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ISAIAH

Prophet, Poet & Symbolist

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ISAIAH – The man

We have very little information of the personal history of Isaiah. It is believed that he was born approximately 775 B.C. His father's name was Amoz (Isaiah 1:1), but we do not know of which tribe he was from. It is believed that he lived in Jerusalem near the temple (Isaiah 6) and was married to a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3). He had two sons: Shearjashub (Isaiah 7:3) and Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah 8:3).

Isaiah prophesied under the reigns of Uzziah (767-740 B.C.), Jotham (750-740 regent with Uzziah and 740-732 B.C. as sole ruler), Ahaz (732-716 B.C.), and Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.); kings of Judah. Rabbinical tradition says that Isaiah, when 90 years old, was sawn asunder in the trunk of a carob tree by order of the evil king Manasseh, which is supposed be that which is referenced in Second Kings 21:16 and Hebrews 11:37.

Isaiah received his commission and began his ministry in the year that King Uzziah died (Isaiah 6). Scripture informs us that Isaiah recorded the biography of King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:22) and King Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:32). Both of these records are lost.

ISAIAH – The setting

Isaiah was born approximately one century after the ministry of the prophet Elijah. He grew up during the reign of two kings – King Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Israel and King Uzziah in the southern kingdom of Judah. This was a time of relative peace for both kingdoms. Both kingdoms grew in wealth and accomplishments and with this time of prosperity came social injustices, immorality and growing pagan practices. Assyria to the northeast was growing as a political and religious influence. It is believed that it was during Isaiah's teenage years that the prophet Jonah traveled to Nineveh (an Assyrian city) to call them to repentance (Second Kings 14:23-25 and the Book of Jonah).

Although Jonah's mission bought the two kingdoms some time, as Isaiah reached adulthood and began his ministry, Assyria would rise in power as the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah weakened. In the northern kingdom of Israel after the death of Jeroboam, there would arise civil dissensions, rebel rulers, warfare and assassinations. In the southern kingdom of Judah, King Uzziah had become a leper, social outcast and co-regent king with his son after trying to burn the priestly incense in the temple. It was during this time of increasing spiritual and moral corruptness that the prophets Hosea and Amos chastised the nations for their conditions.

ISAIAH – One or two?

It is a long standing dispute between scholars as to whether Isaiah was written by one person or by two or more authors. For the purpose of this study we are presuming Isaiah to have been written by one person. In support of this, reference the study by Apostle Don McIndoo "Isaiah: Singular or in Duplicate". Additionally, when Jesus instructed the people in the Book of Mormon to study the words of Isaiah, he did not indicate anything other than one Isaiah. A few other reasons for one author will be discussed in the next section.

ISAIAH – The style

Understanding the Book of Isaiah can be very difficult. This difficulty has led to many varied opinions and interpretations of the book. To help understand the book we must understand the “style” or manner in which Isaiah wrote.

1) First we must understand that Isaiah was a prophet and he wrote of things that had not yet come to pass at the time of the writing. Living after the time of the great prophet some of those events are now history for us and as we will discover in our study, some are still in the future for us as well.

2) Second we must understand that Isaiah was a symbolist. He uses actual items and events to symbolize things and events that will occur in the future. This is frequently referred to as “types”. Isaiah uses types, anti-types, shadows and illusions throughout his book.

3) Third, Isaiah was a poet. He wrote in very complicated and inter-related style known as parallelism. This style interrelates verses, chapters and the entire book (another evidence of one author).

ISAIAH – Understanding the message

Frequently scholars understand one or two of the elements listed above, but not the others, which lead them astray. Those trying to unlock the prophecies, become confused with the sequence when they do not understand the poetry. It is frequently this approach that lead many to believe that there was more than one author of Isaiah. The same can be said about those that try to follow the symbolism of Isaiah. Those that analyze the poetry of Isaiah frequently miss the prophetic message of Isaiah by not realizing the symbolism that points to that which is yet in the future (they usually believe it is all past).

To understand Isaiah we must consider all three elements plus a fourth. As members of the restoration we have access to the Book of Mormon. In it much of Isaiah is quoted and frequently with slight, substantial changes that help our understanding. As the text in the Book of Mormon are taken from the plates obtained at approximately 600 B.C., this is only about 100 years after Isaiah recorded them and then interpreted through the urim and thummim by Joseph Smith Jr., we will presume the Book of Mormon to be the more accurate translation when a difference arises.

Additionally we have comment on Isaiah from the authors of the Book of Mormon to consider and realizing the restoration of the Gospel we can recognize some fulfillments and establish some dates for Isaiah, such as Isaiah 29 that is not recognized by mainstream Christian scholars.

ISAIAH – Our study

This study is an enormous undertaking. It is not intended to be a complete analysis of Isaiah. Rather we will try to understand the style and some of the elements so that we can more readily read and comprehend the prophet. There is frequently some variance on the exact dates of history and except for a few instances where it is more

important to be more accurate, the dates in this study are approximate and should not create concern if other texts give slightly different dates for events in history.

Additionally, I do not believe that I could identify all of the poetic elements of Isaiah if I tried and even a partial list would require a great deal of time, therefore we will only try to understand the styles and identify a few of them to help us understand the writings of Isaiah.

I will try to include the Book of Mormon equivalents when applicable in reference to Isaiah and anything indicated within brackets [] is the wording in the Book of Mormon when it differs from Isaiah.

ISAIAH – The poetry (parallelism)

There are many attempts at explaining the poetry of Isaiah. I believe one of the best and easiest to understand is found in the book *Unlocking Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* by Victor L. Ludlow. I do not agree with all his thoughts and interpretations, but he does a good job of explaining the “parallelism” found in Isaiah. I will therefore paraphrase his explanations and use some of his examples of the seven types of parallelism found in Isaiah.

Synonymous parallelism – when a theme, idea or concept in the first line is repeats itself in the second line with slightly different words. For example:

he *was* wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5/Mosiah 8:20)

AND:

For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and
for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. (Isaiah 48:9/1 Nephi 6:16)

This is the most common and recognizeable parallelism in Isaiah and throughout the Bible and Book of Mormon. It is very apparent throughout the Psalms.

Antithetic parallelism – this is when the thought of the second section contrasts the first. For example:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isaiah 14:14-15/2 Nephi 10:36-37)

AND:

Say ye [unto] to the righteous, that *it shall be* [is] well *with him* [them]: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Say ye [unto] to the righteous, that *it shall be* [is] well *with him* [them]: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be* ill *with him* [for they shall perish]: for the reward of his [their] hands shall be given him [upon them]. (Isaiah 3:10-11/2 Nephi 8:48-49)

AND:

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: (Isaiah 1:19-20)

This use of opposites to amplify the extremes is very common in proverbs and is very apparent in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. In Isaiah this can be between verses as in the previous examples or in a single verse (Isaiah 11:4/2 Nephi 9:19) or throughout an entire chapter such as Isaiah 14:1-32/2 Nephi 10:23-54 which opens with the restoration of Israel and closes with the destruction of Babylon.

Emblematic parallelism – where the ideas or concepts from two halves of one line or from two different lines are compared by means of a simile or metaphor. For example:

all we **like** sheep have gone astray; (Isaiah 53:6/Mosiah 8:21)

then had thy peace been **as** a river, and thy righteousness **as** the waves of the sea: (Isaiah 48:18/1 Nephi 6:25)

Isaiah combines all three of these first parallelisms in what is probably one of the most famous verses in Isaiah:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

sins as scarlet, white as snow, red like crimson, they (sins) as wool (white) – **emblematic**
red to white – **antithetic**

your sins can be forgiven, your sins can be forgiven – **synonymous**

Synthetic parallelism – this is more subtle and difficult to recognize. It is where the second element or line completes or compliments the first in a variety of possible combinations. The first element might ask a question that the second answers or the first element might make a proposition that the second element states the conclusion. The first part of synthetic parallelism stimulates thought and question to which the second part provides details, resolves our concerns or answers our question. Example:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

8:19) yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4/Mosiah

AND:

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned,

that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: he wakeneth [unto thee, O house of Israel. When ye are weary, he waketh] morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. (Isaiah 50:4/2 Nephi 5:55-57)

Composite parallelism – when three or more ideas develop a theme by amplifying a concept or defining a precept. Example:

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and

let them stretch forth the curtains of thine [thy] habitations:

spare not, lengthen thy cords, and

strengthen thy stakes;

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left... (Isaiah 54:2-3/3 Nephi 10:10-11)

AND:

Awake, awake;

put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city...

Shake thyself from the dust;

arise, *and* sit down, O Jerusalem:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck... (Isaiah 52:1-2/2 Nephi 5:112-114)

Climactic
Climactic parallelism – where an idea, concept or word is repeated in the following and subsequent lines until a key pattern or theme which can be either stated or implied is developed. Example:

...*that* instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and

instead of a girdle a rent; and

instead of well set hair baldness; and

instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and*

burning instead of beauty. (Isaiah 3:24/2 Nephi 8:62)

The theme is developed by comparing the previous and following verses. In this case the previous verses identify the lack of courageous and compassionate men and the vanity of haughty women. Verse 24 of Isaiah is the climatic center of the reversal from the previous condition to the reversal that follows which is war and desolation.

AND:

For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low: ¹³And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, ¹⁴And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are* lifted up, ¹⁵And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, ¹⁶And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. ¹⁷And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (Isaiah 2:12-17/2 Nephi 8:28-33)

The list is the climatic transition from the previous which is that the Lord is coming to that which follows, which is that the Lord will be exalted. Another example of this technique was used by the Lord himself with the "Beatitudes". (Matthew 5:3-12/3 Nephi 5:50-59)

Introverted parallelism – when a pattern of words or ideas is stated and then repeated in reverse order. This is also known as *chiasmus* (reference study by Apostle Don McIndoo for additional info). Example:

- (a) ...Ephraim shall not envy
- (b) Judah,
- (b) and Judah
- (a) shall not vex Ephraim. (Isaiah 11:13/2 Nephi 9:128)

AND:

- (a) Make the *heart* of this people fat,
- (b) and make their *ears* heavy,
- (c) and shut their *eyes*;

- (c) lest they see with their *eyes*,
- (b) and hear with their *ears*,
- (a) and understand with their *heart*, and convert, and be healed. (Isaiah 6:10/2 Nephi 9:10)

Introverted parallelism/chiasmatic patterns can be expanded to include many verses, whole chapters and even groups of chapters. It is possible that the whole book of Isaiah is chiasmatic in nature to itself. With more elaborate examples, a main theme or pivotal message is usually stressed in the center of the chiasmus. The separate halves of the chiasmus can also be in parallel patterns to each other (synonymous, antithetic, synthetic and so on), so this becomes a very sophisticated style of Hebrew poetry. For example, the first half of a chiasmatic poem might portray our relationships with each other and the second half might highlight our relationships with God in a synonymous pattern. Or the first half of a chiasm might warn of God's judgments and punishments while the second half promises His mercy and blessings in an antithetic pattern. The possibilities seem endless and complicated and we haven't even added in the symbolic nature with one thing representing another, but hopefully it will open up our understanding as we begin to read the passages of Isaiah.

ISAIAH – The symbolist

Throughout the Book of Isaiah as well as the rest of the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the authors frequently use individuals, places, events and things to represent something or someone in the future (at the time of writing). This has been long recognized, but unfortunately there does not seem to be a standard for addressing them. Authors and scholars use different terms when discussing the same topic. For the purposes of this study we will try to keep it simple (at least as much as possible) and simply refer to the examples as "types" and understand that they are indicative of something besides that which is being stated. However, we will list some of the definitions so that we can understand what they are referring to if we see them.

This type of writing is generally most properly referred to as *typological symbolism*, however it may be referred to as *symbolic*, *symbolology*, *typology* or *typical*. Some of the terms that are used in defining the elements are:

Type – A person, thing, action, event, ceremony, structure, furniture, color or number that prefigures or represents a corresponding fulfillment.

Antitype – The fulfillment of a "type". Example: The Passover lamb is the type for the sacrifice of Christ and Christ's crucifixion is the fulfillment or "antitype".

Shadow – An imperfect or inferior example of a greater fulfillment. Example: John the Baptist was a shadow of Christ.

Archetype – Is used as synonymous with both types and antitypes.

Illusion – Same as a shadow.

Symbol – Same as type.

Figure – Same as type.

Typological symbolism is prophetic in nature as it uses a known or familiar example to “prophesy” of a greater fulfillment to come. Throughout the Bible, the Old Testament is filled with “types”, while the New Testament is filled with “antitypes”. Saint Augustine (354 – 430 A.D.) said “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”

Many of the “types” of the Old Testament seem obvious to us today as we have seen a lot of their fulfillment, such as the Passover, the tabernacle, the tabernacle furnishings and the High Priest (reference our study on Exodus), which all point to Christ and the Christian Church. In Isaiah some of the types are obvious, but we do a disservice if we accept the obvious without investigating the more obscure. Isaiah combines prophesy with typology and parallelism. An example is in the fourteenth chapter in Isaiah where Isaiah compares the King of Babylon with Satan. Here Isaiah establishes the King of Babylon as a type for the antitype Satan and Babylon as a type for the antitype of Satan’s kingdom. Later when Isaiah prophesies of Babylon he is giving a warning to Israel about Babylon, while warning the Christian church of Satan as the “antitype”.

Next we must consider the sequence of events, are they as they will happen to Israel, as they will happen to the Christian Church or a parallelism to emphasize a point? In our study I believe we will find all three to be true.

It may seem strange, but it appears that will history is a chiasmus – repeating itself in reverse order. Consider:

Israel – type Christian church – antitype

- a) Israel selected
- b) Israel established
- c) Israel apostate
- d) Israel reclaimed (Christ)
- e) Israel takes gospel to Gentiles
- f) Gentile selected
- g) Gentiles established
- h) Gentile apostate
- i) Gentiles reclaimed (Restoration)
- j) Gentiles take gospel to Israel

Most scholars are on the extremes regarding *typological symbolism*, either believing everything is a type or discounting most of it. The one extreme probably began with Philo (20 B.C. – 50 A.D.), a Jew that has played a part in historical theology because

of his founding of the alexandrian school of thought, Philo
attempted to merge Jews.

philosophy and Old Testament Judaism, although controversial for that reason alone, Philo's methods lead to an over emphasis of the allegorical interpretive method. Alfred Edersheim in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* elaborated on the errors of Philo's allegoric method: "Everything became symbolic in his hands, if it suited his purpose: numbers, beasts, birds, fowls, creeping things, plants, stones, elements, substances, conditions, even sex. And so a term or an expression might even have several contradictory meanings, from which the interpreter was at liberty to choose." This led to the neoplatonist idea that scripture contained two truths: a temporal truth and a spiritual truth, with the latter being viewed as "more real".

This extreme view has led to the opposite extreme. Many Christian scholars and writers today reject the study of typology altogether because of the often extravagant speculations of earlier typologists have left a bad impression for "typology" in their minds. As a further complication, the spirit of natural liberalism has silently assaulted the thinking of some in the Christian community causing them to dismiss altogether the supernatural elements of the scriptures, including typology because as a matter of application typology must be a part and related to prophesy.

It is quite evident that "types" exist in scripture, but we must be cautious in identifying them and look for the clues that lead us to a type rather than trying to find a type that suits our purpose.

ISAIAH – The Prophet

There can be little if any argument that Isaiah was a prophet. However the style in which he wrote can be difficult to understand and at times seem contradictory. To understand Isaiah we must understand that in many cases he prophesied of both the type and the antitype and therefore we should look for two fulfillments. In many cases the prophesy of the type has been fulfilled, but we are still waiting for the fulfillment of the antitype. Additionally, when Isaiah speaks of an event, is the sequence for the type or the antitype or is it presented in parallelism for emphasis?

With this basic understanding, let's begin our study of Isaiah. I hope that this study will be beneficial, enlightening and educational. I am convinced that Isaiah is derived divinely and cannot be completely or accurately understood without divine (Holy Spirit) assistance and I therefore encourage all to include this study in their prayers as we proceed.

CHAPTER ONE

Verse 1 The "vision" that Isaiah "saw" can leave little doubt that this was something that was presented him in such a manner that he had a clear image of what he is relating and not merely something that was told to him of the Lord. Isaiah was the son of Amoz¹.

The message of chapter one is clearly separate from chapter two, which begins "The word" and chapter six that records what Isaiah "saw" of the Lord. This first chapter serves as both an introduction and a summary of the chapters that will follow. What is not clear, and there are sound arguments for the varied opinions, is if this first chapter was given as a separate vision to Isaiah or if Isaiah is presenting a synopsis of his own regarding the vision he received.

The style of writing would suggest that it is a synopsis by Isaiah. On the other hand chapter six records that Isaiah received that vision the year that Uzziah died, while this chapter states that this vision includes that which would occur during the reign of Uzziah, indicating that it was a prior vision.

Verses 2-3 The setting is like a trial with heaven and earth as the jury, God as the judge and Judah and Jerusalem as the defendants, and the charges are brought against them². The indictment charges the people with being rebellious children that have failed to show the natural gratitude and devotion that could be expected of a domestic animal!

Verses 4-6 God's previous attempts at chastisement have failed and only caused them to rebel more. Spiritually they are as a body covered with wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

Verses 7-8 At this time in history Judah and Jerusalem were relatively peaceful and prosperous. Many scholars look at these verses as Isaiah speaking of the invasions of which he would later prophesy of. I believe that Isaiah is continuing the example that he started in the previous verses. He is describing how Judah and Jerusalem appear to God. They have accepted pagan customs and as a result are desolate of God's blessings.

Verse 9 Except for a small righteous remnant, their fate would have been the same as Sodom and Gomorrah³. It is consistent that God spares the evil for the sake of the righteous and removes the righteous before destroying the wicked. Examples are Noah and the flood, Lot in Sodom and the in particular to Isaiah would be the removal of the Nephites and Mulekites before the destruction of Judah⁴

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 2:1; 13:1; 37:2; 2 Kings 20:1; 2 Chronicles 32:32

² Deuteronomy 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; Micah 6:1-2

³ Isaiah 3:9; Ezekiel 16:44-57

⁴ Genesis 7:1-24; 18:23-33; 19:15-23; 1 Nephi 1:26-29; Omni 1:25-27

Verse 10 Isaiah addresses the people of Judah as if they were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verses 11-15 The Lord does not delight in sacrifices. They were for a purpose, to bring realization and repentance. Now they are being used to excuse conduct. They perform the rituals without any heart. They have no desire to change.

Verses 16-20 These verses are the theme/message of the chapter. Despite their condition, if they cease and repent, they can be again favored of the Lord.

✓ Verses 16 & 17 **Antithetic** - put away/cease & learn/seek

Synonymous – put away/cease learn/seek

✓ Verse 18 **Emblematic, Antithetic, Synonymous** (see page 5 of study)

✓ Verses 19 & 20 **Antithetic** – obedient/rebellious

✓ Verses 21-25 Jerusalem is no longer a city of faithfulness, justice and righteousness. It is now a harlot city, a refuge of murderers. Its best things have been corrupted and its princes are scoundrels. Bribery and injustice are everywhere. Therefore, God will vent His wrath on all those who show by their sin that they are His enemies.

✓ Verses 26-27 That which the Lord will destroy because of wickedness, He will resurrect in glory and righteousness as He intended from the beginning¹. This is most likely referring to Christ's Millennial Reign².

✓ Verses 28-31 Sinners will be destroyed. Idolaters will be ashamed of their shrines (oak trees and gardens). They themselves will be like an oak whose leaf fades and a parched garden that has no water. Leaders who rely on their own strength (the strong) will be like highly flammable tinder, ignited by the spark of their own wicked works. Oak trees were highly prized and could represent any worldly pursuit that draws us away from God.

ANALYSIS: Synonymous: 4-8(people), 11-15(worship), 16-20(repentance),

Antithetic: 2-15/16-19; 21-25/26-27;

Emblematic: 6-8; 18; 21-22; 30-31

NOTES:

¹ Exodus 18:25-26; Jeremiah 2:2-3; 1 Chronicles 26:14; 27:32-33

² Zechariah 14:1-21; Revelation 20:1-4; 1 Nephi 7:32-36; 2 Nephi 12:88-99

CHAPTER TWO

(2 Nephi 8:17-38)

We find that chapters 2 through 14 of Isaiah are quoted by Nephi in 2 Nephi chapters 8 through 10. Comparison with 2 Nephi will aid us in our understanding. As we proceed, we will find that there are some minor and some notable differences between the record in 2 Nephi and that which we have in the KJV of our Bible. Additionally, Nephi gives a short introduction and then in the 11th chapter gives an interpretation/explanation and then presents what it is recorded in Isaiah 29, which is of great significance to the Restoration.

In Nephi's introduction in 2 Nephi 8:15-16 we find that although the prophecy is addressed to his brethren, it may be likened "unto all men". We should also consider Nephi's summary found in 2 Nephi 11:1-81. If we find Isaiah difficult to understand, we should not be ashamed as Nephi states: "... Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying..."¹. Clearly there is a "manner" in which prophecy is presented, which in Isaiah includes, but is not limited to the parallelism and symbolism that we have discussed. However, the words of Isaiah are "... plain unto all they that are filled with the spirit of prophesy."²

Beginning with 2 Nephi 11:11, Nephi tells us: "... I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in the which I know that no man can err; Nevertheless, in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled, men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass... For I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days; for in that day shall they understand them; wherefore, for their good have I written them"³ Of particular interest to us will be Nephi's comments after verse 28 which begins: "And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work, and a wonder among the children of men."⁴

Verse 1 "The word" introduction that begins this chapter divides it from what we have just studied in chapter 1 and begins a new line of thought that continues through chapters 3, 4 and 5. Although a new thought, it is still addressed to Judah and Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom). What is not clear is if this, like the previous chapter, was given to Isaiah as a separate vision or if the prophet is categorizing the elements of a single vision that he received.

NOTES:

¹ 2 Nephi 11:2

² 2 Nephi 11:5

³ 2 Nephi 11:11-14

⁴ 2 Nephi 11:28-29

Verses 2-4 These verses are very similar to the prophesy of Micah in Micah 4:1-4. While the prophets Hosea and Amos preceded Isaiah¹, Micah was a contemporary in the same time period as Isaiah². Isaiah's prophesy is addressed to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, while Micah's is addressed to both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah³.

In Chapter 1, Isaiah prophesied that the people would be destroyed because of their wickedness, but could be redeemed if repentant and the nation of Israel would be scattered, but restored. Now Isaiah looks farther into the future and describes the conditions that will prevail in this restored kingdom. This must with all probability describe the Millennial Reign of Christ⁴. Chapter 2 is Antithetic to Chapter 1 – Chapter 1 looks at the wickedness and Chapter 2 looks at the cleansed restoration. The theme of the first chapter is that although wicked, they can be saved⁵, i.e.; although they are chapter 1, they can become chapter 2.

The mountain, mountains and hills of these verses may or may not refer to literal mountain(s). Mountains symbolize holy places, they are symbolically and literally the closet places on earth to the heavens⁶. Consider Nephi⁷, Brother of Jared⁸, Moses at Mount Sinai⁹ and after His resurrection, Jesus had His disciples meet Him on a mountain¹⁰.

As members of the restored Church of Christ we understand that at some point in time there will be two central points; one in the Americas and the other in Israel, i.e., a "New" and an "Old Jerusalem"¹¹. This "New Jerusalem" should not be confused with the "New Jerusalem" that comes down from heaven. It is therefore understandable that when we read verses such as found in Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2: "... out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" to assume that the prophets are speaking of two locations also.

However, as we have learned, repeating something in a different manner is a style for Isaiah and so we cannot automatically assume that "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are different locations.

NOTES:

1- Chap. 2- The Lord will be exalted

2- Lord's house

3- Israel's identity

5- Pagan nations &

¹ Page 2 of study

² Isaiah 1:1/Micah 1:1

³ Micah 1:1

⁴ Isaiah 1:26-27; Zechariah 14:1-21; Micah 4:1-4; Revelation 20:1-4; 1 Nephi 7:32-36; 2 Nephi 12:88-99

⁵ Isaiah 1:16-20

⁶ Hebrews 12:22

⁷ 1 Nephi 3:38; 5:172

⁸ Ether 1:60-61 & 94

⁹ Exodus 19:3; 24:15

¹⁰ Matthew 28:16-20

¹¹ Ether 6:1-13; 3Nephi 9:58, 10:1-5; Book of Commandments 44:9,29,47, 48:59-67

Some of the possibilities are:

- 1) Zion/Law = Israel/Mosaic Law & Word/Jerusalem = Gospel/Christian Church
- 2) Zion/Law = Restoration/Book of Mormon & Word/Jerusalem = Bible/Original Church
- 3) Zion/Law = Mosaic Law departed & Word/Jerusalem = New Covenant replacing it
- 4) Zion/Law = Original Church/Bible & Word/Jerusalem = Restoration/Book of Mormon
- 5) Zion/Law Word/Jerusalem = Synonymous/Introverted parallelism of same event

If we believe that possibilities 2 or 4 is what Isaiah is referring to then we should at least consider the possibility that this has begun. Consider that we live in a land that governed by a Constitution that more closely patterns the Judean/Christian belief than any other nation. Latter in Isaiah the role of Ephraim will be mentioned and we must consider this in relation to the study "*Choice Seer*" by Elder Gordon McCann.

Points to consider:

- 1) Directed to Judah and Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom)
- 2) Time is the "last days"
- 3) Previous chapter prophesied of their condition and downfall
- 4) This and following chapters look to their restoration
- 5) "Zion": The first mention of Zion in the Bible is in 2 Samuel 5:7: "David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David)." Zion, therefore, was the name of the ancient Jebusite fortress situated on the southeast hill of Jerusalem at the junction of the Kidron Valley and the Tyropoeon Valley. The name came to stand not only for the fortress but also for the hill on which the fortress stood. After David captured "the stronghold of Zion" by defeating the Jebusites, he called Zion "the City of David" (1 Kin. 8:1; 1 Chr. 11:5; 2 Chr. 5:2).

When Solomon built the Temple on Mount Moriah (a hill distinct and separate from Mount Zion), and moved the ark of the covenant there, the word "Zion" expanded in meaning to include also the Temple and the Temple area (Ps. 2:6; 48:2, 11-12; 132:13). It was only a short step until Zion was used as a name for the city of Jerusalem, the land of Judah, and the people of Israel as a whole (Is. 40:9; Jer. 31:12). The prophet Zechariah spoke of the sons of Zion (Zech. 9:13). By this time the word "Zion" had come to mean the entire nation of Israel.

The most important use of the word "Zion" is in a religious or theological sense. Zion is used figuratively of Israel as the people of God (Is. 60:14). The spiritual meaning of Zion is continued in the New Testament, where it is given the Christian meaning of God's spiritual kingdom, the church of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1; Zion, KJV).¹

- 6) "Law": Strong's #8451 – "a precept or statute, espec. the Decalogue or Pentateuch" (Mosaic Law – GAO)²

NOTES:

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

² Notation by author – Glenn A. Orsted

7) “Word”: Strong’s #1697 – “a word; by impl. a matter (as spoken of) or thing; “speech, saying, utterance, word, words, speaking, thing, business, occupation, acts, matter, case, something, manner (by extension)”¹

Opinion (GAO)² – It is my opinion that “... out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” is a synonymous/introverted parallelism of the same event/location. I want to make it clear that I am **not** saying that there will not be two locations. Scripture makes it clear that at some point in time there will be both a “new” and an “old” Jerusalem. That may even occur at the same time that Isaiah is describing, but I do not believe that Isaiah is prophesying of two locations here.

In the previous chapter Isaiah had told Judah of her destruction. Now he tells them of what the Lord will restore. It is only directed to Judah and their future. At this time Lehi and his family have not departed (or even been born) and Judah knows nothing of another land. It is inconsistent with the style and “manner” of Isaiah to only give a few words describing something unknown to the people he is addressing, when he elaborates known things over many verses and chapters.

The theme of the second chapter is a time when the Lord will be “exalted” (verses 2, 11 & 17). Part of that exaltation is the Lord’s restoring that which man has corrupted. I believe that Isaiah is describing to Judah/Jerusalem a time in the distant future where Christ has made his return and all will work together for good. The Mosaic Law/New Testament Gospel will be understood. Jew and Christian will go there as well as Israel and the Gentiles (all nations) and the Lord will be the judge of all earthly matters and rule in peace. Isaiah is ultimately describing the “Lord’s house” which shall be “exalted” above all. The rest is describing and supporting that picture – Climactic parallelism.

Verse 5 – “O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD [; yea, come, for ye have all gone astray, every one to his wicked ways].” 2 Nephi 8:21 adds the latter portion of the verse not found in the KJV of Isaiah. This is an invitation to those addressed to partake of what has just been described and at the same time (Book of Mormon version) an admonition that their current condition will prevent this and a change is necessary. The addition found in 2 Nephi is important in that it makes more sense with the following verses than the KJV does.

NOTES:

¹ *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

² Author – Glenn A. Orsted

Verses 6-9 - Isaiah here establishes a type for the future. He describes the very things that are the downfall to Judah, that in the last days will prevent “many people” from ascending to the mountain of the Lord. “...replenished from the east..” means that they had become filled with pagan influences from the East, namely, Assyria and Babylon. “Soothsayers, like the Philistines”: The “diviners” of the Philistines are mentioned in 1 Samuel 6:2. During the reign of Uzziah, the Israelites had been brought into closer contact with the Philistines than usual, through his conquest of several of their cities.¹ “They please themselves in the children of strangers”: please means to strike (shake) hands, i.e.; enter into agreements and contracts with the children of foreigners.² This is thought to be an allusion to the commercial activity of the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham.³

When Israel was given their land, they were warned of the danger in accepting foreign customs and the consequences.⁴ The Lord had established Israel as a nation right in the midst of the pagan nations where the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe come together to be an exemplary nation. Instead leading and being the example, they have followed the examples of the surrounding idolatrous nations.

“Full of silver and gold” - The results of the commercial activity, — not evil things in themselves, but probably acquired by sharp dealing, and leading to undue softness and luxury. The Law had given a warning against “greatly multiplying silver and gold”.⁵ For the fact of the vast abundance of the precious metals in Judaea at this time, see 2 Kings 14:16; 20:13; 2 Chronicles 32:27. “Full of horses... chariots” (compare with Micah 5:10). There is no reason to believe that the Jews or Israelites ever possessed (unless it were under Solomon) any considerable cavalry or chariot force. But from the time of David, horses and chariots were imported for convenience and for show by the kings, the princes, and the nobles⁶. Like the silver and the gold, they were signs of luxury and ostentation. Their possessions and creations have become their idols.

There is a difference that we must investigate in regards to Isaiah 2:9/2 Nephi 8:25. The Independence Edition of the Book of Mormon reads different than other editions of the Book of Mormon and in turn these Book of Mormon(s) editions read different than the KJV Bible. Other editions of the Book of Mormon add “not” to the “mean man boweth down” and to “the great man humbleth himself” while the Independence Edition only adds “not” to the “the great man humbleth himself”.

NOTES:

¹ 2 Chronicles 26:6

² Job 27:23

³ 2 Kings 14:22; 16:6

⁴ Joshua 23:1-16

⁵ Deuteronomy 17:17

⁶ 2 Samuel 15:1; 1 Kings 4:26; 10:28-29; 22:31; Ecclesiastes 10:7

The “mean man” refers to the average and lower class of society while “great man” refers to the wealthy and powerful. Scholars go to great lengths trying to explain why the KJV sounds like these individuals will not be forgiven. The Book of Mormon clarifies these seemingly contradiction as to why they will not be forgiven. This difference and the difference in verse 10 that are found in the Book of Mormon completely change the understanding of these verses that scholars of the KJV only stumble with.

NOTE: Before we continue, let me (GAO) interject a thought that we haven't developed yet, but of which these verses will later be an important part. Although this prophesy is to Israel, Israel is a type for the Christian Church (not just the restoration). Israel (the nation) is a type for the United States (the nation). The United States once was a guiding light to the world, but increasingly the United States is looking to other nations for the example to follow. In recent court cases that have been appealed to state and the federal Supreme Courts, these court have referred to laws of other nations in their decisions. As such, Isaiah's warnings to Israel are also a cry to the United States and the Christian Church.

Chapter one of Isaiah which is direct to the destruction of Judah is not found in the Book of Mormon, however the conditions in Isaiah chapter two that will prevent people from going to the “House of the Lord” in the “last days” are found in the Book of Mormon that “...that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days...”¹

Verse 10 - In 2 Nephi 8:26, verse 10 of Isaiah begins “O ye wicked ones”. This, with the addition found in verse 9, clarify to whom these verses and the following ones are directed.

Verses 9 and 10 are the antithetic transition of the theme. Verse 9 describes man's arrogance and pride, while verse 10 describes how that false sense of worth will be shattered and they will seek to hide themselves in the lowest and dirtiest places when “...every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”²

Verses 11-18 – Verses 10 and 19 describe those that are trying desperately to hide from the face of the Lord. These verses in between are synonymous/composite/climactic/introverted parallelism of those things of pride and worth to man that shall be destroyed/removed in the “day of the Lord” when He shall be exalted. *II Nep. 8:27-35*

NOTES:

¹ 2 Nephi 11:14

² Isaiah 45:23

Verse 11: [And it shall come to pass that] the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. (Isaiah 2:11 / 2 Nephi 8:27)

Verse 12: For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be [soon cometh] upon [all nations; yea, upon every one; yea upon the] every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: (Isaiah 2:12 / 2 Nephi 8:28)

Verse 13: [Yea, and the day of the Lord shall come upon] And all the cedars of Lebanon, [for they] that are high and lifted up; and upon all the oaks of Bashan, (Isaiah 2:13 / 2 Nephi 8:29)

Verse 14: And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills, [and upon all the nations] which are lifted up, (Isaiah 2:14 / 2 Nephi 8:30)

Verse 15: [And upon every people,] and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, (Isaiah 2:15 / 2 Nephi 8:31)

“High tower”: Uzziah and Jotham had both paid much attention to fortifications, and had especially “built towers,” both at Jerusalem and in other parts of Judea (2 Chronicles 26:9, 10; 27:4). Isaiah means to pour contempt on these indications of “trust in an arm of flesh,” and to say that they will be of no avail when the time of calamity arrives.

“Fenced wall” refers to fortifications. “On the *wall* of Ophel” Jotham had “built much” (2 Chronicles 27:3). Hosea (Hosea 8:14) and Micah (Micah 4:11) also notice the trust of Judah in her fortresses and threaten their destruction.

Verse 16: [And upon all the ships of the sea,] and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. (Isaiah 2:16 / 2 Nephi 8:32)

“Ships of Tarshish” meant originally “ships built to sail to Tarshish;” but was used by the later writers for ships of a certain class or size (1 Kings 22:48; Psalm 48:7; Ezekiel 27:25). Tarshish was Tartessus, in Spain, and voyages there were regarded as long and dangerous. Consequently, the ships which were built for the Tartessian trade were of unusual size and strength. Uzziah had “built Elath,” in the eastern arm of the Red Sea, early in his reign (2 Kings 14:22), and no doubt maintained a fleet there, as Jehoshaphat had done (1 Kings 22:48). Elath remained in the possession of the Jews till the reign of Ahaz, when it was taken by Rezin, and restored to Edom (2 Kings 16:6).

NOTES:

“Pleasant pictures” or perhaps more accurately “all pleasant imagery”, it is most likely referring to works of art, of some sort or other, perhaps paintings and sculptures etc. These are different than the idols that are specifically mentioned in verse 18. The sentiment is that the judgment of God will fall on the most valued contents of palaces and grand houses, no less than upon the forests and the mountains, the fortified places, and the national navy.

Verses 17-18: Isaiah / 2 Nephi identical

Verse 19: And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for the fear of the Lord [shall come upon them:] and the glory of his majesty [shall smite them], when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isaiah 2:19 / 2 Nephi 8:35)

Verse 20: In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which [he hath made for] they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; (Isaiah 2:20 / 2 Nephi 8:36)

Verse 21: To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for the fear of the Lord [shall come upon them,] and for the glory of his majesty [the majesty of his glory shall smite them] when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isaiah 2:21 / 2 Nephi 8:37)

Verse 22: Isaiah / 2 Nephi identical

An appeal to Israel on the part of the prophet to give up their trust in man, from which was the source of all of their errors. “Whose breath is in his nostrils:” *i.e.* “whose life is a mere breath; who, if he ceases to breathe, ceases to live.” “For wherein is he to be accounted of?” or, for of what account is he? Surely, of no account at all.

2 Nephi gives a clearer image with a broader application than what we have recorded in the KJV. These verses are directed to the “wicked ones” and they apply to “all the nations” and “every people”.

We must consider them both literally, metaphorically and symbolically. History records that these events did occur when the Assyrians/Babylonians invaded Israel. We also must realize that they are a metaphor for anything that man values or esteems above God. As we will latter realize that are also a type or symbol for a secondary or anti-type that will be fulfilled at a latter date.

NOTES:

CHAPTER THREE

(2 Nephi 8:39-64)

Verses 1-8 – There are a few very minor changes between Isaiah and Second Nephi in these verses. The only change of any real significance is Isaiah 3:6 / 2 Nephi 8:44: When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, [and shall say] saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let [not] this ruin [come] be under thy hand;

This changes the plea to one that desires to avoid the ruin rather than inviting it. In the first verses the Lord will take away all the things/persons the support and stabilize the nation. The result is in the verses that follow in which the people become their own destruction.

These first eight verses of the chapter are introverted (chiasmus) / composite / antithetic parallelism.

Introverted (Chiasmus) by concept not exact word matches:

- A Jerusalem and Judah are addressed (verse 1)
- B Bread and water are removed (verse 1)
- C Society's leaders are removed (verses 2-3)
- D Children rule over princes (verse 4)
- E People oppress each other (verse 5)
- D Youth rebel against the elders (verse 5)
- C Family leaders are called upon (verse 6)
- B Lack of bread and leadership (verse 7)
- A Jerusalem and Judah are ruined (verse 8)

Isaiah uses composite parallelism when he describes the loss of both secular and spiritual leadership in these verses. As an antithetic parallel, in their place, children and babes will rule over the elders, contrary to Semitic tradition and the wisdom of experience.

These verses are both literal, a metaphor and symbolic and/or typical. Example: bread and water – literal in that there would be famine and a metaphor for spiritual famine. As this chapter is a continuation of chapter two, although addressed to Judah and Jerusalem, they are a type for the last days as well.

NOTES:

"I will give children to be their princes" - the extreme youth of the later kings of Judah at the date of their accession is very remarkable. After Hezekiah, only one was as much as twenty-five years old when he came to the throne. Jehoahaz was twenty-three (2 Kings 23:31); Amon, twenty-two (2 Kings 21:19); Zedekiah twenty-one (2 Kings 24:18); Jehoiachin, eighteen (2 Kings 24:8); Manasseh, twelve (2 Kings 21:1); and Josiah eight (2 Kings 22:1). Thus this prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

Verses 8-15 - The middle of verse 8 begins another introverted / chiasmus parallel. These verses are also antithetic in their contrast between the wicked and the righteous and synthetic in that it addresses questions/concerns presented in the previous verses. It is also emblematic with its comparison to Sodom.

This new chiastic poem explains why social chaos will come among Judah and how the Lord's people will be spared.

A Evil acts against the Lord (verses 8-9)

- Wo to the evil ones (verse 9)

B Rewards +It is well with the righteous (verse 10)

- Wo to the wicked (verse 11)

- People oppressed by children (verse 12)

B Judgments + The Lord will plead for the people (verse 13)

- "Ancients" (leaders) brought into judgment (verse 14)

A Evil acts against the poor (verses 14-15)

Verse 8 and 9 make it clear that the Lord is aware not only of their actions and words, but also of their thoughts and desires. King Benjamin warned of this in Mosiah 2:49 "But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish."

"Women rule over them" (verse 12) is a verse that it often used to argue against women in roles of leadership, however we must realize that the original word in the Hebrew is one for which there is no direct corresponding translation in English and it is therefore most commonly translated as "women". The original word carries with it the idea of someone lead by their passions and emotions and not governing by law or justice. In the Hebrew it carries a feminine characteristic. The rulers were weak, wavering, timid, impulsive, passionate, and are therefore called actual "women." There is no allusion to female sovereigns.

NOTES:

2 Nephi 8:50 also says “women” and we must therefore consider the literal fulfillment of this, but should be cautious not to limit this prophesy to a gender, but rather the type or style of rulers. I could not find any historical evidence of this being the circumstance (women rulers) in Judah, but most certainly is in our present time.

Verses 16-26 – Isaiah condemns the wicked Israelite women for their vanity and excess. With a series of composite parallelism, he verbally paints a vivid picture of richly dressed women of the night. He lists their many physical adornments and embellishments, stressing the overabundance of material goods valued by these spiritually blind women. They are preoccupied with necklaces, earrings, bracelets, hats, headbands, curlers, coats and scarves of fine materials – expensive fashions that the world still adores.

With climatic parallelism, Isaiah then describes the Israelite women’s fate: their “sweet smell” become “stink,” their fancy clothes turn into rags, their “well set hair” changes to “baldness,” their fine clothing (“stomachers”) becomes “sackcloth” and their beauty turns into scars (verse 24). The irony of this downfall climaxes in the last verse of the chapter as the once proud and haughty daughters (verses 16-24) and the mighty men (verses 1-8) of Zion sit upon the ground as slaves in desolation and poverty. The “her” of verse 26 refers to the city of Jerusalem, of whose description began in verse 8.

The sins of the women can be put under three groups: 1) wanton manners (attracting men), 2) love of apparel, 3) love of ornaments. It is interesting to note that according to most scholars, the manner of dress described here for the Israelite women is historically closer to the manner of dress for women of Assyria and Babylon. This desire most likely developed with Judah’s increased commerce with these nations¹.

We must consider the parallel between the United States and Israel. Both nations were miraculously established by God to be unique nations on the face of the earth. Despite this, we that Israel and now the United States want to be more like the nations that surround them.

A few words that not easily recognized:

Mincing (v. 16) – a skip or bounce in the step
 Cauls (v. 18) – scarves or headdress
 Round tires like the moon (v. 18) – crescent necklace
 Chains (v. 19) – pendants
 Mufflers (v. 19) – veils

NOTES:

¹ Page 17 of study (Isaiah 2:6-9); 2 Kings 16:6-10; 20:12-13

Tablets (v. 20) – hat or headdress

Changeable suits of apparel (v. 22) – festal apparel / changed frequently for event

Wimples (v. 22) – head covering that usually leaves only the face exposed

Crisping pins (v. 22) – purse

Glasses (v. 23) – mirrors

Hoods (v.23) – turbans

Veils (v.23) – robes

Verse 24 is antithetic parallelism between the way the women desires to be and what they would become because if their sinful conduct. It is a speculation that "...instead of well set hair baldness..." refers to women actually pulling out the hair of which they had once been so proud. This would explain "...a scab the crown of the head..." (verse 17). The reason for such behavior is that prior they desired to be a thing of beauty that men desired. Now with the destruction of Jerusalem they want to be unattractive to avoid the circumstances that frequently develop with women at the hands of an invading enemy.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FOUR

(2 Nephi 8:65-70)

In Isaiah's style of writing, this chapter is a transition between the previous chapter and the chapter that follows. Isaiah did not write his message with chapters. They were added later by translators, who apparently recognized the transition here, but were unsure where to put the breaks (chapters). Isaiah 4:1 is really the concluding verse for chapter three and Isaiah 4:2-6 is the introduction for the following chapter.

Verse 1 - This verse has been called a "companion picture to Isaiah 3:6, 7." It is more appropriately completes a composite parallelism describing the change in attitude that has come upon Israel. As in the time of God's judgment, the despairing men are represented as "taking hold" of a respectable man to make him their judge, so now the despairing women "take hold" of such a man and request him to allow them all to be regarded as his wives. There has been such a destruction — men are become so scarce — that no way otherwise that women can escape the shame and reproach of being unwedded and childless.

