, Gen. 1:4.

But the dimness threatened (Isa. 8:22) shall not prevail to such a degree; for (Isa. 9:2) *the people walking in darkness have seen a great light*. At this time when the prophet lived, there were many prophets in Judah and Israel, whose prophecies were a great light both for direction and comfort to the people of God, who adhered to the law and the testimony. This was to have its full accomplishment when our Lord Jesus began to appear as a prophet, and to preach the gospel in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, and in Galilee of the Gentiles.

The intent of the gospel is to break the yoke of sin and Satan, to remove the burden of guilt and corruption, that we might be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Christ broke the yoke of the ceremonial law (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1), and delivered us *from the hand of our enemies*, that we might *serve him without fear*, Luke 1:74, 75. This is

done by the Spirit working like fire (Matt. 3:11), not as the battle of the warrior is fought, with confused noise; no, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

The same one who is *the Mighty God is a child born*; thus did He humble and empty himself, to exalt and fill us. He is born into our world. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* God so loved the world that He gave Him. He is born *to us*, He is given to us.

This child, this Son of God, this Son of man, is invested with the highest honor and power so that we cannot but be happy if He is our friend. He shall be called *Wonderful, Counselor, etc.* His people shall know Him and worship him by these names. He is *wonderful, counselor.* Justly is he called *wonderful*, for He is both God and man. He is the *counselor*, for He was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God from eternity, and He gives counsel to the children of men. He is the wisdom of the Father, and is made to us wisdom from God. He is *the Mighty God—God, the Mighty One.* As He has wisdom, so He has strength. He is able to save to the utmost. He is *the Everlasting Father, or the Father of eternity:* He is God, one with the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting. He is the author of everlasting life and happiness to them, and so is the Father of a blessed eternity to them. He is *the Prince of Peace.* As King, he preserves, commands, creates peace, in His kingdom. He is our peace. His throne is above every throne (Isa. 9:6): *The government will be on his shoulders—his only.* He shall not only wear the badge of it on his shoulder (the *key to the house of David*, Isa. 22:22), but he shall bear the burden of it. Glorious things are here spoken of Christ's government, Isa. 9:7. It shall be multiplied; the lustre of it shall increase, and it shall shine more and more brightly in the world. It shall be a peaceful government, agreeable to his character as the Prince of Peace. He shall rule by love, and as his government increases the peace shall increase. It shall be administered with prudence and equity: *He will establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness.* It shall be an everlasting kingdom: *Of the increase of his government there will be no end.* God himself has undertaken to bring all this about: *"The Lord Almighty, who has all power in his hand and all creatures at his beckoning, will accomplish this."*

Then come terrible threats directed primarily against Israel (Isa. 9:8-12), the kingdom of the ten tribes, Ephraim and Samaria, the ruin of which is here foretold, all which came to pass within a few years, but they look further and read the doom of all the nations that forget God, and will not have Christ to reign over them.

The preface to this prediction (Isa. 9:8): *The Lord has sent a message against Jacob*, sent it by his servants the prophets. He warns before he wounds, but they took no care to turn away his wrath. It fell on them as a storm of rain and hail from on high, which they could not avoid.

(NIV Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry)

What sins are charged against the people of Israel?

Isa. 9:8, 13, 16, 17

What judgments are threatened against them for their wickedness?

Isa. 9:11, 12, 17-21

Who are the head and tail of Israel (Isa. 9:14) who God will cut off?

What is the mood of God in Isaiah 9:12, 17 & 21?

Isaiah 10:1-34

If there is a measure of difficulty attending the placing and elucidation (explanation) of some of the prophecies, which depict the various phases, and stages of the Antichrist's career, the cloud lifts as the end is neared. And this is in full accord with many other things which pertain to the closing days of the Age. The nearer we come to the blessed event of our Lord's return to this earth, the more light has God seemed to cast on those things which immediately precede the Second Advent. It is as though, at first, God furnishes only a bare outline, but ultimately He fills in the details for us. It is thus with the end of the Antichrist. The Holy Spirit has been pleased to supply us with a most comprehensive and vivid description of the closing scenes in the career of the Son of Perdition. It is with mingled feelings that we turn and ponder what has thus been recorded for our learning.

The awful course, which is followed by the Man of Sin, cannot but shock us. The frightful hypocrisy, the shocking duplicity and treachery, the terrible cruelty, and the amazing impiety of this Monster of wickedness, make us marvel at the forbearance of God, who endures "with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction". But when we come to the final scenes, and behold the Antichrist openly challenging heaven, publicly defying God, and making a deliberate and determined effort to prevent the Lord Jesus returning to this earth, we are well nigh rendered speechless by the unthinkable lengths to which sin will go. On the other hand, as we learn that all of this is the ending of that long dismal night which precedes the Day of Christ, the Millennium, we see that it is but the dark background to bring into more vivid relief the glories of the God-Man. The destruction of the Antichrist will be followed at once by the setting up of the Mes-

sianic Kingdom which shall bring peace and blessing to all the earth. And the contemplation of this cannot but fill us with joy and thanksgiving.

"The end of the Man of Sin marks an era of sublimest interest to the believing children of God. It shall be the day of our triumphant manifestation, and the Jubilee of all creation. The day, Oh, Hallelujah! when Satan's crown of pride shall be smitten, and his glory trailed in the dust; when his long-continued and persistent temptations shall have an end; and his power receive the wounding from which it shall never recover itself. That blessed, blessed day, when He whose right it is, shall reign, and the kingdom of Israel be no more overturned and dishonored. The sweet, sweet day, when the mockings, the scourgings, the bonds, the imprisonments, the afflictions, and the torments of the great multitude 'of whom the world was not worthy,' shall cease to annoy forever, and the whole earth be at rest, and break forth into gladness" (*Mrs. G. Needham*).

But before that blessed Day arrives, the last hour of the night of Christ's absence has to run its course, and as the darkest hour precedes the dawn, so the last hour of this "night" shall be the most foreboding of all. The period, which immediately precedes the return of Christ to the earth, will witness the most awful events ever chronicled. It was of this period that Daniel spoke when he said, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (12:1). It was to this same time that Christ referred when He declared, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:19, 20). This is "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3:10). It will be a time of unparalleled wickedness, and a time of unprecedented suffering. It is the time when God shall avenge the murder of His Son, when He shall take to task a world that has so long despised His Word, and trampled His commandments under foot. The very Antichrist will be one of the instruments of His vengeance—"the rod of His anger" (Isa. 10:5).

It is because men received not the love of God's truth He shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the Devil's lie. It is because men had "pleasure in unrighteousness" they shall be deceived by the Lawless One. It is because Israel refused that blessed One who came in His Father's name that they shall receive the one who comes in his own name. This is why the Antichrist will, for a season, be suffered to prosper, and apparently to defy God with impunity. But when God has used him to perform His own pleasure, then shall He empty upon his kingdom and upon his subjects the vials of His wrath. Just as God has set the bounds of the sea, saying thus far shalt thou go and no further, so has He fixed the limits to which He will allow the Antichrist to go. And when that limit is reached the Son of Perdition will find himself as helpless to pass beyond what God has decreed as a worm would be beneath the foot of an elephant. This will be made evident as we proceed.

We have seen the career of the Antichrist to the point where he turns upon the Jewish people and seeks to cut them off from being a nation. Fearful will be his assaults upon them, and bitter will be their wailings. It is at that time the Remnant will cry, "O God; why hast Thou cast us off forever? why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture? Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old; the rod of Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein Thou hast dwelt. Lift up Thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the Enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. Thine enemies roar in the midst of Thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into Thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of Thy name to the ground. They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together; they have *burned up all the synagogues of God in the land*. We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet neither is there any among us which knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the Adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name forever? Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? Pluck it out of Thy bosom" (Ps. 74:1-11).

It is at this same time that the prophecy of Amos 8 will receive its final fulfillment: "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro *to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it*. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst" (Amos 8:7-13). How remarkably does Ps. 74 interpret this prophecy of Amos! The reason why the godly remnant shall run to and fro to "seek the word of the Lord" and shall not find it, and the meaning of the "famine of *hearing* the words of the Lord" is that "all the synagogues in the land" shall have been burned up.

But not for long will this frightful persecution continue: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a *very little while*, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction" (Isa.

10:24, 25). Once the Antichrist turns upon Israel his days are numbered, for to touch that nation is to touch the apple of God's eye (Zech. 2:8).

His (Assyrian's) course is vividly sketched by Isaiah in the tenth chapter of his prophecy: "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Mickmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Galim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmena is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day" (Isa. 10:28-32). Nob is his camping-ground for that day, and it is there he will "plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the goodly holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45). Nob must be some elevation commanding a distant view of Jerusalem from the west. As he stands on the hill that night and looks at the Holy City, he "shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (Isa. 10:32).

We now come to the closing scene. The following morning the Man of Sin leads his forces to the famous Armageddon, there awaiting his final reinforcements before attacking Jerusalem. It is of this that Joel speaks: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14).

It is to this that Micah refers: "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for *He* shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor" (4:10, 11). But it is not in the valley that the battle is fought, but around Jerusalem, where the Beast and his armies deliver the final blow of God's judgment on that city ere the Deliverer appears. It is then that God will say, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hands is Mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 10:5-12). The Antichrist is but the Lord's instrument after all. Just as Moses picked up and held in his hand the rod which became a serpent, so shall this offspring of the Serpent be wielded by the hand of God to accomplish His predetermined counsels.

Once again, though, the Beast appears to be successful. Jerusalem falls before his onslaught as Jehovah had foretold that it should—"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zech. 14:2). Intoxicated by their success, it is then that the heathen shall rage and the people imagine a vain thing: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us brake their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:2, 3).

And then comes the grand finale. The heaven will open and from it will descend the King of kings and Lord of lords, seated on a white horse, with His eyes "as a flame of fire" (Rev. 19:11, 12). Attending Him will be the armies of heaven, also seated on white horses (Rev. 19:14). Far from being appalled at this awe-inspiring spectacle, the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies shall gather together to "make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His armies" (Rev. 19:19). "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3). At last the Christ of God and the christ of Satan will confront each other. But the instant the conflict begins, it is ended. The Foe will be paralyzed, and all resistance cease.

Scripture has solemnly recorded the end of various august evil personages. Some were overwhelmed by waters: some devoured by flames; some engulfed in the jaws of the earth; some stricken by a loathsome disease; some ignominiously slaughtered; some hanged; some eaten up of dogs; some consumed by worms. But to no sinful dweller on earth, save the Man of Sin, "the Wicked One", has been appointed the terrible distinction of being consumed by the brightness of the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Himself. Such shall be his unprecedented doom, an end that shall fittingly climax his ignoble origin, his amazing career, and his unparalleled wickedness.

"Hitherto proud boastings have issued from the lips of Satan's king; but now he falls helplessly to the ground, blasted by the lightening which streams from the King of kings; and together with the False Prophet and in the full sight of his countless armies, he is seized by the angels of the Lord, to be hurled alive into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (*G. H. Pember*).

The overthrow of the Antichrist is described as follows:—"But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and *with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked*" (Isa. 11:4).

"And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but *he shall be broken without hand*"—an expression which always refers to that which is supernatural (Dan. 8:25).

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet shall he *come to his end, and none shall help him*" (Dan. 11:45). "And then shall that Wicked (One) be revealed, whom the Lord *shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming*" (2 Thess. 2:8).

"And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were *cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*" (Rev. 19:20).

"For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, *for the King it is prepared*; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; *the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it*" (Isa. 30:33).

"And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and (they) *shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*" (Rev. 20:10).

Frightful, too, shall be the doom meted out to the followers of the Antichrist. Zech. 14 tells us, "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor" (vv. 12, 13). So, also Rev. 19:21 declares, "And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh".

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

The Assyrian is used by God as an instrument of vengeance, "the rod of His anger" (Isa. 10:5). **Show from scripture how the Assyrian is similar or actually the Antichrist?**

Isa. 10:5-34 Isa. 14:25 Jer. 51:24-64 Dan.11:29-44 Mic. 4:10-5:15

What is the meaning of Isa. 10:15?

Isa. 10:7-14

Isaiah 11:1-5

The prophet had before spoken of a child that should be born, on whose shoulders the government should be. He had said (Isa. 10:27) that *the yoke should be destroyed because of the anointing*; now here he tells us on whom that anointing should rest.

The Messiah should, in due time, arise out of the house of David, as that *Branch* of the Lord which he had said (Isa. 4:2) should be glorious. This branch should arise—from *Jesse*. He should be the son of David, with whom the covenant of royalty was made. David is often called *the son of Jesse*, and Christ is called so. He is called a *shoot*, and a *branch*; both the words here used signify a small, tender product, a *twig* and a *sprig*, such as is easily broken off. The enemies of God's were just before compared to stately boughs (Isa. 10:33), but Christ to a tender branch (Isa. 53:2); yet he shall be victorious over them.

This tender branch should be so watered with the dews of heaven as to become a strong rod for a scepter to rule, v. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him*. He shall have the Spirit not by measure, but without measure, the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, Col. 1:19; 2:9. He began his preaching with this (Luke 4:18), *The Spirit of the Lord is on me*. He shall have *the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of knowledge*. He shall know how to administer the affair of his spiritual kingdom to the glory of God and the welfare of men. He was famed for courage in his teaching the way of God in truth, and not caring for any man, Matt. 22:16.

He should be accurate, and exact in the administration of his government and the exercise of the power committed to him (v. 3): The Spirit with which He shall be clothed *shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*. Jesus Christ had the spirit without measure, that He might perfectly understand His undertaking.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, with respect of persons (Job 34:19), nor *decide by what he hears with his ears*, by the representations of others, as men commonly do; nor by the fair words they speak, *calling Him, Lord, Lord*; but He will judge by the hidden man of the heart, and the inward principles men are governed by, of which he is an infallible witness. He will judge with righteous judgment (v. 5): *Righteousness will be his belt*. It shall constantly surround him and shall be his honor; he shall gird himself for every action, shall gird on his sword for war in righteousness. *With righteousness he will judge the needy*; he shall judge in favor and defense of those who have right on their side, though

they are poor in the world, and because they are poor in spirit. Christ is the poor man's King, Ps. 72:2, 4. He *will give decisions for the poor of the earth, or of the land.* Some read it, *He shall reprove or correct the meek of the earth with equity.* If his own people, the meek of the land, do amiss, he will *visit their transgression with the rod.* But he will *strike the earth, the man of the earth, who oppresses (Ps. 10:18) with the rod of his mouth, the word of his mouth, speaking terror and ruin to them.* *With the breath of his lips, by the operation of His Spirit, according to His word, He will slay the wicked.*

(NIV Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry)

What is meant by the terms: "stem of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1) "Root of Jesse" (Isa.11:10)?

What is the sevenfold ministry of the Divine Spirit? (Example: "wisdom")

How will Christ's reign on earth be different from earthly rulers and judges?

Isaiah 11:6-16

After the prophecy of Assyria's fall we are given another glimpse into the Messianic kingdom. There is no hint of exultation over the defeat of the tyrant. Peace reigns completely. The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) rules and wars have ceased. Another contrast is between the proud cedar (Assyria) which is felled, and the 'shoot from the stump of Jesse' which springs to vigorous life. Attention is focused first of all on the Messiah (1-5) and then His kingdom (6-9). The character and the spiritual endowments of the ruler would ensure the quality of His rule. Like the judges of ancient Israel, He would be One anointed with the Spirit of the Lord (2), but the effect of this would be more than a temporary deliverance and respite for His people.

(Daily Devotional Bible Commentary, Arthur E. Cundall)

What period of time is spoken of in Isaiah 11:6-10?

Is Isaiah 11:11-16 a continuation of Isaiah 10:24-27 and the beginning verses of Isaiah 12 the response of the people when the Assyrian has been made powerless?