They do not ask him to support them; they are able and willing to support themselves. Children were regarded as such a blessing in the ancient times that to be childless was a misfortune and a subject of reproach. Hagar "despised" the barren Sarai (Genesis 16:4). Her "adversary provoked Hannah sore, because the Lord had shut up her womb" (1 Samuel 1:6). Among the Jews, childlessness was a special reproach, because it took away all possibility of the woman being in the line of the Messiah's descent (Isaiah 54:1-4).

Verses 2 - In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious; and ["and" omitted] the fruit of the earth shall be ["shall be" omitted] excellent and comely to [for] them that are escaped of Israel.

This verse is the concluding introverted parallelism (chiasmus) that was started in chapter two, i.e.; the message of hope. There is considerable debate regarding the "branch" and the "fruit" of this verse. We must realize that this is the introduction to chapter 5 (parable of the vineyard) and therefore the branch and fruit are referring to the vineyard and those that "are escaped of Israel".

This verse is beginning a line of thought far into the future when this "branch" and "fruit" have been "washed" and "purged" (verse 4). When we get to chapter 5, we will consider it with Jacob chapter 3.

Verses 3-4 - And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* [them that are] left in Zion, and *he that remaineth* [and remain] in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* ["even" omitted] every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

NOTES:

This most likely refers to the original fruit that “remaineth” and is the continuation of the thoughts introduced in the opening of chapter two of a time of restoration for Israel.

Verse 5 - And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory [of Zion] shall be a defence.

In chapter two we discussed Isaiah’s use of Jerusalem/Zion and in consideration of to whom the prophesy was addressed, was most likely referring to one location. Here beginning with verse 3 we have an introverted parallelism (chiasmus) using Zion/Jerusalem that again starts, but does not complete with this verse. The parable of the vineyard in Isaiah is not complete as compared with Jacob. Rather Isaiah only applies the “natural branch” (Israel). Considering the “escaped of Israel”, “every dwelling place” and “assemblies”, has Isaiah given a clue to the hearers of his prophesy of other “branches” and “locations”?

Verse 6 – As the Lord showed His presence to Israel when He led them from Egypt (cloud/smoke/fire), so will His presence and protection be evident in the last days with the faithful.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FIVE (2 Nephi 8:71-100)

Chapter five begins with a parable. It is the only parable in the book of Isaiah. Although short, this parable contains enough similarities that we should compare it with Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-18 and Jacob 3:30-153. The parable is presented in an introverted (chiastic) manner in regards to who is speaking, changing from a third person portrayal about the master and his vineyard (verses 1-2) to a first person narration as the master himself speaks about his past efforts (verses 3-4) and future plans (verses 5-6) and then shifting back to a third person description of the true Master and His vineyard (verse 7). This arrangement of third person (setup)/ first person (questioning)/ first person (promising)/ third person (explanation) provides the hearers of Isaiah with different perspectives so that they can better comprehend the message. In particular, the question is given to the hearers "what could have done more?" thereby forcing the reader to formulate an answer (synthetic parallelism).

It is important to note that when compared to other "vineyard parables", they are each directed to a different time/audience and therefore each is like a piece of a puzzle, with Jacob perhaps being the total or finished picture. First we will examine Isaiah and then compare it with the others.

Verses 1-2 - We must first remember that this is a "song" directed at Judah/Jerusalem¹. The "vineyard" is the house of Israel². Here the vineyard is on a "hill" and when compared with Isaiah 2:2 where the Lord's house is on a "mountain" we see that it is always God's desire that His people are set in a place of prominence where they "cannot be hid"³. Isaiah presents a picture of the best vine being placed in ground that has been cleared and protected by a fence. God did no less when He led Israel from Egypt to a land that He had prepared and would clear of the "stones" (other nations) and had protected by His hand through the years. Towers were used for observation, warning and beacons⁴, here it most likely refers to the temple.

The winepress indicates that He anticipates something good to be produced, but He is greatly disappointed to find that all that has been produced are wild grapes (sour and of no value).

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 2:1

² Isaiah 5:7

³ Matthew 5:14

⁴ Page 19 of study, verse 15; 1 Kings 17:9, 18:8; 2 Chronicles 26:9-10, 27:4; Matthew 21:33

Verses 3-4 – Before telling Judah/Jerusalem that they are the vineyard, he asks them: what more could have been done? The answer of course is nothing and they have pronounced their own judgment. The method is similar to Nathan's appeal to David by the parable of the ewe lamb (2 Samuel 12:1-4).

Verses 5-6 – The consequences are not, as many suppose, God's wrath or ravage, but rather His neglect and the consequences that follow. Israel has refused to have the Lord as their God and as a result He will leave them to their own resources. The Lord abandons the vineyard to the natural forces that destroy it. This process exemplifies the judgments of God, who usually does not immediately destroy or punish a wicked person. Rather, He simply leaves the sinner alone to face life's adversities and Satan's buffeting without the comfort and protection of His Spirit.

Ezekiel¹ saw the "glory of the Lord" depart the Temple and the Holy city. Shortly after, Israel would cease to be a nation with the completion of the Assyrian/Babylonian invasions. This parable is an abstract portrayal of what Isaiah had described in chapter three.

Verse 7 – Isaiah now reveals the truth of the parable and that is addressed to Israel. Isaiah uses a synonymous parallel to emphasize the significance of Israel's betrayal of the Lord. He writes: "he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." Isaiah uses a play on words here that is not evident in the English translation, but would be apparent to a Hebrew listener. Isaiah matches the word his listeners first heard with a word that sounds similar but has a strong contrasting meaning: instead of the people providing "justice" (*mishpat*), they bring "oppression" (*mispach*); and their "righteousness" (*tsedakah*) is replaced with a mournful "cry" (*tse'akah*). It would be similar to saying, "The Lord looked for *righteousness* but instead saw *riotousness*."

We cannot ignore the similarities between the "vineyard parables" of Isaiah and the Gospels².

ISAIAH
Vineyard
Fenced
Tower
Winepress

GOSPELS
Vineyard
Hedged
Tower
Winepress

NOTES:

¹ Ezekiel 10:1-22

² Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18

In Isaiah the vineyard is one that is spoiled and about to be abandoned by the owner. This is describing Israel which has left the Lord and is about to be left to their own defenses. In the Gospels the vineyard has been left by the owner to the care of husbandmen. The servants sent are attacked and killed until they son is sent. This is describing the Jews that have been left to the care of their religious leaders and have attacked and killed the prophets sent by the God until Jesus Christ comes. In the Gospels, the kingdom is taken and given to another nation (gentiles).

In Jacob¹ we find that Israel is compared to a tame olive tree that has been placed in a vineyard² and began to decay. Like in Isaiah the Lord of the vineyard laments "What could I have done more?"³ Ultimately we find that the vineyard will be lost⁴, but great efforts are made through relocation and grafting that there might be fruit harvested. In Jacob the parable is directed to a group that was one of the branches that was relocated.

What we find is a similar parable in each instance that is carefully created describing and applicable to the audience that it directed to at the time it is being given. This is additional evidence that Isaiah is directing his warnings to Judah/Jerusalem and not to other groups/locations.⁵

Beginning with verse 8 and continuing through the end of the chapter, Isaiah expresses 6 "woes" upon Israel.

Verses 8-10 Isaiah gives a condemnation of wealthy landowners possessing all the land that they can and leaving nothing for the poor. With antithetic parallelism the prophet describes their houses and vast lands (source of their pride and success) as being made desolate and their once fruitful fields (prosperity) will yield pathetic harvests.

We must remember that Israel has just been compared to a vineyard that does not produce useful fruit and now part of God's judgment is that their fields will not produce a useable harvest (possibly composite parallelism). An ephah was 1/10 of a homer and so we see that the harvest is representative of tithe that Israel was commanded to make and did not.⁶ That which they believed was so valuable as to withhold from God is now all that they will have to survive on.

NOTES:

¹ Jacob 3:30-153

² Jacob 3:31

³ Jacob 3:89 & 100

⁴ Jacob 3:153

⁵ Pages 14-16 of study

⁶ Malachi 3:8

Verses 25 -30 "Ensign": Strong's #5251 – Banner, pole, sign, standard or signal. The same word in Isaiah 13:2, 49:22, 62:10. It is the less emphatic form of #5264 such as in Zechariah 9:16.

"Hiss": Strong's #8319 – a whistle, to call.

Closing the warnings from the previous chapters and the parable of the vineyard, the Lord will give some type of signal or call to the nations to come against Israel. Israel the nation that the Lord had put a fence¹ around (protected) will now see what it is like to stand on their own against the powers that would seek to destroy them.

This most likely refers to the final destruction of the Southern Kingdom by the Assyrians which brought an end to Israel as a nation. Babylonia would destroy the Northern Kingdom earlier, but the Assyrians would complete the work. The Assyrians were known for their mighty cavalry and chariots as well as being skilled archers.

The description of them as a young lion may well be a type for the Gentiles that do not repent later in Third Nephi 9:51-52.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 5:2

CHAPTER SIX (2 Nephi 9:1-13)

This chapter designates a change from the previous chapters and the chapters that will follow. It is a vision that Isaiah received that describes his commission as a prophet to Israel. What is not clear and is greatly debated is if this vision was received after Isaiah had already delivered the previous prophesies of the previous chapters or if Isaiah received it prior and is only not relating it.

Which ever scenario is correct, the vision is properly placed here. It establishes the change here and validates Isaiah as the one with the authority to deliver it. The prior chapters were directed at the Southern Kingdom and what would happen as a result of their conditions and attitudes. The following chapters now begin to expand outside of Israel and their future, to many events long after the destruction of Israel.

Verse 1 We have date for this vision referenced to the death of Uzziah. Depending on the source, this date ranges from 759 B.C. to 740 B.C. For the purposes of this study we have used the 740 B.C. date, simply because it is more consistent with other studies that we have done.

Isaiah has a vision of the Lord in His temple. If one is not familiar with the history of Israel and its kings, it would be easy to miss the inferred Antithetic comparison here. Uzziah had one of the longest reigns of any of the kings of Israel – 52 years. His reign had the greatest expansions in the borders of Israel and numerous victorious battles since David. Under his reign Judah enjoyed some the greatest prosperity since Solomon. As a result, Uzziah became proud, to the point that he attempted to burn incense upon the altar of incense for which he was struck with leprosy¹ for the remainder of his reign. Isaiah infers a stark antithetic comparison between this mighty ruler of Israel, who is now dead, and the one who reigneth forever and forever.

Verses 2-3 From our previous study on angels, we had concluded that “seraphim” in not a name, but rather a description meaning “fiery one” and is describing the figure as bright or glowing and not an attempt to name the figure. What Isaiah is seeing is most likely a cherub/cherubim.

Verse 4 The “Shekinah” cloud has always been associated with the presence of God².

NOTES:

¹ 2 Chronicles 26:16-23

² Exodus 19:18, 24:15-18, 40:34-38; Numbers 9:15-17 & Revelation 15:8

Verse 5 - "I am undone" – meaning to be cut off or destroyed. God once said himself, "There shall no man see me and live"¹. Men expected to die even when they had seen angels of God². How are we are to reconcile Exodus 33:20 with this passage? It would appear that this is a vision based on the seraphim being in their symbolic form³ and the coal upon Isaiah's lips. It would therefore seem that the warning applies to actually seeing God in all of His "glory" and not to a vision of the scene as John saw in revelation also⁴.

"I am a man of unclean lips" - a man must be indeed be "perfect" never to offend in word⁵. Isaiah felt that he had often so offended. His lips were not "clean" in God's sight, and if not his lips, then not his heart; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"⁶. "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" - men catch up the phraseology of their time, and use wrong forms of speech, because they hear them daily. "Evil communications corrupt good manners"⁷.

Although we may think of Isaiah as a great prophet, even he feels unworthy before the Lord and his humility is demonstrated here.

Verse 6 - "A live coal" - fire in scripture is symbolic of cleansing or destroying the impurities⁸. "The tongs from off the altar" - The altar is, no doubt, an altar of incense where the incense is burnt upon stones heated to a glow, and it is one of these stones which the angel takes with the golden tongs of the sanctuary⁹. The altar of incense was representative of our prayers (or communication with God)¹⁰ and here Isaiah is being cleansed that he might speak with the Lord.

NOTES:

¹ Exodus 33:20

² Judges 6:22-23, 13:20-23

³ Study on angels

⁴ Revelation 4:11

⁵ James 3:2

⁶ Matthew 12:34

⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:33

⁸ Deuteronomy 4:24; Malachi 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 12:29

⁹ Exodus 25:38

¹⁰ Study on Exodus

✓ Verse 7 – This is an important verse in that it is a testimony that sin could be forgiven as Isaiah had been prophesying¹. This verse is questionable to some, but really should not be. To the casual reader, it would appear that the seraphim cleanses and purifies Isaiah. That cannot be true as that can only come through Christ. A more careful examination will show this to be true.

The seraphim does not “purge” Isaiah’s sins, but rather brings that which can i.e., the coal. This is before Christ has been offered as the final sacrifice and at this time, the Tabernacle and later the Temple were a type for Christ². Therefore, the seraphim is bringing that which can cleanse/purge sin and not actually performing the act.

✓ Verse 8 - “Who will go for us?” - Some explain the plural pronoun as being used of the Almighty and those with whom he is consulting, but he does not really “consult” his creatures, nor do his messengers do his errands *for them*. The plural form is indicative of the trinity of God as demonstrated right from the beginning in Genesis 1:26 and continuing through the New Testament³. This may be the significance of the seraphim saying “holy, holy, holy” in verse 3. Notice the change from verse 5, where Isaiah feels unworthy to now: “Here am I; send me.”

✓ Verses 9-10 - It sounds as if Isaiah is instructed to tell the people to not understand, however 2 Nephi 9:9 clarifies that they will be told, but will not understand: And he said, Go, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but [they] understood not; and see ye indeed, but [they] perceived not.

It would appear that Isaiah is encouraged by the Lord telling him to speak to the people even though the Lord knows that they would not hear. Without this understanding, it would be even more frustrating to know you are being ignored.

✓ Verses 11-12 - An understandable question from Isaiah: if no one will listen, how long shall I continue? The answer: until all the destructions that you prophesy of come to pass.

✓ Verse 13 – Despite a great destruction, there is a reason. A remnant will return. Both the teil⁴ and oak trees are trees that if you cut them down, will sprout new growth from the stump (roots).

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 1:18

² Study on Exodus

³ Colossians 3:1

⁴ terebinth

CHAPTER SEVEN

(2 Nephi 9:14-38)

After Isaiah's experience and commission in the sixth chapter we immediately observe an expansion of the scope and realm of his prophecies beginning right here with this seventh chapter and continuing throughout Isaiah. The previous chapters were aimed at the Southern Kingdom and addressed their conduct and consequences with allusion to a repair of some sort to come at a later date. Now Isaiah gets very specific not only about his nation, but others and gives a very definite messianic prophesy.

To understand this chapter we need to understand a little history of what was occurring at the time Isaiah is prophesying. Jacob (who would become Israel) had twelve sons. After their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites were organized into thirteen tribes, Joseph's posterity being so numerous that they were comprised two tribes from his two sons – Manasseh and Ephraim. Under Joshua's leadership twelve tribes received specified territories while the tribe of Levi was scattered among the other tribes to provide priestly direction and assistance with the obligations of the Mosaic Law.

Approximately two centuries before Isaiah's ministry, the tribes of Israel divided into two separate kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. During Isaiah's time, Israel (Northern Kingdom) formed an alliance with Syria to unite their forces against the threat of an Assyrian invasion. They wanted all countries in the region to join their alliance, but Judah refused to do so. Israel and Syria attacked Judah to compel her compliance.

To better understand this chapter it is important to understand the different names, titles and kingdoms because Isaiah interchanges their use.

<u>Kingdom or Country</u>	<u>Capital City</u>	<u>Territory or Tribe</u>	<u>Leader</u>
JUDAH	Jerusalem	Judah	Ahaz, of the house of David
ISRAEL	Samaria	Ephraim	Pekah, son of Remaliah
SYRIA	Damascus	Aram	Rezin

NOTES.

Verse 1 – Isaiah begins by introducing the key political figures in the chapter: Kings Ahaz, Rezin and Pekah. Isaiah never mentions King Pekah's name again, referring to him only as "the son of Remaliah", probably demonstrating Isaiah's disdain for Pekah's conduct and that he had taken the throne by force rather than rightful inheritance. Pekah had been an officer under Pekahiah, the son and successor of Menahem; but had revolted, put Pekahiah to death in his palace, and seized the crown. It is probable that he and Rezin were anxious to form a confederacy for the purpose of resisting the advance of the Assyrian power, and, distrusting Ahaz, desired to place on the throne of Judah a person on whom they could thoroughly depend (verse 6). It was not their design to conquer the Jewish kingdom, but only to change the ruling authority. Additionally, Pekah is listed after Rezin, king of Syria, perhaps an inference that Rezin is the real power in the alliance.

This Syrian-Israelite war is mentioned in both in Kings and Chronicles. In Kings the alliance between Rezin and Pekah is distinctly declared, as also the fact that they conjointly besieged Jerusalem¹. From Chronicles we learn that, before the siege, Ahaz was twice defeated with great loss, once by the Syrians² and once by the Israelites³. He was probably, therefore, reduced to great straits at the time when Isaiah received directions to seek an interview with him, and communicate to him a comforting message from Jehovah (verses 3-9).

Verse 2 – "It was told the house of David": before the actual siege began, news of the alliance reached Ahaz, because the design was to supersede the family of David by another — apparently a Syrian — house (verse 6). "Syria is confederate with Ephraim": under ordinary circumstances the kingdoms of Syria and Israel were hostile the one to the other⁴. But occasionally, under the pressure of a great danger, the relations were changed, and a temporary league was formed. The inscriptions of Shalmaneser II show such a league to have existed in the time of Benhadad II and Ahab⁵. With the invasion of Pul, and the threatening attitude of Tiglath-Pileser, it had now once more drawn the two countries together.

"His heart was moved" or *shook*. If the two kings had each been able separately to inflict on him such loss (see notes previous verse), what must he not expect, now that both were about to attack him together? It is not clear whether at this time Ahaz had as yet applied to Assyria for help or not (at some point he does).

NOTES:

¹ 2 Kings 16:5✓

² 2 Chronicles 28:5✓

³ 2 Chronicles 28:5-6✓

⁴ 1 Kings 15:20, 20:1-3, 22:3-36; 2 Kings 5:2, 6:8-24, 8:29, 10:32, 13:3,22,25

⁵ *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. 2 pp. 103-104

✓
 Verse 3 - The name Shear-Jashub means "a remnant shall return". The command to take him with him on the present occasion was probably given on account of his name, that the attention of Ahaz might be called to it. "The conduit of the upper pool is mentioned also in 2 Kings 18:17. It was probably a subterranean duct which brought water into the city from the high ground outside the Damascus gate. Ahaz may have visited it in order to see that it was made available for his own use, but not for the enemy's (compare 2 Chronicles 32:3, 4, 30; Isaiah 22:9, 11).

✓
 Verse 4 - "Take heed, and be quiet": be not disturbed; do not resort to strange and extreme measures. "The two tails of these smoking firebrands": Rezin and Pekah are called "two tails," or "two stumps of smoking firebrands," as persons who had been dangerous, but whose power of doing harm was on the verge of departing from them. They can no longer kindle a flame; they can only "smoke." Pekah seems to be called "Remaliah's son" in contempt (compare verses 5, 9), Remaliah having been a man of no distinction (2 Kings 15:25), and indicating that Pekah originates and rules from a temporal source and not a divine one.

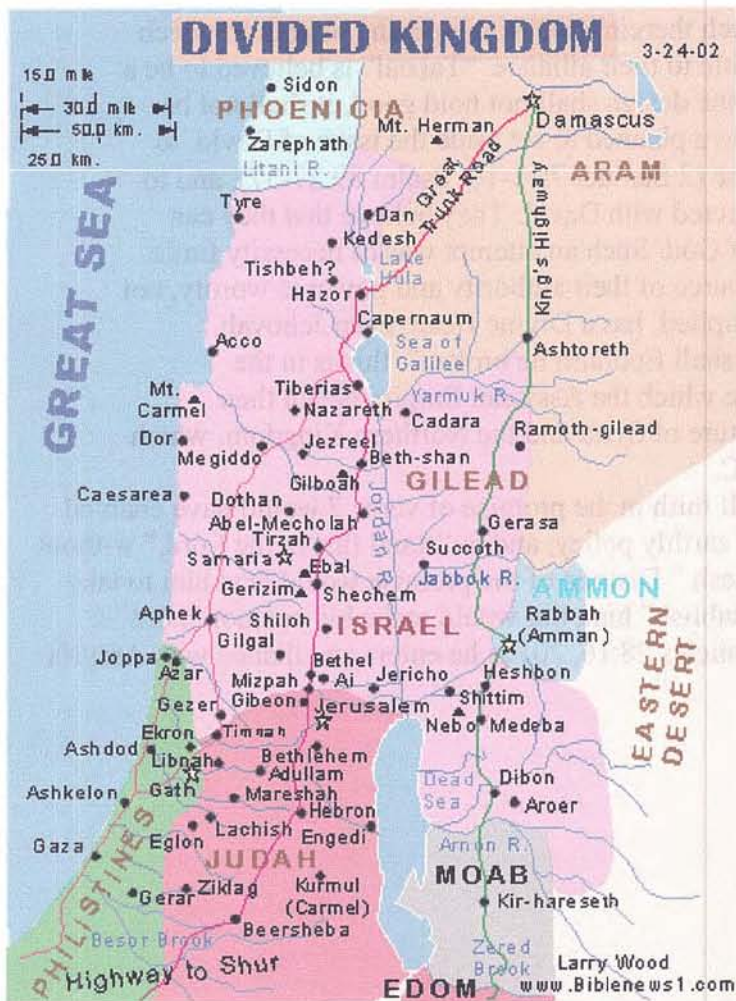
✓
 Verses 5-9 - "Make a breach therein": make an opening or path in which they could establish a king favorable to their alliance. "Tabeal" is believed to be a Syrian name. "It shall not stand": the design shall not hold good, it shall not be accomplished. Rezin and Pekah have planned to set aside the issue of David, to which God had promised his throne (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Psalm 89:27-37), and to create a new line of kings unconnected with David. They believe that they can frustrate the everlasting counsel of God. Such an attempt was of necessity futile.

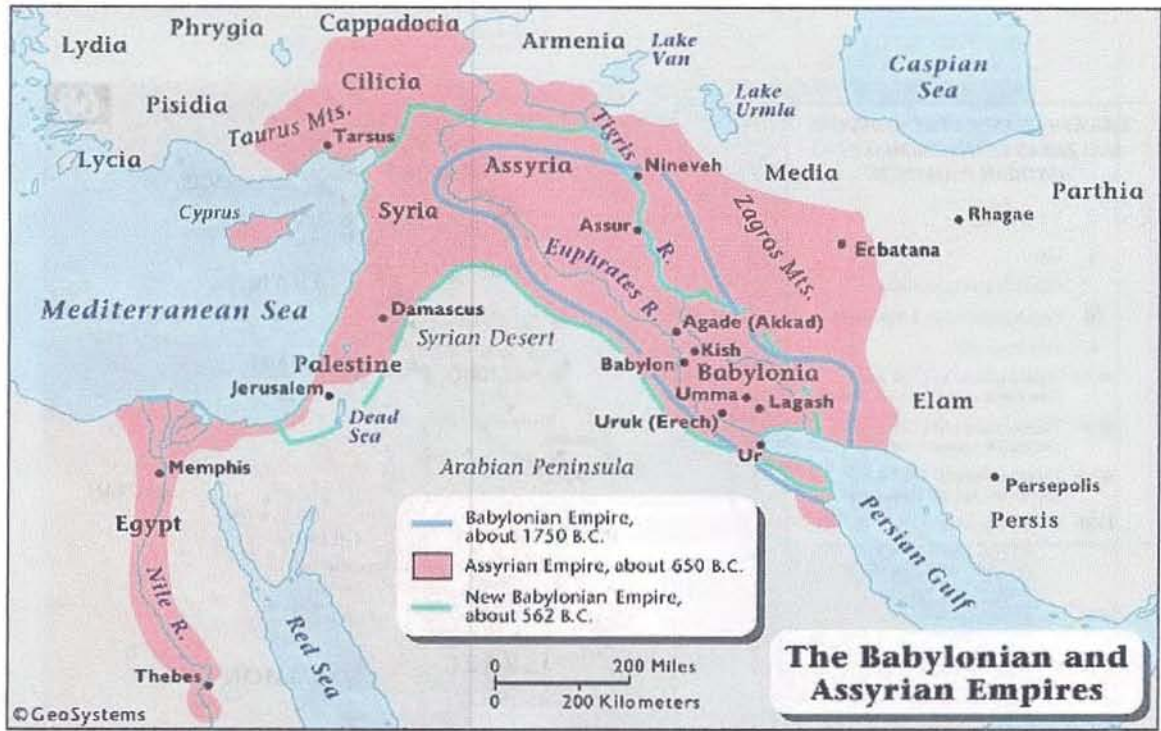
"For the head of..." the source of their authority and power is worldly, not of divine nature, but Judah, it is implied, has a Divine Head, even Jehovah. "Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken": this is in the appropriate time frame for the date which the Assyrian Empire began their expansion which included the capture of Syria and the Northern Kingdom, which occurred in approximately 669 B.C.

✓
 "If ye will not believe": full faith in the promise of verse 7 would have enabled Ahaz to dispense with all plans of earthly policy, and to "stand fast in the Lord," without calling in the aid of any "arm of flesh." Distrust of the promise would lead him to take steps which would not tend to "establish" him, but would make his position more insecure (2 Kings 16:7-18; 2 Chronicles 28:16, 20) as he enters an alliance with Assyria against Syria and Ephraim.

NOTES:

Middle East



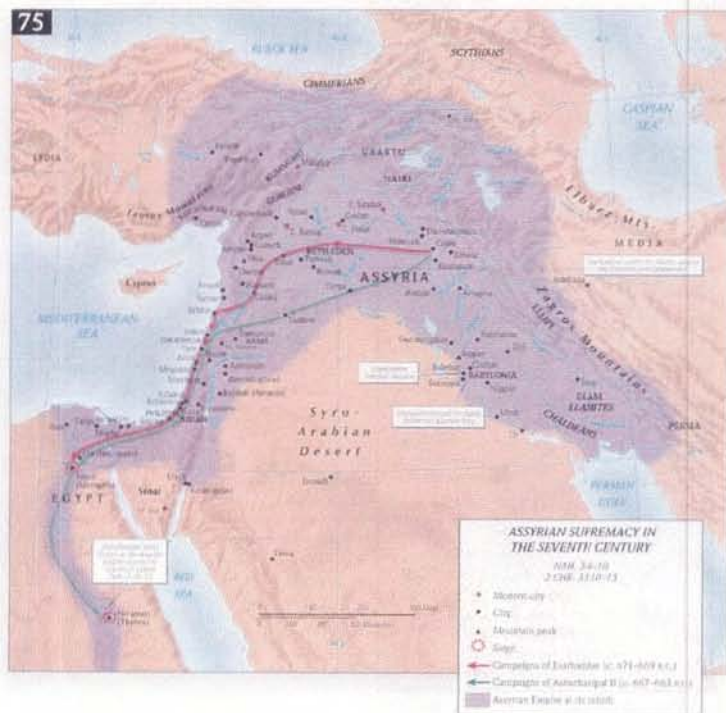
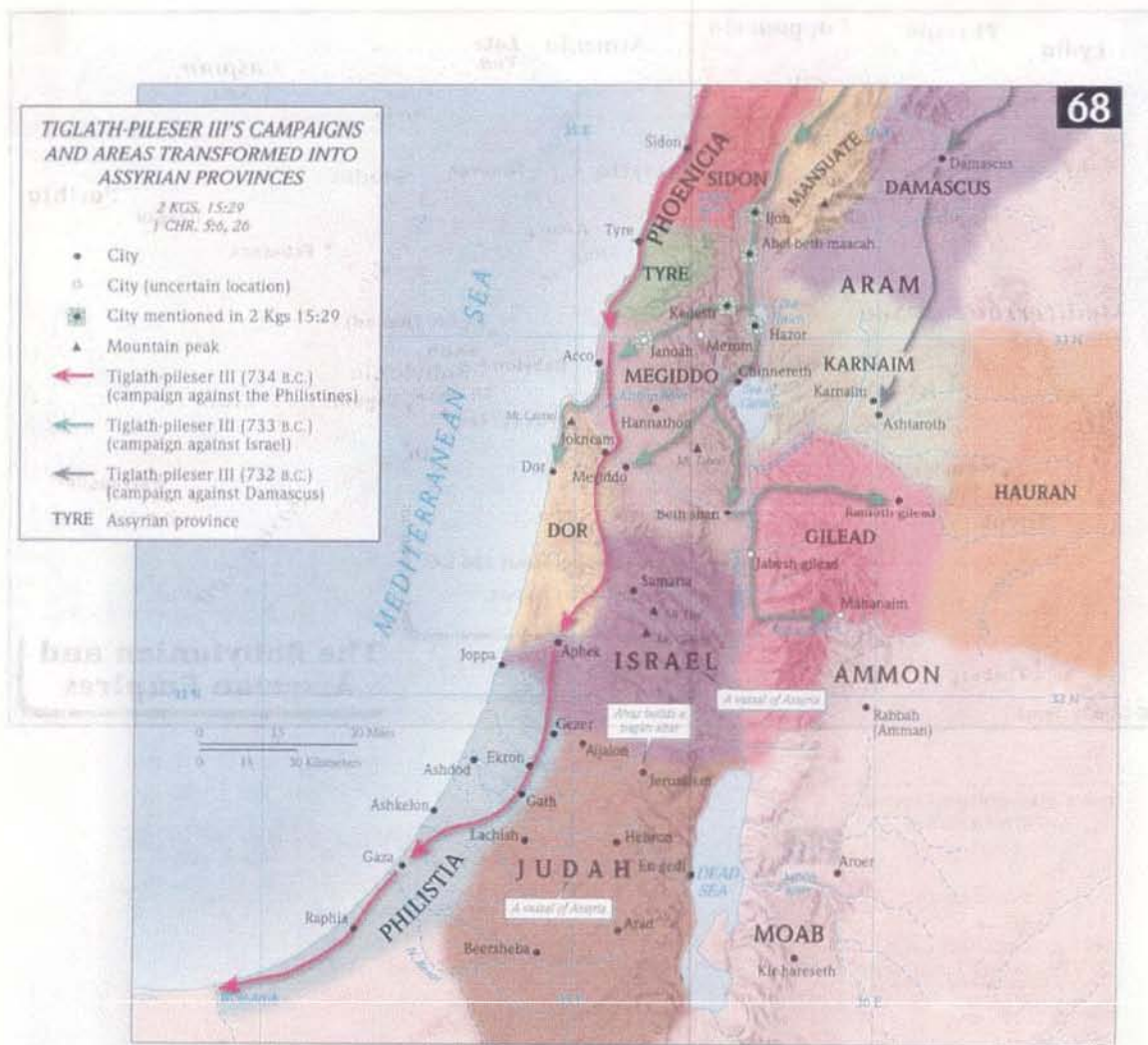


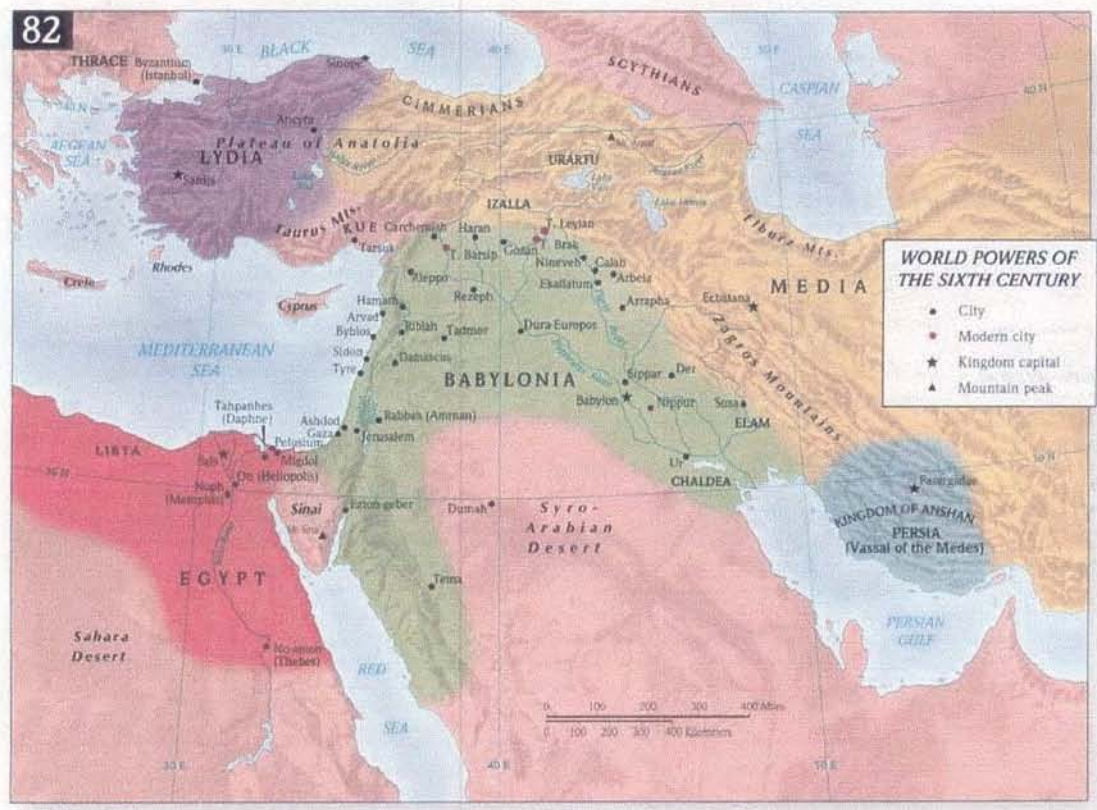
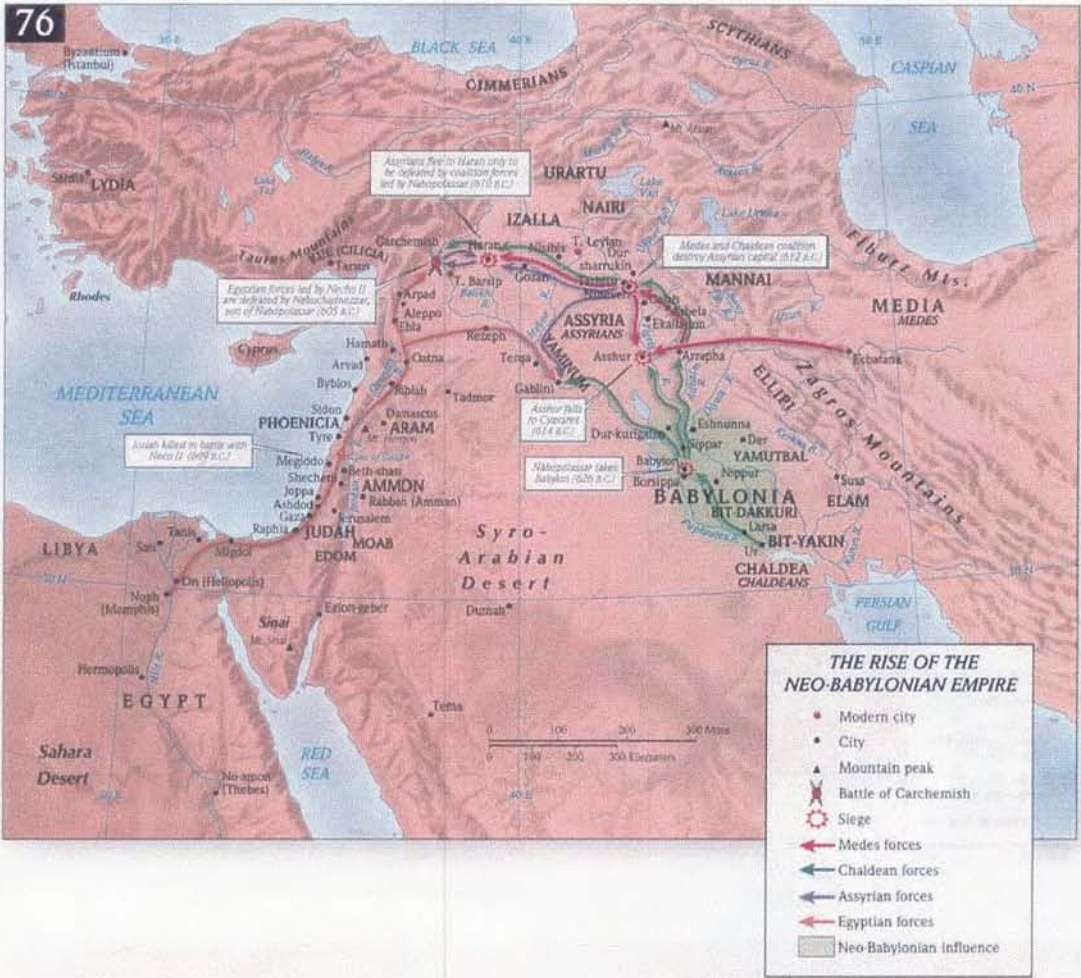
THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE UNDER TIGLATH-PILESER III
2 KGS. 15-17-20

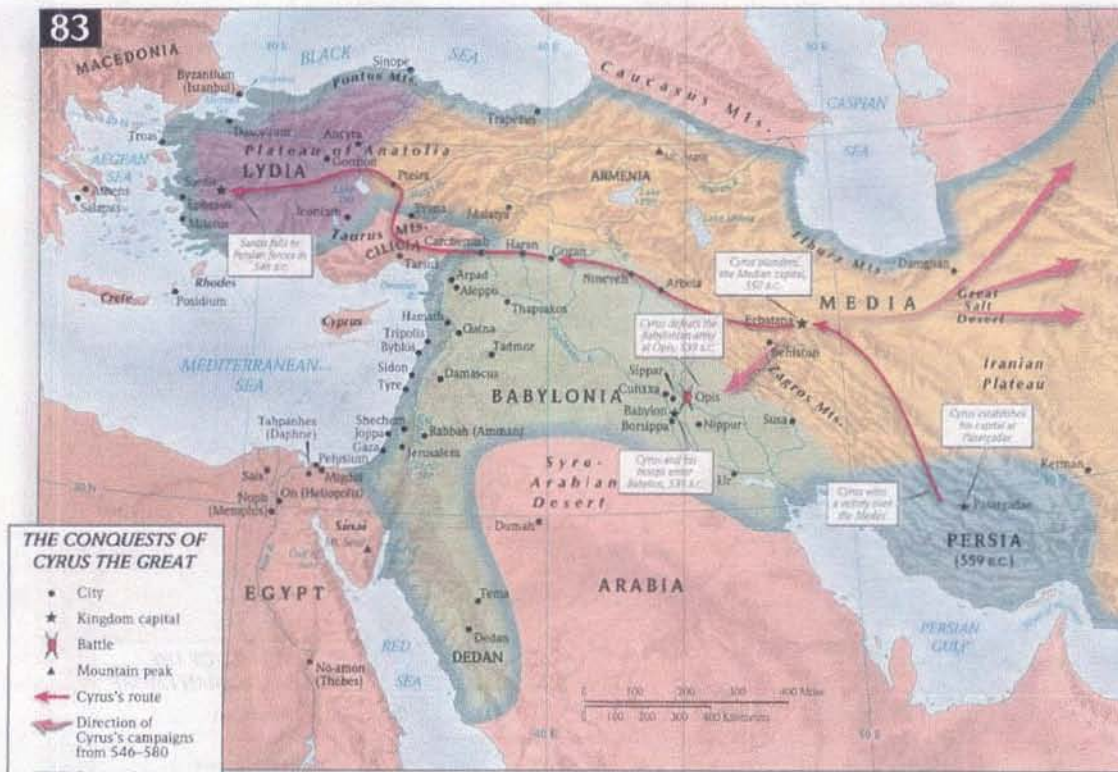
- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ← Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns
- Assyrian Empire at the beginning of Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns
- Assyrian Empire at the death of Tiglath-pileser III
- Israel
- Judah

66



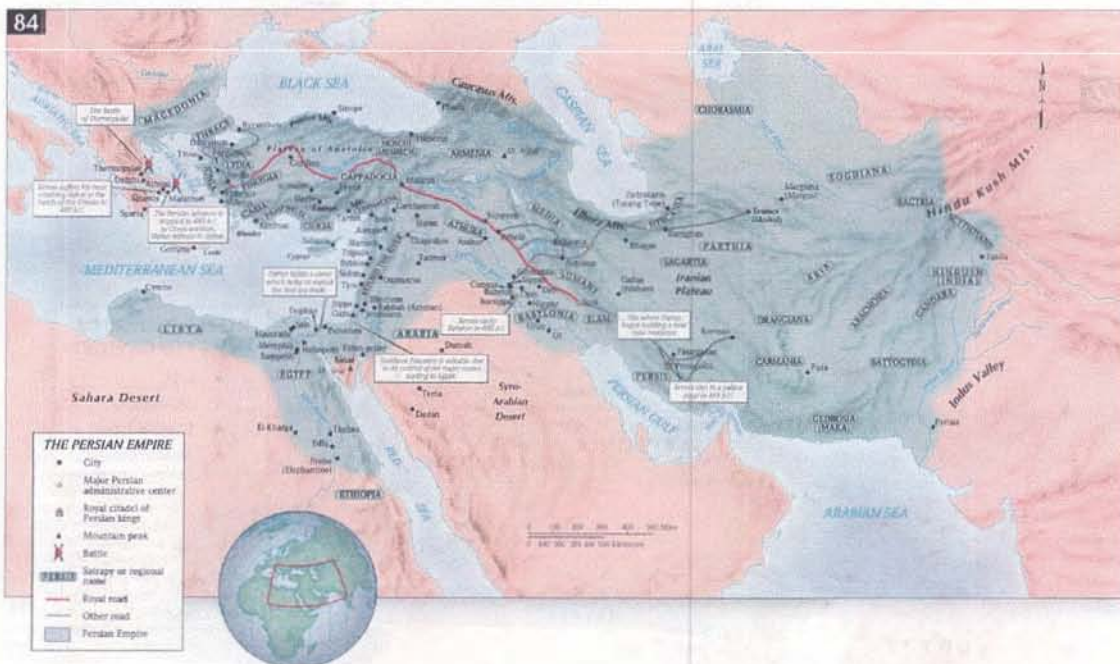






THE CONQUESTS OF CYRUS THE GREAT

- City
- ★ Kingdom capital
- ✕ Battle
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Cyrus's route
- Direction of Cyrus's campaigns from 546-560
- Border of areas conquered by Cyrus
- Kingdom of Anshan



THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

- City
- Major Persian administrative center
- ▲ Royal cities of Persian kings
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ✕ Battle
- Satrapy or regional ruler
- Royal road
- Other road
- Persian Empire

Verse 10 - God had sent Ahaz one message by his prophet (vers. 4-9). It had apparently been received in silence or without acknowledgment. The faith had seemed to be lacking which should have received with gladness the promise given (verses 7 & 9). God, however, will give the unhappy monarch another chance and gives him a second message. As with the previous message (verses 3-9), the word of the Lord will be delivered to Ahaz through Isaiah.

Verse 11 - "Ask thee a sign" - asking for a sign can be right or wrong, according to the spirit in which the request is made. The Pharisees in our Lord's time "asked for a sign," but would not have believed any the more had they received the sign for which they asked. Gideon asked for a sign to strengthen his faith¹ and received it, and in the strength of it went forth boldly against the Midianites. When God himself proposed to give a sign, and allowed his creature to choose what the sign should be, there could be no possible wrong-doing in a ready acceptance of the offer, which should have called forth gratitude and thanks. "Ask it either in the depth, or in the height above"; *i.e.* "Ask any sign that you wish whether it be in the earth or the skies (perhaps heaven?)" — nothing shall be refused to you. This is offered to strengthen Ahaz's faith in the first message that was delivered to him — "fear not the armies of Ephraim and Syria".

Verse 12 - Ahaz proudly rejects this offer. Ahaz has no wish for a sign, because he has no wish to believe in any other salvation than the realization of his own schemes. He finds a plausible reason for declining to ask for one in the passages of the Law which forbade men to "tempt God"². However even in the first incident, the tempting was a belief that God could not provide (in Exodus it was providing water) and so here the real "tempting" is in the belief that God could not provide for Judah. It certainly could not be "tempting God" to comply with a Divine invitation; rather it was tempting of Ahaz to refuse compliance.

Verse 13 - Notice the change: originally the message had gone to Ahaz, with that being rejected, the message is no longer to Ahaz, but to the house of David. "Is it a small thing for you to weary men?" *i.e.* is it not already a great undertaking that you weary men (including the prophet?) with disregarding all of the Lord's warnings, must you go further, and weary God (or, "wear out his patience") by rejecting his gracious offers?

Notice the additional change: in verse 11 the Lord was "thy God" (Ahaz's) and now with Ahaz's rejection, the Lord becomes "my God" (Isaiah's).

NOTES:

¹ Judges 6:36-40

² Exodus 17:7; Deuteronomy 6:16

✓ Verse 14 - Although Ahaz and Judah may refuse any sign from God, none-the-less, a sign will be given. By their refusal, they shall not see it, but the "house of David" (verse 13) i.e., at a future time their descendents shall receive the sign which was chosen by God and not by man. A clear prophesy of Christ and that He shall be a sign for the "house of David". "Immanuel": "God is with us".

✓ Verse 15 - There is great debate over the phrase "butter and honey shall eat". Many believe that it indicates that he would live on the most basic of life's offerings. Others believe that it indicates a great abundance of God's blessings attributing to the "land of milk and honey". It is my opinion (GAO) that it indicates that Christ would live a totally temporal life eating the same as any person and no longer fed on the divine food of his heavenly residence.

Again it is my opinion (GAO) "that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" further supports this previous thought. He would live a completely temporal existence in all respects up to and including death, so that in all things he could choose good or evil.

✓ Verse 16 - Before this child (Christ) is born the land that Ahaz "abhorrest"; i.e. fears or dreads will be "forsaken of both her kings", referring to Ephraim and Syria. The source of the destruction would be from Assyria. If our dates are accurate the destruction of Syria would come from quickly after Ahaz received this prophesy. Ahaz began his reign in 732 B.C. (page 2 of study) and history records that the Assyrians invaded Syria in 732 B.C. Approximately 10 years later the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Judah) *Ephraim* would begin. We can read of this event in 2 Kings 17:1-41.

✓ Verse 17 - The prophet now gives the judgment against Ahaz and the Southern Kingdom of Judah because they have refused the Lord. The perversity of Ahaz, already rebuked in verse 13, is further punished by a threat: that upon him and upon his people, and upon his father's house, shall come shortly a dire calamity. This will come after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim).

The very power whose aid he is himself bent on invoking (Assyria) shall be the scourge to chastise both king and people (verses 17-20). The land shall be made bare as by a razor (verse 20). Cultivation shall cease; its scant inhabitants will support themselves by keeping a few cows and sheep (verse 21), and will nourish themselves on dairy produce, and the honey that the wild bees produce (verse 22). Briers and thorns will come up everywhere; wild beasts will increase; cattle will browse on the hills that were once carefully cultivated to their summits (verses 23-25).

NOTES:

The transition from promises to threatenings is abrupt and is perhaps an indication of the how swiftly the destruction shall occur.

“From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah”; referring to the separation of the nation of Israel into two kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom under the tribe of Ephraim and the Southern Kingdom under the tribe of Judah. Although most scholars attribute this to a time stamp (when the division occurred), I (GAO) believe that it indicates more. The division did not happen because of men, but was directed by God. Because of Solomon’s pagan practices, through the prophet Ahijah, God told Jeroboam (of the tribe of Ephraim) that he would establish him as king over ten tribes (Northern Kingdom), while leaving a remnant with Solomon because of the promise to David¹. This was fulfilled at the death of Solomon, when a revolt split the Kingdom into two nations, the Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam (of Ephraim) and the Southern Kingdom under Rehoboam (Solomon’s son / of the tribe of Judah)².

It is worthy to note that Jeroboam had a great opportunity to correct the errors of Solomon. When he failed and drew the Northern Kingdom even farther from God, it would result in the Northern Kingdom’s destruction prior to the Southern Kingdom.

Here I (GAO) believe that the prophet Isaiah is warning Ahaz that he is king over a remnant of Israel, because of the prior misconduct of the kings of Israel. The consequences that God gave will continue until the destruction of the Southern Kingdom is complete. In other words: if you don’t believe, then remember that I have already brought a great destruction upon you and I can and will continue it until its completion if you don’t repent and if you do not depend upon me (the Lord), I will bring that destruction from the very thing that you believe can save you (Assyria).

Verse 18 – “Hiss” means a whistle or call (see page 31 of study) and indicated some sort of signal. This “hiss” shall go to the “fly” of Egypt and the “bee” of Assyria. The Southern Kingdom would receive attacks from Egypt to the south and from Assyria to the North, with their final destruction coming from the Assyrians. This is an accurate description as the Egyptian armies are recoded in history as depending on overcoming their enemies by sheer numbers as flies swarm with no real organization. This was in contrast to the very disciplined armies of the Assyrians much like a colony of bees that is very organized with each member having a specific function and they communicate with each other.

NOTES:

¹ 1 Kings 11:26-33

² 1 Kings 12:16-24

Verses 19-20 – A complete and total destruction shall come upon the Southern Kingdom. The Lord shall do this by one that is “hired”, in other words from outside of the family (Israel). The Lord had first tried to tend to the matter “in house” within Israel, having not yielded any results, the Lord will bring someone in from outside. From “beyond the river” (the Euphrates), the king of Assyria will come this destruction. The destruction is so complete and the land stripped that it is compared to a man not just stripped of his clothes, but all of his hair shaved off.

Verses 21-22 – During this time that Isaiah is prophesying, the nation is in a time of great prosperity, with lands being cultivated and great herds. After the destruction, a man will struggle to keep a cow and two sheep alive. Without competition for grazing, they shall do well, but their yield will be all that will sustain men, as there are no crops to harvest.

Verse 23 – Where there had been great vine (vineyards/crops) there will be only briars and thorns.

Verse 24 – No longer sustained by their great fields and herds, they will hunt for wild beasts.

Verse 25 – Hills that once had been “digged” (farmed), will only have briars and thorns so thick that man would fear to enter and only send his cattle in.

NOTES:

CHAPTER EIGHT

(2 Nephi 9:39-60)

Verse 1 - [✓]“Take thee a great roll”: there is debate as to whether “roll” is referring to a scroll (paper) or a tablet (metal or stone). Strong’s #1549 states that it is a tablet for writing and indicates bare or unused.

“Write in it with a man’s pen”: proponents of a scroll (paper) use the “pen” as indicating for use on paper, however Strong’s #2747 for pen says “to engrave; a chisel or graver; also a style for writing:-graving tool, pen”.

Whether we choose the literal interpretation of KJV English or original Hebrew text meaning, the important fact is that Isaiah is commanded to make written record. Isaiah is to write on this document concerning “Maher-shalal-hash-baz”, which means: make speed to the spoil, hasten to the prey. Although Isaiah will have a son by that name (verse 3) and there is certainly a relationship between this record and the circumstances of Isaiah’s son, this record is not about Isaiah’s son, but rather a warning.

King Ahaz has refused the warning from the prophet and now the warning will be recorded, either for all to see or for future generations or perhaps both. It is a warning of the destruction that is about to occur.

Verse 2 [✓] - Isaiah obtains two witnesses for the action, therefore validating it.¹ Uriah was most likely the High Priest as mentioned in 2 Kings 16:10-16. Although not righteous, he would most certainly be recognized as a credible witness. There are numerous individuals bearing the name Zechariah in scripture, many can be eliminated by the time in which they lived, however, this most likely refers to the father of Ahaz’s queen (wife) and would therefore be Ahaz’s father-in-law.² The record would most certainly received more attention with such eminent persons as witnesses.

Verse 3 [✓] - Isaiah’s wife conceives a child and Isaiah is instructed to name that child Maher-shalal-hash-baz. It is not clear whether “prophetess” indicates that his wife also had the gift of prophesy or if it simply indicates the wife of a prophet.

Verse 4 [✓] - Here the significance between Isaiah’s son’s name and the testimony is made clear. “Speed the spoil, hasten to the prey”: before the child can call his father or mother (one of the first things a child learns to say), Assyria will destroy Syria and the Northern Kingdom.

NOTES:

¹ Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 18:16

² 2 Kings 16:10-16; 2 Chronicles 29:1

18:2

Scripture does not record the fulfillment of this prophecy, which makes the same Assyrian king carry off the spoil of Samaria and the spoil of Damascus, fixing also the time of the carrying off as within a few years of the time when the prophecy was given. But the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser himself supply the deficiency. They state that this monarch "sent the population, the goods of the people of Beth-Omri, and their furniture to the land of Assyria," after which he "appointed Husih (Hoshea) to the dominion over them," and fixed their annual tribute at two talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver (see 'Records of the Past,' vol. 5. p. 52).¹

Verses 5-7 Isaiah receives additional from the Lord. There is debate as to whether these verses refer to Israel (Northern Kingdom) or Judah (Southern kingdom). It is my opinion (GAO) that verses 6-7 refer to the Northern Kingdom (those that rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son) with a correlation to the Southern Kingdom in verse 8.

"The 'pool of Siloah' (Nehemiah 3:15) was the tank or reservoir at the southwestern foot of Ophel, which is supplied with water by a narrow conduit cut through the limestone rock for a distance of 1750 feet from the 'Pool of the Virgin' on the opposite side of Ophel, in the Kedron valley. This pool itself is fed from reservoirs under the temple area, which have not yet been fully explored. It is probable that Isaiah uses the expression 'waters of Shiloah' in a general sense for the streams, springs, reservoirs, conduits, which supplied the temple, and were connected with its service. 'Refusing the waters of Shiloah' would then be, without any violent metaphor, refusing the temple service and worship, which was exactly what the Israelites had done from the time of Jeroboam. In contrast with the 'waters of the river, strong and many,' of the next verse. They who refused the mild and gentle government of Jehovah should experience the impetuous and torrent-like rush of the Assyrian armies."²

The "river" is most likely referring to the Euphrates and the Assyrian army is being compared to the Euphrates during a time of flood when the water spills over its banks and goes where it wills and there is nothing that can stop it.

✓ Verse 8 – "And he shall pass through Judah"; rather, *he shall pass on into Judah*. The *Assyrians* will not be content with invading Syria and Samaria; they will 'pass on into Judaea.' It is not clear whether this is to be done immediately by *Tiglath-Pileser*, or by one of his successors at a later date. There is reason to believe from Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions that he used the territory of Ahaz for the passage of his armies as those of a vassal king, but did not ravage them. 'He shall reach even to the neck.' The Assyrian attacks on Judaea shall stop short of destroying it. The flood shall not submerge the head, but only rise as high as the neck. This prophecy was fulfilled, since it was not Assyria, but Babylon, which destroyed the Jewish kingdom. 'The stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land'. The Assyrian armies shall visit every part of the land."³ (See maps pages 39-42 of study)

¹ "Records of the Past" vol. 5, pg. 52

² Exposition on Isaiah by G. Rawlinson

³ Exposition on Isaiah by G. Rawlinson

Verse eight closes with “thy land, O Immanuel”. Although nations and peoples may argue and war over the land, it has been, is and will continue to be God’s land to do with as He chooses. Although the destruction of the nation of Israel is prophesied, it is God’s land and here will Christ be born and here will God restore Israel as prophesied by Isaiah in chapter seven.

Verses 6 thru 8 are emblematic. They compare God’s application of authority with to that of the Assyrians using water as the example. God’s government is a calm refreshing pool of water, while the Assyrians are a destructive flood of water washing away everything in its path.

Verses 9-10 - A warning to all the nations of the earth (...ye people...ye of far countries). The Lord is allowing these destructions to come because of the disobedience of his people. Other nations may see the opportunity to completely destroy God’s chosen people and though they may join forces (associate) and build weapons of war (gird), efforts will fail. God has promised to preserve Israel and other nations that oppose Israel may prosper for a time as God allows, but God will not allow them to remain. (We will consider this in greater length in later chapters, when Isaiah prophesies about the nations that will war against Israel)

Verses 8-10 are synonymous (broken, nought, not stand) and introverted (Chiasmus):

- a – Immanuel (verse 8)
 - b – associate/give ear (verse 9)
 - c – gird/broken (verse 9)
 - c – gird/broken (verse 9)
 - b – counsel/speak word (verse 10)
- a – God is with us (verse 10)

Verse 11 – Here as with verses 1 and 5, Isaiah relates that which the Lord has told him. With a “strong hand” or in other words, with firmness or to grab hold of, the Lord has instructed Isaiah in no uncertain terms that he is not to follow the example that the people are presenting.

Isaiah was told not to “follow a multitude to evil” (Exodus 23:2). It was not merely idolatry against which he was warned, but the whole spirit and tone of the society of his day. He was not to entertain their suspicions, or to hope their hopes, or to fear their fears. He was to take a line of his own, to fear God and him only; then God would be “for a Sanctuary” to him.

NOTES:

✓ *more*
 Verse 12 – This instruction is not only for Isaiah. Although, few in number, Isaiah is not alone – “my disciples” (verse 16) and “the children whom the Lord hath given me” (verse 18). “A confederacy” or in other words: *treason or conspiracy*. The command is, not to call a course of conduct treasonable simply because the people generally so call it. Jeremiah was charged with treason for preaching the hopelessness of offering resistance to Nebuchadnezzar.¹ Those who opposed an Assyrian alliance were probably now accused of treason. Isaiah is being told: *Call ye not conspiracy everything which this people shall call conspiracy*. “Neither fear ye their fear”, they feared man (Isaiah 7:2). Isaiah and his disciples are commanded to fear no one but God.

Verses 13-15 - God was sanctified by being believed in.² They who feared Rezin and Pekah, despite of God’s assurances that their design should fail, did not believe in him, and so did not “sanctify” him.

A sanctuary is “a refuge” (Psalm 90:1; 91:9), and something more. It is a holy refuge, a place which is a refuge because of its holiness. Its material counterpart in the Mosaic system is, not “the city of refuge,” but the altar (1 Kings 1:50; 2:28). To Isaiah and his believers this would be true.

“Both the houses of Israel”; *i.e.* “the two reigning houses of Samaria and Judaea,” both of which were Israelite. Both the “houses” would ultimately forsake Jehovah, and find in him a “Snare” (gin) and a “Rock of offense.”

✓
 Verse 16 – Preserve and seal that which has been written and keep it among the believers.

✓
 Verses 17-18 – Like Joshua³, Isaiah makes the declaration of faith in the Lord for himself and his family. Both Isaiah and his children will be signs and wonders for Israel. Isaiah with his prophesies and the names of his sons (Isaiah 7:3 & Isaiah 8:3).

✓
 Verse 19 - In times of great distress the Israelites seem always to have been tempted to consult those among them who pretended to magic and divination. Saul in the Philistine war resorted to the witch of Endor⁴ and Manasseh, threatened by Esar-haddon, “used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards”.⁵ Israel generally, oppressed by Syria and Assyria, “used divination and enchantments”.⁶

NOTES:

¹ Jeremiah 20:1-2; 26:8-11

² Number 20:12

³ Joshua 24:15

⁴ Samuel 28:7-20

⁵ 2 Kings 21:6

⁶ 2 Kings 17:17

Verse 20 – If they will not turn to the law and the testimony, it is because there is no light in them. In the original text, it carries the meaning of “dawning”. In other words, these trials are a test to see to whom they will turn for their hope and salvation.

Verses 21-22 – These verses describe those that have “no light in them” from verse 20.

Verses 13-22 are antithetic/introverted (chiasmus) parallelism:

- a – Lord is stone/rock (verses 13-14)
- b – those that fall from faith (verse 15)
- c – testimony/law – believed (verse 16)
- d – faithful (verse 17)
- e – sign & wonders (verse 18)
- d – unfaithful (verse 19)
- c – law/testimony – not believed (verse 20)
- b – those that struggle from darkness (verse 21)
- a – driven to darkness (verse 22)

As with this style of writing, the theme is the center of the chiasmus. In this case there are signs and warnings given, nothing should be of a surprise. The antithetic comparison is to show the difference between those that heed the warnings and those that ignore or revolt against them.

NOTES:

CHAPTER NINE (2 Nephi 9:61-81)

In a study of Isaiah we must be careful not to allow the chapter divisions of the KJV translators to confuse us into thinking that there is a change of thought or topic. The opening of the ninth chapter is clearly a continuation of the previous chapter. In Hebrew texts of Isaiah, the first few verses of the KJV ninth chapter are the end the previous chapter and the Book of Mormon examples do not interject any change or division in the course of thought.

Chapter eight closed describing the darkness of the condition of the Israelites and chapter nine describes the great light (Christ) that will come to them. The first verse of chapter nine begins that transition, however it also creates some difficulties for the student of scripture.

First let us consider that there are three thoughts as to what these verses are referring to:

Historical Application – The darkness represents Assyria and her threat from the north to the people of Judah (after Assyria had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel); the light represents King Hezekiah who will protect his people from Assyrian imperialist expansion.

Religious Application – The darkness represents the wicked actions and consequential punishment of the northern tribes of Israel; the light represents the Israelites' recognition of earlier sins and their attempt at religious reforms after the Assyrian invasions, as directed by Hezekiah and Isaiah.

Messianic Application – The darkness represents wickedness and apostasy, especially during the pagan Roman times; the light represents Christ, who would bring peace and redemption from sin to earth.

There can be little doubt that the ninth chapter is a prophesy of the coming messiah, however there is truth in the other views as well. Considering the complex nature of the writings of Isaiah, the student should consider that all three applications are true and they should not be a source of conflict

NOTES:

Verse 1 ✓ Verse 1 offers some complications that are not easily answered:

Isaiah 9:1 ✓

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. (KJV)

2 Nephi 9:61 ✓

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict by the way of the Red Sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations. (Book of Mormon)

This prophesy is recorded as being fulfilled by Christ in Matthew 4:13-16: And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; (KJV)

One of the first problems is that most scholars believe that “grievously afflict” actually means “brought honor” or “brought glory” and refers to Christ. Strong’s indicates that which was translated in the KJV was actually one word #3513 and could mean either good or bad depending on the usage:

3513. db'K;

badÆka, *kaw-bad'*; or ✓
dbek;

dÆbeÆka, *kaw-bade'*; a prim. root; to be heavy, i.e. in a bad sense (*burdensome, severe, dull*) or in a good sense (*numerous, rich, honorable*); caus. to make weighty (in the same two senses):— abounding with, more grievously afflict, boast, be chargeable, × be dim, glorify, be (make) glorious (things), glory, (very) great, be grievous, harden, be (make) heavy, be heavier, lay heavily, (bring to, come to, do, get, be had in) honour (self), (be) honourable (man), lade, × more be laid, make self many, nobles, prevail, promote (to honour), be rich, be (go) sore, stop.¹

NOTES:

¹ James Strong, *New Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

This understanding is contradicted by the Book of Mormon which uses the same two words as Isaiah. Other translations of the Bible for this verse read like:

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. (NKJV)

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—(NIV)

But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of (ASV)

But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zeb'ulun and the land of Naph'tali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. (RSV)

But there'll be no darkness for those who were in trouble. Earlier he did bring the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali into disrepute, but the time is coming when he'll make that whole area glorious – the road along the Sea, the country past the Jordan, international Galilee. (The Message Bible)

Zebulun and Naphtali were in the northern portion of the nation of Israel and suffered some of the bloodiest battles when the Assyrian invasion began as they were the front line of the battle, with resources from Assyria coming in from the north and from Israel to the south.

“A part of the Northern Kingdom after the Israelites divided into two kingdoms, Naphtali was ravaged by the Syrian king Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20). The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III carried many from Naphtali into captivity (2 Kings 15:29).”¹

NOTES:

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

✓ After the Assyrian invasion, this region was the location of many great battles as the Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians and later the Medes and Persia fought for supremacy in the land. Any number of these would fulfill “more grievously afflict”.

“Later, when the Philistines, joined by the Syrians and Assyrians, made war on the kingdom of Israel, Hezekiah formed an alliance with the Egyptians, as a counterpoise to the Assyrians, and the possession of Philistia became henceforth the turning-point of the struggle between the two great empires of the East.”¹

The Philistines “suffered under Egyptian and Assyrian attacks in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. because of their exposed position on the great highways between Egypt and the Euhrates.”²

“When Nebuchadnezzar came to power in Babylon, the Philistines formed an alliance with Egypt,”³

✓ Egypt “... made an alliance with Hoshea, the last king of Israel. Tehrak or Tirhakah, the third of this house, advanced against Sennacherib in support of Hezekiah. After this a native dynasty—the twenty-sixth—of Saite kings again occupied the throne. Psametek I or Psammetichus I (b.c. 664), who may be regarded as the head of this dynasty, warred in Palestine, and took Ashdod (Azotus) after a siege of twenty-nine years. Neku or Necho, the son of Psammetichus, continued the war in the east, and marched along the coast of Palestine to attack the king of Assyria.”⁴

NOTES:

¹ William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet, *Smith's Bible dictionary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.

² Unger's Bible Dictionary

³ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

⁴ William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet, *Smith's Bible dictionary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.

The result is that the lands of the Philistines and northern kingdoms of Israel were ravaged by repeated warfare over the centuries that followed Isaiah's time.

“Territories in northern Israel around the Sea of Galilee, such as Capernaum, were known as the ‘lands of darkness’ because many wars had devastated the land. The territory was also literally dark because the local stone construction of the area was black basalt rock. Thus, the Galilean landscape, with its walls and buildings, actually has a constant dark shadow upon it. Symbolically, Galilee was considered a backward province with no great scholars or places of learning. Its inhabitants were not enlightened or advanced in their social or economic development. Christ’s presence in this land of darkness provided a light to its inhabitants...”¹

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. (John 1:46)

It evident that Isaiah is prophesying about the region that would suffer the greatest destruction would also see the greatest miracle – the birth and ministry of Christ.

However the Book of Mormon gives the location of this “affliction” or “honor” as the “Red Sea” as opposed to the “way of the sea” in both Isaiah and Matthew. There are those that attempt to reconcile this difference saying that Joseph Smith said “Dead Sea” and it was written as “Red Sea”. This is of course a speculation and in the Inspired Translation of the Bible it remained “Red Sea”:

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the Red sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. (Inspired Translation)

The confusion is furthered by the observation that to bring “glory” or “honor” would more appropriately fit the chiasmus of chapters 7-9 of Isaiah.

NOTES:

¹ Ludlow, Victor C., *Unlocking Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, pp. 145-146

Considerations for any decision about this verse:

1) Who is the "her" of verse 1? (Judah/Southern Kingdom, Israel/Northern Kingdom)

2) Are both "hers" in the verse the same thing?

3) Is the "way of the (Red) sea" referencing a location or a manner of travel (highway)?
Atlas p. 73 "Way to the Red Sea"

4) Is the "sea" of the KJV the same as the "Red Sea" of the Book of Mormon?

Yes

5) Direction that "beyond the Jordan" indicates?

*Make an insert
for Bible & BqM*

6) Who is the "Galilee of the nations"?

7) Does Matthew validate Isaiah or is it an insertion?

8) Does "grievously afflict" refer to another hardship or is it a mistranslation (consider 2 Nephi 9:61)?

grievously afflict - See 2 King 18:13-16

9) Does this indicate two times in history: "first he lightly afflicted" and "afterward did more grievously afflict"?

701 @ 701

722

Conclusion: It is most likely that verse 1 is referring to Israel as a whole. There would come an “affliction” upon the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali which most likely refers to the Assyrian invasion as this is there area of the greatest battles at the onset of the invasion. As terrible as this “affliction” would be, in comparison it would be “light” compared to the “grievous affliction” which would follow. This “grievous affliction” would not refer to a particular event, but rather the continual oppression of the area that would follow until the birth of Christ. This would include the numerous battles that occurred there as well as the death of Josiah, Israel’s last hope for a righteous king that occurred in the same area. Although at the time of the prophesy, the land was part of the Northern Kingdom, after the Assyrian invasion, it would be occupied by various peoples over the centuries and be the “Galilee of the nations” during the time of this “grievous affliction”.

Verse 2 – The people that suffer through this great affliction of darkness and death will be the same ones that will receive the great light (Christ). It would be this area in which Christ would begin His ministry and have his greatest success. Christ would receive His greatest resistance and His eventual crucifixion in the area of the Southern Kingdom.

There in the lands of the Northern Kingdom Christ had first come forward to teach in a synagogue (Luke 4:16-21); in Galilee he had done his first miracles (John 2:11; 4:54); at Capernaum. “Upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephtholim,” he commenced his preaching of repentance (Matthew 4:13-17). The “light” first streamed forth in this quarter, glorifying the region on which contempt had long been poured.

The verse is presented in Antithetic/Synonymous Parallelism.

Verse 3 – “Watts (p. 20) notes that the word not in verse 3 is a mistranslation that distorts the entire meaning of the verse. He notes that the Masoretic recommendation was to read “its” instead of “not.” In the original they are identical in sound and similar in form (Heb *loh*, not, and *loh*, its). Evidently some scribe mistakenly miscopied the manuscript, accidentally confusing the two words.”¹

This is supported by the Book of Mormon’s omission of the word “not” in 2 Nephi 9:63.

NOTES:

¹ Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1994.

Verses 4-5 - The coming of the Messiah sets the Israelites free, removes the yoke from off their neck, breaks the rod wherewith their shoulders were beaten, delivers them from bondage. Not, however, in an earthly sense, since the Messiah's kingdom was not of this world. The "yoke" is that of sin, the "oppressor" is that prince of darkness, who had brought all mankind under his dominion when Christ came. The "day of Midian" (omitted in the Book of Mormon text) is probably the time of Israel's deliverance from the Midianite oppression by Gideon (Judges 7:19-25). The special characteristic of the deliverance was that it was accomplished without military prowess by a small body of men selected out of Israel, selected expressly in order that Israel might not vaunt itself against the Lord, saying, my own hand hath saved me (Judges 7:2).

Verses 6-7 - A prophesy of Christ presented in Climatic Parallelism. His numerous qualities are listed preceding the following verse in which the results from these qualities are given.

Verses 8-9 - "Israel" can mean either the whole house of Israel and the nation or it can indicate the Northern Kingdom. In verse 8, the reference to Jacob and Israel would seem to indicate that the whole nation of Israel is implied. The whole nation has received the word of the Lord. That being said, verse 9 then seems to make particular attention to the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim). It goes farther to anyone that will be in the lands promised to the tribes of the Northern Kingdom (inhabitants of Samaria). This is in harmony with our understanding of verse 9 of the grievous affliction in the Galilee of the nations.

Verses 10-12 - In their pride they believe that they can rebuild even better, that which the Lord has caused to be destroyed. The "adversaries of Rezin" refer to Assyria. Rezin was the king of Syria. In the Assyrian invasion, Syria was invaded first "before" and then after the Northern Kingdom, they continued into the land of the Philistines to the south "behind".

The Lord hand is outstretched has two meanings. He is always ready to receive the repentant, but is also ready to strike down the rebellious.

NOTES:

Verse 13 - The “people” is referring to the people of Israel (Northern Kingdom – ref. verses 9 & 11), as distinct from the people of Judah. The particular judgment announced in verses 11 & 12 is clearly to fall on them. Israel had set itself to seek after Baal from the time of Ahab (1 Kings 16:31). The “reform” of Jehu (2 Kings 10:28) was superficial. Baal was still “sought to,” rather than Jehovah, when the final judgment came (2 Kings 17:16; Hosea 2:13).

God would arm the neighboring powers against them, verses 11 & 12. At this time the kingdom of Israel was in league with that of Syria against Judah; but the Assyrians, who were adversaries to the Syrians, when they had conquered them should invade Israel, and God would stir them up to do it, and join the enemies of Israel together in alliance against them, who yet had particular ends of their own to serve and were not aware of God’s hand in their alliance.

Note: When enemies are set up, and joined in confederacy against a people, God’s hand must be acknowledged in it. Note further: Those that partake with each other in sin, as Syria and Israel in invading Judah, must expect to share in the punishment of sin. The Syrians themselves, whom they were now in league with, should be a scourge to them (for it is no unusual thing for those to fall out that have been united in sin), one attacking them in the front and the other flanking them or falling upon their rear; so that they should be surrounded with enemies on all sides, who should *devour them with open mouth*, verse 12. The Philistines were not now looked upon as formidable enemies, and the Syrians were looked upon as firm friends; and yet these shall devour Israel. When men’s ways displease the Lord he makes even their friends to be at war with them.

Verses 14-15 – This is referring to the whole nation, from the highest to the lowest. The “branch” refers to a tree branch and most belief specifically a “palm branch,” at once lofty in position and the most glorious form of plant life (Psalm 92:12); the “rush” is the simple “sedge” that grows (most likely a bulrush), not only low on the ground, but in the “mire” (Job 8:11). The same expression occurs again in Isaiah 19:15.

The Book of Mormon omits “honorable” (2 Nephi 9:75). The “ancients” is referring to the elders or mature of the population that have taken positions of leadership and they are the heads of the nation and leading them. In contrast, the prophets, who should be the spiritual leaders, have corrupted their calling and become the “tail” or that which follows the body.¹

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 28:7; 29:10; 30:10

Verse 16 – The responsibilities of leaders for the condition of the people is consistent. Compare with the warning to the leaders of Judah (Southern Kingdom) in Isaiah 3:1-15. Both the peoples were led into idolatry by their rulers, but Israel especially. Jeroboam, the first king, introduced the calf-worship, and his successors from first to last persisted in his sin. Ahab added the still appalling idolatry of Baal. Those who held high position under the kings were equally bad examples to the people (Isaiah 1:2-4) and are destroyed. First, morally corrupted and debased, then physically given over to destruction — slaughtered by Philistines, Syrians, and Assyrians.

Verse 17 – The desolation should be as general as the corruption had been, and none should escape it. They had corrupted their way like all the rest; and, if the poverty and helplessness of their state was not an argument with them to keep them from sin, they could not expect it should be an argument with God to protect them from judgments.

“The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy” (Psalm 147:11). He can have no joy or delight in evil-doers, or idolaters, or in those whose speech is profanity. The widow and the orphan are objects of God’s tenderest love and compassion (Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; Isaiah 1:17, etc.); but when the wickedness of a land provokes him to send any one of his “judgments” upon it, the widow and the fatherless must suffer with the other inhabitants. God pities them, doubtless, but his justice and his righteous anger force him to restrain his pity, and carry out his judgment in spite of it.

Verses 18-21 – It is the wickedness of the people that is the cause of the destruction and they are therefore the “fuel” for this “fire” that shall sweep through the land. As long as the wicked (the “fuel”) remains, the destruction (the “fire”) will continue. Notice the antithetic/synonymous style of writing as the chapter started (reference notes on verse 2). At both the beginning and the conclusion of the chapter he is describing this destruction (synonymous), but using the contrasting methods (antithetic) of first water and then fire.

“No man shall spare his brother.” Here is a new feature. Not only shall foreign enemies besiege Israel, but the plague of civil war will also be let loose upon them (2 Kings 15:30, where we find that Pekah fell a victim to a conspiracy headed by Hoshea).

Manasseh and Ephraim are the two principal tribes of the northern kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:3; 2 Chronicles 30:1, 10, 18; 31:1; 34:9), although the civil unrest was not confined to them. All the tribes would at any time willingly unite “together against Judah” (2 Kings 15:37; 2 Chronicles 28:6-8). This division would continue until God recover Israel (Isaiah 7:6; 11:11-13).

NOTES:

CHAPTER TEN (2 Nephi 9:82-115)

Verses 1-4 – These verses are a continuation of the prophesy started in Isaiah 9:8 regarding the conditions of the people and the consequences of their conduct.

“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees” (compare with Isaiah 1:17, 20, 26; 5:23, etc.). The perversion of judgment from those in positions of leadership is rebuked.

“And that write grievousness” most likely refers to legal documents. Although illegal, immoral and unrighteous, they have every appearance of formality and correctness.

“The poor... the widow... the fatherless”, these were the classes who were the chief sufferers by the perversion of justice (compare with Isaiah 1:17, 23). They were exactly the classes for whom God had most compassion, and whom he had commended in the Law to the tender care of his people (see notes on Isaiah 9:17, page 61 of study).

“The day of visitation” is the day when God reckons with his servants, and demands an account from each of the work done in his vineyard, being prepared to recompense the good and punish the bad (compare Hosea 9:7). It is sadly most often used in a bad sense because, unhappily, so many more are found to deserve punishment than reward. The desolation from afar (Assyria) which shall be sudden and complete, shall cause them to seek assistance. Sarcastically the prophet inquires as to who they seek to protect them from the wrath of God.

Without God they have no choice but to become prisoners or die. Israel shall cease to be a nation. Throughout the prophesy (9:8–10:4) God repeats that His hand is outstretched to them (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). It is outstretched to receive the repentant and to crush the rebellious.

Verses 5-19 - ASSYRIA, AFTER BEING GOD’S INSTRUMENT TO PUNISH ISRAEL, SHALL HERSELF BE PUNISHED IN HER TURN.

The wicked are a sword in the hand of God,¹ with which he executes his judgments; but this fact is hid from them, and they imagine that they are successful through their own strength and might. So it was with Assyria (verses 5-14), which its long career of victory became proud and arrogant above measure. God now, by the mouth of Isaiah, makes known his intention of bringing down the pride of Assyria, and laying her glory in the dust, by a sudden and great destruction (verses 15-19), after that nation has served his purposes.

NOTES:

¹ Psalm 17:13

Verse 5 – The transition here is abrupt, although not unrelated to the previous verses. Perhaps the sudden shift is indication of the suddenness with which the Assyrian invasion would come. Perhaps the previous verses (1-4) belong with the previous chapter and verse 5 should really be the beginning of chapter ten. In either case, it immediately follows the admonishment of Israel that they would either be prisoners or dead and now examines the source of that judgment.

“O Assyrian” – the nation of Assyria is in the next verses personified as a person. Assyria will be the “rod” of God’s anger against Israel. Compare this with God’s description of Babylon later in history: “Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy the kingdoms” (Jeremiah 51:20). So Assyria was now the “rod” wherewith God chastised his enemies.

A “staff” would usually be personalized in some fashion to identify the owner and in the case of a person of authority would indicate his position. In this case the authority or “staff” of Assyria would be indignation. 2 Nephi 9:86 says “their indignation” rather than “mine indignation”.

Verse 6 – Israel is here describes as a “hypocritical nation” that Assyria will be brought against. “I give him a charge” - in 2 Kings 18:25, Sennacherib (King of Assyria) says, “Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it” (compare with Isaiah 36:10). It is commonly believed that Sennacherib did not speak of the Lord (Jehovah), but rather referred to one of his own gods and was crediting that deity, however if God instructed Nebuchadnezzar (Book of Daniel) through dreams, could he not also by the same means have “given charges” to Assyrian monarchs?

“To take the spoil, and to take the prey” – the fulfillment of the prophetic name of Isaiah’s son, Mahershalalhashbaz (8:1-4).

Verse 7 - “Assyria” - is not aware that they are merely God’s instrument in carrying out his will. On the contrary, it is in their heart to destroy the nations for their own advantage, and they imagine that they are doing it by their own strength.

NOTES:

Verse 8 – “One mark of the superiority of Assyria to other countries was to be seen in the fact that her king had not mere officers, but vassal kings under him, hence the title ‘king of kings’ assumed by so many Assyrian monarchs. While conquered territories were by degrees and to a certain extent absorbed into the empire and placed under prefects (see the ‘Eponym Canon’), an outer zone of more loosely organized dependencies was always maintained by the Assyrians; and these dependencies continued ordinarily to be administered by their native monarchs (see ‘Ancient Monarchies,’ vol. 2. pp. 524-526). These are the ‘princes’ who were ‘altogether kings.’”¹

Verse 9 – In short this is a comparison between cities that have been destroyed in the past with a prophetic statement of current (in Isaiah’s time) cities that would be “as” the destroyed ones. The last comparison is prophetic relying on the previous examples. At the time of Isaiah’s writing, Damascus (Assyria) had not yet been destroyed by Assyria, but it would be first and then Samaria (Northern Kingdom) would become “as” Damascus.

Verses 10-11 – Isaiah 9:9 began a prophesy primarily focused on the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim. Now this is clearly aimed at both kingdoms (Samaria and Jerusalem). They have both become full of idols.²

Verse 12-15 – Now the prophesy turns to Assyria. They have been an instrument to accomplish God’s judgment, however, they shall be proud and think of themselves as accomplishing it, an attitude that God will not permit to continue. As verse 15 points out: the tool cannot think it has accomplished anything – that right belongs to the craftsman.

Verse 16 – The Lord shall remove their prosperity, just as he did with Israel. Their punishment will be much like that of Israel in verses 18-20. The land shall be “grievously afflicted” (9:1) until the “light” (9:2) arrives.

“There are traces, in the later history of Assyria, both of increasing internal weakness through luxury and effeminacy, and of violent external attacks culminating in the combined Median and Babylonian invasion, before which her power collapsed...”³

NOTES:

¹ Exposition on Isaiah by George Rawlinson

² Isaiah 2:8

³ Exposition on Isaiah by George Rawlinson

✓ These verses are in a chiasmic form, although not easily identified or categorized. It is a chiasmic expression of concepts rather than specific words. It is antithetic or perhaps more accurately a chiasmic representation of type/antitype.

The focal of the chiasm is that although Israel will be destroyed, they will be restored.

- a) Boastings of the King of Assyria's "might" (vv 13-14)
 - b) A mortal king's rod and staff (v 15)
 - c) Cleansing of wicked from the land (vv 16-18)
 - d) Only a few wicked remain (v 19)
 - e) A remnant of Israel will rely upon the Lord (v 20)
 - (e) *Now refers to the latter day* A remnant will return to their land (v 21)
 - d) Israel will become numerous (v 22)
 - c) A cleansing of the earth (vv 22-23)
 - b) A divine king's rod and staff (v 24)
 - a) Demonstrations of the Divine King's "might" (vv 25-27)

NOTES:

Verse 17 – “The light of Israel” – Isaiah draws on the image he began in the previous chapter, where in a prophesy of Christ, He was referred to as “a great light” than came unto a people in “darkness”.¹ This concept continues into the New Testament, where Christ is referred to as the “light” in many verses.²

As the same material fire which gives light, warmth, and comfort may burn and destroy, so the spiritual light, finding fit material, scorches and consumes. The fire which devours Assyria is to be kindled by God. The destruction of Assyria shall resemble that of Israel, in which Assyria was the instrument (Isaiah 9:18). It shall be as complete, as terrible, and as final. The destruction shall come suddenly and completely.

Verses 18-19 – The destruction shall be so complete, that that which remains will be so small in number that a child could count them.

The concept is not unique to Israel/Judah. The destruction because of disobedience was warned to the Nephites (from the Lamanites) early in their history.³ The same warning comes to the Gentile possessors of the Americas.⁴

Verse 20 - The destruction of Assyria shall be followed — how soon, is not said — by the return of a “remnant of Israel,” not so much to their own land, as to God (verses 20, 21). The remnant, however, shall *be but* a remnant — judgment shall have overtaken the greater portion of the people (verses 22, 23). Still, there is reason for the faithful to take courage and be of good heart; Assyria will shortly receive a check (verses 24-27) — when her armies swoop upon Jerusalem, God will swoop down on her (verses 28-34).

Isaiah had indicated his firm belief in the existence of this faithful remnant and its return, in the name which he had given to his son, Shear-Jashub.⁵ We are told in the Second Book of Chronicles 28:23 that Abaz “sacrificed to the gods of Damascus *which smote him*” — and we know that he also trusted to Tiglath-Pileser, who “distressed him and strengthened him not” (2 Chronicles 28:21). Among the “remnant” there shall be no such mistaken confidences. “But shall stay upon the Lord;” *i.e.* shall put their trust in God; and Him only (compare with 2 Samuel 22:19; Psalm 18:18).

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 9:1-7 ✓

² John 1:6-9 ✓

³ 2 Nephi 4:39-41 ✓

⁴ Ether 1:29-35; 3 Nephi 9:51-52, 98-99 ✓

⁵ Isaiah 7:3 ✓

Verses 21-23 - The promise had been made to Abraham that his seed should be "like the sand of the sea for multitude".¹ This promise had been fulfilled (1 Kings 4:20); but now the sins of the people would produce a reversal of it. It would be a remnant, *and only a remnant*, of the nation that would escape. Judah would have to make a fresh start as from a new beginning.

Verses 24-25 - God now addresses those who are faithful to Him among the people; *they* have no need to fear — He will bring them safely through all the coming troubles. These verses sound very similar to the promises to the faithful in the last days. As the Egyptians did in the oppression that preceded the Exodus, the yoke of Assyria was heavy even upon the nations that conquered by her. There shall come an end to God's wrath, with Israel having been sufficiently punished and then the Lord's wrath shall be upon the Assyrians. Again we have another type for events in the last days. We will discuss this in following verses.

Verse 26 - The "slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb" (compare with Isaiah 9:4) was that great destruction of the Midianites which was begun by the three hundred under Gideon, and completed by the men of Ephraim.² "As his rod was upon the sea", an allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.³ Its counterpart in Assyrian history would seem to be the destruction of Sennacherib's army, as related in 2 Kings 19:32-36. (We will discuss this in more depth with verses 32-34)

Verse 27 - This refers to Hezekiah as the "anointed one"⁴ and by his righteous conduct, the Holy City is spared by the Lord's hand. Again we will discuss this more with verses 32-34. This is a type for the "anointed one", i.e., Christ who will spare the holy city in the last days.

Verse 28 - "Aiath" is probably Ai (Joshua 8:1-28), with a feminine termination. It lay about three miles south of Bethel, which had become Assyrian with the conquest of Samaria. If an Assyrian army mustered at Bethel, it would naturally enter Judean territory at Ai. "Migron" is mentioned as a village in the territory of Gibeah of Benjamin (1 Samuel 14:2). "Michmash" was about seven miles nearly due north of Jerusalem. The heavy baggage might conveniently be left there, especially as it was difficult to attack (1 Samuel 14:4-13), while a lightly equipped body of troops made a dash at Jerusalem.

NOTES:

¹ Genesis 22:17

² Judges 7:19-25

³ Exodus 4:2-4, 16-27

⁴ 2 Samuel 19:21; 2 Kings 11:12; Lamentations 4:20

✓ Verse 29 – The “passage” most likely refers to the “passage of Michmash”.¹ It is a deeply sunken valley between Michmash (*Mukkmas*) and Geba (*Jeba*). At Geba they rest for the night. Ramah is believed to be a village about six miles north of Jerusalem. Gibeah of Saul is thought to be two miles nearer Jerusalem. The inhabitants evacuate during the night.

✓ Verse 30 – 2 Nephi 9:111 reads lift up “the” voice rather than “thy” voice. The exact location of Gallim and Laish is not known, but they are believed to be between Geba and Jerusalem. Anathoth is mentioned in Joshua as a city of refuge in the territory of Benjamin². It was Jeremiah’s birthplace³.