Isaiah 12:1-6

There we are, so to say, prophetically transplanted into the time when Israel, as a nation, shall at last respond to this call and fulfill the original purpose which God had in choosing them from among the other nations, viz. that they may be His witnesses and show forth His praise throughout the earth.

"And in that day," we read—the "day," viz. not only of their national restoration but of *their conversion*, when "with joy they shall draw waters from the wells of salvation," and when the "Holy One of Israel," in the person of the long-rejected, but now exalted, Messiah, shall be visibly manifested in the very "midst" of them—"*shall ye say, Hodu la-Yehovah, 'give thanks' (or, 'make joyful confession') unto Jehovah, publish abroad His Name, declare His doings among the peoples, make mention*" (or, "*cause it to be remembered*") "*that His Name is exalted.*" Thus shall they encourage and stir up one another in this holy task of spreading abroad the knowledge of their glorious Redeemer and King, until in a short time the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of His glory, as the waters cover the sea.

It is significant also that, as in Psalm 105, so also in Isa. 12:4, the "making known of His doings" parallelism to the "publishing abroad of His Name," for it is in these deeds of power and grace that His character is revealed. "What God has done," to quote from another writer, "is the best revelation of what *God is*. His messengers are not to speak their own thoughts about Him, but to tell the story of His acts and let these speak for Him. Revelation is not a set of propositions, but a history of divine facts."

(Israel in the Plan of God, David Baron)

What will cause Israel to sing songs of thanksgiving at this time?

Isa. 12:1 Isa. 26:2, 3, 12

How similar is this song to that in Ex. 15 and what was their cause then to rejoice?

What period of time is spoken of in Isaiah 12?

Isaiah 13:1-14:32

We arrive now at a branch of our subject upon which the Lord's people are in evident need of instruction: they have less light here than on most prophetic themes. And perhaps we should not be surprised at this. The very name Babylon means *confusion*, and widely prevails the confusion concerning it. Yet here and there God has raised up individuals who have borne faithful testimony to the teaching of His Word concerning the past and future of Babylon, and to their witness the writer acknowledges his indebtedness. In view of the ignorance which generally obtains we shall proceed the more cautiously. We here propose to examine carefully the principal scriptures in the Old Testament bearing upon our present theme.

"Babylon was a mighty city of old; its beginnings were in Shinar in the days shortly after the flood; it played an important part in the history of Israel and of Judea; it was the head of the kingdoms of the earth in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; after its capture by the Medes and Persians it fell from its high estate, but for some centuries after Christ it was still a city of importance, and the head of a district. In the New Testament it is first mentioned by Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), and here in the book that tells of the events that occur in the *Day of the Lord* we read of it as a city again dominating the world, and that at a time when Israelites are again prominent in the story of the earth. Here, too, Babylon reappears in its ancient dual aspect, political and social, the first city of earth and also the leader of the worship and religion of the world powers. The site of old Babylon is known at the present day; it covers a wide extent of ground, and parts of it are inhabited, as for instance Hillah, where there are some five or six thousand people. When the long-talked-of Euphrates Valley Railway becomes a reality, Babylon will be one of the most important places on the line" (Col. VanSomeren—"The Great Unfolding"). This quotation supplies a brief but fairly comprehensive outline of our subject.

The earliest mention of Babel in Scripture is in connection with the name of him who first after the deluge attained to greatness in the earth—greatness apart from God. Nimrod was the grandson of Ham, who called down upon him the curse of his father, Noah. "The sons of Ham were Cush.... and Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was *Babel, in the land of Shinar*" (Gen. 10:7-10). "Thus mightiness in the earth and commencement of kingly rule are first mentioned in connection with one, the seat of whose power was Babylon and the land of Shinar. Nimrod—Nebuchadnezzar—Antichrist, are, as we shall see, the three great names connected with that region and with that city" (B. W. Newton: "Babylon; Its Revival and Final Destruction"—1859).

The first mention of anything in Scripture always calls for the most particular attention, inasmuch as the initial occurrence of any term or expression in the Word of God invariably defines its meaning and forecasts its subsequent significance and scope. The passage just quoted from Gen. 10 is inseparably connected with and is in fact the key to what is found in Gen. 11. There we learn that the land of Shinar is mentioned as the place where men first united in confederate action against God. God had commanded that men should spread abroad—Gen. 9:1. But they, in blatant defiance, preferred to centralize. They determined to make for themselves a name, saying, "Go to, Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). And this, we are told, was "In the *land of Shinar*" (11:2). But the Lord interfered, came down, confounded their speech, and scattered them—"And they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called *Babel*; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth", etc. (Gen. 11:8, 9). Thus we see that at the beginning, the land of Shinar and the city of Babylon were the scene of confederate evil, and of judgment from the hand of God.

Shinar, then, was the land around Babel. Now, though the building of the city of Babylon was checked during the days of Nimrod, yet his kingdom was not overthrown. In Gen. 14:1 we read of "Amraphal king of Shinar". It would appear from several scriptures that "the land of Chaldea"—the capital of which was the city of Babylon—is but another name for "the land of Shinar". In Dan. 5: 30 Belshazzar is termed "the king of the Chaldeans", while in 7:1 he is called "the king of Babylon"—cf Isa. 47:1; Jer. 50:8; 51:54; Ezek. 12:13. In addition to these passages, Dan. 1:2, 3 seems to positively establish this conclusion, for there we are expressly told that the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's day was situated in "the land of *Shinar*!". This serves to confirm the fact that Chaldea or Babylonia was the most ancient of the early empires. It was from "Ur" of *Chaldea* (Gen. 11:28) that Abram was called; and it was "the *Chaldeans*" who plundered Job (Job 1:17); and in Josh. 7:21 we read of the "goodly *Babylonish* garment" which tempted Achan, among the spoils of Jericho. In striking accord with this is the statement found in Jer. 5:15, where the Holy Spirit terms the Babylonians an "*ancient*" as well as a "mighty" nation. After the days of Joshua, Babylon was not directly referred to again till the days of Esar-Haddan, of whom it is said, "And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof" (2 Kings 17:24, and cf Ezra 4:2). Closely connected with the land of Shinar is *Assyria*. For a time the supremacy alternated between Assyria and Babylonia, until in the days of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, Ninevah was conquered and Assyria became subject to Babylon.

But though Shinar and its capital are referred to in Gen. 10 and 11, and though there are occasional allusions to them in the centuries that followed, it was not until Israel's apostasy had been fully manifested that we find Babylon coming into the place of prominence and dominion. "Until Jerusalem had been sufficiently tried, to see whether she would prove

herself worthy of being God's city, Babylon was kept in abeyance. The founder of Babylon's greatness was that great king who was raised up to scourge Jerusalem, and who commenced the 'Times of the Gentiles', by receiving from God that endowment of power which was taken from Israel, and remains vested in the Gentiles, till Jerusalem shall be forgiven and cease to be trodden down. It was Nebuchadnezzar who 'walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?' (Dan. 4). The *greatness* of Babylon dates only from Nebuchadnezzar" (B.W.N.).

The fifth chapter of Daniel tells how Belshazzar, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, was slain by Darius, who took over the kingdom. Neither the city nor the kingdom was then destroyed, and so far from it being made desolate and without inhabitant, it remained for long centuries a city of note. Two hundred years after its capture by Darius, Alexander the Great, after his conquest over the Persians, selected Babylon as the intended capital of his vast dominion, and, in fact, died there. In the first century of the Christian era Babylon still stood, for Peter refers to a church there! (See 1 Pet. 5:13). Several of the church "fathers" refer to Babylon, and at the beginning of the sixth century A.D. the famous Babylonian Talmud was issued by the Academies of Babylonia. Mr. Newton tells us that "Ibn Hankel in A.D. 917 speaks of Babylon as a small village. Even in the tenth century, therefore, it had not wholly disappeared". Slow and almost undiscernible was its decline and decay. Even in this day there is still a small town, Hillah, standing on the original site of ancient Babylon. What, then, of the future?

That there will yet be another Babylon, a Babylon eclipsing the power and glory of that of Nebuchadnezzar's day, has long been the firm conviction of the writer. Nor are we by any means alone in this conviction. A long list of honored names might be given of those who have arrived, independently, at the conclusion that the Scriptures plainly teach that Babylon is going to be re-built. But there is no need to buttress our conviction by an appeal to human authority. Better that the faith of the reader rests on the Word of God, than in the wisdom of the best of men. Before we set forth some of the many scripture *proofs* on which our conviction rests, let us ask, Would it not be passing strange if Babylon had no place in the end-time? Scripture tells us that Jerusalem, which has been so long trodden down by the Gentiles, is to be restored by human agency, and have a re-built temple (Matt. 24:15). Egypt and Assyria have yet an honored future before them, as is clear from Isa. 19:23, 24. Moab, Edom, and Seir are to figure in the coming day, as is intimated in Num. 24:17, 18. Greece awaits her final judgment from God (Zech. 9:13). And so we might go on. Why, then, should *Babylon* be exempted from the general renovation of the East?

But we are not left to logical deductions, the Word of God expressly affirms that Babylon *will* play a prominent part at the time of the end. The empire over which the Antichrist will reign is described in the identical symbols which were applied to the four world-kingdoms of Dan. 7. In Dan. 7:3 Daniel beheld "four great beasts" come up from *the sea*, and in Dan. 7:17 we are told "these great beasts, which are four, are four kings (or kingdoms) which shall arise out of the earth". These four beasts or kingdoms were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. Dan. 7:4 says "The first was like a *lion*". 7:5 says "The second was like a *bear*". 7:6 says the third was "like a *leopard*". 7:7 says the fourth was "dreadful and terrible". Now, in Rev. 13:1, 2, where we have a symbolical description of the empire which the Antichrist shall head, we are told that John saw "a Beast rise up out of *the sea*", and then it is added, "the Beast . . . was like unto a *leopard*, and his feet were as the feet of a *bear*, and his mouth as the mouth of a *lion*". Of the fourth beast of Dan. 7 we read, "It had ten horns" (7:7); so in Rev. 13:1 the Beast there has "ten horns". Who, then, can doubt that Rev. 13:1, 2 is given for the express purpose of teaching us that the four great world-kingdoms of the past—not merely the fourth but *all* of the four—are to be revived and restored at the time of the end? But as this point is disputed by some, we tarry to advance further proof.

It is to be noted that the Beast (kingdom) of Rev. 13:1 is said to have "seven heads". This has puzzled many of the commentators, but once it is seen that the Beast of Rev. 13:1, 2 is a symbolic description, first of a *composite* kingdom, made up of and perpetuating the features of the four world-empires of old; and second, a symbolic description of the one who shall head it, all difficulty disappears. That we have here in Rev. 13:1, 2 a *composite* kingdom is clear from the "seven heads". Now note that in Dan. 7 the first, second and fourth kingdoms are not said to have more than one head, but the third has "*four heads*" (Dan. 7:6). Thus the beasts of Dan. 7 have, three of them one head each, and the third four heads, or seven in all; which tallies perfectly with Rev. 13:1. But even this does not exhaust the proofs that the *four kingdoms* of Dan. 7 are to be restored, and play their final parts immediately before the Millennium.

If the reader will turn to Dan. 2, which is parallel with Dan. 7—the "image" in its *four parts* (the head, the breast and arms, the belly and thighs, the legs and feet) corresponding with the *four beasts*—it will be found that when we come to v. 45, which speaks of Christ (under the figure of "the Stone cut out of the mount without hands") returning to earth to destroy the forces of evil, and then set up His kingdom, we discover that the Stone "brake in pieces the iron (Rome), the brass (Greece), the clay (apostate Israel), the silver (Medo-Persia), and the gold (Babylon). What we desire the reader to note particularly is that the Stone strikes not only the iron, but the brass, clay, silver, and gold; in fact, v. 35 tells us, expressly, they shall be "broken to pieces *together*!" If, then, they are destroyed "together", they *must* all be on the scene at the time of Christ's return to earth to inaugurate His millennial reign, and if so, each of them must have been *revived* and *restored*!! As our present inquiry concerns not the renovation of Persia, Greece and Rome, but only that of Babylon, we shall confine ourselves to the scriptures which speak of the last mentioned.

1. Isa. 13 and 14 contain a remarkable prophecy bearing directly on the theme before us. It is termed in the opening verse, "The burden of Babylon". It tells of the terrible judgment which God shall send on this city. It speaks of the total and final destruction of it. It declares that "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah". It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation (vv. 19, 20). Now the one point pertinent to our present inquiry is, whether Isa. 13 describes the doom which befell the Babylon of Belshazzar's day, or the judgment which shall overtake the Babylon of the coming day. Upon this point there is, for those who desire to be subject to God's Word, no room for uncertainty. The sixth verse expressly declares that this "burden of Babylon" is to receive its fulfillment in "the Day of the Lord". This, we need hardly add, is the name for that day which follows the present day of Salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). If the reader will consult a concordance he will find that "the Day of the Lord" never refers to a period now past, but always has reference to one which is yet future! If any doubt remains as to whether or not Isa. 13 is speaking of a *future* Day, the contents of v. 10 should forever remove it. There we are told that "the stars of heaven and the constellation thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine". All students of prophecy will see at a glance that these cosmic phenomena are what are to be witnessed during the Tribulation period—cf (compare) Matt. 24:29. There is not a hint anywhere either in Scripture or (so far as we are aware) in secular history, that such disturbances among the heavenly bodies occurred at the captivity of Babylon by Darius. And it is at *that* time, in "the Day of the Lord" when the sun is darkened and the moon shines not, that Babylon is overthrown (v. 19). This one scripture is quite sufficient to establish the futurity of Babylon and its coming overthrow.

2. The 14th of Isaiah reads right on from 13, completing the "burden of Babylon" there begun. It supplies further proof that there is to be another Babylon. The chapter opens with a declaration of Israel's coming restoration. It declares "the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land" (v. 1). It goes on to say, "It shall come to pass *in the day that* the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this taunting speech against the king of *Babylon*, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" (vv. 3, 4). Should the quibble be raised that these verses are speaking of the restoration of Israel to Palestine following the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar's time, it is easily silenced. The verses that follow those just quoted make it unmistakeably clear that this prophecy *yet awaits* its fulfillment. Thus we read in vv. 7, 8, "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us". The whole earth never has been "at rest" since the days of Cain (except it were during the brief period when the Word tabernacled among men). But it will be during the Millennium! Notice, too, that following the overthrow of "the golden city", Israel exclaims, "Since thou art laid down, (laid low) no feller (no *cutter off*) is come up against us"! This establishes, unequivocally, the time of which this prophecy treats. Long after the days of Belshazzar, the Romans came up against Israel and cut them off. But none shall do this again when the *last* king of Babylon is destroyed!

Above, we have quoted to the end of the 8th verse of Isa. 14. In the 9th verse the prophet suddenly turns from Babylon to its last king. Verses 9 to 20 contain a striking portrait of the lofty arrogance and fearful doom of the Man of Sin. Then, in verse 21, the "burden" returns again to the *subjects* of the Antichrist: "Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts" (vv. 21-23). Finally, the prophet concludes with a parting word concerning the Antichrist: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (vv. 24-27). Well has it been said, "These are remarkable and significant words, and certainly we cannot say they have been fulfilled. Will any one affirm that God's purpose, which He hath purposed upon the whole earth, was accomplished when Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians? Did the hand that was stretched out over all the nations, *then* fulfill its ultimate designs? Was the Assyrian then trodden under foot in THE LAND, AND ON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, and, that at a time when the yoke of bondage is finally broken from off the neck of Israel? If this were so we should no longer see Jerusalem trodden down now. 'The times of the Gentiles' would have ended. Israel would be gathered, and Jerusalem be 'a praise in the earth'. The concluding words of this prophecy, therefore, might alone convince us that it yet remains to be fulfilled" (B. W. N.).