✓ Verse 31 – Madmenah and Gebim, like Gallim and Laisha, are villages otherwise unknown. They are believed to have been within a mile or two of Jerusalem, towards the north. Their inhabitants flee as the Assyrians approach.

✓ Verse 32 - The Assyrians camp at Nob, the priestly city destroyed by Saul⁴. It is believed to be within sight of Jerusalem.

✓ Verse 33-34 – The Assyrians are about to enter the city of Jerusalem, when the Lord sets His hand to stop them⁵.

“In 701 b.c., Sennacherib, king of Assyria (705–681 b.c.), planned an attack on Jerusalem. However, the Assyrian army was struck by a plague, which the Bible referred to as “the angel of the Lord” (2 Kin. 19:35). Sennacherib was forced to retreat from his invasion when 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died.”⁶

NOTES:

¹ 1 Samuel 13:23

² Joshua 21:18

³ Jeremiah 1:1

⁴ 1 Samuel 22:19

⁵ 2 Kings 19:32-36,

⁶ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

CHAPTER ELEVEN (2 Nephi 9:116-131)

With this chapter we find that the preceding chapters have been a foundation for that which will follow. Now the prophet looks to the more distant future and describes the Messiah not in His first advent, but in His return and His millennial reign. The chapter opens with a synonymous parallel and is the antithetic parallel of the previous chapter. Here Isaiah uses emblematic, synthetic and composite parallelism to develop the climactic parallel theme of Christ's millennial reign and the completion of the anti-type for which the previous chapters have been the type.

Until this point, what we have read, although prophetic at the time given, it has been past history to us. Now we have a prophesy which we await to be fulfilled. History has been a witness to the accuracy of Isaiah's prophesies and with that we can be assured that this will also come to pass. In his second vision on September 21, 1823, Joseph Smith Jr. recorded that the messenger quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah and said that "...it was about to be fulfilled."¹

Verse 1 – Jesse was the father of David² and the lineage from which Christ would come.³ Much of the meaning and poetry of this one verse is lost without understanding the original text and knowing the previous chapters. Let us consider:

Rod – Strong's #2415: a twig

Stem – Strong's #1503: the stump of a tree that has been felled

Branch – Strong's #5342: it is from the root word #5341 meaning to protect, guard or maintain, #5342 means greenness of a striking (vivid) color, descendant or branch

Roots – Strong's #8328: a root from the very bottom, deep or heel

This verse is emblematic, comparing the lineage of Christ with that of a branch of a tree that comes from the same root. It is also synonymous in that it repeats a concept, however it is also composite in that the second half is amplified from the first, synthetic in that it draws the attention to the conclusion and that conclusion is the climactic answer for all the previous chapters. In fact what follows in chapters 11 and 12 are merely the description amplified of the statement: "a Branch shall grow out of his roots". It is also antithetic to the previous chapter.

NOTES:

¹ An Outline History of the Church of Christ, pg. 22

² Matthew 1:6

³ Matthew 1:6-16

This verse is the antithetic/climactic answer to the previous chapter. In the previous chapter, the complete destruction of Assyria is described. Assyria was described as a great forest that would be destroyed, never to return. The antithetic comparison is started with the destruction of Israel having already been established and then the promise of its restoration. The promise of that restoration reaches the climactic fulfillment with the Second Advent of Christ and His Millennial Reign.

The “branch” of Isaiah 4:2 is different than the “Branch” here. In Isaiah 4:2 the word “branch” is Strong’s #6780 meaning to sprout, bud or spring, meaning something new, while the “Branch” here comes from something old and destroyed (seemingly).

We must also recognize the typology and parallels. Israel – seemingly destroyed, but restored. Christian church – apostate, but restored. Christ – seemingly destroyed, but shall return.

Consider: “And there shall come forth a rod (*twig*) out of the stem (*stump*) of Jesse” – this would refer to the first advent of Christ from the destroyed (stump) nation of Israel.

“and a Branch (protected and vivid) shall grow out of his roots (from the very depths)” – the “twig” would be protected and become a brilliant branch growing from the very depths of the root (Israel, Christian church and Christ)

In chapter six, Israel was compared to a tree that although chopped down, would spring forth again.¹ Chapters 7 thru 9 described Christ’s birth and ministry. Now we look ahead to His triumphant return, a prophesy that we wait upon to be fulfilled.

Although there are those in the Restoration that believe this is referring to a servant prior to Christ’s return, it in my belief (GAO) that this is referring Christ and with that would include the restored church and Israel. For those that would believe it to mean another, it would most likely have already been fulfilled.²

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 6:13, page 34 of study

² Study *Choice Seer* by Elder Gordon McCann

Verse 2 – The human nature of our Lord required, and received abundantly, the sanctifying and enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. These influences were not in him transient or occasional, as in too many men, but permanent and enduring. (Matthew 3:16; Luke 2:40; 4:1, 14, 18, 22:42; John 3:34, 4:34;).

They were upon him from the beginning and continue without end. They are complete in the Lord, unlike men that may possess one of the “gifts of the spirit”.¹ All these qualities existed in the greatest perfection in our blessed Lord.

Verse 3 - Our Lord “knew men’s thoughts” (Matthew 9:4, etc.), and therefore did not need to “judge according to the appearance” (John 7:24). As a result his judgments are always righteous.

Verses 4-5 - It would be characteristic of the Messiah’s rule that the poor should be cared for, that oppression should cease, and judgment be no more perverted in favor of the rich. There is an intended contrast (antithetic) between the Messiah’s rule in this respect, and that of the princes of Judah (Isaiah 1:23; 3:15; 10:1, 2).

There is a dramatic difference in the description of the Lord’s first advent² and that of His return. Upon His return He will come in judgment and “smite” and “slay”.³

Upon initial examination it would appear that these verses give six “qualities” or “aspects” of the “spirit of the LORD”. In reality, there are seven. The first six are listed in pairs: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the LORD. They are listed and not expounded. They are the aspects that those that have known the Lord from His first advent believe and expect Him to possess. The final and “seventh” spirit is not listed, but explained. It is the stark contrast between His birth as a child to be savior and His triumphant return: JUDGEMENT. Upon his return He will come in judgment. In scripture the number seven represents completion.⁴

Perhaps these seven attributes of the spirit are what John refers to in Revelation as the “seven spirits”.⁵ This differs from the list of “gifts” that men can receive from the spirit.⁶

NOTES:

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

² Isaiah 9:6-7

³ Zechariah 14:2-3; Malachi 4:1-6; Revelation 19:11-21

⁴ See previous Sunday School study(s) on “seven”

⁵ Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6

⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Verses 6-9 – These verses would most likely describe Christ's Millennial Reign¹ as it differs from the description of the "New Heaven and Earth" and the "New Jerusalem".² And yet it would appear that at least some of these characteristics would continue in the "New Heaven and Earth".³

These verses generate a lot of debate as to how this "change" will occur and if this is a literal or a spiritual description. The reality is that this will not be so much of a change, but rather restoring creation to the way it was originally made.⁴ The world we live in is the "changed" world because of sin.⁵

Verse 10 – Isaiah boldly states that which was unimaginable in the Old Testament: this promise would also go to and be received by the Gentiles. Whereas the "rod" and the "branch" would go to the House of Israel, it would be from the "root", or the source (Jews) that the Gentiles would have this ensign (Christ) to which they would be drawn.⁶

Verse 11 – Assyria is most likely placed first because the initial bulk of the Israelites, as distinct from the Jews, were carried into Assyria by Tiglath-Pileser⁷ and Sargon.⁸ The transportation of Israelites to the other places mentioned was subsequent to Isaiah's day: there was a great migration of Jews into Egypt in the time of Jeremiah.⁹ "There was also a second large migration in the time of Onias. The Jewish element in Alexandria for some centuries both before and after Christ was very considerable. Pathros was probably a portion of Upper Egypt, perhaps the Phaturite nome, which was the district about Thebes. It is mentioned as the residence of certain Jews in the time of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 44:1, 15). 'Cush' here may be either the African or the Asiatic. It is slightly in favor of the African that we hear in the Acts of an Ethiopian eunuch who was a Jew in the service of Candace, Queen of the African Ethiopia (Acts 8:27). And it is against the Asiatic that it was so remote. It adjoined, however, upon Elam. 'Elam' was the fertile tract of alluvial land to the east of the Tigris, between that stream and the mountains, parallel with Babylonia. Its capital was Susa, and in Isaiah's time it was an important country, frequently at war with Assyria.

NOTES:

¹ Revelation 20:1-4 ✓

² Revelation 21:1-27; Ether 6:9-10

³ Isaiah 65:17-25 ✓

⁴ Genesis 1:29-30 ✓

⁵ Genesis 9:1-5 (for additional: sermon 7-10-05 by Priest Glenn Orsted)

⁶ Romans 15:7-13 ✓

⁷ 2 Kings 15:29

⁸ 2 Kings 17:6, 18:11

⁹ Jeremiah 43:7, 44:1

Shinar was an ancient name of Babylonia (Genesis 10:10; 11:1-9). The word is used also by Daniel (Daniel 1:2) and Zechariah (Zechariah 5:11)... the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean....during the Maccabee period, there was a gradual spread of Jews over the Western world. Alliances were made with Rome and Sparta (1 Macc. 8:1; 12:2-21; 14:20-23, etc.), and Jews became familiar with both Greece and Italy. St. Paul finds numerous Jews at Rome, and in almost every city of Greece.”¹

Verse 12 – Although we may identify certain ideas or elements to this “ensign”, we really need no more than to realize the basic idea that “Christ” shall be the “ensign” or sign that will be responsible for drawing all these peoples to this condition. That certainly will include many things and events, however Christ will be the “ensign”.

Verse 13 – The division between the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) shall be healed² and no longer will there be any adversaries to Judah (the nation of Israel today).

Verses 14-16 – In today’s world condition, this seems impossible. Israel’s most persistent enemies were the border-nations of the Philistines, the Edomites, the Arabs, Moab and Ammon. The nations that today possess those same lands continue to be a threat to Israel. A promise is made that physical difficulties shall not prevent the return of the Jewish exiles from distant countries. There shall be nothing to hinder God’s people, there shall be a “highway”.

NOTES:

¹ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

² Jeremiah 3:17-18

CHAPTER TWELVE
(2 Nephi 9:132-137)

This twelfth chapter of Isaiah completes the vision that started with chapter six. The following chapter (13) begins a new vision: "the burden... which Isaiah... did see". As we studied chapters six through twelve, the chapters in the KJV frequently seemed misplaced. The reality is that they are one topic or vision. It is therefore no coincidence that these chapters are recorded as one chapter in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 9:1-137).

Isaiah has given the warning of the impending destruction from Assyria and promised that despite that destruction a promise of a savior and a redeemer. Israel would be destroyed but, they would be recovered and the Lord would reign. With that accomplishment, the joy of those that are present is described as they give praise and thanks.

It is also an anti-type. As the people of the holy city of Jerusalem rejoice at the termination of the Assyrian advance, so will the people rejoice at the return of the Lord, which is also described as in preservation of the holy city of Jerusalem.¹

¹ Zechariah 14:1-3

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(2 Nephi 10:1-22)

Verse 1 – It is unclear and a matter of debate, whether this chapter begins a new vision that the prophet has seen or if he saw a single vision and is categorizing it into sections. Which ever is the case, it is of little consequence in understanding the message so long as it is understood that there is a topic change beginning with this chapter. This is further emphasized in the Book of Mormon by the start of a new chapter.

Many will try to say that the word “burden” is not a true translation, however the Book of Mormon supports “burden” and it would be appropriate. In prior chapters, Isaiah has warned his nation of their errors, but the destruction prophesied of was primarily to the Northern Kingdom and with that there was the promise of a Savior and the establishment of His kingdom. Now the prophet addresses Babylonia, the nation that would be the source of the destruction of his (Isaiah’s) nation and the city of Jerusalem and it would most assuredly be a “burden” for the prophet.

This verse like 1:1, 2:1 and 6:1 states that the prophet “saw” what would transpire. We must assume that these events were received by the prophet in a “vision”.

In Isaiah’s time, Assyria was the world power and those hearing Isaiah could easily picture an Assyrian advance. Babylonia at this time was a weak nation in subjection to Assyria and few if any could picture anything of consequence from that nation.

“A century after Isaiah delivered his Babylon prophesy, people would have ‘known’ he was completely wrong in his prediction. Before Nephi was born, Babylon had overthrown the Assyrian yoke and regained her independence, and the New Babylonian Empire would be the greatest empire the Near East had ever seen. When Nephi was a youth, Daniel, his three friends, and many other gifted Jews were taken to Babylon to help build her into a magnificent city (Daniel 1). Her hanging gardens and other achievements were so impressive that later readers of Isaiah must have thought the Judean prophet was absolutely wrong – Babylon was not *decreasing* but *increasing* in wealth and power. This was the Babylon that Nephi knew when he and his family left Jerusalem about 600 B.C.”¹

NOTES:

¹ Ludlow, Victor L., *Unlocking Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, p.186

Verses 2-5 – These verses begin a series of type/anti-types. Babylonia was a power that arose after Isaiah's time and would conquer and carry into captivity those Jews that still remained in Judah/Jerusalem. It is also a type for Satan's kingdom and domain on earth. Babylonia (type) would be destroyed and Babylon (anti-type) will be destroyed before Christ's Millennial Reign.

"The Babylonians of Isaiah's time were an unrighteous, pagan people who practiced all manner of idolatry and sin. *Babel*, the Hebrew root of the name *Babylon*, means 'confusion' or 'mixture,' alluding to the proliferation of the languages and the variety of religions and cultures that were a part of the Babylonian society since its beginning. Symbolically, the confusion of Babel represents the mixture of the sacred and the profane as well as the confusion resulting from the false philosophies of men when mixed with distorted gospel truths. The revelry and vanity of the Babylonians became synonymous with the wickedness and materialism of the world. Because of Babylon's renowned perversions, this ancient worldly empire came to symbolize Satan's kingdom of the latter days. The Apostle John referred often to the wicked 'Babylonian' kingdom of the last dispensation, and he foretold, just as Isaiah did, of its eventual destruction (Revelation 17-18). Clearly, Isaiah's message is directed toward wicked peoples and their alliances in all times."¹

This makes these verses and that which will follow of great importance to us. As we discussed, the messenger to Joseph Smith Jr. said that chapter eleven of Isaiah was about to be fulfilled.² Also, Apostle Don McIndoo in his study of Revelation placed our time approximately in the sixteenth chapter. With this understanding, what occurs in chapters 17-18 of Revelation and that which we are reading now may be in our near future.

There will be a "banner" or "ensign" as in 5:26 and 11:12. Some form of announcement or declaration that will be made from the high mountain. Whatever this exactly refers to, the basic understanding is that it will not be a surprise. The nation of Babylonia was destroyed by the Medes and it was no surprise – the Medes declared it and marched the armies boldly with "banners" flying into their conquest and we may therefore draw a parallel conclusion that in the time of Christ's return there will be some visible sign or message calling the righteous "from the end of heaven" to "destroy the whole land", i.e., the destruction of Babylon (world kingdom – Satan) for Christ's Kingdom, even as the Medes overwhelmed the Babylonians.

NOTES:

1. Judah
2. Judgement
3. "
4. Restored
5. Vineyard
6. Concession
7. Warning to King

8. Salvation

9. Messiah

10. Assyria Remnant Preserved

11. Chaldean Return

12. Zion

13. Babylone fall

14. Israel (Assyria + Palestine)

15. Moab

16. Damascus

¹ Ludlow, Victor L., *Unlocking Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, p. 187

² Page 69 of study

To fully understand these next few chapters is difficult without looking ahead to the information in the chapters that follow in relation to what we have studied. Although this chapter predicts the destruction of Babylon and that the destruction will come from the Medes, its meaning goes far beyond that. Chapters 13 through 23 describe the destruction of several nations. All of these nations have been adversaries with Israel and all have come to an end. In that sense, these prophecies have been fulfilled, however at closer examination it becomes evident that the “anti-types” are being presented here.

A look at chapter 14, makes it clear that the Babylon that is being addressed here is not just the nation that rose to power and has since ceased. Most scholars will say that these nations are presented in sequence with the rise to power and demise in world history and yet give a glimpse at the last days. Let us consider another possibility:

The first twelve chapters are aimed at Israel (primarily the Southern Kingdom of Judah). They reveal the progression between their transgressions, destruction, savior, restoration and Christ’s return and Millennial Reign. Now in an introverted (chiastic) manner Isaiah looks from Christ’s Millennial Reign backwards (reverse order) in an antithetic form. Antithetic in that now the focus is not on Israel but the nations that have opposed her. Additionally antithetic in that the first chapters address Israel, which was a type for the Christian era, which is the antitype. Now Isaiah presents the nations (powers) in the last days as the antitype of which the “types” have already seen their fulfillment in history with Babylon falling to the Medes and the Medes then having their downfall etc.

Verses 6-22 – We must presume that the “antitype” is described here, because the Babylon of old did not completely match the description here. First, the capture of the city by the Medes (Isaiah 13:17) in 539 B.C. did not result in a destruction similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 13:19). Second, did not leave the city uninhabited forever (Isaiah 13:20–22). Further evidence that this is the antitype is the description in verses 9-11. These verses most certainly match the description in other scriptures of the last days.¹

Verse 7 – 2 Nephi 10:7 omits the “and” between faint and every. There shall be a general inaction and apathy. “Recently discovered accounts of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus show a great want of activity and vigor on the part of the defenders.”² The general inaction will spring from a general despondency. “This statement agrees much better with the recently discovered documents than does the statement of Herodotus, that, safe within their walls, the Babylonians despised their assailants, and regarded themselves as perfectly secure.”³

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 24:21-23; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28

² George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

³ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

Verse 8 – 2 Nephi 10:8 omits the statement “they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth”.

Verse 9 – Compare with Matthew 13:1-43 (particularly verses 40-43).

Verse 10 – Compare with Isaiah 24:21-23; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28.

Verse 11 – 2 Nephi 10:11 omits “their” before *evil* and says “lay down” rather than “lay low”.

Verse 12 – Most scholars consider the conditions of warfare and believe that this is describing a time when the population shall be so diminished that man shall be the most highly esteemed of commodities. The more diminished the supply of a thing, the greater its value.

However, if we consider this as the last days and the final conflict, it more likely refers to the value of the righteous remnant in the eyes of God and would then be well suited to the remainder of the verse.

Ophir is mentioned as a gold-region in 1 Kings 9:28; 10:11; 22:48; 1 Chronicles 29:4; 2 Chronicles 8:18; 9:10; Job 22:24; 28:16; Psalm 45:9. Its locality is uncertain. “Gold of Ophir appears to have been considered especially pure.”¹

Verse 13 – Again, most likely describing the final judgment of mankind, and not the fall of the nation of Babylon (Joel 3:16; Haggi 2:6-9; Matthew 24:29-31; Isaiah 24:17-20; 3 Nephi 11:31).

Verse 14 – Chased roe = hunted gazelle. They shall scatter and run in those days without direction or loyalty, like a hunted gazelle or sheep without a shepherd. When the visitation comes on Babylon (spiritual – last days), there shall be a loosening of all ties between her and the subject nations. Her armies shall disband themselves, the pressed soldiers from foreign countries deserting, and hastening with all speed to their homes. A flight of the foreign traders and visitors may also be implied.

Verse 15 – 2 Nephi 10:15 says “proud” rather than “found”, adds “yea” and says “joined to the wicked” rather than “joined unto them”. The Book of Mormon clarifies that this chaos will be from the wicked and not all inclusive of all peoples, both wicked and righteous as the KJV implies.

NOTES:

¹ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

Verse 16 – Not uncommon in times of warfare or when civil authorities are absent. However, this is the condition of those running in fear of the Lord and not those joyfully awaiting His return.

Verse 17 – 2 Nephi 10:17 says “shall not regard silver and gold” rather than “shall not regard silver, and as for gold”.

“Isaiah’s knowledge that the Medes should take a leading part in the destruction of Babylon is, no doubt, as surprising a fact as almost any other in the entire range of prophetic foresight, or insight, as set before us in Scripture. The Medes were known to Moses as an ancient nation of some importance (Genesis 10:2); but since his time had been unmentioned by any sacred writer; and, as a *living* nation, had only just come within the range of Israelite vision, by the fact that, when Sargon deported the Samaritans from Samaria, he placed some of them “in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6). The Assyrians had become acquainted with them somewhat more than a century earlier, and had made frequent incursions into their country, finding them a weak and divided people, under the government of a large number of petty chiefs. Sargon had conquered a portion of the tribes, and placed prefects in the cities; at the same time planting colonists in them from other parts of the empire. That, when the weakness of Media was being thus made apparent, Isaiah should have foreseen its coming greatness can only be accounted for by his having received a Divine communication on the subject. Subsequently, he had a still more exact and complete communication (Isaiah 21:2). *Which shall not regard silver* - The Medes were not a particularly disinterested people; but in the attack on Babylon, made by Cyrus, the object was not plunder, but conquest and the extension of dominion. The main treasures of Babylon — those in the great temple of Bolus — were not carried off by Cyrus, as appears both from his own inscriptions, and from Herodotus (1. 181-183).”¹

Again we must consider that although fulfilled in history, if Isaiah is speaking of the antitype, then there will be a counterpart. In the last days, it will be a struggle for the eternal dwelling of men’s souls, with riches of little regard.

Verse 18 – 2 Nephi 10:18 says “shall also” rather than “also shall”, “eyes” rather than “eye”.

“Both the Medes and the Persians were skilled archers. Herodotus tells us that every Persian youth was taught three things — “to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth” (1. 136). At Persepolis, Medes and Persians are alike represented as carrying bows and quivers. AEschylus regards the contest between the Persians and the Greeks as one between the arrow and the spear (‘Persae,’ 11. 135, 136).”²

NOTES:

¹ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

² George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

Rw. 18:1-9

Place of Babylon

Verses 19 -22 – Once again, although there is some fulfillment in history, we should be looking ahead to its antitype. 2 Nephi 10:22 adds “For I will destroy her speedily; yea, for I will be merciful unto my people; but the wicked shall perish.” In the destruction of Judah, the Babylonians were hardly merciful to God’s people.

“The ‘glory’ of Babylon consisted:

1. In her antiquity. She had been the head of a great empire long before Assyria rose to power.
2. In her origination of literature, architecture, and the other arts, which all passed from her to Assyria, and thence to the other nations of Asia.
3. In her magnificence and the magnificence of her kings, which provoked the admiration of the Assyrians themselves (‘Records of the Past,’ vol. 9. p. 15). As time went on, she grew in wealth and splendor. Perhaps it was granted to Isaiah to see her in ecstatic vision, not merely such as she was in the time of Sargon under Merodach-Baladan, but such as she became under Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of her kings, who raised her to the highest pitch of glory and eminence. The beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency. The Kaldi appear to have been originally one of the many tribes by which Babylonia was peopled at an early date, From the expression, “Ur of the Chaldees,” which occurs more than once in Genesis (Genesis 11:28, 31), we may gather that they were inhabitants of the more southern part of the country, near the coast. The same conclusion may be drawn from the Assyrian inscriptions, especially those of Shalmaneser II. — the Black Obelisk king. The term never became a general name for the Babylonian people among themselves or among the Assyrians; but, somehow-or other, it was accepted in that sense by the Jews, and is so used, not only by Isaiah, but also by the writers of Kings and Chronicles, by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Habakkuk.

It shall never be inhabited. This part of the prophecy did not receive its fulfillment till many centuries had gone by. From the time of Cyrus to that of Alexander the Great, Babylon was one of the chief cities of the Persian empire. Alexander was so struck with it, and with the excellence of its situation, that he designed to make it his capital. It first began seriously to decline under the Seleucidae, who built Seleucia on the Tigris as a rival to it, and still further injured it by fixing the seat of government at Antioch. But it had still a large population in the first century after our era (Josephus, ‘Ant. Jud.,’ 18:9, § 8); and is mentioned as a place of some consequence in the time of Trajan (Die Cass., 68:27), and even in that of Severue (Die Cass., 75:9). But after this it went rapidly to decay. Under the Sassuntans it disappears from sight; and when Benjamin of Tudela, in the twelfth century, visited the spot, there was nothing to be seen of the mighty city but those ruins of the Kasr, or palace, which still arrest the traveler’s attention. The site had become, and has ever since remained, “without inhabitant.”¹ [The author wrote this in the 1800’s at which time it was true, however that is no longer the case, which is further evidence that we look for a later fulfillment – GAO]

¹ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Exodus

“Saddam Hussein installed a huge portrait of himself and Nebuchadnezzar at the entrance to the ruins (Babylon – GAO). He also had part of the ruins rebuilt, to the dismay of archaeologists, with his name inscribed on many of the bricks, in imitation of Nebuchadnezzar. One frequent inscription reads: *‘This was built by Saddam Hussein, son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq’*.”¹

“...the ancient city of Babylon has already been rebuilt to some degree by the former Iraqi authority headed by Saddam Hussain”²

“Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there. A superstitious feeling prevents the Arabs from encamping on the mounds of Babylon, which are believed to be the haunts of evil spirits (Rich, ‘First Memoir on Babylon,’ p. 67; Ker Porter, ‘Travels,’ vol. 2. p. 371).

Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. The nitrous soil of the Babylonian mounds allows them to produce nothing but the coarsest and most unpalatable vegetation. The shepherds consequently do not feed their flocks on them. (Rich, ‘First Memoir on Babylon,’ p. 67; Ker Porter, ‘Travels,’ vol. 2. p. 371).

*Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. The nitrous soil and most unpalatable vegetation. The shepherds consequently do not feed their flocks on them.”*³

NOTES:

¹ Wikipedia Encyclopedia

² Wikipedia Encyclopedia

³ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(2 Nephi 10:23-54)

Verses 1-2 – If it is a correct understanding that we are now regressing in time from Christ's return, then the restoration of Israel to a nation of power and authority in the land will either be in conjunction with or just prior to the collapse of Babylon. Again it would appear that Isaiah is looking to the latter day fulfillment (anti-type), but we must recognize that there was a similar event in history (type). With the fall of Babylon to Media-Persia, Cyrus the Great permitted the exiled Jews to return to Judah. This is contrary to the view of most commentaries that read this as Israel rising in power after the destruction of Babylon.

2 Nephi 10:24 adds to verse 2 of KJV: And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; [**yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise.**] And the house of Israel shall possess them, [**and / in**] the land of the Lord [**shall be**] for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives, [**unto whom they were captives / whose captives they were**]; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

The Book of Mormon certainly clarifies verse 2. This will be a time where Israel reigns supreme. This most refer to the latter day fulfillment when there will be "strangers" with them and their oppressors will be in subjection to them: Zion.

Verses 3-4 – It is a time when Israel (anti-type, i.e. those that have taken the ensign of the previous chapters and accept Christ – the Christian Israel), can rest from the centuries of bondage and oppression. These verses begin a "proverb" against Babylon. Remember that we are regressing in history. The Book of Mormon says it will be "in [**that**] day" which Israel can say the proverb. That is reinforced in 2 Nephi 10:26 where [**And it shall come to pass in that day**] is added to the statement of when Israel can say this proverb. When Israel (Christians) can say the proverb, then Babylon will fall, i.e. the previous chapter.

Isa 60:4-5 10-12

Verses 5-23 - The Babylon of old was one of great splendor, with its hanging gardens as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. All that wealth and power shall cease. In hell all the previous kings and rulers that have been Satan's pawns will see that like their reigns, Satan's has come to an end. However, all the kings of earth of earth have been laid in state (elaborate ceremony and memorial), Satan will have no such observance or remembrance, he shall utterly cease and hence the Babylon of the previous chapter that shall never be inhabited again.

NOTES:

Verses 24-28 – Whereas Babylon was a nation of great wealth and commercial and economic power, Assyria was a collection of governments. If we are correct in this belief that we are going backward from Christ's return, then this pronouncement against Assyria will proceed or coincide with the establishment of the Christian Israel. This collection of world governments is most closely represented today by the United Nations. This Assyria of the latter days will have a "hand that is stretched out upon all the nations".

Verse 28 gives us insight that Isaiah did not receive these visions all at one time. Isaiah 6:1 records that vision in the year King Uzziah died. Here he says that he received this in the year that King Ahaz died.

Verses 29-32 – If I (GAO) am correct – Palestina would be Palestine in the latter days and its counterpart in the ancient world would be the Philistines. Here is a warning for them not to rejoice, that they soon shall be subject to Israel. This is most likely where we are in history.

In history "the Philistines had suffered grievously at the hands of Judah in the reign of Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:6), and had retaliated in the reign of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:18). It would seem that after this they were invaded by Tiglath-Pileser, who penetrated as far as Gaza, which he took ('Records of the Past,' vol. 5. p. 51) and made tributary, as he also did Ascalon ('Ancient Monarchies,' vol. it. p. 399). Tiglath-Pileser died shortly before Ahaz, and the present "burden" seems to have been uttered in connection with his death. Isaiah warns Philistia (equivalent to "*Palestina*") that her rejoicing is premature; Tiglath-Pileser will have successors as powerful and as cruel as himself, and these successors will carry destruction and ravage over the whole land."¹

In the Book of Mormon, Nephi now explains these chapters we have just studied: see 2 Nephi 11: 1-124. This explanation is for Isaiah chapters 2 thru 14. Beginning with verse 125, Nephi begins relating what is recorded in Isaiah chapter 29.

Consider the significance in omitting chapters 15-28.

NOTES:

¹ George Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

2 Nephi 11

✓
Verse 1 – Nephi will speak about the words of Isaiah that he has just related (chapters 2 thru 14).

✓
Verses 2-3 – Isaiah is not easy to understand.

✓
Verse 4 – Nephi writes unto his people **AND** to all that receive that which he is writing. Isaiah (chapters 2 thru 14) is about the judgments that come upon nations.

✓
Verses 5-7 – Addressed to Israel – words of Isaiah are not plain, Nephi will speak in plainness.

✓
Verses 8-10 – Must understand the manner of the Jews.

✓
Verse 11 – Nephi will prophesy with plainness (easy to understand).

✓
Verses 12-14 – Will understand Isaiah when it begins to be fulfilled. They shall be of great worth in the last days and it then that they will be understood. Nephi is writing for those in the last days.

✓
Verses 15-18 – Nations have and will continue to be destroyed because of iniquity, but God always gives warning, it is never a surprise.

✓
Verses 19-23 – Jews will be carried away, but shall return. They did under Cyrus. Christ will come and be rejected by them.

✓
Verses 24-25 – They will again be destroyed (70 A.D.). Babylon will cease.

✓
Verses 26-27 – They shall be scattered throughout the nations and scourged (oppressed and persecuted) until they believe in Christ (Ephraim & Reformation).

✓
Verses 28-36 – God will work a second time to recover His people from a fallen state (apostasy) through a marvelous work and a wonder (Restoration) that they may believe in the Messiah.

✓
Verses 37-38 – Will be brought out even as Israel was brought out of Egypt.

✓
Verses 39-42 – Nephi's words will be preserved for the promise to Joseph. The Nation that possesses them will be judged by them (Israel was judged by Isaiah's words).

✓
Verses 43-57 – Must believe in Christ. Remember that Nephi is writing to those in the last days (verse 14) and that this is prophesy (verse 11), so the references to Christ are not premature as many critiques will say.

Verse 58-70 – Though Christ will come, this is not the end of judgment and hardship (remember, Nephi is addressing those in the last days).

Verses 71-77 – Those that seek Christ will not perish, only those that reject Him.

Verses 78-79 – Gentiles included.

Verses 80-89 – Again Nephi stresses that he is speaking of the last days. His people shall have dwindled in unbelief, but a record shall be preserved (Book of Mormon). They shall be destroyed at the hands of the Gentiles.

Verses 90-115 – The warning and promise to the Gentiles.

Verses 116-124 – In the last days, it will not be an issue of Jew or Gentile, but rather those that support or oppose Zion. In Isaiah it was those that have the ensign. In either case it will determined by those that accept or reject Christ, not by nationality.

Nephi continues, but after verse 124 is more closely related with Isaiah 29 and we will discuss these verses with that chapter.

NOTES:

CHIASMUS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

As we discuss Nephi's instruction on Isaiah, it should be of interest to note that the style of chiasmus found in Isaiah, is also evident in the Book of Mormon.

The whole book of First Nephi is Chiastic:

- a Lehi's dream leads him to PROPHECY WARNINGS to the Jews
- b The DEPARTURE from Jerusalem
- c Nephi accomplishes a GREAT FEAT in obtaining brass plates—brothers confounded
- d ISHMAEL joins the group with his daughters
- e The TREE OF LIFE
- f Lehi prophesies about the OLD WORLD and coming of the Lamb
- g Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord
- f Nephi prophesies about the NEW WORLD and coming of the Lamb
- e The TREE OF LIFE is interpreted
- d The sons of Lehi marry the daughters of ISHMAEL and ISHMAEL dies
- c Nephi accomplished GREAT FEAT by building ship – brothers confounded
- b The DEPARTURE from the Old World
- a Nephi WARNS the Jews and quotes PROPHECY from Isaiah

It is of interest that First Nephi is a historical account of events as they happened. Therefore, First Nephi is not so much written in Chiasmus as it demonstrates that God often works in Chiastic form: the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Not only is the statement Chiasmus, but its fulfillment in history is also Chiasmus.

Mosiah 1:118-120

- a HUMBLE themselves and
- b become as little CHILDREN
- c through the ATONING BLOOD OF CHRIST
- d NATURAL MAN is an enemy
- e to GOD and
- f HAS BEEN from the fall of Adam
- f and WILL BE, forever and ever
- e unless yields to the HOLY SPIRIT
- d putteth off the NATURAL MAN and becometh a saint
- c through the ATONEMENT of CHRIST
- b becometh as a CHILD, submissive, meek...
- a HUMBLE

NOTES:

Mosiah 3:13-16

- a whosoever shall not take upon them the NAME OF CHRIST
- b must be CALLED by some other name;
- c therefore, he findeth himself on the LEFT HAND OF GOD.
- d And I would that ye should REMEMBER also....
- e that never should be BLOTTED OUT,
- f except it be through TRANSGRESSION; Therefore
- f take heed that ye do not TRANSGRESS,
- e that the name be not BLOTTED out of your hearts...
- d I would that ye should REMEMBER to retain the name...
- c that ye are not found on the LEFT HAND OF GOD,
- b but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be CALLED
- a and also, the NAME by which he shall call you:

NOTES:

It is of interest that First Nephi is a historical account of events as they happened. Therefore, First Nephi is not so much written in Chiasmus as it demonstrates that God often works in Chiasmus form; the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Not only is the statement Chiasmus, but its fulfillment in history is also Chiasmus.

Mosiah 1:18-20

- a HUMBLE themselves and
- b become as little CHILDREN
- c through the ATONING BLOOD OF CHRIST
- d NATURAL MAN is an enemy
- e to GOD and
- f HAS BEEN from the fall of Adam
- f and WILL BE forever and ever
- e unless yields to the HOLY SPIRIT
- d putteth off the NATURAL MAN and becometh a saint
- c through the ATONEMENT OF CHRIST
- b becometh as a CHILD, submissive, meek...
- a HUMBLE

NOTES:

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

This and the following chapter address the “burden” of Moab. Moab was an enemy of Israel in the eastern Trans-Jordan. Moabite cities are listed that shall be overrun by the Assyrian invasion.

If it is a correct interpretation that we are following the reverse chronology of the anti-types and that Assyria’s modern representation is the United Nations, then this region would include the area that was once part of the Ottoman Empire until after World War I, when it was broken up by the League of Nations (later to become the United Nations).

Verse 1 - Ar of Moab: an ancient city mentioned among those taken from the Moabites by Sihon (Numbers 21:28). Kir of Moab is identified with *Kerak*, a place situated on a mountain peak, about ten miles from the south-eastern corner of the Dead Sea.

Verse 2 – Bajith is an unknown location and the subject of debate today. Dibon: Diboa is mentioned in Numbers 21:30; 32:3, 34; Joshua 13:9, 17; Jeremiah 48:18, 22. It was an ancient Moabite town of considerable importance, and has recently been identified with the site called *Diban*, where the Moabite Stone was found. This place is situated in the country east of the Dead Sea, about three miles north of the river Arnon, on the old Roman road connecting Rabbath-Moab with Hesh-bob.

Nebe and Medeba were also ancient Moabite towns. Nebo is mentioned in Numbers 32:3, 38; 33:47; 1 Chronicles 5:8; Jeremiah 48:1, 22. It seems to have lain almost midway between Beth-baal-meon (Main) and Medeba, about three or four miles south-east of Heshbon. Medeba obtains notice in Numbers 21:30; Joshua 13:9,16; 1 Chronicles 19:7. It lay south-east of Hesh-ben, at the spot which still retains the old name — *Madeba*.

The practice of cutting off the hair in mourning was common to the Jews (Isaiah 22:12; Micah 1:16) with various other nations; e.g. the Persians, the Greeks, the Macedonians, the primitive Arabs, and the North American Indians (Bancroft, 'Native Races of America').

Verse 3 – “gird themselves with sackcloth” - another widely spread custom, known to the Assyrians (Jonah 3:5), the Syrians (1 Kings 20:31), the Persians (Esther 4:1, 2), the Israelites (Nehemiah 9:1), and, as we see here, to the Moabites.

“Howling” remains one of the chief tokens of mourning in the East. It was a practice of the Egyptians, of the Persians, and of the Babylonians.

NOTES:

✓ Verse 4 – Heshbon was about twenty miles east of the Jordan. It was the capital city of Sihon (Numbers 21:21), who took it from the Moabites. On the partition of Palestine among the tribes of Israel, it was assigned to Reuben (Numbers 32:37; Joshua 13:17); but at a later time we find it reckoned to Gad (1 Chronicles 6:81). We do not know at what time Moab recovered Heshbon, but may conjecture that it was one of the conquests of Mesha. Elealch is commonly united with Heshbon (Numbers 32:3, 37; Isaiah 16:9; Jeremiah 48:34). Jahaz lay considerably to the south of Hesh-ben, probably not very far north of the Arnon. It must have been in the vicinity of Dibon, since Mesha, on taking it from the Israelites, annexed it to the territory of that city. It was the scene of the great battle between Sihon and the Israelites under Moses (Numbers 21:23).

✓ Verse 5 - My heart shall cry out for Moab (compare Isaiah 16:9, 11). The prophet sympathizes with the sufferings of Moab, as a kindred people (Genesis 19:37), and perhaps as having, in the person of Ruth, furnished an ancestress to the Messiah (Matthew 1:5).

Zoar, the "little" town, spared for Lot's sake (Genesis 19:20-22), is placed by some at the northern, by others at the southern, extremity of the Dead Sea. The present passage makes in favor of the more southern site.

"A heifer of three years old", the specific meaning here is unclear and of debate. Those who defend this rendering refer the simile either to Zest, or to Moab, or to the fugitives. Having regard to the parallel passage of Jeremiah (48:34). The resemblance to the heifer will consist in the cries uttered. To many critics, however, this idea appears harsh, and the alternative is proposed of regarding *Eglath* — the word translated "heifer" — as a place, and the epithet, "of three years old," as really meaning "the third." Attempts are made to show the existence of three Eglaths in these parts; but they are not very successful; nor is any instance adduced of a city being distinguished from others of the same name by a numerical suffix. The rendering of the Authorized Version may therefore stand, the comparison being regarded as one of the fugitive Moabites to a heifer in its third year, "*rushing along with loud, hopeless bellowings*".

✓ Luhith - this has not been identified. It should have been on the way from Moab proper to Zoar.

✓ On the Moabite Stone Horonaim is mentioned as a town of the Edomites attacked and taken by Mesha. It lay probably south or southeast of the Dead Sea. The Moabites, seek a refuge in the territories of Edom and Judah, weeping and wailing as they go.

NOTES:

Verse 6 - The Wady Numeira is a watercourse running into the Dead Sea from the east, halfway between the promontory called the "Lisan" and the sea's southern extremity. It is fed by "six or seven springs" ("Quarterly Statement" of Palest. Expl. Fatal, October, 1880, p. 254) — "plenteous brooks gushing from the lofty hills", and boasts along its banks a number of "well-watered gardens."

There is no reason to doubt the identity of this stream with "the waters of Nimrim." Their "desolation" was probably caused by the enemy stopping up the sources (2 Kings 3:19, 25; 2 Chronicles 32:3, 4). There is luxuriant vegetation in the wadys and ghors at the southern end of the Dead Sea, especially in the Ghor-es-Safiyeh, the Wady Numeira, and the Wady el-Mantara ("Quarterly Statement" of Palest. Expl. Fund, October, 1880, pp. 252, 254).

Verse 7 - The property which they have been able to save and carry off with them, finding no place of refuge in their own territory, they convey to their southern border, where "the brook of the willows" separates their country from Edom, with the intention, no doubt, of transporting it across the brook.

Verse 8 - Eglaim & Beer-Elim - unknown sites on the borders of Moab, both probably towards the south. The enemy has come in from the north, and has driven the population southwards. A hope has been entertained of the pursuit slackening; but it is disappointed. The enemy causes grief and "howling" in every part of the territory.

Verse 9 - It is thought that "Dimon" is here put for "Dibon," St. Jerome says that in his day the place was called indifferently by either name. If we accept this view, "the waters of Dimon" will probably be those of the *Amen*, near which Dibon was situated (see the comment on ver. 2). Additional calamities will cause the stream of the Aton to flow with blood. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 4:7), who is said by Josephus to have conquered the Moabites, or possibly Asshur-bani-pal, who overran the country about B.C. 645.

NOTES:

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Moab was a son of Lot and Lot was Abraham's nephew. There appears to have been a special relationship between Abraham and Lot, perhaps because Lot's father had died and it is possible that Lot had been "adopted" into Abraham's family.

Lot accompanied Abraham into Canaan (Genesis 12:4-5) and then into Egypt and back to Canaan (Genesis 13:1-4).

When the Israelites were delivered from Egypt and going into Canaan to possess it, they did not go through Moab (Judges 11:18). Although there were conflicts at times, we see that Moab did pay tribute to Israel (2 Kings 3:4).

✓ Ruth was a Moabite and through her marriage to Boaz was the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David and part of the genealogical line for Christ.

✓ Whatever the exact relationship, it appears that it is recognized in the prophecy. In verses 1-5, Moab is offered mercy on the condition that it recognizes Israel and accepts the Israelites that come into the area.

✓ Verses 6-12 is the result if they reject that offer and verses 13-14 are the time frame in which it will occur – very quickly.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The eye of the prophet is once more upon Damascus (Isaiah 7:1 — 9). Damascus is again recognized for her alliance with Ephraim (Northern Kingdom) and the two are joined with a new power, Aroer, which possesses several “cities.” Woe is denounced on all the three powers: desolation on Damascus and Aroer; on Damascus and Ephraim, the complete loss of the last shadow of independence. The Assyrian inscriptions point out, as the probable date of the fulfillment in the past as the commencement of Sargon’s reign — about B.C. 722 or 721.

We must also be mindful of any possible modern fulfillment. Until recently (in history) Great Britain (possibly Ephraim) had a strong presence in the region.

✓ Verse 1 - According to historians, Damascus is a city that has been in constant turmoil and may have been destroyed more often than any other town and yet maintains an ability to continually rise from its ashes.

✓ Verse 2 – The location of this “Aroer” is a matter of debate. Many associate it with Arid. It was a city of great importance, having “cities” dependent on it. It was united in a league with Damascus, Samaria, Arpad, and Simyra and in the second year of Sargon, and was the scene of a great battle and a great destruction. Sargon besieged it, took it, and reduced it to ashes. It marked the very extreme of desolation, that cattle should be pastured on the sites of cities and there shall be no inhabitants to make any objection.

✓ Verse 3 – Fulfilled with the Assyrian invasion in the past which conquered this region, we must also consider the decrease of British (Ephraim) rule (fortress) in the area, which officially ceased after World War II and the entire region was turned over to the United Nations (Assyria).

✓ Verses 4-6 – Again if we consider this as having a modern fulfillment, this would refer to a time before Israel was again established as a nation. There is little for the harvest.

✓ Verses 7-8 – There are those looking to God for their support (Zionist movement?)

✓ Verses 9-10 – Despite their desire, they will be in a state of desolation.

✓ Verse 10 – The reason for their condition – they have forgotten the God of their salvation.

✓ Verse 11 – Israel today has certainly grown in a day of sorrow and grief.

✓ Verses 12-14 – God will rebuke the nations that rush to stop this growth (birth of Israel).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

One of the criticisms of Isaiah that the last few chapters are not chronological and in some instances do not accurately represent the events of the past. It has been my thought (GAO) that the chapters are reverse chronological order for the anti-type (latter fulfillment) using as reference the type (first occurrence).

There is dispute among scholars over this chapter as to exactly when this was fulfilled (they consider the type). Each view has weaknesses and strengths to their position. It is therefore still my (GAO) opinion that its true representation is in its anti-type, but as we have been going back in history, I am not sure exactly when this anti-type occurred. We will there consider the possibilities for the fulfillment of the type and consider possible secondary fulfillment (anti-type).

✓ “The burden of Egypt” - It is uncertain whether this prophecy refers to the conquest of Egypt by Piankhi or to that by Esarhaddon. In the former case the date would be as early as B.C. 735 and in the latter, its date might be as late as B.C. 690.

The division of Egypt, “kingdom against kingdom,” is a circumstance rather in favor of the earlier date; but the “cruel lord,” and the mention of the “princes of Zoan and Noph,” are decisive for the later. Piankhi was anything rather than a “cruel lord,” being particularly mild and clement; Napata (Noph) is under him, and cannot be said to have been “deceived” or to have “seduced Egypt;” and Zoan plays no part in the history of the period. Esarhaddon, on the contrary, was decidedly a “cruel” prince, and treated Egypt with great severity, splitting it up into a number of governments. Zoan was one of the leading cities of the time, and Noph was the leading power on the Egyptian side, the head of the patriotic party which resisted the Assyrian monarch, but to no purpose.

✓ Verse 1 - Imagery to express the rapidity of Divine visitations (Psalm 104:3). God, being about to visit Egypt with a judgment of extreme severity, is represented as entering the land in person (as in Isaiah 13:5). “The idols of Egypt shall be moved” - Neither Piankhi nor any other Ethiopian conqueror made war on the Egyptian idols; but the Assyrians were always bent on humbling the gods of the hostile countries (Isaiah 10:10; 36:18-20). There are no detailed accounts of Esarhaddon’s campaign; but we find Asshur-bani-pal’s first victory over Tirhakah immediately followed by the presentation to him in his camp of Egyptian deities¹, *i.e.* of their images. These were probably taken to Nineveh, or else destroyed. At a later date, the same monarch deprived an Egyptian temple of two of its sacred obelisks². The heart of Egypt shall melt (Isaiah 13:7; Psalm 22:14).

Verse 2 - “Egyptians against the Egyptians” - The disintegration of Egypt commenced about B.C. 760-750, towards the close of the twenty-second dynasty. About B.C. 735 a struggle began between Pian-khi, King of Upper Egypt, and Tafnekhf, King of Sais and Memphis, in which the other princes took different sides. Ten or twelve years later there was a struggle between Bocchoris and Sabaeo. From this time onwards, until

¹ G. Smith, ‘History of Asshur-bani-pal,’ p. 20, l. 1

² *ibid.*, p. 54, ll. 4, 5

Psamatik I reestablished the unity of Egypt (about B.C. 650), the country was always more or less divided, and on the occurrence of any crisis the princes were apt to make war with one another. "Kingdom against kingdom" - during the period of disintegration, the title of "king" was assumed by most of the minor princes, though they were little more than chiefs of cities¹.

Verse 3 - They will be unable to find the answer. Their idols and spiritualists will be unable to provide an answer.

Verse 4 - "The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord." As noted before, Piankhi will not answer to this description. It is however, well suit for Esarhaddon. Esarhaddon, soon after his accession, cut off the heads of Abdi-Milkut, King of Sidon, and of Sanduarri, King of Kundi, and hung them round the necks of two of their chief officers². In an expedition which he made into Arabia, he slew eight of the sovereigns, two of them being women³. On conquering Egypt he treated it with extreme severity. Not only did he divide up the country into twenty governments, but he changed the names of the towns, and assigned to his twenty governors, as their main duty, that they were "to slay, plunder, and spoil" their subjects⁴. He certainly fit the description of "a cruel lord," "a fierce king."

Verses 5-10 - There shall be a great deficiency in the water supply. There have been many times in history when such a deficiency has been the cause of terrible famines in Egypt.

Verse 11 - Zoan or Tanis (considered to be the same) had been an insignificant city since the time of the shepherd-kings. It came to the front once more at the time of the struggle between Egypt and Assyria. Esarhaddon made it the head of one of the petty kingdoms into which he divided Egypt⁵. Early in the reign of his son it revolted, in conjunction with Sais and Mendes, but was long reduced to subjection by the Assyrians. Its king, Petu-bastes, was taken to Nineveh, and there probably put to death. Its "princes" were, no doubt, among those who counseled resistance to Assyria.

"The counsel of the wise" - two classes of advisers seem to be intended — nobles, supposed to be qualified by birth; and "wise men," qualified by study and education. Both would now be found equally incapable. "Pharaoh" - Tirhakah is one possibility. It is possible that he was really suzerain of Egypt at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, when Shabatek was nominally king. It is certain that, after the death of Shabatok (about B.C. 698), he was recognized as sovereign both of Ethiopia and of Egypt, and ruled over both countries. Esarhaddon found him still occupying this position in B.C. 673, when he made his Egyptian expedition. Tirhakah's capital at this time was Memphis.

¹ 'Records of the Past,' vol. 2. p. 100; G. Smith, 'History of Asshur-bani-pal,' pp. 20-22

² G. Smith, 'Eponym Canon,' pp. 137-139

³ 'Records of the Past,' vol. 3. pp. 106, 107

⁴ G. Smith, 'History of Asshur-bani-pal,' p. 37

⁵ Ibid. p.21

“How say ye...” - with what face can you boast of your descent, or of your learning, when you are unable to give any sound advice?

Verse 12 – Rather: *Where, then, are thy wise men?* If thou hast any, let them come forward and predict the coming course of events, what Jehovah has determined to do (compare similar challenges in the later chapters of Isaiah, Isaiah 41:21-23; 43:9; 48:14, etc.).

Verse 13 – Some believe that Noph is referring to Napata and others that it refers to Moph. Whichever the case, they are leading Egypt astray.

Verses 14-15 - To bring Egypt into so distracted a state, the hand of God had been necessary.

Verses 16-17 - The Egyptians would scarcely recognize Jehovah as the Author of their calamities, but it would none the less be his hand which punished them. In Manasseh's reign Judaea became subject to Assyria (2 Chronicles 33:11)¹ and had to take part in the hostile expeditions, which both Esarhaddon and his son, Assurbanipal, conducted against Egypt. Egypt had to keep her eye on Judaea continually, to see when danger was approaching her. The very mention of Judaea by any one shall cause fear, because they will expect to hear that an expedition has started, or is about to start, from that country. “Because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts” - this is how Isaiah views the Assyrian attacks on Egypt, not how the Egyptians viewed them. The fear felt by the Egyptians was not a religious fear. They simply dreaded the Assyrian armies, and Judaea as the country from which the expeditions seemed to issue.

NOTES:

¹ G. Smith, 'Eponym Canon,' p. 139, 1. 13

✓ The chastisement of the Egyptians shall be followed, after a while, by a great change. Influences from Canaan shall penetrate Egypt (ver. 18), an altar shall be raised in her midst to Jehovah (ver. 19), and she herself shall cry to him for support (ver. 20) and be delivered (ver. 20). Egypt shall even become a part of Jehovah's kingdom, shall "know him," and serve him with sacrifice and oblation (ver. 21), and perform her vows to Jehovah, and have her supplications heard by him, and be converted and healed (ver. 22).

✓ Verse 18 - The first manifest fulfillment of the prophecy was at the foundation of Alexandria, when the Jews were encouraged to become settlers by the concession of important privileges¹ and where they ultimately became the predominant element in the population, amounting, according to Philo², to nearly a million. The next great Palestinian influx was under Ptolemy YI (Philometor), when Onias fled from Palestine with a number of his partisans, and obtained permission to erect a Jewish temple near Heliopolis. The site of this temple is probably marked by the ruins at Tel-el-Yahoudeh³. It seems to have been a center to a number of Jewish communities in the neighborhood. In this double way Jehovah became known to Egypt before Christianity. A Christian Church was early established in Alexandria, possibly by St. Mark.

✓ Verse 19 - An altar to the Lord was undoubtedly erected by Onias in the temple which he obtained leave to build from Ptolemy Philometor. Josephus⁴ says that he persuaded Ptolemy by showing him this passage of Isaiah.

✓ Verses 20-25 - Although there are many attempts to reconcile this with history, it simply has not been fulfilled as described here at anytime in history in its fulfillment. This further supports the thought that Isaiah is relating an anti-type fulfillment.

✓ Consider: Of the nations in the area, hostile to Israel today, Israel has had its best relationship and support (not ideal) from Egypt when compared to the other nations. In the conflicts, Israel has frequently occupied great areas within Egypt. Additionally, it has appeared the Babylonia and Assyria were types for an anti-type and we should consider the same here. Babylonia (Satan's Kingdom/Domain), Assyria (World Governments) and we see in scripture that Egypt is a type for the bondage to sin.

NOTES:

Israel - Christianity
 Egypt - Sin
 Assyria - World Gov. Powers
 Babylonia - Satan Kingdom

¹ Josephus, 'Contr. Ap.,' 2:4

² 'In Flaec.,' § 6

³ 'Quarterly Statement' of Palest. Expl. Fund for July, 1880, pp. 137-139

⁴ 'Ant. Jud.,' 13:3; 'Bell. Jud.,' 7:10

CHAPTER TWENTY

✓ “The Assyrian inscriptions enable us to date this prophecy with a near approach to exactness. Ashdod was besieged by an Assyrian army twice in the reign of Sargon — in his ninth year (B.C. 713) and in his eleventh year (B.C. 711). On the former occasion it is probable that the arms of a general (Tartan) were employed; on the latter it is nearly certain that Sargon made the expedition in person. The capture of Ashdod, here mentioned, is consequently the first capture. Egypt and Ethiopia were at the time united under one head, Shabak, or Shabatok; and the inhabitants of Ashdod looked to this quarter for deliverance from the Assyrian power. Shortly after the first capture, they revolted, deposed the king whom Sargon had set over them, appointed another, and then proceeded, in conjunction with Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, to call in the aid of the Egyptians and Ethiopians. Isaiah’s mission on this occasion was to discourage Judaea from joining Ashdod and her allies in this appeal. He was instructed to prophesy that Assyria would shortly inflict a severe defeat on the two African powers, and carry into captivity large numbers of both nations. The prophecy seems to have had its accomplishment about twelve years later, when Sennacherib defeated the combined forces of Egypt and Ethiopia at Eltekeh, near Ekron”.¹

Verse 1 – “Tartan” - the word was not a proper name, but a title of office signifying “commander-in-chief.” The tartan held the second position in the empire. Isaiah has been accused of having confounded together the two sieges of Ashdod; but if one was conducted by the tartan, and the other by Sargon in person, his words would distinguish as perfectly as possible which siege he meant.

“Sargon the King of Assyria” - he was the founder of the last and greatest of the Assyrian dynasties, the successor of the biblical Shalmaneser, and the father of Sennacherib. He reigned from B.C. 722 to B.C. 705. He was the captor of Samaria; he defeated the forces of Egypt; he warred on Susiana, Media, Armenia, Asia Minor, Cyprus; and he conquered and held in subjection Babylon.

“Ashdod” was the strongest of the Philistine cities, and one of the most ancient (Joshua 15:47). Its name is probably derived from a root meaning “strength.” It is reported to have withstood on one occasion a siege of twenty-nine years. It was later known as “Esdud”. In B.C. 713 the Assyrians proceed against it; and its capture is implied by the facts that the Assyrians depose its king and install one of his brothers as monarch (2 Kings 23:34).

Verse 2 – Some scholars believe that Isaiah was wearing sackcloth, as during a time of mourning. Others believe that it is more probable that the Hebrew “*sak*” represents the haircloth (“rough garment,” Zechariah 13:4), which, as ascetics, the Hebrew prophets wore habitually (2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4).

NOTES:

¹ G. Smith, ‘Eponym Canon,’ p. 133

Isaiah was “probably not actually ‘naked,’ for captives were not stripped bare by the Assyrians, but with nothing on besides his short tunic, as the male captives are commonly represented in the Assyrian sculptures.”¹ This is a common thought among scholars, however it is difficult to defend when considered with verse 4. While most commentaries make the same or similar statements about Isaiah’s “nakedness” they usually say nothing about the comparison in verse 4, other than to make a statement about Assyrian captives.

Verse 3 - Isaiah shares the honorable title, “my servant,” with a select few: Abraham (Genesis 26:24), Moses (Numbers 12:7), Caleb (Numbers 14:24), Job (Job 1:8; 42:7, 8), Eliakim (Isaiah 22:20), and Zerubbabel (Haggai 2:23).

The three years probably is from B.C. 713 to B.C. 711, or during the whole of the time that Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Judah were making representations to the Egyptians and Ethiopians, and endeavoring to obtain their aid.² It is speculated by some that the “three years” represents a period of three days, however in prophetic writing it is more likely for a day to represent a year than the reverse and a three day sign of the kind could not have been expected to have any important effect.

The supposed “impropriety” of Isaiah’s having “gone naked and barefoot” for three years arises from a misconception of the word “naked” which is not to be taken literally (see the comment on verse 2). The costume adopted would be extraordinary, especially in one of Isaiah’s rank and position; but would not be in any degree “improper.” It would be simply that of working men during the greater part of the day (see Exodus 22:26-27).

Verse 4 – “In Sennacherib’s annals for the year B.C. 701 (approx twelve years after this prophecy was given - GAO), we find the following passage: ‘The kings of Egypt, and the archers, chariots, and horsemen of the King of Meroe, a force without number, gathered and came to the aid of Ekron. In the neighborhood of Eltekeh their ranks were arrayed before me, and they urged on their soldiers. In the service of Asshur, my lord, I fought with them, and I accomplished their overthrow. *The charioteers and sons of the kings of Egypt, and the charioteers of the King of Meres, alive in the midst of the battle, my hand captured*’.”³ Assyrian sculptures depict the intermixture of young and old, of full-grown males with women leading children by the hand or carrying them upon the shoulder. Assyrian captives are ordinarily represented “barefoot.” Most commonly they wear a single tunic, reaching from the neck to the knees, or sometimes to the ankles, and girt about the waist with a girdle. It is probable that Egyptian and Ethiopian prisoners would be even more scantily clad, since the ordinary Egyptian tunic began at the waist and ended considerably above the knee.

Whatever the thought, it is hard to dismiss the fact that someone whose “buttocks” are exposed is anything other than our common understanding of “naked”. This would obviously be a shame to most anyone, but particularly to Egyptians who were

¹ Rawlinson, George: Exposition on Isaiah

² G. Smith, ‘Eponym Canon,’ p. 130

³ Ibid. pp. 133, 134

a very proud people and to any that sought an alliance with Egypt as a strength to protect them against the Assyrians.

✓ Verse 5 - Those who have resorted to Egypt and Ethiopia for aid shall be "ashamed" of their folly in doing so, and "afraid" of its consequences (see the last clause of verse 6). Remember that Isaiah' warning is to Judah, who is seeking an alliance with Egypt against Assyria.

✓ Verse 6 - "Isle" literally means "coast" and refers to Palestine generally, which was a mere strip of coast compared with Egypt and Ethiopia. Sargon speaks of all the four powers who at this time "sought to Egypt," as "dwelling beside the sea".¹

✓ Consider: Using the types/anti-types from previous chapter, is the spiritual parallel of chapters 19 and 20 possibly referring to the Restoration?

NOTES:

Read 19 + 20

C

¹ Ibid. p.130

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

As with the previous chapter, there is no agreement as to what this chapter is specifically describing. There are a number of events in history that partially fulfill this prophesy, but none (that I am aware of - GAO) that exactly fulfill it.

What is being described here is a grievous situation in which a watchman has been set to wait upon an event to change the condition. There are a couple of possible fulfillments of this. It could refer to Cyrus who freed the Israelites from their captivity in Babylon. This event was prophesied and the Jews in captivity were awaiting the event. Another is the advent of Christ and the other is the reformation, where the early reformers were in the apostate church (desert) and awaiting an event (the Restoration of the church).

Verse 1 – This is directed to the “desert of the sea”. Because the fall of Babylon is mentioned later, many believe that this “desert of the sea” is Babylon, but that is not necessarily correct. The word “desert” is #4057 (Hebrew) in Strong’s and is nearly identical to the meaning of “wilderness” #2048 (Greek) as used in Revelation 12:6 in reference to the apostasy where the church fled into the wilderness (or desert here in Isaiah).

Verse 8 – Compare with Revelation 10:3 and Apostle Donald McIndoo’s study on the Book of Revelation.

Verse 10- Compare with Matthew 3:12

Verse 11-12 – “Dumah” means silence. Type: Morning (Cyrus), night (stagnation of Israel), return (Christ). Anti-type: Morning (Christ), night (apostasy) and return (Restoration).

Verse 13 – Forests of Arabia are harsh with thorns and briars. A difficult place to take refuge. Type: Israel no longer a nation. Anti-type: Apostate church.

Verse 14- Compare with Revelation 12:1-14

CONSIDERATION: The anti-type for these events may well be the latter days of the Apostate church during the time of the Reformation, just prior to the Restoration.

NOTES:

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Like the previous chapter, there is debate as to which event in ancient history Isaiah is specifically referring to. Also like the previous chapter in which Isaiah directs it to the “desert of the sea” and then makes reference to Babylon, here Isaiah directs it to the “valley” and makes reference to Jerusalem. As with chapter 21, many assume that Babylon and now in this chapter, Jerusalem, are the topics, that is not necessarily true.

What is clear is that Isaiah is describing a people that once were prosperous and are now in a condition with no hope. Throughout scripture mountains and high places are associated with the presence and nearness of God, is the reference to the “valley” implying the opposite? Perhaps most revealing as to the intent of Isaiah is verses 13-14. Here Isaiah describes individuals rejoicing in their sacrifices, content with their eternity, when in fact it is for naught. “...this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die..”, is there any personal death that purges the individual from iniquity? Is Isaiah referring to baptism? If so the truth in Isaiah’s time would be the advent of Christ and the anti-type would be the apostate Christian church awaiting the restoration. Are these the valleys that Isaiah refers to: the fall of Israel and the fall of the Christian church? As chapters 19 & 20 may have their anti-types in the Restoration and chapter 21 in the Apostasy at the time of the referendum awaiting the restoration, is chapter 22’s anti-type the apostasy of the Christian church? Is the “valley” of the vision a time in Israel’s and the Christian church’s history when they have fallen to the farthest point from God.

In verses 1-14 the prophet describes a city, by inference it is Jerusalem, either actually or spiritually. The inhabitants crowded together upon the housetops, in a state of boisterous merriment (verses 1, 2). Outside the walls is a foreign army threatening the town (verses 5-7). Preparations have been made for resistance, which are described (verses 8-11); but there has been no turning to God. On the contrary, the danger has but made the bulk of the people reckless. Instead of humbling themselves and putting on sackcloth, and weeping, and appealing to God’s mercy, they have determined to drown care in drink and sensual enjoyment (verses 12, 13). Therefore the prophet is bidden to denounce woe upon them, and threaten that Jehovah will not forgive their recklessness until their death (verse 14). There is nothing to mark very distinctly the nationality of the foreign army, however the Assyrian invasion is generally believed to be the force referenced, although they did not conquer Jerusalem. This is all the more reason to believe that we should be looking for spiritual fulfillment rather than temporal.

✓
Verse 1 – Addressed here and repeated in verse 5 to “the valley of vision”. On the housetops – this is describing a condition of relaxation and unaware of the threat. It is supported by the opening of verse 2.

✓
Verse 2 – A joyous city, the slain are not from battle. Perhaps describing a siege? That would certainly fit for the apostasy where the world was void of God’s word.

✓
Verse 3- All the leaders have fled and been captured by the enemy. The apostate church?

✓ Verse 4 – Isaiah expresses his grief over the image that he is witnessing.

✓ Verses 5-7 – Elam is a country extending from the Zagros range to the Lower Tigris, and watered by the Choaspes, Eulaeus, Pasitigris, and other rivers and was an independent kingdom from a very early date (Genesis 14:1, 9), and in Isaiah's time was generally hostile to Assyria. "Kir" is mentioned in 2 Kings as the place to which Tiglath-Pileser transported the inhabitants of Damascus (2 Kings 16:9), and by Amos (Amos 9:7) as the original country from which the Syrians were derived. Its modern counterpart is today unknown.

✓ Verse 8 – "Discovered" means to remove. In other words the covering (protection) of Judah is removed and they must resort to whatever natural means of defense they can find. God is no longer protecting them.

✓ Verses 9-11 – They are breaking down their houses to fortify the walls, but giving no recognition to the God that made them or protected them in the past. They are trusting in their own abilities. Remember from verse 3, all the leaders have fled and been captured. They are without leadership or direction. The apostate church?

✓ Verses 12-14 – God's call to repentance is ignored. Only their death would purge the iniquity (baptism? – see previous comment)

✓ Verses 15-25 – On the most simplistic of interpretations, these verses refer to an official that is replaced with another. The former is so confident in his position that he has already prepared his sepulcher in a prominent position. The fulfillment of the type would be the Pharisees and Sadducees that were replaced by the original disciples and the anti-type would be the apostate church (Roman Catholic) which considers itself as the original and current authority, but has been replaced with the restored church.

NOTES:

CHAPTER 23

This begins the last of the burdens. Tyre was a major coastal city of the Phoenicians. The Greeks called them "purple-folk" because of their famous purple dye. They were a great commercial empire with a huge fleet of merchant ships.

Tyre being a sea-port town, this prophecy of its overthrow fitly begins and ends with, *Howl, you ships of Tarshish*; for all its business, wealth, and honour, depended upon its shipping; if that be ruined, they will be all undone.

Observe: ✓

Verse 2 - *The merchants of Zidon*, who traded at sea, had at first *replenished her*. Zidon was the more ancient city, situated upon the same sea-coast to the north and Tyre was at first only a colony of that; but had become the greater economic center of the region.

Verse 3 - Egypt had helped very much to raise her. Sihor was the river of Egypt: by that river, and the ocean into which it ran, the Egyptians traded with Tyre; and the harvest of that river was her revenue.

She had become the mart of the nations, the great emporium of that part of the world. Some of every known nation might be found there, especially at certain times of the year, when there was a general rendezvous of merchants (consider description in Ezekiel 27:1-4).

Verse 7 - She was a *joyous city*. Those that were so disposed might find there all manner of entertainment and merriment. Her *antiquity* likewise was *of ancient days*, and she was proud of that and therefore believed that she must continue a city with continuance to the days of eternity.

Verse 8 - She was a *crowning city*. Such were the power and pomp of her magistrates that they crowned those who had dependence on her and dealings with her. It is explained in the following words: *Her merchants are princes*, and live like princes for the ease and state they take; and *her traffickers*, whatever country they go to, *are the honourable of the earth*, who are respected by all.

NOTES:

The destruction of Tyre:

“Here is Tyre falling. It does not appear that she brought trouble upon herself by provoking her neighbours with her quarrels, but rather by tempting them with her wealth; but, if it was this that induced Nebuchadnezzar to fall upon Tyre, he was disappointed; for after it had stood out a siege of thirteen years, and could hold out no longer, the inhabitants got away by sea, with their families and goods, to other places where they had an interest, and left Nebuchadnezzar nothing but the bare city. See a history of Tyre in Sir Walter Raleigh’s *History of the World*, lib. 2. cap. 7. sect. 3, 43. page. 283, which will give much light to this prophecy and that in Ezekiel concerning Tyre.”¹

Verse 1 - The haven shall no longer be a convenient harbor for the reception of the ships of Tarshish, but all *laid waste*. Tyre being destroyed and laid waste, the ships that used to come from Tarshish and Chittim into that port shall now no more enter in; for *it is revealed* or made known *to them*, they have received the dismal news, that Tyre is destroyed and laid waste; so that there is now no more business for them there. See how it is in this world; those that are spoiled by their enemies are commonly slighted by their old friends.

Verse 2 - The inhabitants are struck with astonishment. Tyre was an island. The inhabitants of it, who had made a mighty noise and bustle in the world, shall now be still and silent.

Verses 4-5 - *Zidon is ashamed*, by whom Tyre was at first replenished. “*I travail not, nor bring forth children now*, as I have done. I do not now, as I used to do, bring ship-loads of young people to Tyre, to be bred up there in trade and business, which was the thing that had made Tyre so rich and populous. Or the sea, that used to be loaded with fleets of ships about Tyre, shall not be as desolate as a sorrowful widow that is bereaved of all her children, and has none about her to nourish and bring up. Egypt indeed was a much larger and more considerable kingdom than Tyre was; and yet Tyre had so large a correspondence, upon the account of trade, that all the nations about shall be as much in pain, upon the report of the ruin of that one city, as they would have been, and not long after were, upon the report of the ruin of all Egypt, v. 5. Or, as some read it, *When the report shall reach to the Egyptians they shall be sorely pained to hear it of Tyre*, both because of the loss of their trade with that city and because it was a threatening step towards their own ruin; when their neighbour’s house was on fire their own was in danger.”²

NOTES:

¹ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

² *Ibid.*

Verse 6 - The merchants, as many as could, should transmit their effects to other places, and abandon Tyre. Tarshish was a city in Spain.

Verse 7 - They shall be hurried away on foot into captivity and certain misery. Those that have lived in the great center of commerce and abundance shall march into the lowest estate.

Verse 10 - Though they hasten away as a river, with the greatest swiftness, hoping to outrun the danger, yet *there is no more strength*; they are quickly tired, and cannot get forward, but fall an easy prey into the hands of the enemy.

Verse 12 - "*Daughter of Zidon*" is referring to Tyre (see comments for verse 2, page 104 of study). Chittim (Cyprus) was a nearer refuge than Tarshish, and far more easily reached; but, on the other hand, it was much less safe. Sargon and Esarhaddon both of them exercised dominion over it; and when Abdi-Milkut, King of Sidon, fled there in the reign of the latter, the Assyrian monarch pursued him, caught him, and "cut off his head".¹ Still, it was so often sought by princes flying from Phoenicia when attacked by Assyria, that cuneiform scholars call it "the usual refuge of the Phoenician kings".² Cyprus submitted to Sargon³ and again to Esarhaddon.⁴ It was included in the dominions of Asshur-bani-pal.⁵ After Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Tyre, it was annexed by Egypt, on the conquest of which country by Cambyses it became Persian. The Phoenicians had "no rest" there after Assyria had once found her way to the island.

Tyre's return:

Verses 15-18 - Tyre will return after seventy years. Compare this with Jeremiah 25:11-14 and 29:10. Tyre fell at approx the same time as Judah with the Babylonian invasion, perhaps with the release of the Israelites under Cyrus, those from Tyre were also allowed to return their lands. What is of some confusion, is that verse 17 seems to indicate that she will commit fornication with the kingdoms of the world, while verse 18 seems to indicate that her industry will support God's purposes.

Consider: Is the anti-type possibly the Holy Roman Empire (Christian church in apostasy) where the commerce and industry are united under the guise of religion, where it appears to be for good, but is actually fornication.

NOTES:

¹ G. Smith, 'Eponym Canon,' p. 137

² Transactions of Bibl. Archaeology Society, vol. 4. p. 86

³ Records of the Past, vol. 7. p. 26

⁴ *ibid.*, vol. 8. p. 108

⁵ G. Smith, 'History of Asshur-bani-pal, pp. 31, 32

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

This chapter presents a view of a time of great destruction and concludes with the Lord reigning. Its scope is clearly beyond just Judah, with its frequent references to the "earth" and its closing is quite similar to the description that we find in Revelation of Christ's Millennial Reign. There are three possible (maybe more) times and circumstances that this could be addressing and all or some of them could be correct:

- 1) Judah final destruction/Christ's Advent
- 2) Apostasy/Restoration
- 3) Tribulation/Christ's return

Verse 1 – The use of "earth" here, "the world" in verse 4 and of "the-kings of the earth" in verse 21, implies an application beyond that of just the Holy Land.

Verse 2 – There shall be "no respect of persons" — no favor shown to men of any particular rank or station. All shall suffer equally.

Verse 3 – "Land" as translated here, in the Hebrew is the same word translated as "earth" in verse 1 and therefore referring to same. Compare with Matthew 24:6-8.

Verses 4-5 – The reason is transgression against God's laws.

Verse 6 – The earth is "cursed" by God.

*1 Nep - 7:32-48
Matt 24:21-22, 15
Mormon 4:37-40*

Verse 7 - Even those most disposed to be "merry hearted," under the dismal circumstances of the time can do nothing but "sigh."

Verse 8 ✓ tabrets = tambourines

The feasting, the drinking, the songs, and the musical accompaniment, are discontinued. All is dismay and wretchedness — desolation in the present, worse desolation is expected in the future. (Compare with Jeremiah 7:34, 16:9, 25:10)

Verse 9 ✓ The merriment that usually is associated with drinking shall be absent.

Verse 10 ✓ There is no civic life, no government, no order, nothing but confusion.

Verse 11 ✓ Wine, though still manufactured (see verses 7, 9) is scarce, but is much sought after. They crave for its exhilarating effects, or perhaps for the oblivion which it brings when drunk to excess. Unable to locate it, even the factitious merriment, which wine is capable of producing, is denied now to the inhabitants of the earth, with whom "all joy is darkened", from whom "all mirth is gone".

Verse 12 ✓ The very gates of the towns, generally guarded with such care, are broken down and lie in ruins.

Verse 13 - In the time described the condition of the earth shall be like to that of an olive tree when the harvest is done or of a vineyard when the grapes are gathered. That is, a small and scattered remnant of inhabitants shall alone be left, like the few grapes and olives that were the portion of the gleaners.

Verse 14 - Even in this time of depression and ruin there shall be a "remnant," (previous verse) which will be faithful to God, and which, from the midst of the sufferings and calamities of the period, will "lift up its voice," in songs of adoration and praise, to Jehovah, and sing, or "send forth a cry."

Verse 15 - The righteous, though few, will glorify God in the fiery trial.

Verse 16 - The righteous remnant perceive that the calamities which have come upon the earth are ushering in a time of honor and glory for themselves; and they console themselves by making this fact the burden of some of their songs. Their honor is bound up with God's glory; which will not shine forth fully till their salvation is complete, and they "reign with him" in glory. This is in contrast to the "leanness" (poverty of righteousness) that Isaiah is witnessing in his own time. (Compare with Jeremiah 5:11)

Verses 17-18 - Man will be like a hunted animal, flying from pursuit and in danger at each step of falling into a pit or being caught in a snare. (Compare with Jeremiah 48:43)

Verses 19-20 - the earth perishes on account of men's sins. (Compare with Jeremiah 4:23) The present earth is to disappear altogether, and to be superseded by "a new heaven and a "new earth" (Revelation 21:1).

Verses 21-23 - Compare with Revelation 20:1-6. "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed" - Some interpret this in the light of Joel 2:31; 3:15; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12, as pointing to that physical change, real or phenomenal, in the shining of the sun and moon, which is to be one of the antecedent signs of Christ's coming at the last day. But the expressions used suggest rather a contrast between the dazzling splendor of Christ's actual appearance and the normal brightness of sunlight and moonlight.

1 Nep. 7:51-64

Chiasm?: desolate (v. 6)
 mirth (v.8)
 ceaseth (v.8)
 ceaseth (v.8)
 mirth (v.11)
 desolation (v.12)

NOTES:

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

In this chapter Isaiah praises the Lord's righteous judgment. This follows the previous chapter in which the destruction of the unrighteous are described, with a slight mention of the righteous. Now the attention is on how the righteous receive God's judgment.

As we could see the fulfillment of chapter 24 in:

- 1) Judah's destruction
- 2) Apostasy
- 3) Tribulation

We should consider as fulfillment of chapter 25:

- 1) Christ's first advent
- 2) Restoration
- 3) Christ's return

When considered with the chapters that follow, chapters 24 & 25 are transitional chapters and the prophet is now addressing the latter days and not the Judah of his time.

Verse 1 – All of God's counsels (promises) will be fulfilled, demonstrating that He is a God of faithfulness and truth.

Verse 2 – Echoing 24:20 – all those that oppose God and persecute the righteous shall cease and never rise again. Every city and fortress (defensed city) shall fall and the palaces, which would normally be occupied by the wealthy and famous are now full of strangers and none shall recover.

Verse 3 – As alluded to in chapter 24, from this destruction, will rise the righteous Glorifying and praising God.

Verse 4 - The entire imagery is in reference to what God will have done for his people when the final in these times of judgment and a precious encouragement is held out to all who are undergoing their earthly trial and probation, who are taught where to look for a sure refuge in time of trouble.

Verse 5 – The silencing of the boasts of the unrighteous is described. "Branch" actually means a song in the original Hebrew. The exultant chant of triumph which the ungodly are sure to raise as they deem their victory over the people of God complete, will be stopped in mid-song, and "brought low," or reduced to silence, by the crushing overthrow predicted in Isaiah 24.

NOTES:

Verses 6-8 - The blessings of the final state are now touched upon, as a special subject for thanksgiving. They are not enumerated; but a certain number are set forth, as specimens from which we may form a conception of the general condition of the "saved." These are:

- (1) a heavenly feast, in which they will all participate (verse 6);
- (2) a removal of the "veil," or "covering," which is in this life over all things, causing men to have an indistinct vision, and an erroneous estimate of their value;
- (3) the abolition of death, which will no longer hang over them as a thing to be feared; and
- (4) the cessation of tears, or the entire freedom of the saved from all sorrow.

Although the references to "veil" and "swallow up death" sounds like Christ's first advent a more careful examination in the context of a time of no more tears, gives indication of a time where death will no longer occur, not just the hope of what awaits us after death.

Like chapter 24, this is not specific to Judah, but "unto all people" (verses 6 & 7), "all nations" (verse 7) and "all the earth" (verse 8). A great feast is described. Our Lord told of a "marriage supper," to which he will invite his friends (Matthew 22:2-12); and John described the scene of the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7-9). And Christ foretold of a time when He would again partake of the sacrificial feast with His disciples (Matthew 26:29).

Verse 9 - All those that have been "waiting" on the Lord shall rejoice.

Verse 10 - The protecting hand of God will ever be stretched out over the spiritual Zion — the Church of the Redeemed — to defend it and keep it safe throughout eternity. Various reasons have been given for the selection of Moab to represent the enemies of the redeemed. Perhaps, as the Moabites were, on the whole, the bitterest of all the adversaries of the Jews (2 Kings 24:2; Ezekiel 25:8-11), they are regarded as the fittest representatives of the human adversaries of God.

Verses 11-12 - All that oppose God and righteousness shall cease.

NOTES:

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Verse 1 – “In that day” – referring to when the conditions described in the previous chapter transpire. From the time setting, we would assume that the “Judah” referred to here is the anti-type to the literal Judah which was the type. It will be a “strong” city, but that strength will be a spiritual strength from righteousness, not physical as with walls and gates. *Ether - 6:4-5*

Verse 2 – “Open ye the gates” may indicate that this city (spiritual) has never been occupied, but has been reserved for this “righteous nation” to dwell in.

Verses 3-4 - All is peace and sure defense on God’s side; all is trust and perfect confidence on the side of man.

Verses 5-6 - The feet of God’s people, the weak and afflicted of this world, trod down ultimately, or brought to destruction and ruin, the great world-power — not so much that they were victorious in an actual physical contest, as that they, finally triumphed through God’s judgment on the world-power, which brought it to naught, and left it for his people to show their contempt by trampling upon the smoking ruins.

Verse 7 - It is one of the main blessings of the righteous that God “makes their way straight before their face” (Psalm 4:8), “leads them in a plain path” (Psalm 27:11), “shows them the way they are to walk in” (Psalm 143:8), so that they are for the most part free from doubt and perplexity as to the line of conduct for the path they are to pursue.

Verses 8-9 – The righteous have longed for and awaited this day.

Verses 10-11 – Although the righteous have desired “favor” or “grace” for the unrighteous, the unrighteous will not recognize what is available to them and continue to rebel against God and the righteous.

Verse 12 – The righteous rejoice that they now are secure in peace, free from adversity.

Verse 13 – Of particular interest is that the righteous in this blessed time, have not always been so. In the past they have at other times followed “other lords”, but they have been converted to the Lord and now receive all the blessings.

NOTES:

Verse 14 - The "they" of this may refer to the false gods, those that believe in them or both. In all three possibilities the message is the same: they are dead and gone and have no hope in the resurrection or eternal life. The "great gods" whom so many millions worshipped in former times — Bel, Asshur, Ammon, Zeus and Jupiter — have passed so completely away as to be almost wholly forgotten!

Verse 15 - The "righteous nation" of verse 2 — not just the Jewish people — who are to be "a great multitude, that no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9-10). This "nation" (spiritual) will not be like other nations with geographic boundaries, but rather "removed...far until all the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 24:13-16, 1 Nephi 3:226-28, Mosiah 1:121-123).

Verses 16-18 — It has been these pains of persecution, oppression and poverty that has caused them to seek the and now that they are realizing the benefit, they give thanks.

Verse 19 — Whether you live to see the day or not, by the resurrection, all the righteous shall have part in that glorious day (Revelation 20: 4-7).

Verse 20 — Those that live to see the day must shelter themselves from the impending doom (Revelation 18:1-5, Matthew 24:21-22)

Verse 21 — The Lord shall return in judgment to defend the righteous (Zechariah 14:1-4).

NOTES:

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

This chapter also starts with "in that day" in reference to the day of God's judgment that has been described in the previous chapters. With all of God's earthly opposition now subdued He shall visit with His sword the final foe that is described with three descriptions/characteristics: The first as "Leviathan the piercing serpent", the second as "Leviathan that crooked serpent" and finally as "the dragon that is in the sea."

Commentators frequently associate these three descriptions with three kingdoms in opposition to God, those being either: Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt; or Assyria, Egypt, and Tyre; or Media, Persia, and Egypt. Rather than any particular kingdom or world-power, the imagery itself and the climax alike indicate something higher than world-powers being intended. "Leviathan," which first appears in Job 3:8 as "mourning," represents some power beyond the earthly realms described in the previous chapters. "Dragon" is a customary emblem of Satan himself (Psalm 91:13; Isaiah 51:9; Revelation 12:7, 9), the prince of darkness. The triple vengeance here is parallel to the triple punishment, in the apocalyptic vision (Revelation 19:20; 20:10), of "the devil," "the beast," and "the false prophet."

✓ Verse 1 - The term "Leviathan" appears to mean "that which is coiled" or "twisted," whence it would seem to have been primarily applied, as in the present verse, to serpents. The term also appears in Psalm 104:26 and Job 41:1-34 gives a description. Thus its most appropriate English rendering would be "monster." The word in the original text for "piercing" meant "fleeing". As with the preceding chapters, this seems to be describing Christ's return and Millennial Reign (Revelation 19:19 - 20:6).

✓ Verses 2-6 - This may be a companion picture to Isaiah 5:1-7. In both the figure of the vineyard is employed to express the people of God, and God is "the Lord of the vineyard." But whereas, on the former occasion, all was wrath and fury, menace and judgment, here all is mercy and loving-kindness, protection and promise. The difference is, no doubt, not with God, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17), but with the vineyard, which is either not the same, or, if the same, then differently circumstanced. The vineyard of Isaiah 5 is beyond all doubt the Jewish Church in the time of Isaiah or in the times shortly after. The vineyard of the present chapter must refer to those righteous in the previous chapters that have been awaiting this glorious moment. As the previous chapters have been addressed to the "world" and "earth", we must suppose that this vineyard goes beyond Israel and would include all righteous followers of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile. Verse 6 clearly indicates that Israel will be included (of Jacob).

NOTES:

✓ Verse 2 – Traditionally “a vineyard of red wine” is known for its abundant fruit. It produces more product per acre than other types.

✓ Verse 3 – This “vineyard” will be under God’s continual watchcare, receiving everything that it is in need of. Compare with the “vineyard” of Isaiah 5:6, which the Lord would “lay waste”.

✓ Verse 4 – Unlike the “vineyard” in chapter 5, there is no fury towards this one from God. Rather that “fury” is reserved for those that oppose and persecute the vineyard (briers and thorns) which God will destroy (burn).

✓ Verse 5 - There is an alternative. If the “thorns and the briers” are not prepared to contend in battle against God, let them adopt a different course. Let them “lay hold of God’s strength,” place themselves under his protection, and make their appeal to him, and see if they cannot “make their peace with him.” The enemies of God are entreated to cease from striving against him, and are taught that the door of repentance is still open to them. God is willing to be reconciled even to his enemies.

✓ Verse 6 – Jacob shall take root and Israel shall bloom and bud. The “fruit” of this “vineyard” will fill the world.

✓ Verse 7 - Has God smitten Judah, as he (God) smote Judah’s smiters? Judah’s chief smiters were Assyria and Babylon. The judgments upon them would be more severe than that upon Judah. They would be destroyed; Judah would be taken captive, and restored.

Hath he (God) smitten him (Israel), as he (God) smote those (opponents to Israel) that smote him (Israel)? *or* is he (Israel) slain according to the slaughter of them (opponents of Israel) that are slain by him (God)?

✓ Verse 8 – The various translations of the Bible read quite differently on this verse as it appears that the KJV translators did not completely capture the sentiment of this verse in the Hebrew. The more conservative thought is that this verse should read as: *In measure, when thou puttest her away, thou wilt contend with her; he sighed with his keen breath in the day of the east wind.* “In measure” means “with forbearance and moderation” — the punishment being carefully adjusted to the degree of the offence. God was about to “put Judah away” — to banish her into a far country; but still he would refrain himself — he would “not suffer his whole displeasure to arise,” or give her over wholly to destruction. “In the day of the east wind” or of the national catastrophe (Israel’s enemies have traditionally come from the east), when his breath was fierce and hard against his people, he would “sigh” at the needful chastisement. Amid the rough and stern severity which he breathed into the tempest, there was an undertone of sadness and grief.

NOTES:

Verse 9 – “By this” is in reference to the previously described punishment. And its purpose has been to “purge” Jacob of his sin and bring the destruction and end to all the false gods, idols and altars that have so easily become part of Jacob (Israel).

Verse 10 - Though Israel’s punishment is in mercy, as a chastisement which is to purge away her sin, yet her defended city(ies) (possibly Jerusalem) shall for a time be desolate, void, without inhabitant.

Verse 11 – Perhaps referring back to the image of verse 6, Israel or Jerusalem is described as a tree. When the boughs are withered, they shall be broken off. “Withered boughs” are indications of internal rotteness, and must be “broken off” to give the tree a chance of recovery. Women, who are generally viewed as physically weaker than men, are strong enough to gather them and burn them, and indication of weak (light) the branches are because of corruption. It was folly, madness, to turn away from Jehovah, and go after other gods. Only through having “no understanding” could Israel have been so foolish (Deuteronomy 32:28; 2 Kings 17:15; Jeremiah 4:22). God made all men, but he “made” and “formed” Israel with exceptional care, and exceptional care leads on to exceptional love. God will have “measure” and “mercy” in his punishment of Israel, but to those that have so decayed as to be broken off, will receive their just punishment.