3. We appeal next to the 50th chapter of Jeremiah. The opening verses contain a prophecy which certainly has not received its complete fulfillment in the past. It declares, "The words that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, *and in that time*, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah *together*, going and

weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward (in that direction), saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten" (vv. 1-5). Mark carefully three things in these verses. First, it is announced that the *land* of Babylon shall be made so desolate that neither man nor beast shall dwell therein. Second, the time for this is defined as being when Israel and Judah *together* (and since the days of Rehoboam they have never been united) shall "seek the Lord". Third, it is when Israel and Judah shall join themselves to the Lord in "a perpetual covenant"! Still more explicit is the time-mark in v. 20: "*In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found*".

4. The whole of Jer. 51 should be carefully studied in this connection. Much in it we reserve for consideration in the two chapters which will follow this. Here we simply call attention to vv. 47-49: "Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the Spoiler shall come upon her from the north, saith the Lord. As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth". Surely little comment is needed here. When did the slain "of all the earth" (i. e. of all nations) fall in the midst of Babylon? And when did heaven and earth and all that is therein rejoice at her overthrow? "When Babylon passed into the hands of the Medes there was little occasion for such joy. It made little difference to the earth whether Babylon was reigned over by Chaldeans, or by Persians, or Greeks, or Romans. There was little cause for thanksgiving in such *transfer* of authority from one proud hand to another. But if there be a fall of Babylon that is to be immediately succeeded by the kingdom of Him, of whom it is said, 'All nations shall call Him blessed'.... then there is indeed sufficient reason why heaven and earth, and all that is therein should sing" (B.W.N.).

5. "Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to *Babylon*; there shalt thou be delivered; *there* the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies" (Micah 4:10). In the light of such scriptures as Micah 5:3, Matt. 24:8 ("sorrows" literally means "birth-pangs"), etc., there can be no room for doubt as to the time to which this prophecy refers. It is at the close of the Great Tribulation. And at that time a remnant of Israel will be found in *Babylon* and they shall be delivered by the Lord.

6. Both the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah as well as the Apocalypse speak of the *immediateness* of the blow which is to destroy Babylon. "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.... therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee *in a moment, in one day*, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in thy perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:1, 8, 9). "Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed: howl for her" (Jer. 51:8). "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for *in one hour* is thy judgment come" (Rev. 18:10). There has been nothing in the past history of Babylon which in any-wise corresponds with these prophecies.

7. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Revelation each declare that Babylon shall be *burned* with fire. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency shall be as when God overthrew *Sodom and Gomorrah*" (Isa. 13:19). "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holes: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have *burned* her dwelling places; her bars are broken . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be *burned with fire*" (Jer. 51:30, 58). "And cried when they saw the smoke of her *burning*, saying, What city is like unto this great city!" (Rev. 18:18). We know of nothing in either Scripture or secular history which shows that Babylon was "burned" *in the past*.

"But it will be said, perhaps, How can this be? Has not Babylon already been smitten? Has it not already been swept with the besom (broom) of destruction? Our answer is—not at the time and with the concomitant circumstances specified in the passages just quoted. It is true indeed that the Euphratean countries have been smitten—sorely smitten under the hand of God. God is wont (accustomed to) in His goodness to give premonitory blows—He is accustomed to warn before He finally destroys. Egypt, Jerusalem, and many other places, have all experienced premonitory desolations, and so has Babylon. Its present ruin (which came on it slowly, and if I may so speak, gently), is a memorial of what God's righteous vengeance can do, and a warning of what it will more terribly do, if human pride in contempt of all His admonitions, shall again attempt to rear its goodly palaces when He has written desolation. But if it be the habit of God thus graciously to warn, it is equally the habit of man to say, 'The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars'. Unbidden, the hand of man revived what God had smitten. Without therefore undervaluing the lesson given by past visitations of God's judgments—without hiding, but rather seeking to proclaim the reality and extent of the ruin, His holy hand has wrought, we have also to testify, that the hand of man uncommissioned from above will, sooner or later, reconstruct the fabric of its greatness—its last evil greatness, on the very plains which teem with the memorials of a ruin entailed by former and yet unrepented of transgressions. Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, and in a measure, Jerusalem, are already being revived. And if these and neighboring countries which have been visited by inflictions similar to those which have fallen on Babylon, are yet to revive and flourish with an evil prosperity at the time of the end, why should *Babylon* be made an exception?" (B.W.N.).

That the Antichrist will be intimately connected with the land of Chaldea is clear from a number of scriptures, notably, those which speak of him as "the Assyrian" and "the king of Babylon". But as this is a disputed point we are obliged to pause and make proof of it. Let us turn, then, first to Isa, 10 and 11 which form one continuous prophecy. We cannot now attempt even an outline of this long and interesting prediction, but must merely single out one or two statements from it which bear on the point now before us.

In the fifth verse of Isa. 10, the Lord addresses the Antichrist as follows: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation". This intimates that the Son of Perdition is but a tool in the hands of the Almighty, His instrument for threshing Israel. His consuming egotism and haughtiness come out plainly in the verses that follow (7-11). But when God has accomplished His purpose by him, He "will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (v. 12). How this serves to identify him with the "little horn" of Dan. 7:20, the Man of Sin of 2 Thess. 2:4! —cf further his proud boastings recorded in Isa. 10:13,14. In v. 23 is another statement which helps us to fix with certainty the period of which the prophet is speaking, and the central actors there in view: "For a consummation, and that determined, shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth" (R.V.). The words "consummation" and "that determined" occur again in Dan. 9:27—"He (Antichrist) shall make it (the temple) desolate, even until *the consummation*, and *that determined* shall be poured upon the Desolator". The "King of Assyria" and "the Desolator" are thus shown to be the same. In Isa. 10, vv. 24 and 25 we read, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and *the indignation shall cease*, and Mine anger in their destruction." Clearly this is parallel with Dan. 11:36: "And the King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till *the indignation be accomplished*." In the 11th chapter of Isaiah there is a statement even clearer, a proof conclusive and decisive: "And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (11:4). These very words are applied to the Man of Sin in 2 Thess. 2:8.

In Isa. 14 we have a scripture which very clearly connects the Antichrist with Babylon. The opening verses (which really form a parenthesis) tell of the coming restoration of Israel to Jehovah's favor, and then in v. 4 they are bidden to take up "a taunting speech (marginal rendering) against the King of Babylon". The taunting speech begins thus: "How hath the Oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! the Lord hath broken the staff of the Wicked" (vv. 4, 5). As to *who* is in view here there is surely no room for doubt. He is Israel's Oppressor in the End-time; he is the Wicked One. In the verses which follow there are many marks by which he may be positively identified. In v. 6 this "King of Babylon" is said to be "He who smote the people (i. e. Israel) in wrath with a continual stroke". In v. 12 he is called "Lucifer (Daystar), Son of the morning", a title which marks him out as none other than the Son of Perdition. Whatever backward reference to the fall of Satan there may be in this verse and the ones that follow, it is clear that they describe the blasphemous arrogance of the Antichrist. In v. 13 we read, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north". Then, in vv. 15 and 16 we are told, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the Pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the *man* that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" Clearly it is the Man of Sin that is here in view.

In Isa. 30 we have another scripture which links Antichrist with Babylonia. Beginning at v. 27 we read: "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger, and the burning thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an over-flowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel". Clearly it is the very end of the Tribulation period which is here in view. The reference is to the return of the Lord to earth in great power and glory, when He shall overthrow those who are gathered together against Him, and put an end to the awful career of the Antichrist. Continuing, we find this passage in Isa. 30 closes as follows: "For through the voice of the Lord shall *the Assyrian* be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it"—cf "the breath of the Lord" here with Isa. 11:4. For further references to Antichrist and Assyria see Isa. 7:17-20; 8:7, etc.

"How art thou fallen from heaven O Lucifer, *Son of the Morning!* How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations" (Isa. 14:12). "Lucifer" is a Latin word which signifies the "morning star". "All the ancient versions and all the Rabbins make the word a noun denoting the *bright one*, or, more specifically, *bright star*, or according to the ancients more specifically still, the *Morning Star* or harbinger of daylight" (Dr. J. A. Alexander). This term "Lucifer" has been commonly regarded as one of the names of Satan, and what is here said of the Morning Star is viewed as describing his apostasy. Against this interpretation we have nothing to say, except to remark that we are satisfied it does not exhaust this remarkable scripture. Sufficient now to point out that however Isa. 14 may look back to the distant past when, through pride, Satan fell from his original estate, it most evidently looks forward to a coming day and gives another

picture of the Antichrist. In this same passage "Lucifer" is termed "the *Man* that did make the earth to tremble" (v. 16), and in his blasphemous boast "I will be like the Most High" (v. 14), we have no difficulty in identifying him with the Man of Sin of 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. The force of this particular title "Morning Star" is seen by comparing it with Rev. 22:16, where we learn that this is one of the titles of the God-man. The "Morning Star" speaks of Christ coming to usher in the great Day of rest for the earth. In blasphemous travesty of this Satan will send forth the mock messiah to usher in a false millennium.

Both the Old and the New Testaments refer to the death of the Antichrist, and attribute it to the *sword*. In Rev. 13:14 we read that the false Prophet shall say to them that dwell on the earth "that they should make an image to the Beast, which had the wound by the *sword* and did live". In harmony with this we read in Zech. 11:17, "Woe to the idle shepherd that leaveth the flock! The *sword* shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye". It is to be noted that before we read that "the sword shall be" upon him, we are told that he "leaveth the flock", and the previous verse tells us that he was raised up "in *the Land*", which can only mean that he was ruling in Palestine. Hence it is clear that he leaves the Land before he receives his death wound by the sword. In perfect accord with this is what we read in Isa. 37:6, 7: "Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall *by the sword* in his own land".

Leaving Palestine, the Antichrist will "return to *his own land*", that is, the land of his nativity—Assyria— which confirms what we have said previously about Assyria being the country where Antichrist will first be manifested. There, in his own land, he will fall by the sword. Most probably he will be slain there by his political enemies, envious of his power and chafing under his haughty autocracy. In death he will be hated and dishonored, and burial will be refused him. It is to this that Isa. 14 (speaking of the King of Babylon, see v. 4) refers: "But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through *with a sword*, that go down to the stones of the pit. As a carcase trodden under feet, thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people" (vv. 19, 20). But his enemies will suddenly be filled with consternation and then admiration, for to their amazement this one slain by the sword shall rise from the dead, and his deadly wound will be healed— note how this is implied in Isa. 14, for v. 25 shows him once more in the land of the living, only to meet his final doom at the hands of the Lord Himself. It is to this amazing resurrection of the Antichrist that Rev. 13:3, 4 refers: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the Beast. And they worshipped the Dragon which gave power unto the Beast: and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?" Details of his resurrection are supplied in Rev. 9, from which we gather that just as Christ was raised from the dead by God the Father, so the Antichrist will be raised from the dead by his father the Devil, see v. 1 where the fallen "Star", which refers to Satan, is given the "key of the bottomless pit", and when this is opened there comes out of it the mysterious "locusts" whose king is the Destroyer (v. 11), the Antichrist.

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

Who is the proverb in Isaiah 14 spoken against, what are his traits and what will be his destiny?

Isa. 14:13-20 Isa. 37:6-7 Zech. 11:17 2 Thess. 2:3-4 Jude 9 Rev. 13:14

Is Babylon a person, city or system?

Is the prophecy mentioned here about Babylon the same prophecy mentioned in Rev 18:1-19:21?

Isaiah 15:1–21:27

We cannot properly understand the visions of Isaiah without having a clear conception of the neighboring nations which filled so large a place in contemporary history, and so frequently form the subject of the prophets' messages.

Palestine was situated midway between the two great empires of the world. On the west was Egypt with her tributary states in Africa, generally described under the name of Ethiopia. On the east was Assyria, which was superseded and succeeded later by Babylon. These two mighty empires lived in constant jealousy and conflict, and in the marching and counter-marching of their mighty armies, the intervening states of Western Asia became the constant battleground of the world. These states clustered close to the Mediterranean coast. Chief among them were Judah and Israel. The one with its capital at Jerusalem, shut away to a considerable extent by its inaccessible situation among the hills, was more likely to escape the notice of these passing armies. The other, Israel, with its beautiful capital Samaria in the most fertile part of the valley of Northern Palestine, lay in the very path of these contending armies. Further north were the three powerful kingdoms of Syria, Hamath and Tyre, the great maritime kingdom of antiquity. Around the southern frontier of Judah were Edom, Moab and Arabia. These midway states, exposed as they were to one or the other of the great contending parties, were under the constant temptation of joining forces either with Egypt or Assyria for their own protection. Sometimes their joint action took the form of a mutual alliance between each other against the common foe. The politics of Judah and Israel, therefore, circulated around the question of these alliances. The shrewd politicians of Hezekiah's court were always plotting for some convention, either with Egypt, Assyria or the smaller states. In opposition to this we constantly find

Isaiah protesting against all entangling alliances and appealing to the people to remember that God is their national King and able to protect them Himself, without their leaning upon the broken reed of earthly powers. All these states, he tells them, are themselves to be involved ere long in national ruin and their fate will only drag God's people down with them.

We find the early portion of Isaiah's prophecies occupied, therefore, with a series of visions relating to these surrounding nations.

SYRIA

1. In Isaiah 7:1, an alliance between Israel and Syria was made against Jerusalem, and King Ahaz was greatly alarmed. This was the occasion for Isaiah's first vision and message regarding Syria in chapter 8:4. In this message the prophet declares that before the child, which had just been born to him, "Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria." The vision is renewed in Isaiah 17:1-11, and a fuller description is given of the fall of Damascus and the extinction of Syria. "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. . . .The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus" (17:1b-3). All this came to pass under Shalmaneser in the same invasion in which the 10 tribes were carried away captive and the kingdom of Israel destroyed.

ASSYRIA

2. This is a sublime passage in which Assyria is represented as a proud, vainglorious power, which imagines that its victories are through its own strength, and through the favor of its idol gods; while it is merely a rod and an axe in the hand of God, used to chasten His people and then broken and thrown away. So Assyria was to be broken too. Again in Isaiah 14:25 the vision is continued, "I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders."

MOAB

4. Moab was really a kindred race to Judah and Israel, being descended from Lot through his wicked daughters. Moab was always jealous of Israel and richly deserved the judgment which at last came upon her. Balak, the king of Moab, tried his best to destroy Israel as they passed through the wilderness, and afterwards succeeded through Balaam in bringing them into unholy relations with the daughters of Moab and thus falling under the divine judgment. In the later history of Judah, Moab proved herself a treacherous foe by standing guard at the fords of the river and refusing to let the fugitives from the destruction of Jerusalem escape. The two chapters, Isaiah 15 and 16, contain "the burden of Moab" and pronounce punishment and ruin upon the people and their cities.

ETHIOPIA

5. The 18th chapter of Isaiah contains the burden of Ethiopia—"the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush" (18:1). How perfectly this describes that great Eastern Sudan, whose bird-life is fluttering ever upon the air, and whose people have indeed been "tall and smooth-skinned, . . .feared far and wide" (18:2). "They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter" (18:6). But even from this people "gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty" (18:7b).

EGYPT

Isaiah 19:1-25

6. Generally speaking, this prediction is intended to show to the people of Isaiah's time the utter vanity of trusting in the Egyptian alliance, because Egypt herself is to be led away captive by the king of Assyria.

Then the LORD said, "Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old with buttocks bared—to Egypt's shame." (20:3-4)

EDOM

Isaiah 21:11-13

7. Edom was a sort of cousin to Israel, but, like many other secondhand relations, was more unfriendly than even Israel's enemies. "Someone calls to me from Seir, 'Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?' The watchman replies, 'Morning is coming, but also the night. If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again' " (21:11-12). Edom's watchmen are represented as crying unto the prophetic watchman, "What of the night?" and the answer comes, "Morning is coming, but also the night." For Israel it was to be morning, but for Edom night. How dark the night of Edom history tells us. Travelers today can only find the ruins of that greatness which has forever passed away.