Verse 12 – “In that day” returns us to the prevailing time of the prophesy – Christ’s return and Millennial Reign. “Beat off” means to “thresh” or harvest. The “river” as usual refers to the Euphrates. The “stream of Egypt” refers to the southern boundary of the Holy Land. This is a prophesy of the gathering of Israel.

Verse 13 – The great trumpet signaling Christ’s return is sounded (Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Now the image goes beyond the Holy Land (as the previous chapters have been aimed) and those ready to perish in Assyria and the outcasts in Egypt also come to worship the Lord in “in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:16-21) .

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Woe has been placed upon all the principal nations of the earth (Isaiah 13-23.), the destruction of the world itself foretold (Isaiah 24:17-20), and the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and the ingathering of the nations into it (Isaiah 25-27.) have been told. Now the attention returns to Israel, beginning with Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom – see page 35 of study). After a brief warning, addressed to Ephraim, he considers the condition of Judah, which he accuses of following the example of Ephraim, of perishing through self-indulgence and lack of knowledge (verses 7-12). He then proceeds to chastise the “rulers of Jerusalem,” on whom lies the chief responsibility for its future.

Verse 1 - The “drunkards of Ephraim,” or of the ten tribes, were intoxicated with wine and with pride (compare with Amos 6:4-13). With the advance of the Assyrians they gave themselves up more and more to self-indulgence and luxury, lay upon beds of ivory, drank wine from bowls, feasted to the sound of the viol, and even invented fresh instruments of music. They persisted in regarding themselves as secure, when even ordinary political foresight might have seen that their end was approaching.

“Ephraim had his name from *fruitfulness*, their soil being very fertile and the products of it abundant and the best of the kind; they had a great many *fat valleys* (v. 1, 4), and Samaria, which was situated on a hill, was, as it were, *on the head of the fat valleys*. Their country was rich and pleasant, and as the garden of the Lord: it was the glory of Canaan, as that was the glory of all lands; their harvest and vintage were the *glorious beauty* on the head of their valleys, which were covered over with corn and vines.¹ *their beauty will end.*

Verses 2-3 - The “mighty and strong one” is the Assyrian power. The fearfully devastating force of an Assyrian invasion is set forth under three distinct images — a hailstorm, a furious tempest of wind, and a violent inundation. “War is always a horrible scourge; but in ancient times, and with a people so cruel as the Assyrians, it was a calamity exceeding in terribleness the utmost that the modern reader can conceive. It involved the wholesale burning of cities and villages, the wanton destruction of trees and crops, the slaughter of thousands in battles and sieges, the subsequent massacre of hundreds in cold blood, the plunder of all classes, and the deportation of tens of thousands of captives, who were carried into hopeless servitude in a strange land.”²

NOTES:

¹ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

² Rawlinson, George *Exposition on Isaiah*

Verse 4 - The "beauty" of Samaria would tempt the Assyrians to desire it so soon as they saw it, and would rouse an appetite which would be content with nothing less than the speedy absorption of the coveted morsel. Samaria's siege, once begun, was pressed without intermission, and lasted less than three years (2 Kings 18:9-10) — a short space compared to that of other sieges belonging to about the same period; *e.g.* that of Ashdod, besieged twenty-nine years and that of Tyre, besieged thirteen years.

Verses 5-6 - Israel's (Northern Kingdom) fate was the most powerful of all possible warnings to Judah against treading in her steps. Samaria had perished through want of faith in Jehovah. She had turned to other gods; she had trusted in her own "glory" and "beauty;" and she had trusted in Egypt. If Judah would do the exact opposite, she might be saved. If she would take Jehovah for her "Crown of glory" and "Diadem of beauty," he was willing to be so taken. He was willing to impart a "spirit of judgment" to her rulers, and "strength" to her armed force.

This is an offer, and something more than an offer. It is implied that, to some extent, the offer would be accepted. And clearly the closing of the clouds around Samaria was coincident with the dawn of a brighter day in Judah. Hezekiah came to the throne only three years before the fatal siege of Samaria began. His accession must have been nearly contemporaneous with that expedition of Shal-maneser against Hoshea, when he "shut him up, and bound him in prison" (2 Kings 17:4). Yet he was not daunted by his neighbor's peril. He began his reign with a political revolution and a religious reformation. He threw off the yoke of Assyria, to which his father had submitted (2 Kings 18:7), and he cleared the land of idols and idol-worship. It was the dawn of a day of promise, such as the prophet seems to point to in these two verses. Unhappily, the dawn was soon clouded over (verses 7-9).

Verses 7-10 - The reformation effected by Hezekiah was but a half-reformation. It put away idolatry, but it left untouched a variety of moral evils, as:

1. Drunkenness. Judah was no whit behind Ephraim in respect of this vice. The very priests and "prophets" gave way to the disgusting habit, and came drunk to the most solemn functions of religious teaching and hearing causes.
2. Scorn and mockery of God's true prophets. The teaching of Isaiah was made light of by the officials of the priestly and prophetic orders, who claimed to be quite as competent to instruct men in their duties as himself. They seem to have ridiculed the mode of his teaching.

NOTES:

“They also” - Judah, no less than Ephraim (see verses 1, 3). It has been questioned whether literal intoxication is meant, and suggested that Judah “imitated the pride and unbelief and *spiritual intoxication* of Ephraim”. But the numerous passages which identify both the Israelites and the Jews of the period with drunkenness (Isaiah 5:11, 22; 22:13; 56:12; Hosea 4:11; 7:5; Amos 6:6, etc.), are best understood literally. Priests were forbidden by the Law to drink any wine or strong drink previously to their taking part in the service of the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:9), and the prohibition was always understood to apply to the temple (Ezekiel 44:21). Prophets might have been expected to act in the spirit of the command given to priests. By “prophets” here Isaiah means, not persons especially called of God, but official members of the prophetic order. Of these there were always many in Judah, who had no strong sense of religion (see Isaiah 29:10; Jeremiah 5:13, 31; Ezekiel 13:2-16; Amos 2:12; Micah 3:11; Zephaniah 3:4, etc.). They are drunken, even in the very exercise of their prophetic office. Persons in authority had been specially warned not to drink wine before the hearing of causes (Proverbs 31:4, 5).

Although it is somewhat vague as to whom is speaking in verse 9, it would appear to be Judah’s response to Isaiah: “Whom does he think he is teaching?” they ask. “Mere children, just weaned from their mother’s milk, and taken away from the breast? Does he forget that we are grown men — nay, priests and prophets? And what poor teaching it is! What ‘endless petty feazing’! — precept upon precept,” etc. The intention is to throw ridicule upon the smallness and vexatious character of the prophet’s interminable and uninterrupted chidings. The whole teaching is nothing but an accumulation of precept upon precept, rule upon rule, one little injunction followed up by another, here a little, there a little. The objectors profess to find in the prophet’s teaching nothing grand, nothing broad — no enunciation of great leading principles; but a perpetual drizzling rain of petty maxims and rules, vexatious, cramping, confining; especially unsuitable to men who had had the training of priests and prophets, and could have appreciated a grand theory, or a new religious standpoint, but were simply revolted at a teaching which seemed to them narrow, childish, and wearisome.

Verse 11 - God will retort on the Jews their scorn of his prophet, and, as they will not be taught by his utterances, which they find to be childish and unrefined, will teach them by utterances still more unrefined — those of the Assyrians.

Verse 12 - God had offered to his people “rest” and “refreshing” — or a life of ease and peace in Palestine — but on condition of their serving him faithfully and observing his laws (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). But they had rejected this “rest,” since they had refused to observe the condition on which it was promised. Because they had rejected God and His prophet(s), God now brought upon them war and a conqueror.

NOTES:

Verse 13 - God will now speak to them, not by his prophet, but by the Assyrian conqueror, who will do what they said Isaiah had done, *i.e.* lay upon them command after command, rule alter rule, a constant series of minute injunctions, under which they will chafe and fret and at last rebel, but only to be “snared and taken.” It is uncertain whether the reference is to the immediate future and to the Assyrians proper only, or whether the Babylonians are not taken into account also, and their oppression of Judaea pointed to. The yoke of Babylon was probably quite as difficult to endure as that of Assyria; and in the space of eighteen years, it produced at least three rebellions.

(Verses 14-22) The power of the nobles under the later Jewish monarchy is very apparent throughout Isaiah’s prophecy. It is they, and not the king, who are always blamed for bad government (Isaiah 1:10-23; 3:12-15, etc.) or errors of policy (Isaiah 9:15, 16; 22:15-19, etc.). Isaiah now turns from a denunciation of the priests and prophets, who especially opposed his teaching, to a threatening of the great men who guided the course of public affairs. He taxes them with being “men of scorn” (verse 14), *i.e.* scorers of Jehovah, and with “a proud and insolent self-confidence”. They have made, or are about to make, secret arrangements which will, they believe, secure Judaea against suffering injury at the hands of the Assyrians, and are quite satisfied with what they have done, and fear no evil. Isaiah is instructed that their boasted arrangements will entirely fail in the time of trial — their “refuge” (Egypt) will be found a refuge of lies (verse 17), and the “overflowing scourge” (Assyria) will pass through the land, and carry all before it (verse 18). There will then ensue a time of “vexation” and discomfort (verses 19, 20) — God’s anger will be poured out upon the land in strange ways (verse 21). He therefore warns the rulers to lay aside their scorn of God, and humble themselves, lest a worse thing happen to them (verse 22).

Verse 14 – The “scornful men” that “rule this people” is now addressed.

Verse 15 - The words are a boast, that they have secured their own safety by some secret agreement. They have an agreement with “death” and “hell” *i.e.*, the destructive powers that Isaiah has prophesied of, they believe they have circumvented by treaty. The exact nature of the agreement they are disinclined to divulge. “When the overflowing scourge shall pass through” – the Assyrian invasion has been compared to a “flood” (Isaiah 8:7; 28:2), and to a “rod” or “staff” (Isaiah 10:24). Here the two metaphors are joined together. “It shall not come to us” - some means will be found — what, they do not say, either for diverting the flood, or for stemming it. “For we have made lies our refuge” - here the Divine reporter departs from the language of those whose words he is reporting, and substitutes his own estimate of the true nature and true value of that “refuge” on which they placed such entire reliance.

NOTES:

It appears by Isaiah 30:1-7 and Isaiah 36:6-9 that that refuge was Egypt.

Verse 16 - In contrast with the insecure refuge and false ground of confidence upon which they have relied, the prophet puts forward the one sure "Rock" on which complete dependence may be placed — which he declares that Jehovah is laying, or "has laid," in Zion as "a tried stone, a precious corner stone", a sure foundation. The imagery is, no doubt, drawn from the practice of kings and notably Solomon, to employ foundation-stones of enormous size and weight at the corners of buildings. Some of those uncovered at the corners of Solomon's temple are more than thirty-eight feet long, and weigh more than a hundred tons. But the reference cannot, of course, be to the material structure of the temple as Israel's true refuge. Rather, Jehovah himself would seem to be the Rock (Isaiah 26:4; 30:29, etc.) intended; and hence the application to Christ by the writers of the New Testament (Romans 9:33; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8) was natural and easy. But it may be questioned whether the passage was to Isaiah himself "Messianic," or meant more than that God had set his Name and his presence at Jerusalem from the time that the temple was built there, and that it was a mistake to look elsewhere than to him for deliverance or security.

Verse 17 - Rather, *justice also will I set for my rule, and righteousness for my plumb-line; i.e.* I will execute justice and judgment on the earth with all strictness and exactness. The scorners had implied that, by their clever devices, they would escape the judgment of God (verse 15). The storm of Assyrian invasion will overwhelm Egypt, which is a "refuge of lies," false and untrustworthy.

Verse 18 - The entire clever arrangement, by which they thought to avert the danger from themselves and from Judea, shall come to naught.

Verse 19 - As the flood of Assyrian invasion sweeps through Palestine, it shall thin the population by death and captivity. We know of at least eight passages of the "flood" through Judea — one under Sargon, two under Sennacherib, three or four under Esarhaddon, and two under Asshur-bani-pal. There may have been more. "Morning by morning"; *i.e.* frequently — time after time. They had thought scorn of Isaiah's "doctrine," when he taught it them by word of mouth; they will understand it but too well, and find it "nothing but a terror," when it is impressed on them by the preaching of facts.

Verses 20-21 - We have a proverb, "As a man makes his bed, so must he lie in it." The Jews will have made themselves a bed in which they can have no comfort or ease, and consequently no rest. But they will only have themselves to blame for it.

NOTES:

Verse 21 - The "Mount Perazim" of this passage is probably the same as the "Baal-Perazim" of 1 Chronicles 14:11, where David completely defeated the Philistines by the Divine help. This victory is connected with another over the same nation in "the valley of Gibeon" (1 Chronicles 14:13-16). Now, however, God was to be on the side of the enemies of his people, and it would be Judah who were to suffer as the Philistines had suffered in the past.

Having denounced the sinners of Judah through the preceding verses (7-22), he has a word of consolation and encouragement for the better disposed, whose hearts he hopes to have touched and stirred by his warning.

Verses 23-24 - In both the old and new testaments, God's people often are compared to a vineyard and here they are compared to a field. The processes by which God educates and disciplines his people are compared to those employed by man in the cultivation of such a piece of ground and the obtaining of a harvest, from it. First of all, the ground must be plowed, the face of the earth "opened" and the "clods broken." This, however, does not go on forever; it is for an object — that the seed may be sown; and, as soon as the ground is fit for the sowing to take place, the preparation of the soil ceases. Harrowing succeeds to plowing in the natural order of things, the object of the harrowing being to break and pulverize the clods.

Verse 25 - **When he hath made plain the face thereof**; *i.e.* leveled it — brought the ground to a tolerably even surface. **Doth he not cast abroad the fitches?** The Hebrew word translated "fitches" — *i.e.* "vetches" — is *qetsach*, which is generally allowed to represent the *Nigella sativa*, a sort of ranunculus, which is cultivated in many parts of the East for the sake of its seeds. These are black, and have an aromatic flavor. Dioscorides (3:83) and Pliny (19:8) say that they were sometimes mixed with bread. **And scatter the cummin.** "Cummin" (*Cuminum sativum*) is "an umbelliferous plant, something like fennel." The seeds — or rather, berries — have "a bitterish warm taste, with an aromatic flavor" ('Dict. of the Bible,' vol. 1. p. 372). They seem to have been eaten as a relish with various kinds of food. **And cast in the principal wheat;** rather, *and put in wheat in rows*. Drill-ploughs, which would deposit *grain in rows*, were known to the Assyrians ('Ancient Monarchies,' vol. 2. p. 198). **And the rie in their place.** *Cussemeth*, the word translated "rie," is probably the *Holeus sorghum*, or "spelt," which is largely cultivated in Palestine and other parts of the East, and is the ordinary material of the bread eaten by the poorer classes (see the 'Pulpit Commentary' on Exodus, pp. 219, 220). For "in their place," Kay translates, "in its own border." The wheat and the barley and the spelt would all be sown separately, according to the direction of Leviticus 19:19, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed."¹

¹ Pulpit Commentary on Isaiah

Verse 26 - Through the reason which God has given to men, they deal thus prudently and carefully with the pieces of land which they cultivate.

Verse 27 - **For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument.** The *Nigella sativa* is too tender a plant to be subjected to the rude treatment of a threshing-instrument, or "threshing-sledge." Such instruments are of the coarsest and clumsiest character in the East, and quite inapplicable to plants of a delicate fabric. **Neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin.** The allusion is to aim the coarse mode of threshing practiced in Palestine and elsewhere, by driving a cart with broad wheels over the grain. **But the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.** Canon Tristram says, "While the cummin can easily be separated from its case by a slender rod, the harder pod of the *Nigella* requires to be beaten by a stout staff" ('Natural History of the Bible,' p. 445).¹

Verse 28 - **Bread corn is braised;** literally, *bread*; but no doubt the corn, from which bread is made, is meant. Most critics regard the clause as interrogative, "Is bread corn bruised?" — and the answer as given in the negative by the rest of the sentence, "No; he will not continue always threshing it, nor crush it with his cart-wheel and his horses — he will not bruise it." Even where the rougher modes of threshing are employed, there is moderation in their employment. Care is taken not to injure the grain. Here the main bearing of the whole parable appears. The afflictions which God sends upon his people are adapted to their strength and to their needs. In no case are they such as to crush and injure. Only such violence is used as is required to detach the good seed from the husks. Where the process is most severe, still the "bread-corn" is not "bruised."²

Verse 29 - This prudent dealing of the husbandman with his produce is the result of the wisdom implanted in him by God. (Isaiah 9:6; Job 6:13, 12:16; Proverbs 2:7, 3:21, 8:14, 18:1; Micah 6:9; Proverbs 8:14)

NOTES:

¹ Pulpit Commentary on Isaiah

² Ibid.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

(2 Nephi 11:80-160)

Verse 1 – Now Isaiah focuses on the city of Jerusalem. This chapter of Isaiah is the only place in scripture where the city of Jerusalem is referred to as “Ariel”. “Ariel” means “lion of God” or “heart or altar of God”, with the latter the more accepted thought. It is a rather universal thought that this is in reference to Jerusalem and there is no reason that we should accept that thinking about the “city where David dwelt”, although it is unclear as to the unique designation here as “Ariel”.

Verses 2-3 – Not only will the Lord “distress” the city, but will “lay siege” against it. The phrase “siege” implies an oppression that will long out last the original assault. Even today, the city of Jerusalem is a great source of tension in the region. Nephi prophesied similarly in regards to the “seed of my brethren” in 2 Nephi 11:80-83.

Verse 4 – Nephi is more specific in 2 Nephi 11:84-86 that this is referring to a written record or book which we recognize as the Book of Mormon. Isaiah will later make reference to this “book” beginning in verse 11.

Speak – Hebrew word # 1696, *dabar*, a primitive root; perhaps properly, to arrange; but used figuratively (of words), to speak; rarely (in a destructive sense) to subdue: -answer, appoint, bid, command, commune, declare, destroy, give, name, promise, pronounce, rehearse, say, speak, be spokesman, subdue, talk, teach, tell, think, use [entreaties], utter, X well, X work.

Out of the ground - Strong's # 776 Hebrew: *'erets* from an unused root probably meaning to be firm; the earth (at large, or partitively a land): --X common, country, earth, field, ground, land, X natins, way, + wilderness, world.

Speech – Strong's #565, Hebrew: *'imrah* feminine of 561, and meaning the same: --commandment, speech, word.

Low - Strong's #7817 a primitive root; to sink or depress (reflexive or causative): --bend, bow (down), bring (cast) down, couch, humble self, be (bring) low, stoop.

Out of the Dust - Strong's #6083 Hebrew: *'aphar* from 6080; dust (as powdered or gray); hence, clay, earth, mud: --ashes, dust, earth, ground, mortar, powder, rubbish. *'Aphrah*. See 1035.

Voice - Strong's # 6963 Hebrew: *qowl* ; from an unused root meaning to call aloud; a voice or sound: --+ aloud, bleating, crackling, cry (+ out), fame, lightness, lowing, noise, + hold peace, [pro-]claim, proclamation, + sing, sound, + spark, thunder(-ing), voice, + yell.

Familiar Spirit - Strong's #178 Hebrew: 'owb ;from the same as 1 (apparently through the idea of prattling a father's name); properly, a mumble, i.e. a water skin (from its hollow sound); hence a necromancer (ventriloquist, as from a jar): -- bottle, familiar spirit.

Whisper - Strong's #6850 Hebrew: tsaphaph; a primitive root; to coo or chirp (as a bird): --chatter, peep, whisper.

Compare also with 1 Nephi 3:184-186 and Mormon 4:17-21, 28-47

Verses 5-8 - (Compare with 2 Nephi 11:87-89, 117-121) Although this destruction will come upon them, the destruction that will come upon their adversaries will be complete and final. The individuals at "Ariel" will pass away, but God has a plan for the city (verses that follow). Nephi describes what will occur among the "gentiles" in greater detail in 2 Nephi 11:90-115.

Verses 9-10 - (Compare with 2 Nephi 11:122-124)

Stay yourselves - Strong's #4102 Hebrew: mahahh; apparently a denominative from 4100; properly, to question or hesitate, i.e. (by implication) to be reluctant: --delay, linger, stay selves, tarry.

Wonder - Strong's #8539 Hebrew: tamahh; a primitive root; to be in consternation: --be amazed, be astonished, marvel(-lously), wonder.

Cry - Strong's #8173 Hebrew: sha`a` ; a primitive root; (in a good acceptance) to look upon (with complacency), i.e. fondle, please or amuse (self); (in a bad one) to look about (in dismay), i.e. stare: --cry (out) [by confusion with 7768], dandle, delight (self), play, shut. sa`iph. See 5587.

NOTES:

Verse 11 – Compare with 2 Nephi 11:125-145

Vision — Hebrew word #2380 chazuwth — from 2372; a look; hence, (fig) striking appearance, revelation, or (by impl.) compact;--agreement, notable (one), vision

Book — Hebrew word #5612, cipher - or (feminine) ciphrah (Psa. 56:8 [9]) {sif-raw'}; from 5608; properly, writing (the art or a document); by implication, a book: --bill, book, evidence, X learn[-ed] (-ing), letter, register, scroll.

The sealed book — Sealed Hebrew #2856, chatham — a primary root; to close up; especial to seal;--make an end, mark, seal (up), stop.

"In a New and Critical Translation of Isaiah by Franz Delitzsch, D.D., the following rendition of Isaiah 29: 11 is offered: 'And the revelation of all this will be to you like words of a sealed writing which they give to him who understands writing, saying, Pray read this; but he says, I cannot, it is sealed. - Prophetic Times, vol. 10, p. 24" (A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, p. 228).

Verses 12-13 — Compare with 2 Nephi 11:146-160 and the experience of Joseph Smith in the Outline History page 16.

Verse 14 - God was going to do this work. It would not be done by the wisdom of men.

Prudent — Hebrew word #995, biyn — a prim. Root; to separate mentally (or distinguish), i.e. (gen.)understand:--attend, consider, be cunning, diligently, direct, discern, eloquent, feel, inform, instruct, have intelligence, know, look well to, mark, perceive, be prudent, regard, (can)skill (-full), teach, think, (cause, make to, get, give, have) understand (-ing), view, (deal) wise (-ly) man

Verses 15-17 - The sealed book was the record from which the Book of Mormon was translated. And as we have seen from the above, every particular concerning the taking of the words of this book to one that is learned and to one that is not learned was literally fulfilled. A further witness was also provided for He says 'Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?' This was fulfilled in 1853, just 24 years, after the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The former and latter rains returned to the land of Palestine after an absence of 1800 years. Consider the following testimony:

NOTES;

THE FORMER AND LATTER RAINS

Scriptural history tells how the children found the land of Palestine / Lebanon when they came from Egypt. These scriptures also record the blessing and cursing of the land if they follow other Gods.

Deuteronomy 11:11-17; 28:12-29

LATTER RAINS TAKEN

Jeremiah 3:1-3; 5:23-25

"Of Lebanon, Chambers' Encyclopedia, edition 1891, has this to say: 'The lower parts of the mountains, however, are everywhere well watered and cultivated, and the valleys are often covered with orchards, vineyards, olive and mulberry plantations, and cornfields'!"¹

"Concerning Palestine, Louis Van Buren, visiting that land in 1866, has this to say: 'I arrived in Palestine in the beginning of last December (1866), and remained there till the 20th of March. I found it to be a very good land, with a delightful climate; the fruitfulness of it is truly wonderful; crop after crop can be raised, summer and winter, the former and the latter rain, the dew also, being restored as in ancient times; there is no longer any difficulty in raising grain or any other product' Saints' Herald, April, 1867."²

"It is a fact that the rain and dew are restored; recently, in 1853, the former and latter rains were restored, to the astonishment of the natives' Saints Herald, April, 1867."³

"I know not whether you are aware of the fact, but it is one that is fully authenticated, that the 'latter rain' returned last year to Mount Zion - a rain that had been withheld, so far as our information goes, ever since the dispersion of the people; and he who has brought back the 'latter rain' in its season, will also give the 'former rain' in its season' Scottish Presbyterian Magazine, 1853. Parsons' Textbook, p. 205."⁴

"A correspondent writing to the Sword of Truth from Jerusalem, in 1864, has this to say: 'During the five years of my sojourn in the land of our fathers, the early and latter rain came down from heaven as regularly as in the days of David and Solomon. Everything grew and blossomed almost visibly to the beholder, and in three days our sacred soil outran the best lands in Europe' Sword of Truth, February 15, 1864."⁵

¹ MacGregor, Daniel; A Marvelous Work and a Wonder – page 172

² *ibid.*, pp. 172-173

³ *ibid.*, p. 173

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 173

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 173

"George J. Adams, writing from Palestine in 1865, says: 'I will now explain in relation to the wheat and millet and the other crops; also the rains, as they now come since the restoration of the latter rain. The former or first rain commences in the latter part of October and closes in December. . . The latter rain commences in April and continues about six weeks. It is this rain that ripens the wheat and barley. The wheat and barley is sown in December and the first part of January. They reap it in the first part of May. Immediately after harvest, they sow the same land with millet and reap it the last of August. The land then rests about two months, or until the first rain, when they sow turnips and peas, potatoes, and every kind of vegetable. These ripen in time to put the wheat crop in for the next season, making three crops a year on the same land. Where on earth can such a land be found? Nowhere else but in Palestine.' Sword of Truth, November 1, 1865.¹

"We believe that God has for ages permitted the land to lay waste and desolate, and withheld the latter rain and even the dews of heaven in direct fulfillment of the testimony of all the prophets, and that the time of that desolation and the withholding of the latter rain has now run out, that rain having been given in its season every successive year since 1853' Sword of Truth, February 1, 1866".²

"Our testimony is that it is a goodly and a fruitful land, bearing abundantly three crops each year when properly cultivated. The latter rain has been restored without intermission since the year of our Lord 1853' Sword of Truth, January 1, 1866".³

"Lebanon or Palestine lay a barren waste for many long centuries. It is historically stated that after the fall of Jerusalem, in AD. 70, the former and the latter rains which had made Palestine so fertile, were withheld. This reduced the country to a condition which had never before prevailed there. In the year 1853, however, the rain returned and the land is now fertile. A traveler to the Holy Land wrote thus of the country some years ago:

" I arrived in Indiana a few days since, from the Eastern Continent. I stopped at Joppa nearly the whole winter. For my part I was well pleased with the country. It is certainly a land of most wonderful fruitfulness, with a delightful climate, producing everything, if properly cultivated, and from two to three crops in a year. They have grain, fruit, and vegetables all the year round: in fact, I never was in such a country before. I have seen much good country in Europe and America, but none to compare with Palestine; its fruitfulness is uncommon and the climate the most delightful; even in winter I did not see the least sign of frost, and vegetables of every sort were growing in perfection in the gardens. It is a fact that the rain and dew are restored; recently in 1853, the former and the latter rain were restored, to the astonishment of the natives'.⁴

¹ *ibid.*, p. 173

² *ibid.*, p. 174

³ *ibid.*, p. 174

⁴ The Fall of Babylon, pp. 251-252

"McClintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia, in the article on Palestine, states its condition before the beginning of its restoration as follows:

"Eighteen centuries of war, ruin, and neglect, have passed over it. Its valleys have been cropped for ages without the least attempt at fertilization. Its terraced walls have been allowed to crumble, and its soil has washed down its ravines, leaving the hillsides rocky and sterile. Its trees have been cut down and never replaced. Its fields have been desolate. Its structures pillaged and all its improvements ruthlessly destroyed. A land of ruins without man or beast. Everywhere on plain or mountain, in rocky desert, or on beetling cliff, the spoiler's hand has rested"¹.

Verses 18-24 - This book will bring correction to those that are walking in error and bring understanding and doctrine.

Erred – Hebrew Strong's number: 8582, ta`ah, a primitive root; to vacillate, i.e. reel or stray (literally or figuratively); also causative of both: --(cause to) go astray, deceive, dissemble, (cause to, make to) err, pant, seduce, (make to) stagger, (cause to) wander, be out of the way.

Understanding – Hebrew, Strong's number: 998, Hebrew: biynah, from 995; understanding: --knowledge, meaning, X perfectly, understanding, wisdom.

Murmured - Hebrew, Strong's number: 7279, ragan: a primitive root; to grumble, i.e. rebel: -- murmur.

Learn – Hebrew, Strong's number: 3925, lamad : a primitive root; properly, to goad, i.e. (by implication) to teach (the rod being an Oriental incentive):[un-] accustomed, X diligently, expert, instruct, learn, skilful, teach(-er, - ing). limmud. See 3928.

Doctrine – Hebrew, Strong's number: 3948, leqach : from 3947; properly, something received, i.e. (mentally) instruction (whether on the part of the teacher or hearer); also (in an active and sinister sense) inveiglement: -doctrine, learning, fair speech.

NOTES:

¹ ibid., p. 255

CHAPTER THIRTY

Verses 1-7 – Here, Judah is warned of trusting in Egypt for protection rather than God. Against Israel (Northern Kingdom) they sought to the Syrians.¹ Against the Syrians they sought to the Assyrians.² Against the Assyrians they here sought to the Egyptians, and Rabshakeh rebuked them with so doing.³

Although the “shadow of Egypt” undoubtedly refers to the lack of substance in that which they were putting their trust, in light of the previous chapter, we should consider if the “shadow” also refers to that which people in the latter will falsely put their hope, i.e.; the modern “Egypt”.

Verse 8 – Isaiah is instructed record what has transpired as a testimony against Judah.

Verses 9-12 – They have repeatedly refused to hear the Lord.

Verses 13-14 – Like a wall the breaks and releases that which it was containing, Judah will receive the consequences from their enemies, which had previously been held back by God. That consequence is that they shall be so utterly broken as when the pitcher is crushed into minute fragments, so that there is no piece large enough to convey a coal from one fire for the lighting of another or to be of even the least use for drawing water from a well.

Verse 15 - The conditions are put forward, not as now capable of being realized, but as those which might have been realized at an earlier date, if they would have harkened to the Lord.

Verses 16-17 - However swift the horses of Judah, their enemies would be as well mounted and would pursue and overtake them.

Verses 18-22 - The consequences for Judah’s conduct have been prophesied as being so severe in verses 9-17 that it would appear that all is hopeless. This was not the Divine purpose. Judah’s probation still continued. Therefore it was necessary to let it be seen that the Divine long-suffering was not yet exhausted — there were still conditions under which God would be gracious to his people. The conditions were “crying to the Lord” (verse 19), and entire abolition of idolatry (verse 22).

NOTES:

¹ 2 Chronicles 16:2, 3

² 2 Kings 16:7

³ 2 Kings 18:21

Verses 23-24 - God, having forgiven his people, will once more renew the blessings of his ordinary providence, giving them "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness". The abundance would be so great that even the livestock would have the very best.

Verse 25 - Rivers and streams will flow. Continuing the thought of abundance and yet it will be in a time of great destructions. God's faithful will be provided for while destruction comes upon those that oppose God. Towers frequently represent powers and pride. One cannot help but, consider the similarity between the World Trade Center and what it represented in world power and pride and turmoil in the world today from natural disasters, wars and disease.

Verse 26 - Although there are applications in the past, when considered with chapters 28 & 29, this must surely be speaking of Israel's restoration and the Gospel going forth, while those in opposition suffer. (Christ's return?)

Verses 27-33 Although the reference is to Assyria, the description goes beyond the destruction of Assyria. Assyria was representative of world powers and here is used in the description of the "sifting of the nations". In relationship with chapters 28 & 29, Isaiah must be describing the final days before Christ's return. See Zechariah 14:1-21 for the description of the final days and 2 Kings 19:34-35 for the fulfillment with Assyria.

Chiastic style of Isaiah 30

A1 Human events - Egypt no help (verses 1-7)

B1 Human events - refusal to accept God - end is death (verses 8-17)

B2 Divine events - God waits - sure glory (verses 18-26)

A2 Divine events - God cannot be defeated (verses 27-33)

A1 Spiritual - blessing when the waiting is over (v. 18)

B1 Spiritual - comfort after tears (v. 19)

C1 Spiritual - revelation & discernment (vv. 20-21)

D The end of false religion (v. 22)

C2 Earthly - Abundance of food (word - C1) (vv.23-24)

B2 Earthly - Abundant water (contrast tears - B1) (v. 25)

A2 Earthly - Abundant light (God's presence A1) (v. 26)

NOTES:

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

This is the fourth of four “woes”: *drunkards of Ephraim* (28:1), to *Ariel* (29:1), to the *rebellious children* (30:1), and here to *those that go down to Egypt for help*. The chief point brought out is the value set on the horses and chariots of Egypt in the conflict with Assyria (2 Kings 18:24), while giving no thought to God and His power.

Verse 1 – The Egyptians maintained a large cavalry of chariots.¹ Egypt exported chariots to the neighboring countries.² At this time in history, Egypt would appear to be the only power capable of furnishing such a chariot-force to contend with the force of Assyria. The irony is that as confident as they are in Egypt, which will fail them, they are equally resistant to the Lord, who could spare them.

Verse 2 - He (the Lord) is “wise” also, and could give prudent counsel if his advice were asked. As He is not consulted, “he will bring evil” upon his people, “and will not call back”, or retract, “his words” of threatening, but will give them accomplishment, by rising up “against the house of the evildoers” (*i.e.* Judah), and their help (*i.e.* the Egyptians).

Verse 3 - Judah is depending on Pharaoh, as a sort of God, which indeed he was considered in his own country. Isaiah asserts the contrary in the strongest way: the Egyptians, one and all, are men — mere men; and there is no help in them. The horses, on which so much reliance was placed, were mere animals, subject to all the weakness of the animal nature, not spirit-horses, with a life and vigor of their own. “They all shall fail together”, both the helpers and the helped (holpen).

Verses 4-5 – The Lord will demonstrate His power to the rebellious Southern Kingdom of Judah. Like lion that has hold of his prey and will not be scared away, so will Jehovah defend the Holy City of Jerusalem. When the Assyrians went through the Northern Kingdom, they were stopped at Jerusalem³ and we await a similar protection in the last days.⁴

Verse 6 – A last plea to Judah (Southern Kingdom). They shall witness the fate of Israel (Northern Kingdom) to the hands of the Assyrians. That assault shall stop at Jerusalem. If Judah will repent, they will be spared, if not (as was the case) the same shall come upon them from the Babylonians.

NOTES:

¹ 2 Chronicles 12:3; Exodus 14:7

² 1 Kings 10:29

³ 2 Kings 19:34-35

⁴ Zechariah 14:1-21

Verse 7 - "In that day" i.e., when they turn to God. Compare with 30:22. When Judah turns to God for their strength, they will cast away their false idols. Again this is an event for which we await a fulfillment.

Verse 8 - Assyria's destruction will not be by the visible swords of human enemies, but by the invisible sword of God (2 Kings 19:35).

Verse 9 - The Assyrian King will bypass God's stronghold (Jerusalem) to return to his stronghold and his princes shall fear the "ensign" (2 Kings 19:34-35).

Verse 2 - The Lord is "wise" also, and could give prudent counsel if his advice were asked. As He is not consulted, "he will bring evil" upon his people, "and will not call back," or retract, "his words" of threatening, but will give them accomplishment by rising up "against the hosts of the evildoers" (i.e. Judah), and their help (i.e. the Egyptians).

Verse 3 - Judah is depending on human, as a sort of God, which indeed he was considered in his own country. Isaiah asserts the contrary in the strongest way: the Egyptians, one and all, are men - mere men, and there is no help in them. The horses of which so much reliance was placed, were mere animals, subject to all the weakness of the animal nature, not spirit-beasts, with a life and vigor of their own. "They all shall fall together," both the helpers and the helped (Isaiah).

Verse 4-5 - The Lord will demonstrate His power to the rebellious Southern Kingdom of Judah. Like the hold of his prey and will not be scared away, so will Jehovah defend the Holy City of Jerusalem. When the Assyrians went through the Northern Kingdom, they were stopped in Jerusalem, and we await a similar protection in the last days.

Verse 6 - A bad plea to Judah (Southern Kingdom). They shall witness the return Israel (Northern Kingdom) to the hands of the Assyrians. That assault shall stop in Jerusalem. If Judah will repent, they will be spared. If not (as was the case) the same shall come upon them from the Babylonians.

NOTES:

1 2 Chronicles 32:7, Isaiah 37:36
2 2 Kings 19:35
3 2 Kings 19:34-35
4 Jeremiah 51:51

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Verse 1 – Some scholars attribute this to Hezekiah, whose righteous rule spared Judah the initial destruction from Assyria that fell upon Israel (Northern Kingdom). However, when considered with the verses that follow, Hezekiah failed to accomplish the full prophesy. Even the first advent of Christ failed to accomplish all of it.

This chapter begins a prophesy of when the king (Christ) will reign in righteousness with His princes (subordinates) ruling in judgment (justly).

Verse 2 – This “man” of this verse most likely refers to Christ, who will provide shelter from the elements and comfort.

Verse 3 – Mankind will no longer be blind and deaf to the truth, but shall hear and see.

Verse 4 – Those who were rash and hasty, who would not give themselves time to understand the warnings addressed to them, or to think of the real character of their actions, shall in the Messiah’s kingdom have the gift of discernment to perceive the truth. The tongue of those who hitherto have spoken hesitatingly and inconsistently on moral and religions subjects shall be ready, prompt and eager to speak with clearness and elegance.

Verses 5-6 – People will be known for what they truly are. The “vile” (foolish) shall not be thought “liberal” (generous or noble). The “churl” (miser) shall not be thought as “bountiful”. Rather the “vile” (foolish) person shall speak “villany” (foolishly).

Verse 7 – The “instruments” (schemes) of the “churl” (miser) are “evil”. They try to deceive the poor of what little they have to increase their own abundance.

Verse 8 – The “liberal” (generous) shall be generous and for that they will stand (not fall).

Verses 9-12 – The self-satisfied and self-complacent women are called to hear the voice of the prophet. Soon their life of ease and comfort will be removed.

NOTES:

Verses 13-14 - The women, like the men, are both warned and comforted. The prophet addresses the women as the men were in Isaiah 30 and 31, with a mixture of threatening (verses 13-14) and promise (verses 15-20). The land being overrun with thorns and briars was the punishment with which the unfruitful vineyard was threatened in Isaiah 5:6. The cities will be void of human life and left for the beasts. Sennacherib is recorded as having taken more than 200,000 captives. What he left was finished by the Babylonians.

Verses 15-20 – The destruction will continue “until” the time in which the “spirit be poured upon” them from on high. Then shall they have the conditions of peace and comfort that Isaiah has previously described.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Verse 1 - *Woe to you, O destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, O traitor, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed.* (NIV)

The NIV translation, perhaps, makes this verse a little easier to understand. This is the fifth “woe”. It most likely refers to Assyria, which violated their treaties and destroyed that which they conquered. They would suffer the same fate. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was murdered and the nation of Assyria would be destroyed by the Babylonians.

Verses 2-3 - *LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress. At the thunder of your voice, the peoples flee; when you rise up, the nations scatter.* (NIV)

Again the NIV translation may help understand the thought expressed. Having prophesied the previous woes and realizing their impact, Isaiah offers a prayer for the faithful.

Verse 4 - The “caterpillar” is probably the grub out of which the locust develops — a very destructive insect. The “spoil” of Assyria (that which they have obtained), shall be utterly destroyed (by Babylonia) like a field ravaged by locusts.

Verses 5-6 - The destruction of the Assyrians is an exaltation of God. It is an indication to them that he has his dwelling on high, and is the true King of heaven. The destruction is, in part, the result, in part the cause, of the Jews once more turning to God, putting away their iniquities, and establishing the reign of justice and righteousness in the land (Isaiah 1:26; 32:15-17).

Verse 7 - Hezekiah probably sent several embassies to Sennacherib in the course of the war. One went to Lachish, offering submission, in B.C. 701 (2 Kings 18:14-17).

Verse 8 - Fear of the Assyrians restrained men from traveling. Sennacherib, when he accepted the sum of money sent him by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:15), must have consented to leave him unmolested for the future. But in a very short time we find him, apparently without any reasonable pretext, sending a fresh expedition against Jerusalem, requiring it to be admitted within the walls, and even threatening the city with destruction (2 Kings 18:17-35; 19:10-13). Isaiah, therefore, taxes him with having broken his covenant. Sennacherib continued to storm the fortified places of Judah, in violation of his agreement. He pays no attention to the protests that are made against his infraction of the treaty — does not care what is said or thought of him.

NOTES:

Verse 9 - The surrounding land shall be representative of the spiritual condition of its inhabitants. Compare with the "Former and Latter rains" in our study on Isaiah 29.

Verse 10 - Judah's extremity is Jehovah's opportunity. "Now" at length the time is come for God to show himself, He will rise from his throne, and actively display his power.

Verse 11-12 - The Assyrian plans against Jerusalem shall be mere "chaff" and "stubble." They shall fail (2 Kings 19:34-35).

Verse 13 - Jehovah speaks by the mouth of his prophet, and calls on the nations of the earth, far and near, to consider and acknowledge his might, as shown in his judgment on Assyria.

Verse 14 - The prophet proceeds to speak in his own person. The judgment on Assyria, he says, cannot but strike terror into the hearts of the immoral and irreligious in Zion. They cannot fail to realize their own danger, and to tremble at it. They will recognize God as "a consuming fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24), whose next outbreak may be upon themselves.

Verses 15-17 - Isaiah answers the question which he has supposed to be asked. None can endure the revelation of the presence of God but the holy and the upright. Righteousness is explained as consisting in six things:

- (1) Just conduct;
- (2) righteous speech;
- (3) hatred of oppression;
- (4) rejection of bribes;
- (5) closing the ear against murderous suggestions;
- (6) closing the eye against sinful sights.

The righteous shall dwell in God's presence and protection and enjoy abundance.

Verse 18 - *In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror: "Where is that chief officer? Where is the one who took the revenue? Where is the officer in charge of the towers?"* (NIV) The righteous will recall the dreadful period of siege in contrast with their present happiness. Everything and everyone that seemed so powerful and strong are now gone. They caused fear and dread, but have past away. What was once dread is now deemed insignificant.

NOTES:

Verse 19[✓] – The righteous will have no contact or regard for the “fierce” or those who can not be understood (foreign to God).

Verse 20[✓] – This verse like many in these chapters, give an image more consistent with Christ’s return and Millennial Reign, than anything we find in history. Here Zion is described as being a permanent and unmovable city. The “solemnities” or solemn feasts will be observed, the tabernacle (mobile in Exodus), with its stakes and chords will be permanent and solid. An obvious transition from its conception as a mobile place of worship.

Verses 21-22[✓] – Consistent with Christ’s return, a time when the Lord is present and the source of all necessity and protector is described.

Verse 23[✓] – The enemies of God here and in verse 21 are likened to ships of war, but in this time they shall have no strength and it shall be the “lame” or physically weak that shall have the advantage.

Verse 24[✓] – There shall be no more sickness, either physical or spiritual.

NOTES:

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Many scholars believe that there is a change from chapter 33 to chapters 34 & 35. This is because chapters 34 & 35 are clearly future and describing the final days and many scholars attribute the previous chapters to Assyria only, but as we have observed, from chapter 28 on, Isaiah has been looking towards the final days and Christ's return and reign.

Verse 1 - This is addressed in the widest possible terms, so as to include the whole of humankind.

Verses 2-4 - The wrath of God is upon the earth. So great will be the slaughter that it will be impossible to bury the slain on account of their number. The slaughter of God's enemies is connected with the end of the world that exists as we know it, like the closing of a book or the rolling up of a scroll. Compare with Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 6:14, 19:11-21.

Verse 5 - "Idumea" is generally accepted as referring to Edom. The Edomites first showed themselves enemies of Israel when they refused to allow the Israelites, under Moses, "a passage through their border" (Numbers 20:14-21). David subdued them (2 Samuel 9:14); but they revolted from Jehoram (>2 Chronicles 21:8-10), and were thenceforward among the most bitter adversaries of the southern kingdom. They "smote Judah" in the reign of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:17), and were always ready to "shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity" (Ezekiel 35:5). Amos speaks of them very much in the same tone as Isaiah (Amos 1:11, 12). They ultimately "filled up the measure of their iniquities" by open rejoicing when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people led away captive by Nebuchadnezzar (Psalm 137:7; Obadiah 1:10-14; Lamentations 4:21, 22; Ezekiel 35:10-13). In the present passage we must regard the Edomites as representative of the enemies of God's people generally. *The people of my curse* — the Edomites. Esau was to "serve" Jacob (Genesis 25:23; 27:40), Edom to be "a possession" for Judah (Numbers 24:18). God had said of Edom, probably before Isaiah uttered the present prophecy, "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof... but I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah" (Amos 1:11, 12). Thus Edom was under a curse.

NOTES:

Verse 6 – Lambs, goats and rams are the lesser cattle which represent the lower classes of those about to be slain, while the unicorns and bullocks of verse 7 represent the upper classes — the great men and leaders. Bozrah was one of the principal cities of Idumaea. It lay in the hilly country to the south-east of the Dead Sea, about thirty-five miles north of Petra, and was one of the earliest settlements of the descendants of Esau, being mentioned as a well-known place in Genesis 34:33. The threats here uttered against it are repeated by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 49:13), who says that “Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.”

Verse 7 – “Unicorns” are wild oxen and “shall come down” means to fall and perish.

Verse 8 – Compare with Isaiah 61:2; 63:4 and Zechariah 14:1-21. “The controversy of Zion” means the cause or vindication of Zion.

Verse 9 – The streams of Edom should run with pitch, instead of water. The general idea is that Edom should be visited with a destruction like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24; compare with Jeremiah 49:18). But it is unlikely that Isaiah intends his words to be taken literally; he is making Edom a type or representation of God’s enemies, and the gist of his teaching is that a dreadful vengeance, an utter destruction, will come upon all who set themselves up against the Most High. In the next verse he declares that the vengeance will be eternal (compare with Isaiah 66:24).

Verse 10 – The full scope is that punishment of God’s enemies will be eternal of which Edom was a type. There was a literal fulfillment of the prophecies against Edom to a considerable extent. Malachi, writing three hundred years after Isaiah, says that the “mountains and the heritage of Esau were laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness” (Malachi 1:3); and he makes the Edomites themselves exclaim, “We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places” (Malachi 1:4). “A certain amount of recovery must have followed; and in the Maccabee period Edom appears once more as an adversary of Israel, and an adversary of some importance (1 Macc. 5:3, 65). Gradually, however, she had to yield to the superior power of Judaea, and was even ruled by viceroys, whom the Maccabee princes nominated. One of these, Antipater, was the father of Herod the Great. From his time Idumea languished until, in the seventh century after Christ, it was overrun and conquered by the Mohammedan Arabs, who completed its ruin. It is now, and has been for above a thousand years, one of the most desolate tracts upon the earth’s surface.”¹

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson; Exposition on Isaiah

✓
Verse 11 – “Cormorant” is generally thought to be a pelican, although some believe it to be an owl. “Bittern” is either a porcupine or a hedgehog. The significance of these animals along with the raven is that they are solitary creatures, they do not belong to herds or flocks. They will exist in this time of “emptiness” that is left with the destruction of the unrighteous. In the original Hebrew, the words for “confusion” and “emptiness” are the same words that were translated as “without form” and “void” in Genesis 1:2. (Strong’s #8414 & 922) 34:11

✓
Verse 12 – With the loss of life, there would be no one to appoint as king.

✓
Verses 13-15 – The palaces and fortresses shall be abandoned and overgrown with vegetation and inhabited by wildlife.

✓
Verses 16-17 – The command is to seek the “book”. Is this the same book of Isaiah 29 that we recognize as the Book of Mormon? Whomever seeks this book, they shall not fail or want and they shall possess it forever. They shall be gathered, which sets us up for the next chapter.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

On the punishment of God's enemies will follow the peace, prosperity, and glory of the righteous. Previously, the righteous were in affliction and persecution. With God's enemies removed, destroyed and swept away, the righteous instantly rise to a condition of great beauty in a condition which words are poor to paint. The highest resources of the poetic art are called in to give some idea of the glory and happiness of the final Church of the redeemed.

Verse 1 - The first result of the joy shall be a putting forth of lovely products. Blossoms, beautiful as the rose shall spring up all over the parched ground, and make it a garden of flowers. The image is both literal (recall the former & latter rains in chapter 29) and spiritual, describing the beauty of God's people (recall the field of chapter 28).

Verse 2 - Productiveness of all kinds, of abundant harvests, fruits, and flowers, and forest trees (compare Isaiah 10:18, 19, 33, 34; 32:15). The culminating joy and delight and blessedness of the Church shall be the vision of God either the spiritual perception of his presence (Matthew 5:8; Romans 1:20) or the actual vision (1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 21:11, 23; 22:4).

Verses 3-4 - There shall no longer be the weak, feeble or fearful.

Verses 5-6 - In the literal sense, our Lord claims these prophecies to himself and his earthly ministry, when he says to the disciples of John the Baptist, "Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see, the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear" (Matthew 11:4, 5); but they have doubtless a further spiritual sense, in which they belong to the whole period of His Millennial Kingdom and are correlative to former utterances of the prophet, in which the blinded eyes and deaf ears and stammering tongues of God's people had been spoken of and made the subject of complaint (Isaiah 6:10; 29:10, etc.). Our Lord's miracles of bodily healing, performed during the three years of his earthly ministry, were types and foreshadowings of those far more precious miracles of spiritual healing, which the great Physician is ever performing on the sick and infirm of his Church, by opening the eyes of their understandings, and unstopping the deaf ears of their hearts, and loosening the strings of their tongues to hymn his praise, and stirring their paralyzed spiritual natures to be active in His service. Most likely Isaiah intended to point to both these classes of miracles, and not to one of them only, as characteristic of the Messiah's kingdom. The wilderness of humanity shall be renovated by a large effluence of God's grace (compare Isaiah 30:25; 32:2; 41:18; 43:19; John 7:37, 38).

NOTES:

Verse 7 – That which had been a parched and desolate desert, will now be alive and abundant with life and vegetation.

Verse 8 – Compare with Isaiah 11:16; 30:21. There shall be a clear “way” marked out in which all shall be bound to walk — a “strait and narrow way” doubtless (Matthew 7:14), but one not readily missed. It shall be that path through the dangers and difficulties of life which holiness points out and requires. The unclean shall not pass over it. It is that right course of life, which “the unclean” do not follow, though they might do so if they chose, but which the righteous follow to their great gain and advantage. God shall be with those who seek to walk in the way, and not to err from it. He shall direct them, support them and sustain their footsteps. Though fools; *i.e.* however simple and unlearned they may be — they shall not wander from the way through mere simplicity. It shall be easy to find and difficult to miss for those that have desired it, longed for it and waited for it, like those that have sought “the book” of 34:16.

Verses 9-10 – Like much of Isaiah, there are undoubtedly both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment here. Isaiah 11:5-9 describes the same time period in which there shall no longer be predators of any kind. Both man and beast shall no longer be sustained by “blood”. However in context with the preceding verses it would most likely also describe a time when there shall no longer be any great tyrannical power like Assyria or Babylon to arrest or discourage the energies of the Church, take it captive or enslave it. The redeemed - those whom Christ has purchased for his own, shall be free to walk there, untroubled by cruel enemies. There is an under-current of comparison between the blessedness of the last times and the existing troubles of Israel, still threatened by Assyria.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

This and the following chapters create a concern for modern scholars. Isaiah now switches from prophesy of the future to speaking in the past of what has “happened” as if giving a historical account. This is one of the many reasons that scholars give for there being more than one author of Isaiah. “This Isaiah” lived after the events prophesied by the “previous Isaiah” as this one has knowledge of what has happened.

Let us consider another possibility: throughout Isaiah we have seen the reoccurring use of types and anti-types. Since chapter 28, it has seemed that Isaiah has been looking far into the future and Christ’s return and reign and now he presents himself as in that time (with the righteous) looking back at his time and recording it as past history.

Verse 1 – These are parallel verses with 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chronicles 32. The *Chronicles of Sennacherib* claims that Sennacherib captured 46 towns and 200,000 people from his invasion into Israel and Judah.

Verse 2 – “Rabshakeh” is not a name, but rather the title of a high ranking official. Lachish is about thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Archaeological discoveries in the town have uncovered mass graves from the time period. It was at this same location of the “conduit of the upper pool” that Isaiah had warned Ahaz¹.

Verse 3 – Eliakim had now taken the place of the Shebna who was “over the house” when Isaiah prophesied his downfall (Isaiah 22:19-20) and Eliakim’s advancement (Isaiah 22:21-23). It is uncertain if this “Shebna” is the same Shebna of Isaiah 22, who has now lost his position to Eliakim or another of the same name. The post of “scribe” or “secretary was one of some importance², although inferior to that of one who was “over the house”. In 2 Kings 18:18 the same three officials are mentioned. We learn from Kings that Sennacherib sent in reality three envoys (2 Kings 18:17) to Hezekiah — the Tartan, or “commander-in-chief;” the Rabsaris, or “chief eunuch;” and the Rabshakeh, or “rab-sak,” the “chief captain,” the second in command after the tartan. It would appear that Hezekiah thought it right to appoint an equal number of officials to meet and confer with them.

Verses 4-6 – Sennacherib’s representatives charge Judah with falsely putting their hope for defense in Egypt, which is already falling before the Assyrians. Isaiah had prophesied in 28:11 that if Judah would refuse to hear him, they would hear the words of a foreigner.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 7:3

² 1 Kings 4:3

Verse 7 – Hezekiah in trying to return Judah to proper worship, destroyed the false altars¹. The Assyrians conclude that, in so doing, he must have offended Jehovah. They charge that by requiring that Judah offer their sacrifice in one place only, Hezekiah has been actuated by some narrow motive and has acted in the interests of one city only, not of the whole people. The parallel passage of 2 Kings (18:22) has “this altar *in Jerusalem*.” The reference is to the brazen altar in the great court of the temple. Hezekiah had cleansed it from the pollutions of the time of Ahaz² and had insisted on sacrifice being offered nowhere else³.

Verse 8 - Intent on ridiculing the absurdity of Hezekiah's resistance of Assyria, he promises to make him a present of two thousand horses, if he (Hezekiah) can find two thousand trained riders to mount them. It is quite likely that he was safe in making this promise, and that, notwithstanding the abundant use of chariots and horses by the Jews of the time for purposes of luxury⁴, they were destitute of a cavalry force and unaccustomed to the management of war-horses⁵.

Verse 9 – Their trust in Egypt has not hindered the Assyrian advance, so how can they hope to turn back the least the Assyrian leaders, when they wholly dependant on Egypt for their cavalry and Egypt is falling before the Assyrian advancement.

Verse 10 – Rabshakeh contends that if “the Lord” is all powerful, how could he come against Judah unless the Lord permitted it. He goes farther and says that the “Lord” commanded it. Spies are nothing new, it is quite possible that the prophecies of Isaiah and they other prophets were known to the Assyrians and that knowledge is now used against them.

Verse 11 – Hezekiah's representatives request that the Assyrian ambassadors not speak in a language which could be understood by any Jew nearby. We must suppose that the conference took place immediately outside the fortifications, so that some of those on the wall in a position of defense could hear.

NOTES:

¹ 2 Kings 18:1-7; 2 Chronicles 29-31

² 2 Chronicles 29:18

³ 2 Chronicles 29:21-35, 30:15-24, 31:1

⁴ Isaiah 2:7

⁵ Isaiah 30:16, 31:1,3 , 36:8; Deuteronomy 17:16; 1 Kings 10:28

Verse 12 – Rabshakeh is offended that the Jewish representatives are concerned of what the people might overhear, as if they can in some way be spared the concern or speculation. He has come with the intent and authority to destroy the city with so great a destruction that the survivors will only have their own bodily waste to sustain them.

Verse 13 – In defiance of the Jewish ambassadors request, Rabshakeh shouts his proclamation in their native tongue for all to hear.

Verse 14 – As Rabshakeh had warned Hezekiah's representatives about the folly of trusting Hezekiah in verses 4-7, he now shouts the same contempt to all who will hear.

Verse 15 - Isaiah had long been encouraging Hezekiah to resist Sennacherib by promises of Divine aid.¹

Verse 16 – If they would agree to the treaty, they are promised peace and could leave the protection of their walled cities, and disperse themselves over their lands, where they could live in plenty and security and be spared the terrible tragedy described in verse 12 (at least for a time).

Verse 17 - It was the policy of Assyria to remove to a new locality a conquered people. Rabshakeh tries to soften down the hardship of the lot before them by promises of a removal to a land equal in all respects. This was certainly not a general principle of Assyrian administration. Nations were removed from the far north to the extreme south, and *vice versa*, from arid to marshy tracts, from fertile regions to comparative deserts. The security of the empire, not the gratification of the transported slaves, was the ruling and guiding principle of all such changes.

Isaiah had warned in chapter 33 about the deceitful practices of the Assyrians.

Verses 18-20 – It was common belief that when nations warred, the victor was the one with the stronger god. Therefore the struggles of humanity were merely the representation of conflicts between warring gods. The nations fight under the protection of their own gods and thus each war is a struggle between the Assyrian deities and those of the nation with which they are contending. To this point in time, the Assyrians were undefeated and therefore presumed to be operating under the superior god and Judah's god would fail them like the gods of all the other nations that Assyria had conquered.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 30:31; 31:4-9

Verse 21 - Neither Hezekiah's representatives nor those "on the wall" respond to Rabshakeh. Not because they are at a loss of words or fear, but because it was Hezekiah's instruction. We can assume then that Rabshakeh was unsuccessful in shaking their faith in Hezekiah.

Verse 22 - Garments were "rent," not only as a sign of mourning, but whenever persons were shocked or horrified (compare Genesis 37:29; 1 Samuel 4:12; 2 Samuel 1:2; Ezra 9:3; 2 Chronicles 34:19; Matthew 26:65). As Jerusalem stood against the Assyrians and were divinely victorious¹ we can assume that the Jewish officials meant to mark their horror at Rabshakeh's blasphemies and not out of fear of what they had heard.

NOTES:

Verse 16 - If they would agree to the treaty, they are promised peace and could leave the protection of their walled cities, and disperse themselves over their lands, where they could live in plenty and security and be spared the terrible tragedy described in verse 13 (at least for a time).

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Isaiah had warned in chapter 37 about the deceitful practices of the Assyrians.

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NOTES:

¹ 2 Kings 19:32-36; Isaiah 37:35-37

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Verse 1 - Chapter 37 is a continuation of the events of chapter 36. Hezekiah also "rent" his clothes as the others had done (36:22), but he went even further, showing a deeper sense of horror by being covered with sackcloth (on the combination of the two modes of showing grief or horror, see Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 3:31; 1 Kings 21:27; Esther 4:1, etc.) The temple was not only a place for offering praise and sacrifice, but also a "house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7; 1 Kings 8:28-30) which would seem to be the case in this instance.

Verses 2-3 - Hezekiah had placed his reliance upon Egypt (Isaiah 20:5, 6; 30:1-4; 36:6, 9), but now he had turned to Jehovah, and relied on him only (Isaiah 36:7, 15). Hezekiah calls the day one "of blasphemy," on account of Rabshakeh's utterances (Isaiah 36:15, 18, 20). "The children are come to the birth" - this was a proverbial phrase for a time of extreme difficulty (see Hosea 13:13), and is not to be pressed as embodying at all a close analogy. Judah was in sore trouble, and was expecting deliverance. It seemed now as if she would not have strength to go through the crisis, but would perish through weakness.

Verse 4 - Isaiah is asked to pray for the "remnant". This may apply to Judah, which still survived, although Israel had been carried away captive. But perhaps the contrast is rather between the numerous *Judaeans* captives who had been taken and conveyed to Assyria by Sennacherib when he took the "fenced cities" (Isaiah 36:1), and the portion of the nation which still remained in the land. Sennacherib says, in his annals, that he took "forty-six" cities, and carried captive to Assyria more than two hundred thousand persons.

Verses 5-7 - Isaiah comfort's Hezekiah's concerns and that he need not worry. The Lord would defend Jerusalem. "Blast" means "spirit". Although some believe that this event is fulfilled in the following verses, where Rabshakeh finds Sennacherib in a new battle, but this does not fulfill the whole prophesy that Sennacherib would "return to his own land; and...fall by the sword in his own land". It is most likely fulfilled in verses 36-38 (2 Kings 19:35-37), where the "angel of the LORD" slays 185,000 of the Assyrian army, Sennacherib returns to Nineveh (an Assyrian city) and there is killed in his own land.

Verses 8-9 - When Sennacherib receives word of the Judean response from Rabshakeh, he sends messengers back to Hezekiah with a letter (verse 14).

NOTES:

Verse 10 - Sennacherib recognized Jehovah as a god, the God of the Jews, but put him on a par with the other “gods of the nations” (verse 11), and did not believe in his being able to contend with Asshur (god of Assyria). If he were really, through his priests or prophets, giving Hezekiah assurances of protection and deliverance, he could only be “deceiving” him.

Verses 11-13 - Sennacherib refers to Assyria’s victories over other nations and their gods to support his claim that all other gods (including Judah’s) are inferior and weaker than the god of Assyria.

Verses 14-17 - Hezekiah takes the letter to the Temple and presents it before the Lord, acknowledges the Lord as the only true God and petitions Him in prayer.

Verses 18-20 - Hezekiah confesses the truth of Sennacherib that the Assyrians have conquered many powerful nations and pleads with God to defend Judah that all the earth may know that Jehovah is LORD and the only LORD.

Verses 21-22 - The Lord answers Hezekiah through Isaiah. The verses that follow can be rather confusing if it is not understood as to who they are addressed. Hezekiah has prayed about Sennacherib and his threat and the Lord answers “this is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning **him**”, so what follows is addressed to Sennacherib.

The personification here is very effective, since it represents Jerusalem as a tender maiden, weak and delicate, yet still bold enough to stand up against Sennacherib and all his host, and bid him defiance. Confident in Jehovah, her Protector, she despises him, and laughs him to scorn; nay, “shakes her head at him,” with scornful gestures as he retreats before her.

Verse 23 - The Holy city of Jerusalem mocks Sennacherib for his arrogance in challenging the “Holy One of Israel”, her Protector and Champion. The “Holy One of Israel” is especially unique to Isaiah. Employed by Isaiah twenty-eight times, it is only found five times in all the rest of Scripture (Bible). A strong proof for a single author of the Book of Isaiah.

Verse 24 - Sennacherib’s boast that was received through his messengers is now rehearsed and recorded for posterity, so that all of history will know of the folly.

NOTES:

Verse 25 – Sennacherib boasts of the natural barriers that he has overcome. He apparently considered them to be more of an obstacle than the people of Judah.

Verse 26 – Addressed to Sennacherib, Isaiah now states “hast thou not heard” and now speaks of Jehovah and His accomplishments. It is a warning to Sennacherib, but also to strengthen Hezekiah and remind Hezekiah who he is trusting in.

Is Sennacherib so ignorant as not to know God’s method of governing the world? He designs the rise and fall of nations, and the mode in which their destruction is to be brought about. Is he not aware that conquerors are mere instruments in God’s hands — to work His will and then to have His will worked upon them in turn? All that Sennacherib had done, he had done as God’s instrument and by His permission.

Verse 27 – Sennacherib has been successful in his campaigns, but they have been against the weak and defenseless. The inferred comparison is that Sennacherib shall not find the city of Jerusalem, which Jehovah has promised to defend, to be so easy to defeat.

Verse 28 – Jehovah knows everything that Sennacherib does and where he goes. Jehovah also knows the “rage” the Sennacherib has towards Him. Nothing is a surprise to Jehovah.

Verse 29 – Sennacherib’s “rage” and “tumult” had come before the Lord’s ears, as shown in the message sent by Rab-shakeh (36:7), in Rabshakeh’s speech to the “men on the wall” (36:15-20), and in the letter sent to Hezekiah from Lachish (37:10).

The Assyrians were in the habit of passing “hooks” or “rings” through the noses or lips of their more distinguished prisoners, and attaching a strap to the hook or ring, by which they led the prisoners into the royal presence.¹ As surely as the Assyrians compelled their prisoners, God would compel Sennacherib away from Jerusalem and return him to his own land.

Verse 30 – Isaiah now turns to Hezekiah, and makes an address to him. “This,” he says, “shall be the sign unto thee” of Sennacherib’s being effectually ‘bridled,’ and the danger from Assyria over. In the third year from the present the land shall have returned to its normal condition which they shall be able to cultivate and enjoy its fruits as formerly. Meanwhile you shall obtain sufficient nourishment from the grain which has sown itself.

NOTES:

¹ ‘Ancient Monarchies,’ vol. 1. p. 304; vol. 3. p. 436

Verses 31-32 – (Reference comments on verse 4). Take root downward, and bear fruit upward; *i.e.* “spread over the land, and became firmly rooted in it, and flourish as in the former time.” It would seem that the Assyrians in their two recent invasions, completely depopulated the country districts. Numbers had, no doubt, been slain; more than two hundred thousand had been carried into captivity; a portion had found refuge in the capital. On the withdrawal of the Assyrians, these last “went forth,” reoccupied their lands, and rebuilt their towns and villages. The blessing of God was upon them, and in a short time Judea recovered her former splendor, so that, under Josiah, she was able to extend her dominion over almost the whole of the old Israelite territory (2 Chronicles 34:6, 18).

Verse 33 - For Hezekiah’s satisfaction and consolation something more definite is needed than the vague assurances that “the daughter of Jerusalem shook her head at Sennacherib” (verse 22) and that God would “put a bridle in Sennacherib’s mouth” (verse 29). Accordingly, it is now declared, in the plainest terms, that he shall not even lay siege to the city, but shall return by the way by which he came, leaving Jerusalem untouched. “He shall not come into this city” – Sennacherib was at Libnah, thirty or forty miles from Jerusalem, when he is last mentioned (verse 8) and having then been just informed of the advance of Tirhakah (verse 9), he is likely to have proceeded on towards Egypt.

The procedure for an Assyrian siege would be that the “first assailants would be the archers. They boldly approached in large bodies, and strove to clear the battlements of the defenders. Then shields were brought into play. Under their cover the archers drew nearer; the scaling parties brought up their ladders; the miners attacked the foundations of the walls; and the torch-bearers endeavoured to fire the gates. Finally, if these tactics did not avail, banks were raised against the walls, which were then assailed with battering-rams till they were breached and the assailants could enter”.¹ God promises that Jerusalem shall experience none of these things at Sennacherib’s hands.

Verse 34 - It is clear that Sennacherib on this occasion had marched by the usual coast route, through Sharon and upon Lachish (36:1), leaving Jerusalem far to his left. From Lachish he sent Rabshakeh to Hezekiah with a threatening message, accompanied by a “great army”. Rabshakeh, having delivered his message, returned to his master (Isaiah 37:8). Sennacherib then sent a letter by messengers (37:9, 14), but without an army, so far as we are told, to renew his threats. Meanwhile from Lachish he went to Libnah, after which we know nothing of his movements, unless we accept the Egyptian account, which was, that he advanced to Pelusium. The declaration, “By the way that he came, by the same shall he return” (compare with verse 29) was the most comforting that Hezekiah could possibly receive. It assured him that he would not even be confronted with his enemy.

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

Verse 35 – God would defend Jerusalem as a bird covers its young with its wings.¹ God would do this “for his own sake;” *i.e.* because his own honor was concerned in the defense of His people. He would also do it for his servant David’s sake; *i.e.* because of the promises made to David, that his children should sit upon his throne (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:29-37; 132:11-14, etc.), which involved the continued independence of Judea and Jerusalem.

Verse 36 – The parallel passage is found in 2 Kings 19:35. Jewish tradition as recorded by Josephus has this slaughter at the gates of Jerusalem.²

Egyptian tradition has the event on their battle front. Which ever location, and quite possibly at both, the word of Isaiah had its accomplishment. On the camp of the Assyrians, wherever it was, the destroying angel of God took the lives of a hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the Assyrian camp.

Verse 37 – Sennacherib’s “ordinary residence was at Nineveh, which he greatly adorned and beautified (‘Records of the Past,’ vol. 11. pp. 55-57). His father, Sargon, on the contrary, dwelt commonly at Khorsabad (Dur-Sargina), and his son, Esarhaddon, dwelt, during the latter part of his reign, at Babylon. We must not suppose, however, that Sennacherib was shut up in Nineveh during the remainder of his life. On the contrary, he made frequent expeditions towards the south, the east, and the north. But he made no farther expedition to the south-west, no further attack on Jerusalem, or attempt on Egypt. The Jews had peace, so far as the Assyrians were concerned, from the event related in ver. 36 to a late date in the reign of Esarhaddon.”³

Verse 38 – Sennacherib was assassinated in his home land. Historians are in disagreement if it was at the hands of his sons, but it was in the security of his worship and at the hands of one that would have been thought friend. Tradition is that he was sacrificed to his God for his failure on the battlefield. By Assyrian thought, the failure could not have from their God being weaker, so it must therefore be the fault of Sennacherib.

NOTES:

¹ 2 Kings 19:34, 20:6; Isaiah 31:5, 38:6; Matthew 23:37

² Josephus, Flavius, *The Works of Josephus*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997. 10.1.5

³ G. Rawlinson, *Exposition on Isaiah*

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

The present chapter is parallel with 2 Kings 20:1-11, but contains some marked differences from that passage, both in what it omits and in what it inserts. The general narrative (verses 1-8, and 21, 22) is greatly condensed and in part disarranged with verses 21 & 22 being placed at the end. On the other hand, the psalm of Hezekiah (verses 9-20) is additional, having nothing corresponding to it in the Book of Kings.

According to historical reference if this is 15 years before Hezekiah's death (701-698 B.C.), then this event would have been prior to the events recorded in chapters 36 & 37.

Verses 1-2 – “Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz” – as throughout the book of Isaiah, one person is repeatedly identified, which is additional indication of one author for the Book of Isaiah.

Verse 3 - Hezekiah at this time would have been about thirty-nine years old. At this time he probably did not have a son yet, since Manasseh, who succeeded him, was but twelve (2 Kings 21:1, 2 Chronicles 33:1) when Hezekiah died at the age of fifty-four. Hezekiah must have asked himself, what had he done to deserve such a sentence? He believes that he has done nothing to deserve this. He believes that he had endeavored to serve God, had trusted in him (2 Kings 18:5), cleaved to him (2 Kings 18:6), “departed not from following him, but kept his commandments” (2 Kings 18:6) Hezekiah does not regard himself as sinless (verse 17).

Verse 4 – 2 Kings describes graphically how Isaiah, after delivering his message, had gone out, but had not reached the middle court of the palace, when his footsteps were arrested, and the Divine voice bade him “turn again and relieve Hezekiah's fears by a fresh announcement” (2 Kings 20:4). God swiftly answers “the prayer of faith.”

Verse 5 – According to 2 Kings, the full message sent to Hezekiah was, “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: *behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.* And I will add unto thy clays fifteen years; and I will deliver time and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria; and I will defend this city for *mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake*” (2 Kings 20:5, 6). The words in italics are additional words than those found in Isaiah. Fifteen years was more than doubling, the length of Hezekiah's reign, and allowing him a length of life exceeding that of the great majority of the kings of Judah, who seldom attained the age of fifty. Hezekiah lived to be fifty-four.

NOTES:

Verse 6 – It would seem that the turning back of the sun dial (verse 8) would be the sign that Hezekiah would believe that his life would be extended and the extending of his life would be the sign that he could trust in the Lord to defend Jerusalem against the Assyrians.

Verse 7 – Ahaz had been offered a sign (Isaiah 7:11), but had refused the offer (Isaiah 7:12); the Lord had then “himself” given him a sign.” Hezekiah received a sign to assure him of Sennacherib’s failure against Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:30). Here an offer is made to him of a sign of a peculiar kind and it was offered under peculiar conditions. We learn from 2 Kings that a choice was submitted to him — he was to determine whether time, as measured by a certain timepiece or clock, which was known as “the dial of Ahaz,” should make a sudden leap forward — the shadow advancing ten degrees upon the dial (2 Kings 20:9), or whether it should retire backwards, the shadow upon the same dial receding ten degrees. Hezekiah selected the latter *sign*, supposedly as it would appear to be the more difficult one to accomplish. On his declaring his decision, the shadow receded to the prescribed distance. Time was rolled backward and the king, seeing so great a miracle, accepted without hesitation the further predictions that had been made to him.

Verse 8 – It is uncertain how far time was reversed as sun dials were marked in various divisions. This is the event which is believed to have caused the King of Babylon send ambassadors to inquire concerning “*the wonder that was done in the land*” (2 Kings 20: 12-19; 2 Chronicles 32:31).

Verse 9 – The verses that follow are the writings of Hezekiah.

Verses 10-12 – In the middle of his life he was to go to the grave and be deprived of the remainder of his life.

Verses 13-14 – He awaits the foretold event as prey before the lion.

Verses 15-16 - The strain is suddenly changed. Hezekiah’s prayer has been answered. He is “at a loss to express his wonder and his gratitude”. God has both spoken unto him — *i.e.*, given him a promise of recovery. Already he feels in himself the beginnings of amendment — he is conscious that the worst is past, and that the things have taken a turn for the better.

Verse 17 – It was through bitterness (the knowledge of his pre-mature death), that he received peace (God’s promise).

NOTES:

Verses 18-20 – Hezekiah rejoices that having been given an extension of his life, he now has the opportunity to praise God.

Verses 21-22 – The counterpart is found in 2 Kings 20:7, 8. A “lump of figs” was a remedy employed in the East for the cure of boils. The term translated here as “boil” is the same used in Exodus (Exodus 9:9-11) for the affliction which constituted the sixth plague, in Leviticus (Leviticus 13:18-23) for an ulcer accompanying one of the worst forms of leprosy, in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 28:27, 35) for “the botch of Egypt,” and in Job (Job 2:7) for the last of the visitations from which he suffered.

In 2 Kings, these verses follow what would be verse 6 in Isaiah.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

This chapter is parallel with 2 Kings 20:12-19 with very few differences. Verse 1 has the additional words, "and was recovered;" verse 2, the phrase, "was glad of them," for "hearkened unto them;" verse 5, "Lord of hosts," for "Lord" simply; and verse 8 makes Hezekiah's last utterance an observation instead of a question. Otherwise the two accounts are almost word for word the same. Both relate ambassadors being sent to Hezekiah by the King of Babylon, shortly after his illness, and tell of the reception which he gave them and of the message which Isaiah was commissioned to deliver to him from God in consequence. The Isaianic authorship of the chapter is much disputed, but solely from reluctance to admit that a prophet could predict the subjugation of Judea by Babylon more than a century before the event.

Verse 1 – Compare with 2 Chronicles 32:31, where it appears that a part of the business of the ambassadors was to inquire concerning "wonder" that had occurred. There is dispute among scholars as to whether this "wonder" was Hezekiah's recovery or the turning back of time. Merodach-Baladan and Berodach-Baladan of 2 Kings 20:12 are believed to be the same. The name is one common to several Babylonian kings, one who reigned about B.C. 1325, to a second who is placed about B.C. 900, and to a third who was contemporary with the Assyrian kings Sargon and Sennacherib. It is this last of whom Isaiah undoubtedly refers. He appears first in the Assyrian inscriptions as a petty prince, ruling a small tract upon the seacoast, about the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates. Tiglath-Pileser takes tribute from him about B.C. 744. In B.C. 721 we find him advanced to a more prominent position. Taking advantage of the troubles of the time, he shakes off the Assyrians yoke, and makes himself King of Babylon, where he has a reign of twelve years — from B.C. 721 to B.C. 709. In B.C. 709 Sargon leads an expedition against him, and drives him out of Babylonia into Chaldea, where he besieges him in his ancestral town Bit-Yakin, takes the city, and makes him prisoner. On the death of Sargon, in B.C. 705, Merodach-Baladan escapes from confinement, and hastens once more to Babylon, where he is acknowledged as king, and has a second reign, which lasts six months. He is then driven from the country by Sennacherib and becomes a refugee in Elam.¹

Hezekiah's fourteenth year was B.C. 714. Merodach-Baladan had then been King of Babylon for eight years and knowing that he might at any time be attacked by Sargon, was naturally looking out for alliances with other powers, which Assyria equally threatened. He had recently concluded a treaty with Khumbanigas, King of Elam² and had obtained the support of several of the Aramaean tribes on the Euphrates. He now apparently thought that Judea, which Sargon was also threatening (ch. 38:6), might be induced to join him. Hezekiah's illness and "the wonder done in the land" (2 Chronicles 32:31) furnished him with pretexts for an embassy, which probably had more serious objects than either congratulation or scientific inquiry.

¹ G. Smith, *History of Babylonia*, pp. 125-128

² 'Records of the Past,' vol. 9. p. 14

Verse 2 – “Hezekiah, like Merodach-Baladan, was looking for allies, and “was glad,” thinking that in Babylon he had found one which might render him important service. Sargon’s promptness, however, frustrated his hopes. In B.C. 709 that prince, regarding Merodach-Baladan’s proceedings as constituting a real danger to his kingdom, made a great expedition into Babylonia, defeated Merodach-Baladan, and took him prisoner, after which he had himself crowned King of Babylon, and during the remainder of his life (B.C. 709 to 705) ruled both countries.”¹

Without any reserve, Hezekiah showed all that he possessed. If a warlike alliance was contemplated, it was as important to show the possession of arms as of treasures. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

Verse 3 – Compare with 2 Samuel 12:1-12, 24:11-14; 1 Kings 12:22-24, 13:2-5; 2 Chronicles 12:5-8, 16:7-9, 19:2, 3, etc. This bold attitude was one which prophets were entitled to take by virtue of their office, which called upon them to bear testimony, even before kings, and to have no respect of persons. A similar fearlessness is apparent in Isaiah 7:1-17, where the king with whom Isaiah has to deal was the wicked Ahaz. In the sequence of events, Isaiah had been warning about not making alliances with Egypt, only to now find the king receiving representatives from Babylon. Hezekiah is apparently arrogant in his boast “they are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon”.

Verse 4 – In response to Isaiah’s question of what these ambassadors have seen, Hezekiah tells him the truth, since he is not ashamed of his act, but rather glories in it. He has shown the ambassadors everything, and has thereby made them eager to secure his alliance.

Verses 5-6 – Isaiah declares that that which he is about to speak is a declaration from the Lord. At this time in history (remember – in history, chapters 38 & 39 precede chapters 36 & 37), the kingdom of Babylon was one among many that were struggling hard to maintain independence against the grasping and encroaching Assyria. From the time of Tiglath-Pileser IX, she had been continually losing ground. Both Sargon and Sennacherib trampled her underfoot, overran her territory, captured her towns, and reduced her under direct Assyrian government. Till Assyria should be swept away, a Babylonian conquest of Palestine was impossible. Only God speaking by the mouth of his servants, could have made such an anticipation.

The fulfillment is recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:18. A portion of this the wealth was carried off by Sennacherib in his first expedition (2 Kings 18:14-16); but the bulk of the temple treasures — the gifts of many kings — remained untouched until they were removed to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:2; 5:2; 2 Kings 24:13; 25:13-17).

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson, Exposition on Isaiah

Verse 7 - Hezekiah had at the time, probably, no son, since Manasseh, who succeeded him upon the throne, was not born till two years later. Besides Manasseh, he appears to have had a son, Amariah, who was an ancestor of the Prophet Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1). He may, of course, have also had others. His descendants, rather than his actual sons, seem to be here intended; and the fulfillment of the prophecy is to be found in Daniel 1:3, where certain "of the king's seed" are mentioned among the Israelites who served as eunuchs in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 8 - While there is resignation, there is no doubt something also of selfishness, in Hezekiah's acceptance of the situation. He thinks with gratitude of the "peace and steadfastness" which are to be "in his day;" he does not dwell in thought on the coming "deluge." The "word of the Lord" is "good" to him in more ways than one. It has assured him of coming male offspring — of sons to sit upon his throne, and save him from the curse of childlessness. And it has assured him of a rest for his nation — a respite, so that the Babylonian struggle shall not follow immediately upon the Assyrian; but there shall be a "breathing-space" (Ezra 9:8), a tranquil time, during which Israel may "dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places" (Isaiah 32:18).

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY

Verse 1 – Now Isaiah looks to the distant future when Israel shall be in the blessed presence of the Lord. At this time they shall be “my people” and He shall be their “God”.

Verse 2 – In this time, Jerusalem shall no longer be involved in warfare, her sins are behind her and she has received her punishment.

Verse 3 – Reminiscent of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2-12) and the angel that announced him (Luke 1:17), there shall be an announcement of some kind preparing for the event.

Verses 4-5 - The poor and lowly are raised up; the proud and self-righteous depressed; the crooked and dishonest induced to change their ways for those of simplicity and integrity; the rude, rough and harsh rendered courteous and mild. Then, when the preparation is complete, there shall be a revelation of the glory and might of Jehovah. The revelation is not confined to Israel, for “*all flesh shall see it together*”. This event shall draw the attention of the human race at large. While the restoration of Israel to Palestine is the primary fulfillment of the prophecy, that restoration clearly does not exhaust its meaning, which points on to the restoration of all mankind to God’s favor in Christ.

“*For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*” is a phrase unique to Isaiah (1:20, 58:14).

Verses 6-8 – All things of man and nature have an end, but the word of God endures forever and He has said that Jerusalem shall once again be the Holy City and Israel will again be a nation.

Verses 9-11 – Isaiah presents a beautiful description of Christ’s Millennial Reign where He will gather His righteous with the tenderest of care.

Verse 12 – Now Isaiah describes the majesty of the Lord. The might of God is especially shown in creation. How infinitely above man must he be, who arranged in such perfection, “by measure and number and weight”, the earth, the waters, and the heavens, so proportioning each to each as to produce that admirable order and regularity which the intelligent observer cannot but note in the material universe as among its chief characteristics! Meted = measured, comprehended = calculated.

Verses 13-14 – God is the only Being in the universe that possesses independence from Creation. He was his own counselor, He had no adviser external to himself. The wisdom which wrought with Him was his own wisdom, an essential part of the Divine essence.

NOTES:

Verse 15-17 – All the nations of the earth, of which many have been very powerful and accomplished great feats, are nothing in comparison with God. Man may think that he must be of some account, since God has required of him sacrifice and burnt offering, from which he may suppose God to derive some satisfaction. But, the prophet says, even if man were to burn all Lebanon as firewood on God's altar, and offer there all the (clean) beasts of the entire tract, still God would be put under no obligation. Man would even then have paid less than his debt. In verse 15 single "nations" had been declared to be of no account; in verse 17 now the same is said of all the nations of the earth collectively.

Verse 18 – This verse is more the complement of what precedes than the introduction to what follows. If God be all that has been said of him in verses 12-17, must he not be wholly unique and incomparable? Then, out of this, the thought arises of the strange, the poor, the mean "likenesses" of God, which men have in their folly set up in various times and places.

Verse 19 – In light of the sovereignty of God, human idolatry is pictured as utterly ridiculous. Through a series of rhetorical questions the prophet lifts his readers into the very presence of God. He argues that no "graven image" (idol) shall compare to the likeness of God. Israel's tendency to idolatry has been touched on in the previous chapters (Isaiah 2:8, 20; 31:7); but in the following chapters idolatry is assailed with an increased frequency and vigor. Perhaps Isaiah sees that his people in Babylonian captivity shall be ensnared in the idolatry of that nation.

The special antidote which he employs is ridicule, and the first ground of his ridicule is the *genesis* or formation of an image. It is made by man himself, out of known material substances. Either a figure is cast in some inferior metal, and then coated with gold and finished with the graving tool, or a mere block of wood is taken and cut into shape. Can it be supposed that such things are "likenesses" of God, or that he is comparable to them?

Verse 20 – He that is poor and cannot spend much on religion, chooses wood that he believes will endure and goes to the carpenter, who will carve his image for him and set it up, so that it shall be protected and preserved. The folly is that does a God need to be protected?

Verse 21 – Until now, the prophet has restrained himself and confined himself to quiet sarcasm. Now he bursts out. Is there any one so insensate, so devoid of natural reason and understanding, as not to know what has been known to all from the beginning — from the foundations of the earth — by "the light that is in them," that God is something wholly different from this? — that he is such a One as the prophet proceeds to describe in verses 22-24, alike above nature and above man, Lord of heaven and earth, and absolute Disposer of the fates of all men? If ye have not known the nature of God by the light of nature, has it not come down to you by tradition? Have not your fathers told it you? Has it not been handed on by sire to son from the very foundation of the earth?

Verse 22 – Upon = above. God, who is above the earth, looks down and the inhabitants of earth appear as mere grasshoppers; i.e. minute.

Verses 23-24 - The princes and judges of the earth are not fixed in their places, have no firm root in the soil, are easily overturned. Even if the case were different, a breath from the Almighty would, as a matter of course, dry them up (verse 7) and blow them away.

Verse 25 - This is a summary, to conclude the section (verses 19-24), as verse 18 concludes the preceding one. If God is paramount over idols (verses 19, 20), over nature (verse 22) and over humanity (verses 23, 24), to whom can he be likened? Is he not altogether unique and incomparable?

“Holy One” is an abbreviation of Isaiah’s signature phrase “Holy One of Israel”.¹

Verse 26 - Once more an appeal is made to creation, as proving God’s greatness. “Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these (heavens), bringing out their host (*i.e.* the stars) by number, or in their full number (Cheyne), and calling them all by names”.²

Verse 27 – O Jacob...O Israel, this combination is another Isaianic signature phrase (Isaiah 9:8; 10:21, 22; 14:1; 27:6; 29:23; 41:8; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 49:5, 6, etc.). Isaiah has gone back to the time when Israel is suffering all the calamities of the captivity, instead of being on the point of emerging from it, as in verses 9-11 and he now hears the complaints of the exiles, who think that God has forsaken them — that he does not see their “way” of life, or regard their sufferings. Judgment = right or claim. They believe that God does not understand the “right” of Israel to be independent of its oppressors.

Verse 28 - Complaining Israel is bidden to stay itself upon God, as

- (1) everlasting;
- (2) the Creator;
- (3) unwearied;
- (4) unsearchable;

and is then further consoled by the promise that God will give them strength to endure; support them, refresh them, and, as it were, renew the youth of the nation (verses 29, 31).

NOTES:

¹ See study note Isaiah 37:23

² Compare with Psalm 147:4-5

If God were for a moment to “faint” or “be weary,” to “slumber” or “sleep,” the whole fabric of nature would fail and disappear, universal chaos would set in, all moral order would cease — probably all existence, except his own, sink into nothingness. God is wholly free from whatsoever is weak or defective in man. God’s ways being unsearchable, his servants must trust him to accomplish their deliverance in his own good time.

Verses 29-31 – So far is he from being “faint” himself, He has superabundant energy to impart to any that are faint among his servants.

Isaiah 40:28-31 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Synonymous, Antithetic, Emblematic, Synthetic, Composite, Climactic and Introverted (all seven styles)

Synonymous – idea repeated

Antithetic – Contrast

Emblematic – Comparison “as”

Synthetic – answers a question

Composite – list of examples

Climactic – Develop theme

Introverted (chiasmus) – faint, weary, power/strength,

NOTES:

FORTY-ONE

Verses 1-3 - It is generally agreed that "*the righteous man from the east*" is a reference to Cyrus the Great of Persia, who is further referred to in verse 25 and in Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4, 13; and 46:11.