ARABIA

Isaiah 21:13-17

8. The vision of Edom is followed by that of Arabia. Even the scattered tribes of the desert were to share in the awful tide of carnage and war, which the Assyrian was to bring over the whole of western Asia. The glory of Kedar should fail and the traveling companies of Dedanim be scattered abroad.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Isaiah wrote down this vision as he saw it, keeping in mind that he could only explain various visions with what he knew. Just like us, if we saw a vision of the future we could only relate what we saw by explaining something current we could identify with. In Isaiah's case he knew the land and the nations that inhabited it but these words go well beyond the conflict during Isaiah's days. **Find verses that show how these words of prophecy go well beyond what was happening then.**

All the enemies of God's people who now taunt and oppress them, as Moab did Israel, shall, like Moab, at last be brought to silence. **Why was Moab being destroyed?**

Isa. 16:6

Those who league together against the people of God, as Damascus and Israel did against Judah, shall be brought to ruin. **What was Israel's sin and sorrow?**

Isa. 17:10

What will happen to Egypt or for that matter any other country when God waves His hand over it as in Isa. 19:16?

Isa. 19:17

Is Isa. 21:9 speaking of the same incident as in Rev. 18:20-21 and Rev. 19:1-3?

Isaiah 22:1-25

"Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert (secret) to them from the face of *the Spoiler*: for the Extortioner is at an end, *the Spoiler* ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness" (Isa. 16:4, 5). It will be observed that the verse in which the Antichrist is spoken of as the Spoiler comes immediately before the one where we read of the throne being established, a reference, of course, to the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom. These two things synchronize: the destruction of Antichrist, and the beginning of the real Messiah's reign; hence we read here "the Spoiler ceaseth". A further reference to the Man of Sin under this title of the Spoiler is found in Jer. 6:26: "O daughter of My people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mournings, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for *the Spoiler* shall suddenly come upon thee". This is another title which views the Antichrist in connection with Israel. After the return of many of the Jews to Palestine, and after their rights have been owned by the Powers, and their security and success seem assured; their enemy, filled with satanic malice, will seek their extermination. "The Spoiler" contrasts him with the Lord Jesus who is the great Restorer (see Ps. 69:4).

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall *the Nail* that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 22:25). The last ten verses of this chapter should be read carefully. They furnish a striking foreshadowment of the End-time. Shebna was holding some office over (note "government" in v. 21) Israel. Apparently he was a usurper. God announced that he should be set-aside in shame, and the man of His choice—Eliakim—should take his place. These historical figures merge into prophetic characters. In v. 22 we read that God says, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder, so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open". As we know from Rev. 3:7 this refers to none other than the Lord Jesus, and of Him it is here said, "And I will fasten Him as a Nail in a sure place; and He shall be for a glorious throne to His father's house" (v. 23). Then, in the closing verse of the chapter we read, "In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the Nail that is fastened in a sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall". Just as Eliakim foreshadowed Christ, so Shebna pointed forward to the Antichrist; and just as in v. 23 we have a prophecy announcing the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, so in v. 25 we have foretold the overthrow of the false messiah's kingdom.

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

When will this proclamation stated in Isaiah 22:1-14 against Jerusalem take place?

Isa. 22:5, 12

Show how Shebna pointed to the Antichrist and Eliakim foreshadowed Christ in Isaiah 22:15-25.

Isaiah 23:1-18

Historical Point of View

Tyre, a seaport, is another name for Phoenicia, the leading maritime power of Isaiah's day. Their empire extended as far as the coast of North Africa, perhaps even to Spain. Phoenicians invented the alphabet, evidence of an advanced civilization: however, their religion was abominable. They worshiped Baal and Ashtoreth, the deities that the Tyrian Jezebel brought into Israel, and which Elijah withstood and humiliated on Mount Carmel.

Ezekiel 28, also directed against Tyre, makes clear that the reason for the wrath of God lay primarily in their idolatrous pride (v. 9), as evidenced by their king.

Sidon was the sister city to Tyre located on the coast about 20 miles north of Tyre. Tyre and Sidon were conquered by Babylon in 572 B.C. after a long siege. The fortified island city of Tyre withstood the attack, but was completely destroyed by Alexander in 332 B.C.

Her future will be one of a seductive influence on international trade, as well as a contribution to Israel's temple life (Tyre supplied cedar logs for the second temple, Ezra 3:7). Jesus visited Tyre's territory (Matt. 15:21), and Paul found disciples there at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 21:3-5).

(Spirit Filled Life Bible, Nathaniel M. Van Cleave)

Description of Tyre's King and Prince from Ezekiel

In the opening verses of Ezekiel 28 we have a striking view of the Man of Sin under the title of "the Prince of Tyre," just as what is said of "the King of Tyre" in the second half of the chapter is an esoteric allusion to Satan. First, we are told his "heart is lifted up" (Ezek. 28:2), which is precisely what is said to his father, the Devil, in Ezekiel 28:17. Second, he makes the boast "I am God" and "I sit in the seat of God" (Ezek. 28:2), which is parallel with 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Third, it is here said of him, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee" (Ezek. 28:3), which intimates he will be endowed with superhuman wisdom by that one of whom this same chapter declares, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom" (Ezek. 28:12). Fourth, it is said of him, "By thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures" (Ezek. 28:4). Thus will he be able to dazzle the worshippers of Mammon by his Croesus-like (fabulously rich Lydian king) wealth, and out-do Solomon in the glory of his kingdom. Finally, his death by the sword is here noted, see Ezekiel 28:7-8.

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

Connected with the city of Tyre is wealth, commercialism, harlotry and the king or prince of Tyre. Tyre and its king have many similarities with Babylon and its king. **Try to make a connection between these cities and their kings and if there is no connection show that also?**

Isa. 13:1-14:32 Isa. 23:1-8 Isa. 24:8-10 Isa. 47:1, 8, 9 Jer. 27:1-11 Jer. 50:1-51:64 Ezek.
26:1-28:26 Dan. 9:27 Joel 3:4-8 Amos 1:9-10 Zech. 9:2-4 Rev. 14:8 Rev. 16:18-19
Rev. 17:1-19:21

After "Tyre will be forgotten 70 years" (Isa. 23:15), Tyre will again will have a seductive influence on international trade.

Do you think Tyre will play any role in future Israel?

Ezra 3:7 Isa.23:17-18

Isaiah 24:1-23

The theme of this chapter is the judgment coming upon the professing Christian world for its unfaithfulness to the covenant. The whole fabric of society, political and religious, including the people and the priest alike, shall be broken up. The relations of life, according to the present world-course, shall come to an abrupt termination. The cause for the coming judgment shall be the same as in the days of Noah—namely, the apostasy of the men of the earth from the clearest revelation that has ever been vouchsafed to man. Professing Christendom shall have proved false to "the everlasting covenant." Therefore "the earth" being so 'defiled under its inhabitants' (v. 5) is doomed to "the curse."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Show how Isaiah 24:5 is the answer to why this worldwide judgment takes place.

Isaiah 25:1-12

"Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place: even the heat with the shadow of a cloud; *the branch (kjb) of the terrible ones* shall be brought low" (Isa. 25:5). The first five verses of this chapter (Isa. 25) contemplate the enemy's stronghold—Babylon—and the remainder of the chapter pictures the blessedness of the millennial era. In Isaiah 25:5 the Antichrist's overthrow is announced: "The branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low" (KJV). With this should be compared Isa. 14:19, where of Lucifer it is said, "Thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch". This points to another contrast. The "Branch" is one of the Messianic names: "Behold, I will bring forth My Servant, the Branch" (Zech. 3:8); "Behold the man whose name is the Branch" (Zech. 6:12). By placing together Isa. 4:2 and Isa. 14:19 the antithesis will be more evident. Of Christ it is said, "The Branch of the Lord shall be *beautiful and glorious*"; Antichrist is called "an *abominable* branch": Christ is "the *Branch of the Lord*"; Antichrist is "the *branch of the terrible ones*".

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

Elaborate more on the Antichrist by using the following verses: Isa. 16:4-5, Isa. 22:25, Isa. 33:1-8.

How does what is happening here compare with what is happening in Revelation 9:1-7?

Describe the earth when the Lord establishes His kingdom.

Isaiah 26:1-21

The saints delight to sing of the "strong city" which they have in the 'Church of the living God' whose walls are "salvation." None can enter there save "the righteous" who 'keep the truth.' As these keep the truth, so their Lord 'keeps them in perfect peace.' The secret of their keeping the truth, and of their consequent peace is their "trust" in the Lord, and their 'staying their mind on Him' in every perplexity and temptation. As 'the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of ages,' so it is our wisdom and happiness to 'trust in Him forever.' "The lofty" of the world He will soon 'lay low' in the dust; whereas 'the poor and needy' shall be exalted above them, whatever hindrances there be now in "the way of the just," their path at last shall be made straight.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Who is the "righteous nation" referred to in Isaiah 26:2?

Isa. 26:12-21

Explain the last part of Isaiah 26:19; "the earth shall cast out the dead."

Throughout the book of Isaiah there are references to the Jews' situation during Isaiah's time, the tribulation period (seven year period before the Lord's return) as well as the Millennial age (period of peace). **The song being sung in Isaiah 26 is referring to which age?**

Isaiah 27:1-13

"In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1). This chapter is by no means easy to analyze: its structure seems complex. That its contents point to a yet future date is intimated by its opening words—compare other verses in Isaiah where "in that day" occur. As one reads the chapter through it will be found that there is a peculiar alternation between references to the tribulation period and conditions in the millennium. The closing verse clearly refers to the end of the tribulation period. So, also, does the first verse with which we are now chiefly concerned.

Leviathan, the piercing serpent, is, we believe, one of the names of the Antichrist.

"In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1). To appreciate the force of this we need to attend to the context, which is unfortunately broken by the chapter division. In the closing verses of Isa. 26 we hear God saying, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (26:20). These words are addressed to the elect remnant in Israel.

Their ultimate application will be to those on earth at the end of this Age, for it is the time of God's "indignation" (cf. Dan. 8:19 and 11:36). It is the time when "the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (26:21)—notice "iniquity", singular number, not "iniquities". It is their worshipping of Satan's man which is specifically referred to. Then, immediately following we read, "*In that day* the Lord . . . shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent". The connection, then, makes it plain that it is just before the Millennium when God shall punish the crooked serpent, the Antichrist. Now the very fact that the Wicked One is here denominated "the piercing and crooked serpent" hints strongly that he will be *the son* of "that old serpent, the devil".

A comparison with a passage in Job confirms this conclusion. It is generally agreed that "leviathan" in Job 41 refers to the crocodile, yet the commentators do not appear to have seen in it anything more than a description of that creature. But surely a whole chapter of Scripture would scarcely be devoted to describing a reptile! Personally, we are satisfied that under the figure of that treacherous and cruel monster we have a remarkable silhouette of the Prince of darkness. Note the following striking points:

In verses 1 and 2 (of Job 41) the strength of leviathan is referred to. In v. 3 the question is asked "will he speak *soft words* unto thee?": this is meaningless if only a crocodile is in view; but it is very pertinent if we have here a symbolic description of Antichrist. In v. 4 the question is put, "Will he *make a covenant* with thee?": this, too, is pointless if nothing but a reptile is the subject of the passage; but if it looks to some monster more dreadful, it serves to identify. "None is so fierce that dare stir him up" (v. 10): how closely this corresponds with Rev. 13:4—"Who is able to make war with the Beast?" "His teeth are terrible round about" (v. 14): how aptly this pictures the fierceness and cruelty of the Antichrist! "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone" (v. 24): how accurately this portrays the moral depravity of the Antichrist! "When he raiseth up himself the mighty are afraid.... the sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold.... the arrow cannot make him flee" (vv. 25, 26, 28): how these words suggest the invincibility of Antichrist so far as human power is concerned. "Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride" (vv. 33, 34). Surely these last verses remove all doubt as to *who* is really before us here! The whole of Job 41 should be studied carefully, for we are assured that it contains a remarkable but veiled amplification of Isa. 27:1.

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

When does the destruction of leviathan (Antichrist) take place?

What does the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 27:2-6 emphasize?

What happens after the Lord "will thresh" in Isaiah 27:12?

Isaiah 28:1-29

It must be borne in mind that the Jews are to return to Palestine and there reassume a national standing while yet unconverted. There are a number of passages which establish this beyond question. For example, in Ezekiel 22:19-22 we are told, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof." The first six verses of Isaiah 18 describe how the Lord will gather the Jews to Jerusalem, there to be the prey of "fowls and beasts." The closing chapters of Zechariah lead to the inevitable conclusion that the Jews return to their land in unbelief, for if their national conversion takes place in Jerusalem (Zech. 12:10), they must have returned to it unconverted.

When the Antichrist is manifested, great companies of the Jews will already be in Palestine, and in a flourishing condition. What, then, will be his relations with them? It is by no means easy to furnish a detailed answer to this question, and at best we can reply but tentatively. Doubtless, there are many particulars respecting this and all other related subjects, which will not be cleared up until the prophecies concerning them have been fulfilled. We, today, occupy much the same position with regard to the predictions concerning the Antichrist, as the Old Testament saints did to the many passages which foretold the coming of the Christ. Their difficulty was to arrange those passages in the order they were to be fulfilled, and to distinguish between those which spoke of Him in humiliation and those which foretold His coming glory. A similar perplexity confronts us. To ascertain the sequence of the prophecies relating to the Antichrist is a real problem. Even when we confine ourselves to those passages which speak of him in his connections with Israel, we have to distinguish between those which concern only the godly remnant, and those which relate to the great apostate mass of the nation; and, too, we have to separate between those prophecies which concern the time when Antichrist is posing as the true Christ, and those which portray him in the final stage of his career, after he has thrown off his mask of religious pretension.

It would appear that the first thing revealed in prophecy concerning the Antichrist's dealings with Israel is the entering into a "covenant" with them. This is mentioned in Daniel 9:27: "And he shall confirm the covenant (make a firm covenant, R.V.) with many for one week" i.e. seven years. The many here can be none other than the mass of the Jewish people, for they are the principal subjects of the prophecy. The one who makes this covenant is the "Prince that shall come" of the previous verse, the head of the restored Roman Empire. Thus the relations between this Prince, the Antichrist, and the mass of the Jews shall, at the first, be relations of apparent friendship and public alliance. That this covenant is not forced upon Israel, but rather is entered into voluntarily by them, as seeking Antichrist's patronage, is clear from Isaiah 28:18, where we find God, in indignation, addressing them as follows—"And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." And this, we believe, supplies the key to Daniel 2:43.

In Psalm 55 much is said of the Antichrist in his relation to Israel. Among other things we read there, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (v. 21). The occasion for this sad complaint is given in the previous verse—"He had put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant." The reference is to Antichrist breaking his seven-year Covenant with the Jews (see Daniel 9:27; 11:21-24). Now if the entire Psalm be read through with these things in mind, it will be seen that it sets forth the sorrows of Israel and the sighings of the godly remnant during the End-Time. But the remarkable thing is that when we come to Psalm 55:11-14 we find that which has a double application and fulfillment—"wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." These verses describe not only the base treachery of Judas toward Christ, but they also announce how he shall yet, when reincarnated in the Antichrist, betray and desert Israel. The relation of Antichrist to Israel will be precisely the same as that of Judas to Christ of old. He will pose as the friend of the Jews, but later he will come out in his true character. In the tribulation period, the nation of Israel shall taste the bitterness of betrayal and desertion by one who masqueraded as a "familiar friend."

"And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Isa. 28:18). The "covenant" referred to is that seven-year one which is mentioned in Dan. 9:27. But here the one with whom this covenant is made is termed "Death" and "Hell". This is a title of the Antichrist, as "the Resurrection and the Life" is of the true Christ. Nor is this verse in Isa. 28 the only one where the Son of Perdition is so denominated. In Rev. 6 a four-fold picture of him is given—the antithesis of the fourfold portrayal of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. Here he is seen as the rider on differently colored horses, which bring before us four stages in his awful career, and when we come to the last of them the Holy Spirit exposes his true identity by telling us, "and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (Rev. 6:8).

(The Antichrist, Arthur W. Pink)

Explain what Isaiah meant in verses 9–15 of chapter 28.

Isa.6:9 Isa. 8:15, 16 Isa. 29:11 Mark 4:12

"Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand;" (Isa. 28:18 NKJV) **Who is spoken of here that has a covenant with death and hell? Who is the stone (Isa. 28:16-17) that opposes this covenant?**

Isa. 28:1-15 Dan. 9:26-27

Is there any similarity to what is being said here to what is being said in 2 Tim. 2:19-26?

How does the teaching of Isaiah 28:23-29 apply to us?

Isa. 28:13

Describe the fourfold portrayal of the rider who sits on different colored horses in Revelation 6.

Isaiah 29:1-24

Once more Isaiah takes up the solemn theme of judgment against Jerusalem (1-11). The modern reader may become weary at such repetition, but he must bear two facts in mind: (1) There is a judgment upon the sin of individuals and communities. This stems from a sovereign, holy God who controls all the forces of nature and nations. The Bible takes the fact of sin seriously, and so must we, if we are to retain any relationship to its revealed truth. (2) The very repetition of these oracles, warning of impending judgment, speaks of God's patient forbearance. He does not act

precipitantly (hastily or rashly), but allows full opportunity for repentance and reformation. But let no man mistake this for weakness, or imagine that God will not act in final judgment.

'Ariel' (1) obviously indicates Jerusalem, it could mean 'lion of God' but this hardly suits the context, unless it be used ironically. More likely is the suggestion that it means 'altar-hearth', and that the whole city is viewed as a place of sacrifice, the offering being the citizens themselves. The details of the siege, worked out in the following verses, are like a ghastly nightmare to the besieged (8). They were morally and spiritually blind, as were the false prophets in whom they trusted, so that they were quite incapable of understanding the principles behind the Lord's drastic dealings (9-12).

Hypocrisy in religion (13) is surely one of the most abhorrent sins. To go through a form of prayer, mouthing insincere words which mean nothing, may win the approbation of men. But they will not please a living God, who merits our full attention, our choicest gifts and our outpoured adoration. Let us be on our guard against insulting God by going through a pretence of honoring Him. Positively, 'let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith' (Heb. 10:22). In politics also (15) Isaiah's contemporaries were acting as though God, their Creator, did not exist. They would find out their mistake, to their great cost, but after the judgment God would reveal His ultimate purpose of blessing, security and prosperity, accompanied by true worship (17-24).

Note: v. 17 symbolizes the renewed prosperity. The forest would come under cultivation, and the growth on arable land would be so prolific that it would look like a forest (cf. 32:15).

(Daily Devotional Bible Commentary, Arthur E. Cundall)

On the testimony of prophetic Scripture there is yet a climax of tribulation which is spoken of pre-eminently as "the day of Jacob's trouble"; (Jer. 30:7) there is yet a final gathering of the nations against them, and the manifestation of greater hatred, than even they have yet experienced. But when the confederated Gentile hosts are marshalled under the Antichrist and the war-cry is raised, "*Come, let us destroy them from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more held in remembrance,*" (Ps. 83:4) one more blow, and the Jewish nation will be no more, Jehovah shall again say to the remnant which "shall be saved out of it": (Jer. 30:7) "*And where is now the fury of the oppressor?*" For it shall come to pass that suddenly "*the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her, and her stronghold, and that distress her, shall be as a dream, or vision in the night. And it shall be when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he waketh, and behold, he is faint and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all nations be that fight against Mount Zion.*" (Isa. 29:7-8) (David Baron) **Judgments have come upon Israel but show the judgments that come upon the other nations when they try to prevent God's purpose from being fulfilled.**

Isa. 34:1-12 Rev. 6:15-17

Isaiah 30:1-31:9

In the days of Isaiah, two great empires were contending for the control of the world, Assyria on the east and Egypt on the west. When they met in conflict, the battleground was frequently the Mediterranean coast, and the small states in that region were the chief sufferers in the clash of arms, and were often ground to powder between the two millstones as they came together. The result of all this was a constant diplomacy on the part of these small states, aiming to combine against their formidable oppressors and to join forces with one or the other as it might seem most politic.

The kingdom of Judah had suffered much from these alliances. God does not love human politics and His prophets ever protested against these compromises with the arm of flesh.

At this time the Jewish politicians were advocating an Egyptian alliance against the increasing power of Assyria, whose invading armies loomed large in the vision and the fears of the people. Isaiah used all the energy and force of his glowing tongue to prevent this move which was both bad politics and bad religion.

So far he had failed and already the ambassadors of the court had gone down to Egypt to arrange for an alliance with Pharaoh. The prophet was commanded to hold this up to ridicule and say that Egypt should help in vain. To give more emphasis to his warnings, he had a great sign made and wrote it in the public view as a sort of epigrammatic caricature of Egypt, "Rahab [a mythical sea monster, whose name means 'storm'] the Do-Noth-ing" (Isaiah 30:7). He told them that the Egyptians would fail them and that the compromise would only bring them into deeper trouble. All this really came to pass. Pharaoh had more than he could do to take care of himself. An Ethiopian invasion came down from the upper Nile, defeated the armies and burned the king alive, and the ambassadors of Judah returned humiliated and disappointed. Meanwhile, the Assyrians, provoked by all this temporizing, as soon as they got through with their eastern troubles, swept down upon the Mediterranean coast and were soon encamped about Jerusalem. All that Isaiah had prophesied had come to pass.

How vividly these texts stand out in the light of history.

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:

"In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it.
You said, 'No, we will flee on horses.' "
(30:15-16a)

They refused to take counsel of God and quietly rest and trust in Him, and they said that they would turn to the cavalry of Egypt. With bitter sarcasm the prophet answers,

"We will ride off on swift horses."
Therefore your pursuers will be swift!
A thousand will flee
at the threat of one;
at the threat of five
you will all flee away,
till you are left
like a flagstaff on a mountaintop,
like a banner on a hill.
(30:16-17)

The help of Egypt was to fail them and the Assyrians were to pursue them until they had learned no longer to lean upon the arm of flesh.

But in their distress, God would not forsake them. Beleaguered and besieged by a cruel enemy, His presence would still be with them, comforting, teaching, guiding, cleansing, and at last delivering them. "Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!" (30:18).

How tenderly will He comfort them in the hour of their distress! "How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you" (30:19). And so near will He come to them that they shall learn to know His voice and follow His direction now, instead of their own fleshly counsel and self-sufficient wisdom. "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it' " (30:21). Better still, their trials shall bring cleansing and righteousness. They will throw away their idols and dishonor their images of silver and gold and their sorrows will be a purifying fire as God intended. Then when all this shall have been accomplished, will come their deliverance.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, Simpson)

And you (people) said, "No, for we will flee on horses"— And, "We will ride on swift horses"—..... (Isa. 30:16) but what did the Lord say? What could have been their character if they rested in the Lord?

Isa. 30:15-17 Isa. 31:4-9

Isaiah 32:1-35:10

For many centuries Jerusalem has lain in ruins; and Palestine, naturally a fruitful land, has been known pre-eminently "as the land that is desolate." Let it not be forgotten that the long-continued desolation of the land is directly due to the sin of the people. "The land," we read, "shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings" (Mic. 7:13); for Palestine became involved in the sin of Israel, even as creation became involved in the sin of Adam. But we are looking forward to the time when, as one of the blessed results of the glorious redemption which has been accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, "creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." And so also, when Israel is pardoned and the covenant relations between God and His people are restored, the curse which has rested on the land shall be lifted, and "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." (Isa. 35:1) Yea, "He shall comfort all her waste places, and make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of Jehovah."

But what the land in its desolate condition has been in relation to the people, the people in its condition of unbelief and apostasy has been in relation to God, viz. a barren wilderness, a spiritual desert. But this moral and spiritual wilderness of the people also shall be transformed. And not only so, but as this same prophet tells us in the 35th chapter, "Waters shall break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert," *i.e.* not only will Israel himself, now a moral wilderness, be quickened and refreshed, but out of him shall flow rivers of living waters for the spiritual quickening and refreshment of the world.

And if we want to know when this wonderful transformation will be brought about, and by what means or power it will be accomplished, the same prophet tells us in the 32nd chapter: "*Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,*" he

says, "and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed a forest." (Isa. 32:15) And then, when both the land and the people are thus "comforted" and transformed, "joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." "For thus saith Jehovah: Yet again there shall be heard in this place, whereof ye say it is waste without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. . . . The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that give thanks to Jehovah of hosts; for Jehovah is good, for His mercy (or, 'His lovingkindness') endureth forever." (Jer. 33:10-11) And this joy and gladness, and the voice of melody of restored and converted Israel, will reverberate through the universe, and will be the echo and response, so to say, of God's own joy over His restored national prodigal, even as we read in Zephaniah: "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love (or, 'be silent in His love'—as if it were too much, or too deep for expression); He will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. 3:17)

No wonder that the prophet Isaiah—in view of the blessed issues of the conversion and blessing of Israel, not only to Israel himself, but to the world—exclaims in the 49th chapter: "Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for Jehovah hath comforted His people and will have compassion upon His afflicted."

By God's grace we, too, my dear Christian reader—whether we be Jews or Gentiles—are included among those who are "followers after righteousness and seekers after God." Yea, though we may not be of Israel after the flesh we are the children of Abraham by faith, and this beautiful scripture, though addressed primarily to the godly remnant in Israel, has a message for us also. We, too, when tempted to stagger at the promises of God in unbelief because their fulfillment seems to us naturally impossible, or, humanly speaking, improbable, should bring to mind the "works of Jehovah" and meditate "on His wonders of old." Let us remember how in the whole history of Israel, which has been well characterized as "the history of miracle and the miracle of history," He has again and again proved to those who have believed His word and trusted in His holy name, that He is a God of the impossible—or, according to His own word to Abraham, that there is nothing "too hard" or "wonderful" for Jehovah. As fellow-workers for Israel's salvation, let us exercise strong faith in God and not be daunted by what may seem to us impossibilities.

We look on the Jewish nation now and say, "What a moral and spiritual desert!" We look on the Promised Land and say, "How barren, how desolate!" Let us look to the rock from where we were hewn; to the hole of the pit from where we were digged. Was not Abraham as good as dead? Was not Sarah naturally barren?

Yea, have we not experienced the supernatural power of God in our own hearts and lives? Has He not quickened and transformed our own souls? And what He has done in the past He will do, only on a more glorious scale, in the future; and what He has done for us, He can and will do for others.

(The History of Israel, David Baron)

How has this prophecy advanced since David Baron's time (early 1900's)? When the "Spirit is poured upon us from on high" (Isa. 32:15) and "my people will dwell in a peaceful habitation" (Isa. 32:18) is what period of time?

Chapter 33, like so many in Isaiah, passes from a notice of tribulation conditions to the Millennial state and back again. The opening verse reads, "Woe to thee that spoileth, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee." This is evidently a judgment pronounced upon the head of the false messiah. Two things serve to identify him: he is the great Spoiler, and the one who shall deal treacherously with Israel. It is in view of the perfidy and rapacity of their enemy that the godly remnant cry, "O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee: be Thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble" (Isa. 33:2). A further word concerning the Antichrist is found in Isaiah 33:8: "The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man." The last three statements in this verse make it certain who is there in view. It is the Antichrist displayed in his true colors; the one who breaks his covenant with Israel, sacks their cities, and defies all human government to resist him. (Arthur W. Pink) **Prove the one "that spoileth" (kjb) or the one "who plunder" (Isa. 33:1 nkjv) is the Antichrist?**

Isaiah 35:2 speaks of the future glory of Israel when "They shall see the glory of the Lord, The excellency of our God."

Show from other portions of scriptures what this "glory of the Lord" is.
Ex. 40:33-35 1 Kings 8:10-11 Isa. 63:9 Hag. 2:3-9 Zech. 5:4 1 John 3:2

Isaiah 36:1-39:8

Isaiah's earlier prophecies terminate with the thirty-fifth chapter, that wonderfully sublime paragraph which contains, in germ, most of the leading thoughts of the last twenty-seven chapters. Following that, we have four chapters of contemporary history, containing the account of Sennacherib's invasion; the destruction of his army; Hezekiah's sickness and recovery; and of the embassy sent by Merodach-baladan, ostensibly to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, but in reality, as we know also from 2 Chron. 32:31, to "inquire of the wonder that was done in the land," in the great reverse

which befell the arms of Assyria, whom Babylon, till then a subject power, was before long to supersede. In that thirtieth chapter we have a most striking definite announcement to Hezekiah of the seventy years' captivity among the very people whose ambassadors he had tried to impress with the importance of his kingdom, and the riches of his treasures. "Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of Hosts. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon." (Isa.39:5-7)

This announcement forms at once the threshold and the standpoint of the last great prophecy written at a later period of the prophet's life.

(The Ancient Scriptures for the Modern Jew, David Baron)

Hezekiah does not demand a reward from God for his good services, but modestly begs that God would remember how he had approved himself to God with a single eye and an honest heart: *I have walked before you faithfully and sincerely, and with wholehearted devotion*, that is, an upright heart; for uprightness is our gospel perfection. The same prophet that was sent to Hezekiah with warning to prepare for death is sent to him with a promise that he shall not only recover, but be restored to a confirmed state of health and live fifteen years yet. When we pray in our sickness, though God may not send us such an answer, as he here sent to Hezekiah, yet, if by his Spirit he bids us be of good cheer, assures us that our sins are forgiven us, that his grace shall be sufficient for us, and that, whether we live or die, we shall be his, we have no reason to say that we pray in vain. God answers us if he *makes us bold and stouthearted*, though not with bodily strength, Ps. 138:3. (Matthew Henry) After Hezekiah's recovery the king of Babylon sends letters and a present congratulating Hezekiah in recovering from his near death illness. Hezekiah shows these couriers of Babylon the treasures of Judea. **Why would Hezekiah do such a thing? Show how Hezekiah's own words prove he was self centered? What lessons are there for us in these chapters?**

Isa. 38:3 Isa. 39:8

Introduction — Isaiah 40:1-66:24

The second half of the Book of Isaiah, consisting of the last twenty-seven chapters, is the sublimest and richest portion of Old Testament revelation. It forms a single continuous prophecy which occupies the same position in the prophetic Scriptures as the book of Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch, and the Gospel of John in relation to the Synoptic Gospels. It is true that "it does not flow on in even current like a history," and to the superficial reader it may have a desultory appearance, but "after patient study the first sense of confusedness is got over, and we perceive its magnificent and harmonious completeness as it rounds itself into one glorious vision."

It may be called the prophetic Messianic epic of the Old Testament. It is sublime in its very style and language, and wonderful in its comprehensiveness—anticipating, as it does, the whole order of the New Testament. It begins, where the New Testament begins, with the ministry of John the Baptist—"the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," and it ends, where the New Testament ends, with the new heavens and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness.

On examining the glorious prophecy closely, we find that the twenty-seven chapters range themselves into three equal divisions of nine chapters each, all ending with nearly the same solemn refrain, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

One great line of thought unfolded in the whole prophecy is the development of evil and the final overthrow of the wicked, who are excluded from the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom; and the sufferings but final glory of the righteous remnant, who are the subjects of that Kingdom, and whose King is described as leading the way along the same path of suffering into glory.

This subject becomes developed and intensified as we go on, until it reaches its climax in the last chapter.

The first section is brought to a close at the end of chapter 48, where the blessedness of the righteous who are "redeemed" (v. 20), and peacefully led and satisfied even in the desert, is contrasted with the state of the wicked to whom "there is no peace."

In the second division the same subject becomes intensified; there is development of both evil and good, righteousness and wickedness, and it ends with chapter 57, where "Peace! peace!" is announced to the righteous, but the wicked have not only "no peace," but have become "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

In the last division the destiny of both is brought to a climax and becomes fixed forever. "Therefore thus saith Jehovah God, Behold, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, My servants shall sing for joy, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto My chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call His servants by another name." This contrast is continued until finally we find the

righteous dwelling forever in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness; while as to the wicked who have transgressed against God, "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

In the first section (chaps. 40-48) the restoration from Babylon (which, however, is portrayed in terms which far exceeded what actually took place at that restoration, and which will only be exhaustively fulfilled in the greater restoration of Israel "from the four corners of the earth") is the starting-point, and the appointed instrument in God's hand to bring about that restoration, Cyrus, is the central figure.

In the second or central section (chaps. 49-57) the grand redemption to be accomplished by One greater than Cyrus—even by Him, who in this series of chapters is pre-eminently the *Ebhed Yehovah* — the "Servant of Jehovah," who is sent not only to raise up "the tribes of Jacob," and to restore "the preserved of Israel," but to be "a light also to the Gentiles," and God's salvation "unto the end of the earth," is the theme with which the prophet's heart overflows; and in the third or last section the blessed condition of restored and converted Israel, who shall then be the channel and active propagators of the blessings of Messiah's gospel among all nations, is the outstanding subject.

The heart and climax of the whole prophecy is to be found in the brief section which forms its inmost center (chaps. 52:13 to 53:12), which, instead of a prophecy uttered centuries in advance, reads like an historic summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of the Christ and the glory that should follow.

Taking our position at this central point, we are almost overwhelmed with the evidence of design in the very structure of this prophecy, for on closer examination we find that each book is subdivided into three sections of three chapters each, nearly corresponding to the divisions in the Authorized Version. Thus the middle book is chapters 49-57. The middle section of the middle book is chapters 52, 53, 54, and chapter 53 is the middle chapter of the middle section of the middle book—forming, as it were, the heart and center of this wonderful Messianic poem, as well as the heart and center of all Old Testament prophecy. The central verse of this central paragraph, which begins properly with ch. 52:13, is: "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement with a view to our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*"

The doctrine it enshrines, namely, substitution, is one of the leading truths unfolded in Old and New Testaments, and it forms the central thought in this great prophecy. It is, moreover, the essence of the message of comfort with which the prophet begins (40:1, 2), solving the problem as to how "her iniquity is pardoned."

(The Servant of Jehovah, David Baron)

How are the last 27 chapters of Isaiah divided and what is the theme of each division?

Isaiah 40:1-31

The captivity has become ideally a present fact to the prophet, and in vision he already beholds the land desolate, the temple destroyed, the people pining in Chaldean bondage; and it is just like God, to open up in advance, a stream of consolation, to accompany the faithful remnant all through the weary wilderness march of the shorter, and of the present much longer captivity. But to return from the short digression. What is the climax to which we are gradually led up in the earlier prophecies of Isaiah? It is found in the second verse of the thirty-fifth chapter, "They shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency" (or "the majesty") "of our God." And what is the great theme of the last twenty-seven chapters? It is the same. The central thought of the prologue, or introduction, consisting of the first eleven verses of chapter forty is: "And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together," (Isa. 40:5) which is explained in the last of the brief four sections into which the introduction is divided, by the words: "Behold the Lord God will come with strength and His own arm shall rule for Him; behold His reward is with Him and His work before Him." (Isa. 40:10) It is from this blessed announcement that the streams of comfort flow; it is for this glorious culmination that the way is to be prepared, and all the twenty-seven chapters but unfold the process by which this grand consummation will finally be brought about.

(The Ancient Scriptures for the Modern Jew, David Baron)

Who shall announce the glory of Jehovah when it is revealed?

Isa. 40:3-5

Describe the greatness and glory of Lord Jehovah, God of Israel.

Job 26:13 Isa. 40:12-17

What is the promise to those who wait on the Lord?

Isa. 40:31

Isaiah 41:1-29

There is a grand question at issue between God and the world, and between the people of God and the people of the world. The question is, whether the kingdom of God is to prevail, or the kingdom of the world, which is estranged from God. The remarkable interposition of God in behalf of His oppressed people in their Babylonian captivity, whereby He raised up Cyrus to execute His "righteous" will in delivering them, decides the point at issue. That deliverance is a pledge and earnest of the final deliverance of the people of God, the literal and the spiritual Israel, by the Messiah, of whom Cyrus was the type. The nations in vain oppose themselves to the will of God, relying on their earthly idols. The Almighty is the "first," and therefore was before all human devices. He also is "with the last," and therefore shall Himself forever be, and shall have His people with Him, when all adversaries of Himself and His people shall have been cast out finally. The same antitypical Cyrus, Messiah, shall destroy with the brightness of His coming the God-opposed nations and people, and will deliver the people of His covenant for the sake of Abraham, the forefather of Israel after the flesh, the father of all the faithful, and the "friend of God."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Ye are "*the seed of Abraham*," (Isa. 41:8) to whom, when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the peoples, the God of glory appeared, calling him, and his seed after him, into special fellowship with Himself, to be His witnesses on the earth; who, when the voice of God came to him, readily obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went; and whom, because of his faithfulness and ready obedience to God's word, even to the point of offering up his son, his only one, whom he loved, God delights to call, not only "His servant," but His "friend." (Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron.20:7)

And ye are "*the children of Jacob*," whom of His free sovereign grace He "chose" and "loved" rather than Esau, (Mal. 1:2) and whom, in spite of his own natural perversity and crookedness, he turned into "Israel." And ye, his children, too, are "His chosen ones," even as we read in Deut. 7:6, "*Thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God. Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for His own possession above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.*" Who, then, should show forth His praise and spread abroad the knowledge of His name, if not ye?

But you, too, dear Christian reader, are neither excluded nor exempted from uttering God's praise, or from offering Him acceptable service; for, though you may not be bodily descendants of Abraham, ye are, through the grace of Christ, children of Abraham by faith, and are now included in the "Israel of God." Indeed, during the period of Israel's national apostasy and unbelief, it is the true Church of Christ which is called upon to take Israel's place as God's witness to the nations, and to fill up Israel's lack of worship and service. Only remember that your *inclusion* into the sphere of promise and of blessing does not imply the exclusion of Abraham's natural descendants. Still, they are "His people," "His chosen," "His inheritance," and His original purpose in and through them as a nation shall yet be fulfilled: "*This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.*"

(Israel in the Plan of God, David Baron)

Explain how Cyrus delivered the people of God.

What is God proving in Isaiah 41:4, 8-9?

Do not fear: and again (v. 13), *Do not fear*; and (v. 14). It is against the mind of God that his people should be a timorous (fearful, timid or frightened) people.

'I will uphold you with my right hand, go hand in hand with you'; as their guide. When we are weak he will hold us up, will encourage us, and so *hold us by the right hand*, Ps. 73:23. He will silence fears: *Saying to you. Do not fear.* He has said it again and again in his word, but he will go further: he will by his Spirit say it to their hearts. (Matthew Henry) **What is God saying about Jacob in Isaiah 41:14-16? Are we also in a similar position with God?**

What is the prophet challenging the idolaters to do in Isaiah 41:21?

Isaiah 42:1-25

God the Father calls upon all men to "behold" His beloved Son, who voluntarily became 'His servant' for man's sake. Redemption was no afterthought devised as an antidote to an evil unforeseen. Messiah was the Father's "elect" One, 'in whom His soul delighted,' as the fore-appointed Redeemer, before the world was. And in the fullness of time God 'put His Spirit on' Messiah, the Word made flesh: so that by His Gospel He brings forth "judgment" in its highest sense "to the Gentiles." The manifestation of Messiah at His first coming was characterized by pre-eminent meekness and gentleness. 'No cry' of impatience, no 'voice lifted up' in altercation was ever heard from Him. He courted privacy. And as He was a man of sorrows, and bruised Himself, He never 'breaks the bruised reed.' So far from 'quenching the smoking,' or smoldering, "flax" of the wick in the lamp of the soul, He will feed it with the oil of grace to increase the heaven-lit flame.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Who does “my servant” refer to in the verses below and why that name?

Isa. 41:8 Isa. 42:19 Isa. 43:10 Isa. 44:1-2, 21 Isa. 45:4 Isa. 48:20 Isa. 49:3, 5-7 Isa. 50:10
Isa. 52:13 Isa. 53:11

How does God bring about sight and hearing to the blind and deaf (Isa. 42:18)?

Isa. 42:23-25

Isaiah 43:1-28

However manifold be our sins, if we be the true Israel of God through repentance and faith, we are owned by the Lord as His. He who 'created and formed' us, will not lightly forsake His creatures. Much less will He who hath "redeemed" us and 'called us by name,' as His purchased flock, suffer the enemy to rob Him of the purchase of His blood. The believer must expect to 'pass through the waters' of affliction and "through the fire" of trial; but neither shall the rivers overwhelm him nor the fire consume him. No, "the flame" shall not so much as "kindle" upon the saints, so far as any real hurt; to them is concerned. They are so 'precious in His sight,' that the mighty ones of the world must be sacrificed, sooner than any child of God should be injured.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What is meant in Isa. 43:2 when “you pass through the waters.....walk through the fire.”

Ps. 56:12 Jam. 1:2

What is God pleading for the unfaithful in Israel to do?

Isa. 43:25-26

Isaiah 44:1-28

God's *choice* of His people is repeatedly made the ground of their encouragement (vv. 1, 2). God cannot deny Himself; and therefore, though the reprobates shall be justly cast away, He will "help" His servants out of all present trials, and will prepare them for all 'blessings' by pouring the "water" of His "Spirit" in "floods" upon His 'thirsty seed and offspring.' 'They who thirst after righteousness shall be filled.' They shall be "trees of righteousness" planted "by the water-courses" of grace. Though there be various stages in spiritual growth, one being weak as "Jacob" when he was a "Syrian ready to perish;" another strong as the same patriarch when he was called "Israel" as "having power with God and with men," yet all alike who belong to the true Israel can say "I am the Lord's." The literal Israel, "the ancient people" of God, shall at last say so. "The King of Israel" hath 'called' that it may be done, hath "set it in order," appointing the successive stages and times in its being brought to pass, and hath 'declared' that it shall be so; and all this 'for Himself,' that the redeemed Israelites may be to all ages 'His witnesses' that there is 'no God besides' Him.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Why is the Spirit compared to water in Isa. 44:3-4?

Ps. 104:30 Ezek. 36:25

Isaiah 45:1-13

Cyrus is a striking type of Messiah, the Anointed One of God. For the sake of Israel, the elect servant of Jehovah, Cyrus was "called" by God, and his "right hand" was upholden, so that the nations were 'subdued before him,' and the gates of mighty Babylon 'opened before him.' So Jehovah made "the crooked places straight" before Messiah, and burst open for Him the gates of death, and gave Him "the treasures" which Satan the strong man had long kept in his house of "darkness." But the antitype always exceeds the type. Cyrus knew not God when God called him by name. But Messiah has been from eternity with God, "rejoicing always before Him." The effect of God's designation of Messiah to be the Savior of mankind shall be ultimately that which the designation of Cyrus to be deliverer of the Jews effected only in part, "from the rising of the sun, and from the west," all shall know that there is "no God besides" Jehovah.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Explain why Cyrus, king of Persia is called God’s anointed in Isa. 45:1?

2 Chron. 36:22-23 Ezra 1:1-4

Isaiah 45:14-25

Paul applies the verse, "*That to Me every knee shall bow*" in Isaiah 45:23 to the last judgment, when he says (Rom. 14:10, 11) that "we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Satan contrives many schemes and incessantly carries on war with Him; and therefore we are at a great distance from the full accomplishment of this prophecy. Then shall every knee be truly bent to Christ, when he shall triumph over vanquished and utterly ruined adversaries, and shall render visible to all men his majesty, which Satan and wicked men now oppose. Thus Paul teaches that, when Christ shall ascend his judgment-seat to judge the world, then shall be fully accomplished that which began to be done at the commencement of the gospel, and which we still see done from day to day.

"*Every tongue shall swear*" (Isa. 45:23) is a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, the word *swear* is put for worship, reverence, or subjection. "Swearing" is one department of the honor which is due to God; for by it we confess and acknowledge that He is the author and Father and lawful defender of the truth, and that "all things are naked and open to Him." (Heb. 4:13) Whenever therefore this honor is bestowed on idols, the majesty of God is dishonored by abominable sacrilege; and consequently they who worship him purely swear exclusively by his name.

Whoever shall be satisfied with a bare knowledge departs very widely from faith, which must invite us to God in such a manner that we shall feel Him to be in us. In, like manner Paul wishes that "Christ should dwell in the hearts of believers through faith." (Eph. 3:17) He who imagines that God sits unemployed in heaven either will not humble himself sincerely before him or will not make an open and sincere profession.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

When Isaiah 45:23 is fulfilled: "That to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath" will the saved in Christ and the unsaved respond in different ways (eg. anticipatory, happily, fearfully, grudgingly, etc.)?

Isaiah 46:1-13

What a glorious contrast to every other object of man's trust doth Jehovah present! Man's idols need to be "borne;" Jehovah bears His people "from the womb" to hoary age. He 'carries' them as a nurse would an infant; His "everlasting arms are underneath" them, so as to "deliver" them from every danger. The zeal and lavish liberality of the votaries of superstition in respect to their objects of worship, ought to put to shame the professors of a pure faith, who yet will make no large sacrifices for the Lord. Earthly vanities at best are childish, and heavenly aims are the only ones worthy of men. Let us 'show ourselves men' by 'remembering' God in all our ways. Let us "remember" His "former" doings "of old," as a pledge that 'His counsel shall stand,' and that what He hath "spoken," He 'will also bring to pass.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What meaning did Isa. 46:3 have for the Israelites and what meaning would it have for those who are not Jewish?

Deut. 32:11 Ps. 121:1-8 Ps. 138:8

Isaiah 47:1-15

The world-power, now so proud, shall at last, like Babylon of old, be abased to the dust. Instead of glory it shall have "shame." When God shall "take vengeance," He will "not meet" the adversary "as a man." But the people of God have as their "Redeemer the Lord of hosts, ... the Holy One of Israel." After He hath sufficiently chastised Israel in His wrath, by the hand of the world-power, He will take vengeance on it for its merciless cruelty to His people. The world-power thinks to be "The lady of kingdoms . . . for ever" (vv. 5, 7), and so will 'not lay to heart' or "remember" what God hath said as to "the latter end of it."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Tell why was the expression in Isa. 47:1: "come down" was used when speaking to the Babylonians and Chaldeans.

Jer. 1:9-10

Why did the Babylonians think they were secure?

Isa. 47:7-8, 10

Why should we periodically reflect on our situation in life?

Isa. 47:7-9

Will the Babylonians know the reason why evil comes upon them?

Isa. 47:11

Isaiah 48:1-22

They especially need rousing reproof who "stay themselves upon" the name, without the reality, of the citizenship of "the holy city." Whosoever 'makes mention of the God of Israel,' must see that in truth he is of "the Israel of God." Natural descent from a godly fountain will not stand in stead of spiritual birth of God. Fulfilled prophecy is the strongest outward evidence of the truth of revelation. The 'sudden' accomplishment of what God "declared from of old," when human sagacity could not have anticipated it, is enough to silence the most "obstinate." Besides the old things of the Jewish dispensation, God has showed us in the Gospel "new things," even things 'hidden in God from the beginning of the world.' Though old in the purpose of God, the Gospel work is in its manifestation to us "created now, and not from the beginning." How we should beware, in the midst of such privileges, lest we like Israel, should "deal treacherously" toward our loving God.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What facts was God to arouse in those hypocritical Jews concerning their religious profession?

Who does God test in Isaiah 48:10 and why?

Isa. 48:9, 11 Isa. 49:3, 14-16

Isaiah 49:1-9

*The word which proceeded out of the mouth of the Son of God, is "like a sharp sword " with two edges, opening a passage for the saving entrance of the truth into some, and cutting asunder those who perversely reject the offer of salvation. From the womb Messiah was designated by "name" to be the Savior. He was sent forth by the Father as a "polished shaft," heretofore 'hid in his quiver,' but now manifested in due time. God is "glorified" in Jesus, who is the true "Israel," the *Prince with God* who prevails in His conflict for man's salvation by His inherent righteousness. Many were the discouragements which He had to encounter; and often He seemed to 'spend His strength for nought, and in vain;' but His invincible faith assured Him that His cause was in the hands of His God, and therefore must ultimately triumph.*

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What is the meaning of Isaiah 49:2 "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword."

Show the inner frustration the Savior portrays from the apparent lack of results in His ministry.

Isa. 49:4 Matt. 23:37-39

Isaiah 49:10-26

Assurances were given to the chosen race on the eve of their return from Babylon. They were timid and reluctant to quit the familiar scenes of their captivity; they dreaded the dangers and privations of their way home, and questioned whether the great empire of their captors would ever let them go or allow their city to rise from its ruins. Therefore the Lord's voice takes on a tone of unusual persuasiveness. Let us ponder his assurances of compassion and comfort, verses 13, 15, 16.

He will lead us with a shepherd's care, verse 10. He will make obstacles subserve his purpose, verse 11. His love is more than motherhood, verse 15. He treasures the remembrance of his own, verse 16. Zion thinks herself cast away as a derelict, verse 14, but such is not the case. Even her broken walls are ever before God, with a view to their rebuilding, verse 19, etc. God's love is stronger than our strongest enemies, verse 25, etc. Let us hide in it, standing above the fears that compose the cloudland of our soul, in the upper peaks of a strong faith.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

How does the Lord comfort us when we feel abandoned?

Isaiah 50:1-11

The Lord hath for a time "put away," not permanently 'divorced,' Israel, whom He has betrothed to Himself spiritually. He therefore still has the conjugal right of a husband over her, and can take her back to Him on her submission. It was indeed most sad that 'when He came,' the nation was not willing to accept His proffered salvation. Yet notwithstanding their past unbelief, His hand is not shortened, that it cannot redeem them from their bondage, and their dispersion. He can and will repeat upon their past enemy all the judgments that were inflicted on Egypt. He will "dry up" the fountain of the enemy's resources, and "clothe the heavens with blackness." Messiah has been given by the Father "the tongue of the learned" in heavenly science, qualifying Him to "speak a word in season to him that is weary." His own experimental knowledge in suffering, the smiting, the shame, and the spitting which He endured, all enable Him to sympathize with His people in affliction, as no other can.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

How does God respond to those who complain on how God has treated them?

Isa. 50:1-4

What did Christ voluntarily undergo to convince us of His willingness to save us?

Isa. 50:5-6

Isaiah 51:1-23

They "that follow after righteousness," must "hearken to" Jehovah, and seek it in the same way that Abraham, the father of the faithful obtained it. It is not far off, but "near." To "wait upon" the Lord, and to 'trust on His arm' is the way to find it, and with it to find "salvation." As Abraham was all but "alone" when the Lord "called him . . . and blessed him, and increased him," so will the same Lord bless and increase the small remnant of Israel in the last days. He will 'comfort Zion, and make her wilderness like the garden of the Lord,' so that "joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." 'The heavens and the earth' in their present form shall pass away; but the "salvation" which God's "righteousness in Christ, and who have His Gospel 'law in their heart,' have no reason to 'fear the reproach of men,' who shall perish as the "moth."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

After the Lord says "Listen" (Hearken- kjv) in Isaiah 51:1, 4 & 7, what does He promise to Zion?

What does He tell them to do after saying "Awake" in Isaiah 51:9?

Who is the Rahab of Isaiah 51:9?

Isa. 27:1 Isa. 30:6-7 Rev.12:9

What has the arm of the Lord done for Israel in the past?

Isa. 51:9-11

Why should the people not be afraid of what man can do to them (Isa. 51:12)?

Isa. 49:2 Isa. 51:12 Heb. 2:15

Isaiah 52:1-12

As the ancient people of God 'sold themselves for nought,' so 'shall they be redeemed without money.' Their 'howls' of anguish under oppression shall bring the Lord to their help. "They shall know in that day" the Lord Christ as their manifested Redeemer, who shall then deliver them from their gratuitous oppressors, even as He did from Egypt and the Assyrian of old. The "good tidings" of "peace" published by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah, were truly delightful to those who 'looked for redemption in Jerusalem.' Such they are still to every soul that experimentally appropriates them, in the hearing of them as announced by the ministers of the Gospel. They shall be especially so hereafter, when it shall be said unto the regenerated Zion, "Thy God reigneth!" The spiritual "watchmen shall lift up the voice" in joyful thanksgivings when their long-deferred prayers shall have been heard, and "eye to eye" they shall see their desire accomplished in the Lord's bringing again of Zion.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

As we precede Isaiah is building to a greater and greater revelation concerning Israel and the Savior. **What is the message to these exiled Jews? How many times in Isaiah 51 and 52 are they told to awake and listen to what God has to say to them?**

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Amongst all the treasures of devotion and prophecy in the O.T. this passage is surely one of the most significant. Possibly only Jeremiah's conception of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) equals its tremendous insights into the final outworking of God's redemptive purposes. In the preceding chapters we have seen how the interpretation of the Servant passages flows between the nation Israel, the godly remnant in Exile and the prophet himself, with more than a hint of the Redeemer. But here, while there are still echoes of the suffering endured by the nation and the persecution heaped upon the prophet, there is a projection into the future which centers upon a unique Person, different from even the greatest of the prophets. His majesty and victory appear both at the beginning and the end (52:13, 15; 53:12), which connects with the other O.T. prophecies concerning the triumph and kingly rule of the Davidic Messiah (e.g. Isa. 9:2-7; 11:1-9).

But in between there is the revelation of unique suffering and humiliation, borne humbly yet, vicariously for all men. Mirrored here we have a summary of all those dreadful events in the last day of our Lord's life upon earth: His silence before His accusers; the rejection and hatred of the religious leaders; the faithlessness of the disciples; the cruel lacerations of the scourge, the crown of thorns and the gaping wounds caused by the rough, iron nails which held Him to the cross; His death between two thieves and His burial in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-53). It has been observed by C. R. North that prophets like Jeremiah suffered in the course of their ministry, but in the case of the Servant, suffering was not merely an incidental but the means whereby His ministry was brought to a triumphant conclusion. In this He can be no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet Israel, to whom this prophecy came, with incredible blindness of heart refuses to recognize Him! Such passages as Mark 10:45; Luke 4:16-21; 9:22; 18:31 ff., etc., show clearly that our Lord conceived His ministry after the pattern of the Servant of the Lord, and the light from this fourth Song (these passages) especially, irradiated the stony pathway which led to Calvary.

Here we stand very close to the loving heart of God, who suffers to redeem. But we must not overlook the triumph which is revealed. The Servant, buried after His vicarious suffering, is supernaturally vindicated and sees the fruit of His travail (10 ff.). Nothing less than a resurrection is involved, which, at a time when the view of the after-life in Israel was so vague, makes this prophecy yet more remarkable. Christ is still alive!

(Daily Devotional Bible Commentary, Arthur E. Cundall)

Show from Isa. 52-53 how our great sufferer would begin His career amid circumstances of the deepest humiliation.

Try to explain Isa. 53:10a: "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer."

Try to describe the travail of Christ's soul—the inward anguish He suffered.

Ps. 22:1-21 Matt. 27:46

Show the New Testament fulfillment of the following verses:

Isa. 52:13	Phil. 2:9
Isa. 52:14	Matt. 26:67
Isa. 53:1, 3	John 12:37, 38
Isa. 53:4	Rom. 4:25 1 Pet. 2:24-25
Isa. 53:5	Rom. 3:25
Isa. 53:6, 8	2 Cor. 5:21
Isa. 53:7	John 10:11
Isa. 53:9	Matt. 26:63 Matt. 27:12
Isa. 53:10-11	Rom. 5:15-19
Isa. 53:12	Mark 15:27-28 Luke 22:37

Show how Christ's suffering and death affect us.

Isa. 53:4, 5, 11, 12

Show how Christ's suffering and death affect God the Father.

Isa. 53:10-12

Isaiah 54:1-17

Jehovah will yet take to Himself again Israel, the wife long separated from Him because of her sin. So long as she is apart from Him she has no spiritual "children;" but when she shall be restored, a new song of joy shall be put in her mouth, because of the numberless Gentiles who shall be her spiritual progeny in the Gospel Kingdom. She shall "break forth on the right hand and on the left;" and while 'lengthening her cords' by the acquisition of new converts, she shall be careful also to 'strengthen her stakes' by grounding firmly in the faith those who are already believers. Her past 'shame and reproach' she shall 'remember no more.' For her Maker shall then manifest Himself as her 'Husband and her Redeemer.' Then first, as the result of His manifestation as "the Holy One of *Israel*." 'He shall be called the God of *the whole earth*.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Who are the "barren" spoken of in Isaiah 54:1?

How does the atoning work of the Servant mentioned in Isaiah 53:11 affect the "afflicted ones" in Isaiah 54:11?

Isaiah 55:1-13

The universal comprehensiveness of the invitation which the Gospel gives constitutes at once its glory and our responsibility. None hereafter can say that provision was not made whereby he might have been saved. The Father the Son, and the Spirit invite all with gracious earnestness—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." (Isa. 55:1) Yea, not only are we invited to the elementary necessities of spiritual life, but to the "wine and milk" of its comforts and joys. And all are to be had "without money and without price." Yet, though "without money," he who would have the gospel blessings must "buy" them. Christ alone has paid the "price" required for them, even His own precious blood. But we must appropriate them at the cost of ceasing to 'spend our labor for that which satisfies not.' It is by no more hearing the tempter, and by henceforth 'hearkening diligently' unto the Savior, we shall "eat that which is good," and our 'soul shall delight itself in fatness.' Moreover, these blessings are as permanent as they are delightful and satisfying. For God makes with His people an "everlasting covenant."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What are your thoughts of Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways."

Isaiah 56:1-12

The 'keeping' of "the Sabbath from" all 'pollution' is here marked as a prominent feature of believing obedience to God. No nation or individual can maintain true piety who neglect this plain command, obligatory alike, though on somewhat different grounds, under the law and the Gospel. The spiritual temple, the Church, or house of God, is now "an house of prayer," open "for all people." As yet all nations do not belong to it. But hereafter when "the Lord God" hath gathered "the outcasts of Israel," He will also gather the other nations to Him. Meanwhile Israel has been for ages cast out as a prey to 'the beasts of the field,' the unbelieving world-powers—Babylon, Rome, and the Mohammedan oppressor. Such has been the sad result of the unfaithfulness and selfishness of her rulers. Let all in authority in church and state take warning from her history to shun those sins—indolence, covetousness, pleasure-seeking, and unfaithfulness to God—which brought upon her national ruin through the vengeance of God.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Why do you think special emphasis is laid on Sabbath keeping at this point in Isaiah's message after giving such great revelations concerning the Messiah?

Heb. 3:16-4:10

Show from this chapter how the Gentiles are included.

Isa. 56:3-8

Isaiah 57:1-21

The death of the righteous is a loss to the state, but a great gain to themselves. The design of God's gracious providence in removing them, is to 'take them away from the evil to come,' especially in days of apostasy, when national

judgments are impending, as they were in Isaiah's time over the Jewish nation. The state of the godly at death is one of "peace." However many may have been the past troubles of the upright, "they shall rest" at last, not only from trouble, but from sin. The "children of transgression" have a very different "portion." God hath no "comfort" in their ways; and they themselves are 'wearied in the greatness of their way,' while, in their pursuit of the world and the flesh, they 'debase themselves even unto hell.' Yet worldlings do not give up the "hope" of still finding the solid satisfaction in worldly objects which as yet they have not obtained, because they find some seeming success by the efforts of their own "hand."

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

Those reprobates in Isaiah 57 have made "a covenant" (Isa.57:8) with whom?

What is meant in Isa. 57:14 to "Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."

Lev. 19:14 Isa. 8:14 Jer. 6:21 Jer. 20:10 Ezek. 7:19 Rom. 9:32-33 Rom 14:13 1 Cor. 1:23 1 Cor. 8:9
1 Pet. 2:8 1 John 2:10 Jude 24

What is the final word the Lord has for those reprobates?

Isa. 57:21

Isaiah 58:1-14

The divorce between outward rites and inward piety has been the curse of every age. When the Pharisees were plotting our Lord's death, they refused to enter Pilate's hall. Not the bowed head, but the broken heart; not the sackcloth and ashes of the flesh, but the contrition of the soul!

Notice the three paragraphs descriptive of the experiences of the devout and consecrated soul: (1.) *The conditions of blessedness*, vs. 6, 7. (2.) *The successive items which go to make a blessed life*, vs. 8-12. (3.) *The true Sabbath-keeping*, vs. 13, 14. Primarily, it is inward, not outward. Let us be on our watch against the entrance into our hearts of all thoughts that would break the holy inward calm. Remember to imitate Nehemiah's instructions: Neh. 13:16-22. Let the divine peace rule within and be as a sentinel keeping the outward gate, Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7. Cease to follow your own ways, or find your own pleasures, or speak your own words. Delight yourself in God; so shall you sit with Christ in heavenly places and feed at the heavenly table.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The prophet explains to these hypocritical Jews the errors in their worship and fasting. There is a similar situation during Jesus' time when the Pharisees boasted of what they did including how they fasted. "Often, too, all the while that they affect to ask mercy from God, they show no mercy to their fellow-men who are under them. Self-seeking is their real aim in their apparent seeking after God, as it palpably is in their dealings with their fellow-men. Sometimes they even turn religion itself into an instrument of "strife," or a cloak for covetousness. Such a religion cannot be 'acceptable to the Lord.'" (A. R. Fausset) **Explain what type of worship and fast meets with God's approval?**

Isa. 1:11-15 Isa. 56:2 Isa. 58:3-7 Matt. 23:1-39 Eph. 5:1-21

Isaiah 59:1-21

The reason why calamities are permitted to overtake the people of God is not want of power in 'the Lord's hand to save,' nor want of the will to give "ear" to their prayers; it is their own iniquities which separate between them and their God. Where 'the hands are defiled with iniquity,' and 'the lips speak lies, and mutter perversity,' and the heart 'conceiveth mischief' and 'bringeth forth iniquity,' how can good be looked for from God? With all the sinner's ingenuity, he but 'weaves the spider's web.' Such a 'web shall' never 'become a garment' to 'cover sinners themselves with.' No, just as there has been 'no justice in their goings,' so, in righteous retribution, justice is withheld from them in the day of their calamity. They are given up to unjust oppressors. Such has been the history of Israel. For ages they have been 'waiting for light, but behold obscurity.' As Moses foretold would be the penalty of their apostasy, 'they grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

Why are these calamities permitted to overtake Israel?

Isa. 59:1-4

Explain the analogy of the vipers' eggs and spider's web given in Isaiah 59:5.

Luke 1:79

What happens “when the enemy comes in like a flood” (Isa.59:19)?

What promises are made to God’s covenant people?

Isa. 59:21

Isaiah 60:1-22

It is impossible to understand this chapter, with its glowing and magnificent promises, as having been fulfilled in the first advent of Christ, and the establishment of the Christian Church, the spiritual Israel of God. Nothing yet has taken place to realize the terms of this prophecy, even in the present Church, much less in the literal Israel. Now, it is plain from the contrast which is herein drawn between "Zion" and "the Gentiles," that it is the literal Jerusalem, the representative of all Israel, which is meant. Zion, which is now abased, is hereafter to "arise." She who is now in darkness is to be illuminated with "light" especially designed for her, even 'the glory of the Lord rising upon her.' As yet only an election has been and is being gathered from among the Gentiles. But when Jerusalem shall assume her rightful place as Mother-Church of Christendom, 'the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her sunrising.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

When Jerusalem assumes her rightful place as Mother-Church of Christendom, 'the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.' (Isa. 60:3) **What draws the Gentiles to Israel?**

Isa. 60:1-5

Compare Isaiah 60:19 with Revelation 21:23.

Isaiah 61:1-11

The grand theme of this prophecy is the Messiahship of the Savior. He was described in various other aspects previously: here He is set before us as the Anointed One of the Lord Jehovah. In His first sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth He commenced by appropriating to Himself this prophecy. As three classes of typical personages—prophets, priests, and kings—used to be anointed with oil, to consecrate them to their function, so He, the great Antitype, was anointed with the antitypical oil, the fullness of the Spirit, to His function, which combines in one the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly offices. As His prophetic function was prominent during His earthly ministry in the flesh, His priestly function at His death, and especially now in His session at the Father's right hand as our great High Priest in the heavens, so at His coming again His kingly office shall be visibly and prominently manifested.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What has the Lord anointed Christ to do?

Lev. 25:9, 40 Isa.61:1-3 Luke 14:17, 18, 21

Describe His kingdom, His joy?

Ps. 116:16 Isa. 61:4-11 Luke 1:74, 75 1 Pet. 2:9

Isaiah 62:1-12

Three agencies combine for the ultimate restoration of Zion, both temporarily and spiritually. First, Messiah, for her sake, 'holds not His peace,' and 'will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as the brightness' of the rising sun. Secondly, all believers are "set" by God as spiritual "watchmen," to be 'the Lord's remembrancers,' 'giving Him no rest day nor night till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.' Thirdly, the Lord's oath is pledged, in behalf of His ancient people, that strangers and enemies shall no longer consume her produce and usurp her inheritance, but her children shall enjoy what is their own by right, and shall praise the Lord for it, and the 'courts of God's holy house' shall once more be thronged by grateful worshippers.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset & Brown)

What new name (Isa. 62:2) will God bestow on the people and the land? What is the meaning of that name?

What is the duty of the watchman in Isaiah 62:6?

Isaiah 63:1-19

This is another of the prophecies which, while bearing partial features of the first advent of Christ, mainly looks on to the grand consummation at His second advent. He plainly appears here, not so much in His character of the suffering Messiah, as in that of the glorified Messiah, coming to take vengeance on His enemies and to reign. Having trodden down the antichristian faction represented by Edom, He is represented as returning to Jerusalem, His royal capital, in triumph. As here He describes Himself as 'speaking in righteousness,' (Isa. 63:1) so in the parallel passage of Revelation He appears as "the Word of God;" and it is said of Him "in righteousness He doth judge and make war." As here He is seen 'red in His apparel' (v. 2), so John says, "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." As here He says, "I have trodden the wine-press alone" (v. 3), so there it is written of Him, "He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As here "He treads the people in His anger, and tramples them in His fury," so there it is said of Him, 'out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He rules them with a rod of iron.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

Find the passages in Revelation where He appears as "the Word of God;" "was clothed with a robe dipped in blood;" and "in righteousness He doth judge and make war."

Show how this chapter depicts the Conqueror returning from the battle.

Compare Isaiah 63:10 with Ephesians 4:25-32.

Isaiah 64:1-12

In this appeal of Israel to God we have an admirable sample of what should be our prayer in times when seemingly all things go against us, and God has forsaken us. First, we must beseech God to open the "heavens," which are apparently shut against our cry, and to "come down" by His Spirit to our help, so that "mountains" of opposition may melt away at His presence. Next, we must appeal to His concern for the honor of His "name," which is at stake in the case of all who cry to Him. God's "terrible" (awesome-nkjv) doings, exceeding all expectation, are another strong ground of the believer's expectation that He will again interpose in behalf of His suffering people, and that mountain-like obstacles, as in times past, will disappear at His presence.

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

In what state or condition do we come to God to plead His favor and stability of His promise?

Ps. 119:94 Ps. 138:8 Isa. 64:6-12

Isaiah 65:1-16

The rebellion of Israel, notwithstanding God's continued long-suffering, brought upon the nation at last rejection by God. Then the Lord gave His gracious invitation to the Gentiles, who had not previously been 'called by His name,' to "behold" Him as their Savior, and so to take the high place as His people which had heretofore been held by the Jews. So now, among the members of the professing Church, when the most highly favored as to privileges fail to use them, God reveals Himself to those who had not professed to seek Him: He thus magnifies His grace in being 'found of them that sought Him not.'

(Bible Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

Are these versus prophetic of what happens several centuries later when the descendants of these Jews reject God's son?

Could Isaiah 65:5 be speaking of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

Isaiah 65:17-25

The present dispensation is ended. Jerusalem, restored to her former glory, sings for very joy; and her rejoicing sends a thrill of joy through the nature of God. Long years of life and security of tenure are granted again to man. Creation is

emancipated from bondage and participates in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Peace shall reign in the forest glades, never again to abdicate her throne, v. 25. But, best of all, there shall be such unity between man and God that prayer will be anticipated, and the pleading soul shall be conscious of the listening ear of God. Hasten, O day of days, for which creation groans, and the saints groan with inexpressible desire!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Can you add to what F. B Meyer said concerning the new heavens and earth and how mankind will be living in it.

Ezek. 40:1-48:35 Rom. 11:26 Rev. 21:1-27

Isaiah 66:1-14

There is much about the comfort which Israel is yet to experience after their long night of sorrow, in this second part of Isaiah. Its very first words are *nachamu, nachamu*—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God." (Isa. 40:1) Hence the rabbis have styled this great prophecy "The Book of Consolations."

The ground of the comfort which God will minister to them is also set forth in the first words of the prologue: "*Speak ye comfortably to (or, 'speak ye to the heart' of) Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare (or, 'her appointed time of servitude') is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned (or, 'her debt is paid'), that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*" (Isa. 40:2) Israel's long night of sorrow and sufferings, which was the direct consequences of her sins, shall then be ended, and "*as one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you,*" He says, "and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:13). And not only will He comfort Zion herself by His return unto her with mercies, and with the sense of His forgiveness and love, and make her joyous and fruitful, but "*He shall comfort all her waste places (or 'ruins') and make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah.*"

How glorious a transformation! From a state of total barrenness into another Eden, with all its fertility and beauty, and instead of its present condition of utter desolation it shall be like "*the garden of Jehovah,*" as glorious as if it had been directly planted by Himself for His own joy and delight.

And it is both the people and the land which will thus be "comforted" and transformed, for "Zion" stands here, as in so many scriptures, as the name for both, and the promise must be understood literally in relation to the land, and spiritually in relation, to the people. For many centuries Jerusalem has lain in ruins; and Palestine, naturally a fruitful land, has been known pre-eminently "as the land that is desolate." Let it not be forgotten that the long-continued desolation of the land is directly due to the sin of the people. "The land," we read, "shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings" (Mic. 7:13); for Palestine became involved in the sin of Israel, even as creation became involved in the sin of Adam. But we are looking forward to the time when, as one of the blessed results of the glorious redemption which has been accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, "creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." And so also, when Israel is pardoned and the covenant relations between God and His people are restored, the curse which has rested on the land shall be lifted, and "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." (Isa. 35:1) Yea, "He shall comfort all her waste places, and make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of Jehovah." (Isa. 51:3)

But what the land in its desolate condition has been in relation to the people, the people in its condition of unbelief and apostasy has been in relation to God, viz. a barren wilderness, a spiritual desert. But this moral and spiritual wilderness of the people also shall be transformed. And not only so, but as this same prophet tells us in the 35th chapter, "Waters shall break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert," i.e. not only will Israel himself, now a moral wilderness, be quickened and refreshed, but out of him shall flow rivers of living waters for the spiritual quickening and refreshment of the world.

And if we want to know when this wonderful transformation will be brought about, and by what means or power it will be accomplished, the same prophet tells us in the 32nd chapter: "*Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,*" he says, "*and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed a forest.*" (Isa. 32:15) And then, when both the land and the people are thus "comforted" and transformed, "*joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*" "*For thus saith Jehovah: Yet again there shall be heard in this place, whereof ye say it is waste without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. . . . The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that give thanks to Jehovah of hosts; for Jehovah is good, for His mercy (or, 'His lovingkindness') endureth forever.*" (Jer. 33:10-11)

And this joy and gladness, and the voice of melody of restored and converted Israel, will reverberate through the universe, and will be the echo and response, so to say, of God's own joy over His restored national prodigal, even as we read in Zephaniah: "*He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love (or, 'be silent in His love'—as if it were too much, or too deep for expression); He will joy over thee with singing*" (Zeph. 3:17)

No wonder that the prophet Isaiah—in view of the blessed issues of the conversion and blessing of Israel, not only to Israel himself, but to the world—exclaims in the 49th chapter (Isa. 49:13): "*Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for Jehovah hath comforted His people and will have compassion upon His afflicted.*"

By God's grace we, too, my dear Christian reader—whether we be Jews or Gentiles—are included among those who are "followers after righteousness and seekers after God." Yea, though we may not be of Israel after the flesh we are the children of Abraham by faith, and this beautiful scripture, though addressed primarily to the godly remnant in Israel, has a message for us also. We, too, when tempted to stagger at the promises of God in unbelief because their fulfillment seems to us naturally impossible, or, humanly speaking improbable, should bring to mind the "works of Jehovah" and meditate "on His wonders of old." Let us remember how in the whole history of Israel, which has been well characterized as "the history of miracle and the miracle of history," He has again and again proved to those who have believed His word and trusted in His holy name, that He is a God of the impossible—or, according to His own word to Abraham, that there is nothing "too hard" or "wonderful" for Jehovah. As fellow-workers for Israel's salvation, let us exercise strong faith in God and not be daunted by what may seem to us impossibilities.

We look on the Jewish nation now and say, "What a moral and spiritual desert!" We look on the Promised Land and say, "How barren, how desolate!" Let us look to the rock whence we were hewn; to the hole of the pit whence we were digged. Was not Abraham as good as dead? Was not Sarah naturally barren?

Yea, have we not experienced the supernatural power of God in our own hearts and lives? Has He not quickened and transformed our own souls? And what He has done in the past He will do, only on a more glorious scale, in the future; and what He has done for us, He can and will do for others.

(Israel in the Plan of God, David Baron)

Man can build no temple so acceptable to God as is the 'contrite spirit that trembleth at His Word.' All other temples of man's building are merely provisional, during our present imperfect state, until the heavenly city descend from God, wherein there shall be no temple; but "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Formalism, and scrupulous observance of outward ordinances, will be of no avail to those 'who choose their own' corrupt "ways," rather than the Lord's holy ways. He will repay such men in kind; He too will "choose" to give them up to their "delusions," even as they 'chose that in which He delighted not.' On the other hand, they who "tremble" reverently, with filial love and fear, at 'God's Word,' and who have been therefore hated, mocked, and cast out for the Lord's sake, shall see Him soon appearing, to their joy, and to the confusion of their adversaries. (A. R. Fausset) **What specifics is the Lord looking for in a person?**

Isa. 66:5 Phil. 3:3

Isaiah 66:15-17

As Jehovah "saw" (Deut. 32:19) and took note of the sins and rebellion of Israel, and in due time, when His long-suffering was exhausted, sent the terrible judgments which have overtaken them, and which are to culminate in the final great tribulation through which as a nation they have yet to pass, so also is He by no means indifferent to the conduct of the nations in relation to His people. He has "seen" and noted all the oppressions, the pitiless cruelties and brutalities of which the Gentile world-powers have been guilty in their dealings with the people which—in spite of all their many sins and long-continued apostasy—is still "beloved for the fathers' sake."

*"Is not this laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up among My treasures" (or "in My treasures")? (Deut. 32:34)*

i.e., kept safely and ready to be brought forth at the appointed time when—Israel's day of mercy having come—He shall "put all these curses upon their enemies, and on them that hate him and persecute him" (Deut. 30:7) and "pour out His fury upon the nations that know Him not, and upon the families that call not on His name; because they have devoured Jacob, yea, they have devoured him and consumed him, and have laid waste his habitation."

The wicked actions of the nations together with the wrath of God which is sure to follow, are spoken of as "laid up," and "sealed" in God's treasures, in the same way as the transgression and iniquity of the individual are said to be "sealed up in a bag," (Job 14:17) *i.e.*, kept safe to be produced in the day of judgment when they shall all be "set in order" again before the eyes of the sinner, (Ps. 1:21) so that the opened book of his own conscience may attest the faithful accuracy of the terrible record which has been preserved by God; for although (to use another figure) "sin does not purpose to remember or be remembered, it registers itself with perfect and unfailing regularity in two books—the book of God which shall be opened on that day, and on our own character, mind and imagination. Only the blood of Christ can blot out sin from the one book, only the Spirit of God from the other." (Adolph Saphir)

But to return more closely to our context: the day when the "seals" shall be broken so that the iniquity which the nations have committed may be laid bare, and the successive judgments which have also been "laid up" in God's treasures be let loose, is "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61:2) which synchronizes with the commencement of "the year of His redeemed" (Isa. 63:4) when Israel's Redeemer shall be manifested a second time, not as the meek and lowly one to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, but in His power and glory to execute the judgments committed to Him by

the Father, to "tread down the peoples in His anger, and to trample them in His wrath." And this long-delayed work of vengeance He has reserved entirely for Himself. This is brought out with emphasis in the order in which the words are placed in the original:

"Mine is vengeance and recompense" (Deut. 32:35)

To no one else can the execution of it be entrusted, and least of all to frail, passionate man. Only in the hands of the Judge of all the earth is there an absolute guarantee that its infliction will be in the fullest accord with perfect righteousness without excess, or a spirit of vindictiveness on the one hand, or a stopping short of the strictest requirements of justice on the other hand.

(Israel in the Plan of God, David Baron)

Compare what is said here with that said in Revelation 19:11-21.

Isaiah 66:18-24

" For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall fall to pieces like a (disused, worn-out) garment, and its inhabitants shall in like manner perish." (Isa.51:6)

What a terrible announcement this is for those whose hopes are all bound up with the present visible order of things! So terrible, indeed, that they put it from them, or refuse to believe it. "What sign is there," they say, "of any possible change? Is not nature governed by unchangeable law? Do not all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" Willfully forgetting the sudden destruction which overtook the world at the Flood, and the other great judgments of God which came upon men "unawares." But whatever scoffers may say, and whether men are prepared for it or not, *"the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."* (2 Pet. 3:10)

But when this fearful cataclysm of nature shall have taken place, and when the heavens and the earth "that now are" shall pass through the fiery ordeal and be, as it were, dissolved, "My salvation"—*i.e.* as manifested in those who by His grace have become the subjects of it—"shall be forever"; "and My righteousness"—as displayed in those who have become *partakers of it*—"shall not be abolished"—literally, *lo-thechath*—"shall not break up" or "go to ruin," but remain *indestructible*. We are reminded of the beautiful words in chapter 54:10 (Isaiah): *"For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but My lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith Jehovah, that hath mercy on thee."*

And not only shall God's redeemed people "abide forever" when the world and the lust thereof shall have "passed away," (1 John 2:17) but out of the havoc and ruin of the old order of things there shall emerge, as this same prophet Isaiah announces, "the new heavens and the new earth" (Isa. 65:17, Isa. 66:22) wherein shall dwell righteousness. "Wherefore, beloved," writes the apostle, *"seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless in His sight."* (2 Pet. 3:13-14)

(Israel in the Plan of God, David Baron)

With what prophecy does Isaiah conclude this book?

Isa. 66:24