CYRUS [SIGH russ] — the powerful king of Persia (559–530 b.c.), sometimes called Cyrus the Great, who allowed the Jewish captives to return to their homeland in Jerusalem after he led the Persians to become the dominant nation in the ancient world. Within 20 years after becoming king of Persia, Cyrus had conquered the Medes, Lydians, and Babylonians (549, 547, and 539 b.c., respectively). He is praised most highly, in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, where he is called God's "shepherd" and His "anointed." He is the only pagan ruler to be honored with the latter title.

Cyrus first appears in the Old Testament in connection with the release of the Jewish captives (taken in the Babylonian captivity of Judah), when he proclaimed their return from Captivity (2 Chr. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4). This restoration, which was highlighted by the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, had been prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10–14; also see Is. 44:28). The Book of Ezra contains a number of reports on the progress of the work related to the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 3:7; 4:3, 5; 5:13–14, 17; 6:3, 14). The prophet Daniel was a member of his court (Dan. 1:21; 6:28; 10:1).

Cyrus was known in Persia as a wise and tolerant ruler. He was able to gain the goodwill of the varied ethnic and religious groups within his large empire, which extended from India to the western edge of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The Old Testament describes him as chosen by the Lord God of Israel as the deliverer of His people. It was not that Cyrus became a follower of Israel's God; rather, he described himself as the one who received "all the kingdoms of the earth." He declared that God "commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem" (2 Chr. 36:23). The famous Cyrus Cylinder, containing records of Cyrus' reign, revealed that Babylon's chief god, Marduk, had accepted Cyrus as "righteous prince," and had appointed him ruler "over the whole world."

Ezra 6:1–12 gives some idea of the careful organization carried out by Cyrus in relation to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Its dimensions and the materials and supplies required are carefully described, along with the specification of severe penalties for anyone who would change his orders regarding its construction.

Cyrus' reign ended in 530 b.c., when he was killed in battle. His tomb still stands at Pasargadae in southwestern Iran. He was succeeded by his son, Cambyses II.¹

NOTES:

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

Verse 4 - "By whom has this mighty conqueror been raised up?" Can any of the idol-gods claim him as their *protege*? Definitely not! He is the work of Jehovah, that called (into being) the generations (of man) from the beginning (of the world) — Jehovah, the First and the Last.

Verses 5-6 - "A general terror seized the nations on the conquest of the Medes by Cyrus. Croesus of Lydia, Nabonidus of Babylon, and Amasis of Egypt, were at once drawn together by the common danger, and made alliance offensive and defensive (Herod., 1:77). The weaker tribes and peoples gave themselves up for lost. Scarcely any resistance seems to have been offered to the Persian arms by the tribes between the Halys and Indus, the Jaxartes and the Indian Ocean. Lydia and Babylon alone made a stout fight; but even these were conquered without very much difficulty....distant nations held consultation together on the danger which threatens them. The league of Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt is the only known instance of such 'drawing near'."¹

Verse 7 - Compare with Isaiah 40:19, 20 for the variety of workmen employed in the production of idols. Each encourages the others to manufacture a right good god. When all is done, there is, however, need of soldering, and of nails, that the manufactured object may be kept upright and not show its weakness by falling.

Verse 8 - *Israel...my servant* (compare with Isaiah 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3-6, etc.). The title characterizes these later chapters and while standing no doubt in some special relation to the "Servant of Jehovah" who is the subject of Isaiah 42:1-5; 49:5-7, etc., is perhaps mainly selected, and dwelt on, to console Israel in captivity, when *servants* of the King of Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:20), by the thought that their true Master was God himself, and that to him, and him only, did they really belong. *Jacob whom I have chosen* (compare Isaiah 44:1). (On this "choice," and the love which it implied, see Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 10:15) Abraham my friend; or, *Abraham that loved me*. It was the special privilege of Abraham to be known as God's friend (see 2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23) among the Hebrews, even as he is among the Arabs to this day.

Verses 9-10 - Whatever happens, God has not "cast away" Israel, He will remember His covenant and be their strength.

Verses 11-12 - As Israel would grow strong through God's help, so her enemies would grow weak through God's disfavor.

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson; Exposition on Isaiah

Verse 13 - God himself will be their Strength, will personally interfere on their behalf, taking them as it were by their right hand.

Verse 14 - Few and weak though they be, God's people need not fear. "Holy One of Israel" - see note Isaiah 37:23.

Verses 15-16 - Israel is to be more than sustained. Strength is to be given her to take the aggressive and to subdue her enemies under her. She is to "thresh them" and "beat them small," as with a threshing-instrument (compare 2 Kings 13:7; Amos 1:3; Micah 4:13). In the literal sense, no earlier accomplishment of this prophecy can be pointed out than the time of the Maccabean war. Metaphorically, it may be said that Israel began to conquer the world when her literature became known to the Greeks through the expedition of Alexander the Great, and completed her conquest when the Roman empire succumbed to the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

Verses 17-20 - The crowning promise is that of spiritual support and refreshment through the dull and dreary time of the Captivity, during which Israel dwells as it were in a desert, without water, or shade, or the relief to the eye which is furnished by the greenery of trees and shrubs. God was able to make of this "wilderness a standing water, and watersprings of the dry ground" (Psalm 107:35), and he promises to do so (verse 18). The soul that longs for Him, that thirsts after Him, feeling that it dwells "in a barren and dry land, where no water is" (Psalm 63:1), shall be relieved and satisfied by a revelation of God's presence, and an outpouring of his grace unusually copious and abundant. God's grace is shadowed out under the two similitudes of water and verdure, as in Isaiah 35:7, and, to some extent, in Isaiah 30:23-25.

Verse 21 - The nations had been told to "draw near" — to "keep silence" while God spoke — and "then to speak" (verse 1). Now the time for them to speak is come, and they are challenged to "*produce*" and plead "their cause" before the King of Jacob.

Verses 22-23 - God claims that the power of predicting the future is his own inalienable prerogative. He defies the idol-gods and their votaries to give any clear prediction of future events. No doubt the claim to possess the power was made very generally among the idolatrous nations, who almost universally practised divination, and in many cases possessed oracles. But it was a false claim, based upon fraud and cunning, which deceived men as often as dependence was placed upon it and landed them in misfortune. The former are, of course, much the easier to predict, since they fall to some extent within the domain of human foresight; the latter are more difficult; but the idol-gods are challenged to produce either the one or the other. A definite and clear statement is required to preclude such vague and ambiguous utterances as the heathen oracles delighted to put forth and then compare them with the event, when the time comes.

Verse 24 – These idol-gods of the nations when put to the test shall be found to be nothing and an abomination to anyone that would choose to put their faith in such.

Verse 25 - Jehovah will vindicate His own Divinity. He provides as proof of His power in action, the fact of His raising up Cyrus; as proof of his ability to predict, the fact that He has announced his coming. Both as a Persian and as King of Elam, Cyrus might be considered to come from the east. In fact, however, when he attacked Babylon, he fell upon it mainly from the north. After his conquest of Astyages (Istivegu), he made Ecbatana his capital and it was from this comparatively northern city that he directed his attack upon Nabonidus. Herodotus agrees with the monuments in bringing him to Babylon from the north. He shall tread them underfoot, mortar being commonly mixed with the feet, as was also clay for bricks and pottery. The chief "princes" whom Cyrus is known to have conquered were Astyages of Media, Croesus of Lydia, and Nabonidus of Babylon. He was studiously mild in his treatment of royal captives, but naturally deprived them of all power.

Verse 26 - Which of the idol-gods has announced the coming of a conqueror?

Verse 27 – The "first" most likely refers to Jehovah (verse 4). He has already announced to Zion her deliverance (Isaiah 40:9-11; 41:2, etc.). Perhaps Isaiah himself or perhaps some prophet of the Captivity, as Daniel, who "knew by books" when the Captivity was drawing to a close (Daniel 9:2), and may be supposed to have announced the good tidings to the other exiles.

Verse 28 – There is none that answer the challenge.

Verse 29 – They are all worthless and scatter and confuse those that would believe in them.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

Verses 1-4 – These verses prophesy of Christ. Matthew 12:15-21 records that Christ fulfilled this prophesy. The reference to the Gentiles should not come as a surprise, as Isaiah has continually told of a time where the work of God would carry outside of Israel (2:2; 19:22-25; 25:6; 27:13; etc.).

Verses 5-10 – Compare this prophesy with the words of Christ in fulfillment in 3 Nephi 4:44-52. In particular the “former things” and “new things” that Isaiah speaks of.

Verses 11-12 – The event would be of such significance that even those in the most remote conditions should have reason to rejoice.

Verses 13-16 – Like chapter forty, Isaiah describes Christ’s first advent and then describes conditions more consistent with his return. Perhaps Isaiah sees “the big picture” of God’s plan and looks at Christ’s full mission, from His birth to His return, as a continuous event. There is certainly a similarity (type & anti-type) with Christ’s return and Cyrus with Israel.

Verse 17 – During this time “they” that have trusted in graven images (idols), shall be “greatly ashamed” when the truth of their foolishness is revealed in the “light”.

Verse 18 – The invitation is given to those that will receive it.

Verses 19-20 – It is not completely clear to whom this is referring. One possibility is that Israel was the servant and messenger that failed in taking God to the world.

Verse 21 – Despite the many failings of mankind, God takes pleasure and continues the work because of the few righteous.

Verse 22 – People are caught as prisoners of their conduct (sin). Applications can be Israel in bondage in Babylon or the world in the final days (or both).

Verse 23 – Is there any that will hear?

Verses 24-25 - On account of their iniquities, God brought upon his people the scourge of foreign war and allow the Babylonians to waste Judea, to destroy Jerusalem, and to lead into captivity the entire nation (2 Chronicles 36:14-17).

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

Verse 1 - Severe rebuke is followed, as so often in Isaiah, by comfort and consolation. The words mark the strong contrast between the closing passage of the preceding chapter and the opening paragraph of the present one. Israel had undergone a severe punishment for its sins; it is still suffering, *but now* there is going to be an entire change. Israel is to be protected and delivered. Created, formed, redeemed and called by name: on this fourfold ground God claims Israel as his own.

Verse 2 - God would be with and protect Israel through their trials. The latter part of this verse has an obvious literal fulfillment in the third chapter of Daniel, however the scope of the message is probably far more broad.

Verse 3 - "Holy One of Israel" - see notes in study page 148 (Isaiah 37:23). In exchange for their freedom, the Lord says that he has given to Persia the nations of Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba. "Even the latest date assigned... would make this a most remarkable prophecy. Egypt was not reduced, nor was Ethiopia made tributary to Persia until several years after the death of Cyrus, whose son, Cambyses, effected the conquests about B.C. 527-6. Human foresight could not, in the lifetime of Cyrus, have predicted with any certainty what would be the result of collision between Egypt and Persia; much less could it have ventured on the improbable supposition that the remote Ethiopia would submit itself to the Achae-menisn yoke. Yet this was the result of the invasion of Cambyses, who made Egypt a Persian province, and forced the Ethiopians to submit to the payment of an annual tribute... 'Seba' is the "land of Meroe, which is enclosed between the White and Blue Niles'... it may be questioned whether really this ever formed a portion of the Persian empire. But Isaiah has probably no very distinct knowledge of the geographical position of Seba, or of the relations between the Sabaeans and the rest of the Ethiopians. He couples the two together, both here and in Isaiah 45:14, as forming two portions of one nation. The subjection of the Ethiopians involves, in his eyes, the subjection of the Sabaeans. And we cannot say that he is wrong, since it is not at all clear that the Sabaeans were not generally spread through Ethiopia, or at any rate scattered in various parts of the country."¹

Verse 4 - Israel became "precious" from the time that the promise was given to Jacob that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Genesis 28:14). Therefore God placed the interests of Israel above those of "men" generally, and markedly above those of any other "people."

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson

Verses 5-6 - The nations are called upon, not merely to “let Israel go,” but to conduct and escort them from the places of their abode to their own country. (On the need of such escort, see Ezra 8:22, 31. On the actual furnishing of an escort in one case by a Persian king, see Nehemiah 2:7, 8.)

Verse 7 - See the description of Israel in verse 1. This verse describes the same. This applies to every member of the household of Israel, not shall be forgotten “Even every”.

Verse 8 - Throughout Isaiah, Israel is identified as being blind and deaf to God, despite having eyes and ears (Isaiah 6:9; 42:19).

Verses 9-11 - The event shall be witnessed by all the nations and to the glory of God.

Verse 12-13 - At the time (Isaiah’s prophesy), there was no idolatry in Judah, since Hezekiah had destroyed the idols (2 Kings 18:4). Therefore this event could not be credited to any other and therefore they would be witnesses of the faithfulness and power of the Lord.

Verses 14-15 - Having wound up the preceding “controversy” with a reference to his own power to work great results (verse 13), Jehovah now brings forward two examples — the downfall of Babylon (verses 14, 15), and the recovery and restoration of Israel (verses 16-21), both of which He is about to accomplish.

Chaldeans were inhabitants of Babylonia in a tract along the sea-coast. The Chaldeans, fleeing from the Persian attack, take to their ships with cries of grief, the ships thereby becoming “ships of wailing.” The nautical character of the Babylonians is strongly marked in the inscriptions, where “the ships of Ur are celebrated at a very remote period, and the native kings, when hard pressed by the Assyrians, are constantly represented as going on ship-board, and crossing the Persian Gulf to Susiana, or to some of the islands. The abundant traffic and the numerous merchants of Babylon are mentioned by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 17:4). Again “Holy One of Israel” – see study notes, page 148, Isaiah 37:23.

Verse 16 - The deliverance out of Egypt is glanced at, to prepare the way for the announcement of deliverance from the hand of Babylon. Then “a way was made in the sea” (Exodus 14:21-29), “and a path in the mighty waters;” now it will be necessary to make “a way in the wilderness” (verse 19).

NOTES:

Verse 17 - Still the reference is to the events of the Exodus. The redemption out of Egypt was a type and pledge of the deliverance to be looked for out of Babylon. God then "brought out" after Israel, to attack them, "chariot and horse, army and power;" but the result was their destruction. That force which had come against God's people is now "extinct", they are "quenched as tow"; *tow* is the wick of a lamp, which a single breath puts out.

Verse 18 - The old deliverance will be as nothing when compared with the new. Israel must cast its eye forwards, not backwards. Israel in the wilderness was a stiffnecked and rebellious people, given to murmuring, licentiousness, and idolatry. Israel, returned from Babylon, will no more follow after idols, but will have God's Law "put in their inward parts" (Jeremiah 32:33), and will "show forth God's praise" (verse 21).

Verse 19 - As the Lord led His people out of their Egyptian bondage, first through the Red Sea, and then through a "howling wilderness" (Deuteronomy 32:10), so now He will "make a way" for them through a still more desolate tract. Regardless of which route they returned, they must have had some wide tracts of wilderness to cross.

Verse 20 - All of "creation" shall "honor" the God that accomplishes this work.

Verse 21 - Israel had been formed to bring praise to God (verses 1 & 7). Their restoration to their own land shall cause them to glorify God both with songs of praise (for the fulfilment, see Ezra 3:9-11; Nehemiah 12:27) and also by a life in accordance with God's laws.

Verses 22-24 - The thought of Israel in the future, redeemed, restored, and "telling out God's praise" (verse 21), raises naturally the thought of Israel in the present and the past, disobedient, full of shortcomings (verses 22-24) and too often guilty of overt acts of sin (verses 24-28). While reproaching his people, and reminding them that the exile is the well calculated punishment of their past offences (verses 27, 28), God still promises them pardon if they will appeal to his covenant of mercy (verses 25, 26). Israel had been very remiss in their prayers and dedications and offerings.

Verses 25-26 - Despite their conduct, they shall be redeemed (verse 1).

NOTES:

Verse 27 - Even thy first father, Abraham, sinned (Genesis 12:13, 18; 17:17; 20:2), the very priests and prophets have been full of imperfections and sinned against God.

Verse 28 - The "princes of the sanctuary" are most likely principal members of the priesthood, who were carried into captivity with the rest of the people (2 Kings 25:18) and deprived of their functions, as a part of the punishment due to Israel for its sins. Israel itself was at the same time given to the curse of a severe bondage and to the reproaches of the neighboring nation.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

Verses 1-2 - The Lord's people have their proper names — Jacob, Israel, Jesurun, or rather, Jeshurun. "Jacob" marks them simply as descendants of the patriarch — the people to whom the promises were made. "Israel" marks their militant character — that as "God's soldiers" they fought his battles and maintained his cause in the midst of a hostile world. The third name, "Jeshurun," which is very rarely used (only here and in Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26), designates them as "righteous," being a derivative from the root *yashar* (or *joshar*), equivalent to "upright," and points to that standard of moral excellence which it was their duty to set forth, and which to some extent they did set forth, in a world that "lay in wickedness." Had they been more worthy of the name, it would probably have been often applied to them.

Verses 3-5 - The "water" is only poured on those that are "thirsty" for it and the flood is only on the "dry" ground i.e., able to absorb it. God will pour out His spirit on those that desire to be known as "His" (verse 5).

Verse 6 - Compare with Isaiah 41:4. That there is no other God besides Jehovah has been distinctly asserted in the Law (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 32:39); but Israel could not be convinced to believe it. The "gods of the nations" were supposed generally to be realities, actual powers, not perhaps so potent as Jehovah, but still real beings, capable of doing good and harm (see Isaiah 41:23). It is one of Isaiah's special objects in these later chapters to dispose Israel of this notion (see Isaiah 41:21-24; 43:9-11; 45:5, 6, 14-22, etc.).

Verse 7 - The claim is that, from the first creation of mankind, God has not only ordered the events that should happen, but has declared them by the mouth of prophets (see Genesis 3:15; 6:13, 17; 8:22, 23; 9:12-16, etc.). No other has done the same. Not earlier and later events, but "future events," and "such as will actually come to pass". Let the idol-gods declare these, if they are to be entitled to consideration. The thought is very similar to Isaiah 41:22-29.

Verse 8 - Israel need not fear that they will be forgotten or forsaken. God has told them and declared to them, what he is about to do — destroy Babylon and give them Deliverance and provide a savior (Cyrus and Christ). Compare with Isaiah 43:10, 12; 17:10; 26:4; 30:29.

Verses 9-20 - The uniqueness of God having been set forth, the prophet now turns to the images and the image-makers, overwhelming them with his scorn and ridicule. The foolishness in believing in these idols is a common thought in Isaiah: 40:18-20; 41:21-29.

NOTES:

Verse 21 – Israel is called to remember the futility of idols and the folly of the idol-worshippers. As God's servant, they are bound to worship Him and not the idols (compare with Isaiah 41:8 and verses 1, 2 of this chapter). He has formed them (compare with Isaiah 43:1, 21 and verses 2, 24 of this chapter). It may be assumed that he who has formed a thing will have a constant care of it and regard for it — that at any rate he will not “forget” it.

Verse 22 – Compare with Isaiah 43:25.

Verse 23 – All nature is called upon to rejoice and give praise that Israel is redeemed and God glorified.

Verse 24 – Compare with 43:1, 14.

Verse 25 – “That frustrateth the tokens of the liars”; *i.e.*, who brings to nought the prognostications of the astrologers and soothsayers, that pretend falsely to a knowledge of future events and makes diviners mad; *i.e.* “shows them to be thole or madmen” (see Job. 12:17).

“That turneth wise men backward” *i.e.* “repulses them — puts them to flight.” Pretenders to wisdom, rather than truly wise men, are meant.

Verse 26 – Before the return from the Captivity took place, it had been prophesied, not only by Isaiah, but by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:10-14), by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 39:25-28), by Joel (Joel 3:1), by Amos (Amos 9:11-15), by Obadiah (Obadiah 1:20), by Micah (Micah 4:10), and by Zephaniah (Zephaniah 3:14-20).

Verse 27 – Compare with Isaiah 42:15.

Verse 28 – “The mention of Cyrus by name, here and again in Isaiah 45:1, has no doubt been one of the main grounds on which has been set up the theory of two Isaiahs. It has been thought incredible, or at any rate contrary to the analogy of prophetic revelation, that so minute a matter as the name of a man should have been announced in prophecy more than a century before his birth. There is, however, the parallel case of Josiah, who, according to the author of the Books of Kings, was announced by name more than three centuries before his birth (1 Kings 13:2). And there are the extremely minute facts noted in Daniel 11... which were prophetically declared centuries before they happened. It is, perhaps, assuming that we know more than we really do know about the object and laws of prophetic utterance, to lay it down that there can be no minute prophecy except when the prophet is living in the midst of the events. It is certainly a very marvellous thing that Isaiah, living at the close of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century B.C., should mention a king by name who did not ascend the throne till the middle of the sixth; but no one can suppose that God could not have made such a revelation to him if he pleased. An attempt to minimize the marvel, without postulating two Isaiahs, has been made by the supposition that “Cyrus” was not really a proper name, but an old title of the Persian (Achaemenian) kings, signifying “the sun,” and that Isaiah,

therefore, only meant to point out Persia as the power which would destroy Babylon, which he had already done in effect in Isaiah 21:2. But, in reality, there is no sufficient ground for either of the two statements

- (1) that Cyrus meant "the sun," and
- (2) that it was an old titular name of all the Persian kings.

That "Cyrus" meant "the sun," rests upon the weak authorities of Plutarch and Ctesias, and has been disproved by Sir H. Rawlinson ('Cuneiform Inscriptions,' vol. 2, p. 112). That it was an old titular name of all the Persian kings is directly contrary to the evidence. Out of fourteen Achaemenian kings, two only bore the name; and they bore it as their one and only personal appellation. It was also borne by an Achaemenian prince who had no other name. It is as purely a proper name as Cambyses, or Xerxes, or Darius. The theory of Dean Plumptre ('Biblical Studies,' p. 195) must therefore be set aside as untenable, and we must face the fact that the great Cyrus, who reigned from B.C. 559 to B.C. 529, is mentioned in prophecies attributed to a writer whose death cannot be placed much later than B.C. 700. The name which the Greeks expressed by *Ku>rov* and the Romans by "Cyrus," is in the original Persian *Kurush*, in the old Babylonian *Kuras*, and in the Hebrew *Koresh*. **He is my shepherd**; *i.e.* not a mere ordinary king, who was often called "the shepherd of his people (poimh<n law~n)," but "my shepherd" — the shepherd of my people, who will tend them and care for them. **And shall perform** (literally, *accomplish*) **all my pleasure**. Cyrus is said by Josephus to have had this prophecy pointed out to him on his conquest of Babylon, and to have thereupon determined to fulfil what was written ('Ant. Jud.,' 12:1, § 2). His edict, reported by Ezra (Ezra 1:2-4), contained a statement that "Jehovah had charged him to build him a house at Jerusalem." It is difficult to see any sufficient *political* object for his restoration of the Jews to their country. **Thou shalt be built**; rather, *it shall be built*. **Thy foundation shall be laid**; literally, *it shall be founded*. The decree of Cyrus found by Darius at Ecbatana required that "the foundations of the house should be strongly laid" (Ezra 6:3), and prescribed its dimensions and materials. (On the actual laying of the foundations, see Ezra 3:8-13.)¹

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

This direct address of God to a heathen king is without a parallel in Scripture. Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, Abimelech, were warned through dreams. Nebuchadnezzar was even promised Divine aid (Ezekiel 30:24, 25). But no heathen monarch had previously been personally addressed by God, much less called "his anointed," and spoken to *by his name* (verse 4).

Three motives are mentioned for this special favor to him:

- (1) that he might acknowledge Jehovah to be the true God;
- (2) that Israel might be benefited and advantaged by him;
- (3) that the attention of the whole world might be attracted, and the unity of God made manifest far and wide (verses 3-6).

Verse 1 - Among the nations subdued by Cyrus were the Medes, the Babylonians, the Lydians, the Caftans, the Caunians, the Lycians, the Bactrians, the Sacae, the Parthians, the Hyrcanians, the Chorasmians, the Sogdians, the Arians of Herat, the Zarangians, the Arachosians, the Satagydians, and the Gandarians. *I will loose the loins of kings; i.e.* render them weak and incapable of resistance or disarm them. *To open before him the two-leaved gates* - "the cities and forts represented on Assyrian monuments have their gateways closed by two large gates or doors which meet in the centre of the gateway."¹

Verse 2 - *I will... make the crooked places straight*; rather, I will smooth his way before him. According to Herodotus, the gates of Babylon were of solid bronze, and one hundred in number. Solid bronze gates have, however, nowhere been found, and would have been inconvenient from their enormous weight. It is probable that the "gates of brass," or "bronze," were of wood plated with bronze. Gates of towns were, as a matter of course, secured by bars, which would commonly be made of iron, as the strongest material. Iron was well known to the Babylonians.

Verse 3 - Treasuries were built for greater security without windows. Of the treasures which fell into the hands of Cyrus, the greatest were probably those of Babylon and of Sardis. For Cyrus knowing the Lord, see Ezra 1:1-3; 6:3-5.

Verse 4 - This second motive is, in a certain sense, the main one. Cyrus is raised up, especially, to perform God's pleasure with respect to Judah and Jerusalem. All was done, not for his sake, but for the sake of Israel.

NOTES:

¹ G. Rawlinson

Verse 5 - God "loosed the loins" of Cyrus's adversaries, to weaken them, and "girded" those of Cyrus, to give him strength.

Verses 6-7 - Here is the third motive of the Divine action respecting Cyrus. The attention of all the world from the extreme east to the extreme west, would be drawn by the wonderful occurrences. Jehovah's hand in them would be perceived, and his sole Godhead would obtain acknowledgment. An impulse was doubtless given to monotheism by the victories of Cyrus and the favor which he showed the Jews; but it cannot be said to have been very marked. Idolatry and polytheism were to a certain extent discredited; but they maintained their ground nevertheless. It was not till the true "Anointed One" appeared — the antitype of whom Cyrus was the type — that the idols were "utterly abolished."

Verse 8 - The restoration of Israel to their own land will be followed by a great increase of righteousness and salvation. They will be, as it were, showered down abundantly from heaven, while at the same time they will spring in profusion from earth's bosom. Jehovah, who has caused the deliverance, will also cause these results to follow from it.

Verses 9-10 – Israel is warned about questioning God's methods.

Verses 11-12 - First learn of me what in my designs is to be the course of human events, and then (if necessary) give me directions concerning my sons (Israel), who are the work of my hands; but do not presume to give me directions while you are still in utter ignorance of my designs. In any case remember who I am — the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, One accustomed to give directions to the angelic host (verse 12).

Verse 13 - "Him" can only be referred to Cyrus, the one individual mentioned previously in the chapter (verses 1-5). The expression, "raised up," had been already used of him (Isaiah 41:25). *In righteousness* means "to carry out my righteous purposes." Captives were often "redeemed for a price" (Nehemiah 6:8), Cyrus, however, in letting the Jews go free, would not be motivated for financial profit.

Verse 14 – As Cyrus was a type for Christ, we see the type continues in that others outside of Israel will be drawn to the event as the Gospel drew the Gentiles in after the advent of Christ.

NOTES:

Verse 15 – Some commentators regard this as an exclamation made by Isaiah himself, who marvels at the unsearchable mystery of God’s ways. But others, take it for a continuation of the speech of the converted heathen, who marvel that God has so long hid himself from them and from the world at large, not manifesting his power, as he has now done in the person of Cyrus.

Verses 16-17 - While the heathen that join themselves to Israel partake of their glory and salvation, such as abide by their idols are covered with shame and confusion.

Verses 18-19 - Jehovah’s oracles have not been given, like those of the necromancers, or those of the heathen gods, in dark places of the earth — such as caves or the inmost recesses of temples; but openly on Sinai, or by the mouth of prophets who proclaimed his words to all Israel.

Verse 20 - The thought reverts to the main idea of the section, which is the conversion of the Gentiles, and calls on all “the escaped of the nation” — *i.e.* all who have survived the judgments of the time — to “assemble and come,” to consider the claims of Jehovah to be the only true God, to “look to him (verse 22) and be saved.” The great judgments through which the heathen will be brought to God have been frequently mentioned (Isaiah 24:1-23; 26:20, 21; 27:1-7; 30:27-33; 34:1-10; 40:24; 41:11, 12, 25; 42:13-15, etc.). They must not be regarded as limited to the time of Cyrus, but rather as continuing into the Messianic period, and indeed nearly to its close (see especially ch. 34.). Each one of them constitutes a call to the nations, and is followed by a conversion to a greater or less extent. That conversion is turning away from the graven images of wood “that cannot save”.

Verse 21 – None of the other “gods” can predict or proclaim such an event prior to its occurring. (Compare with 41:22-26).

Verse 22 – The invitation is to “all the ends of the earth”.

Verses 23-25 – What God has declared shall not stopped or altered, but shall be accomplished to the letter.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Verse 1 – Bel and Nebo were two prominent Babylonian deities. These “gods” will *boweth down* and *stoopeth* i.e., they will submit to the greater power.¹ They would be carried away upon beasts of burden by Babylonia’s conquerors.

Verse 2 – These deities would not be able to defend those that believed in them and would themselves be carried away into captivity by the conquerors.

Verse 3 - The address is to the captives of Babylon, designated in these later chapters as “Jacob” or “Israel” (Isaiah 40:27; 41:8, 14; 42:24; 43:1,28; 44:1, 21, 23; 45:4, etc.), never as “Judah,” and constantly mentioned as a “remnant” — all that was left of the oppressed and downtrodden nation (see Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-22; 11:16. etc.), carried in the everlasting arms, as a child in the arms of its mother from their very beginning as a nation.

Verse 4 – Hoar hairs = gray hairs. The mother at some time grows tired of carrying the child and places him down to fend for himself. But God’s tender care for his people lasts from their infancy, through their boyhood and manhood, to their old age. The everlasting arms never weary. God’s watchfulness, his providence, his protection, never fail. The maker of a thing has naturally regard to what he has made, loves it, desires its good, seeks to defend and save it.

Verses 5-7 – The Lord cannot be represented by any image created by man.

Verse 8 - Isaiah is addressing those who waver between true religion and idolatry. They have not fallen away, but they are in danger of so doing. Remember, he says to them, or bear in mind constantly the impotence of the idols, and the power of Jehovah, and then stand firm — remain in your old faith — do not be drawn over to so foolish a thing as idolatry. It is to be a “transgressor” even to contemplate the turning from Jehovah to idolatry.

Verse 9 – They are called to remember God’s wonderful dealings with Israel in times past — the miracles in Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the deliverances from Midian, and Ammon, and the Philistines, and Zerah, and Sennacherib — which proved him God in a sense in which the word could be applied to no other.

Verse 10 – God has prophesied and foretold of all His doings and every letter of His word will be accomplished and fulfilled.

NOTES:

¹ Jeremiah 50:1-3

✓ Verse 11 – A reference to Cyrus and that he would act under the direction of God. Additionally, the Persians from the time of Cyrus had for a standard a golden eagle, with wings outspread.

✓ Verses 12-13 - God's mercy extends even to those who resist his grace. They who have been stiff-necked and "far from righteousness," have a special warning addressed to them, Salvation is drawing nigh; the deliverance of Israel is approaching; there is no time to lose; will they not cast in their lot with the true Israel, and take advantage of the deliverance when it comes?

Verse 4 - How hard - gray hairs. The moment at some time grows tired of carrying the child and piece him down to find for himself. But God's tender care for his people lasts from their infancy through their boyhood and manhood to their old age. The everlasting arm never weary. God's watchfulness, his providence, his protection, never fail. The matter of a thing has naturally regard to what he has made, loves it, desires its good, seeks to defend and save it.

Verses 5-7 - The Lord cannot be represented by any image created by man. Verse 8 - Isaiah is addressing those who waver between true religion and idolatry. They have not fallen away, but they are in danger of so doing. Remember, he says to them, or best in mind constantly the importance of the idols, and the power of Jehovah, and then stand firm - remain in your old faith - do not be drawn over to so foolish a thing as idolatry. It is to be a "transgressor," even to contemplate the turning from Jehovah to idolatry.

Verse 9 - They are called to remember God's wonderful dealings with Israel in times past - the miracles in Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the deliverance from Midian and Ammon, and the Philistines and Canaan, and Sennacherib - which proved him God in a sense in which the word could be applied to no other.

Verse 10 - God has prophesied and fulfilled of all his doings and every utterance of his word will be accomplished and fulfilled.

NOTES

Isaiah 46:1-3

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

✓
Verse 1 – Now a warning goes to Babylon, much like Jonah to Nineveh, except that Nineveh repented. The description of the “virgin daughter of Babylon” is at best confusing, especially when compared with the description of Babylon as the “whore” in Revelation.¹ This description is probably not a description of moral “virginity”, but a description of Babylon’s “virginity” from being violated by conquerors. Before Cyrus, she reigned untouched from her throne in splendor, now that image would vanish and she would sit in the dust and be “soiled”. The “virgin daughter” had sat, as it were, on a throne, ruling the nations. Now she must sit on the ground — there was no throne left for her. It is the fact that Babylon after being conquered by Cyrus was never again the capital of a kingdom. It remained in ruins until Saddam Hussein tried to rebuild it. Perhaps the current events are fulfillment of this prophesy.

The Chaldeans were the elite ruling class of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Babylon had once been the seat of luxury, now her population would have to perform the hard duties laid upon them by foreign masters.

✓
Verse 2 – They would now have to do the hard work commonly allotted slaves - turn the heavy upper millstone all day long. Babylon having been personified as a *female* captive, the details have to be in unison: *uncover thy locks* = remove their veils or coverings; *make bare the leg... pass over the rivers* = on the way from their own city to the land of their captivity, they would have to wade through streams and in so doing to expose parts of their persons which modesty required to be concealed.

✓
Verse 3 – To the righteous, Christ is portrayed as the bridegroom. To Babylon, He will manifest Himself in vengeance. Babylon is portrayed as a female in distress, but she cannot expect the Lord to appear as her “hero” or “rescuer”.

✓
Verse 4 – In contrast to Babylon, to whom the Lord will turn His back, to Israel, He will be their “champion” and redeemer.

✓
Verse 5 - The fallen people is recommended to hide its shame in silence and darkness, as disgraced persons do who shrink from being seen by their fellows. It is important to remember that when Isaiah prophesied this, Babylon was not a great power. At the time of Isaiah, Assyria was the ruling Empire. Isaiah prophesies not only the rise, but the fall of the nation.

✓
Verse 6 – The Lord was angry with His people (Judah) and therefore “allowed” them to fall into the hands of the Babylonians, but the Babylonians treated the Lord’s people harshly.

NOTES:

¹ Revelation 17:1; 18:1-3; 19:2

Verses 7-8 - Babylon felt secure that she would always remain in her position of power and prosperity. She did not "*lay these things to thy heart*" i.e., the warnings of God as recorded by Isaiah before Babylon ever rose to be a world power and "*neither didst remember the latter end of it*", what was prophesied to be her end.

Babylon thought of her own pleasures and pursuits, without thought to others or God's plan.

Verses 9-11 - The mighty city of Babylon fell to Cyrus in one day, in fact within a few hours. "In 539 BC the Neo-Babylonian Empire fell to Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, with an unprecedented military maneuver—perhaps in all of human history. The famed walls of Babylon were indeed impenetrable, with the only way into the city through one of its many gates or through the Euphrates, which ebbed beneath its thick walls. Metal gates at the river's in-flow and out-flow prevented underwater intruders, if one could hold one's breath to reach them. Cyrus (or his generals) devised a plan to use the Euphrates as the mode of entry to the city, ordering large camps of troops at each point and instructed them to wait for the signal. Awaiting an evening of a national feast among Babylonians, Cyrus' troops diverted the Euphrates river upstream, causing the Euphrates to drop to wading levels or to dry up altogether. The soldiers marched under the walls through thigh-level water or as dry as mud. The Persian Army conquered the outlying areas of the city's interior while a majority of Babylonians at the city center were oblivious to the breach. The account was elaborated upon by Herodotus, and verified by passages in the Old Testament. Cyrus claimed the city by walking through the gates of Babylon with little or no resistance from the drunken Babylonians."¹

Verses 12-13 - Isaiah challenges the babylonians to use all of their enchantments and sorceries and see if all of them combined and halt the word of the Lord from being fulfilled.

Verses 14-15 - There is nothing that can prevent the destruction that they have been warned of.

NOTES:

¹ Wikipedia

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

(1 Nephi 6:8-29)

Verse 1 – “House of Jacob” - both Israel (Northern Kingdom – ten tribes) and Judah (Southern Kingdom) are addressed (compare with Isaiah 40:27; 41:8, 14; 43:1, 22; 44:1, etc.). They “swear by the name of the Lord” but not “in truth, nor in righteousness”, very similar to “*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me*” (Matthew 15:8).

Nephi re-affirms this is an address to all of the House of Israel, when quoting from the brass plates he proceeds this verse with “written unto all the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 6:6).

Nephi adds: “**Hearken and** hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel; **yet they swear** not in truth, nor in righteousness.” (1 Nephi 6:8)

Verse 2 – They are not resting upon him in real faith and true humble dependence, but trusting to the fact that they were “Israel,” and that God was “the God of Israel,” and therefore bound to protect them.

The thought is clearer in Nephi: “**Nevertheless**, they call themselves of the Holy city, **but they do not** stay themselves upon the God of Israel, **who is the Lord of hosts; yea**, the Lord of hosts is his name.” (1 Nephi 6:9)

Verse 3 - (compare Isaiah 41:26; 43:9, 10; 44:7, 8, etc.). “Former things” are here contrasted with the “new things” of verse 6. Two cycles of prophecy seem to be intended — one of comparatively ancient date, the other quite fresh — both equally showing forth the power of God and his infinite superiority to the idols. It is difficult to determine what the two cycles of prophecy are. One thought is that “the former things” are the events experienced by the people from the very earliest times down to the times of Cyrus, while “the new things” embrace the redemption of Israel from Babylon, the glorification of the people in the midst of a world of nations converted to the God of Israel, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. Another thought is that the “former things” are those mentioned in the prophecies concerning Babylon generally, the “new things” are those about to be announced in Isaiah 49-56.

“**Behold**, I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did shew them suddenly (*and they came to pass* – KJV).” (1 Nephi 6:10)

Verse 4 - Here the hardening is evil, marking defiance and self-will. “**And I did it** because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck was an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;” (1 Nephi 6:11)

NOTES:

✓ Verse 5 – Through prophesy, the Lord had declared what He would do and then accomplished His word, so as the events could not be credited to any other than Him.

“**And** I have, even from the beginning, declared (*it* – KJV) to thee; before it came to pass I shewed (them/*it* – KJV) thee; **and I shewed them for fear** lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them.” (1 Nephi 6:12)

✓ Verse 6 – God has given the prophesies, which they “heard” and fulfilled them, which they have “seen”, will they not be witnesses of this? Not only have they seen the fulfillment of prophesy, He has given them prophesy to see the fulfillment of.

✓ Verse 7 – God had specifically reserved these prophesies for this time and this people. If the “new things” of Isaiah’s prophecy had been revealed many centuries before, they would not have impressed the Jews of Isaiah’s time, or even of the Captivity period, as they did by having been reserved to a comparatively late date. They would have seemed to most of them an old and trite story.

“They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not, **they were declared unto thee**, lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.” (1 Nephi 6:14)

✓ Verse 8 - Again we hear the voice of complaint, as in verses 1, 2, 4. Israel had not “ears to hear” to any purpose such highly spiritual truths as those of the coming section. They had not profited by what was taught concerning Christ in the Law.

✓ Verse 9 - Israel’s insincerity (verse 1), obstinacy (verse 4), addiction to idols (verse 5), blindness (verse 8), and general resistance to God’s will (verse 8), should have provoked God’s “anger.” He will, however, “defer” it, “refrain” himself, not “cut Israel off, *for his Name’s sake*.” God, having selected one nation out of all the nations of the earth to be his “peculiar people” (Deuteronomy 14:2), and having declared this, and supported his people by miracles in their struggles with the other nations and peoples, was, so to speak, committed to protect and defend Israel “for his Name’s sake,” lest his Name should be blasphemed among the Gentiles (see Exodus 32:12; Numbers 14:13; Deuteronomy 9:28; Psalm 129:10; 106:8, etc.). He was also bound by the promises which he had made; and still more, by the position which Israel occupied in his scheme of salvation.

✓ Verse 10 - The furnace of affliction is here the Babylonian captivity. The object of the Captivity was to “test” and “refine,” or purify God’s people to a certain extent — not with extreme severity, but in such sort as to fit them for their purpose.

“**For**, behold, I have refined thee; (*but not with silver* – KJV) I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” (1 Nephi 6:17)

NOTES:

Verse 11 - God would have conceded His glory to some god of the nations, had He under existing circumstances forsaken Israel.

“For mine own sake, yea, for mine own sake, will I do (this/*it* – KJV); (for I will not suffer my name to be polluted/*for how should my name be polluted* – KJV), and I will not give my glory unto another.” (1 Nephi 6:18)

Verses 12-14 - The tone of complaint is now dropped. Israel is invited to reflect seriously on the chief points urged in the preceding chapters.

- (1) Their near relation to Jehovah (verse 12);
- (2) Jehovah’s eternity and omnipotence (verses 12, 13);
- (3) the superiority of Jehovah to the gods of the nations, as shown by his prophetic power (verse 14); and
- (4) the near approach of deliverance by Cyrus (verses 14, 15).

(compare with Isaiah 40:12, 22, 26, 28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18). Once more the nations are challenged to say which of their deities has foretold the work that the Lord has willed to perform on Babylon (Isaiah 43:9). If none has done so, will not Israel see and acknowledge the superiority of Jehovah to such blind deities? *The Lord hath loved him* - it had not been previously declared in so many words that Jehovah “loved” Cyrus; but it had been sufficiently indicated by the way in which he was spoken of in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1-5. God “loves” all who “in an honest and good heart” seek to do His will and serve Him faithfully. Cyrus will seek “God’s pleasure,” not his own (see Isaiah 44:28).

“All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; who among them hath declared these things *unto them*? The Lord hath loved him; *yea, and he will fulfill his word which he hath declared by them; and he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall (come/be on* – KJV) upon the Chaldeans.” (1 Nephi 6:21/Isaiah 48:14)

Verse 15 - (compare with Isaiah 46:11, “*Calling a ravenous bird from the east*”). Cyrus is represented as raised up by God, “called” by Him, and commissioned by Him “to do all his pleasure.” God has brought him on his way, and made that way prosperous. According to the account of Herodotus, Cyrus received no check of any kind until the last expedition, in which he lost his life. His “prosperity” was beyond that of almost any other commander.

“*Also, saith the Lord*: I (the Lord, *yea/even* – KJV), I have spoken; yea, I have called him, *to declare*, I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.” (1 Nephi 6:22)

NOTES:

Verse 16 - Israel is reminded of God's merciful teaching and leading in the past (verses 16, 17); their disobedience (verses 18, 19); exhorted to go forth boldly and joyfully from Babylon (verses 20, 21); and finally warned that God's blessings — even such a blessing as deliverance — are no blessings to any but the righteous (verse 22).

The Lord has not done anything in secret (compare Isaiah 45:19). Is the reference to *I* (Christ) that was sent by *the LORD GOD* and *his Spirit* a reference to the Trinity.

“Come ye near unto me; (*hear ye this* – KJV) I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was **declared**, (have I spoken/*there am I* – KJV); and the Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me.” (1 Nephi 6:23)

Verses 17-19 - God's teachings are all directed to the “profit” of those to whom they are addressed; and, if received in a proper spirit, actually “profit” them more than anything else can do (2 Timothy 3:16). If they had listened to and obeyed God's word, things would be much different for them now (better).

“**And** thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ***I have sent him***, the Lord thy God who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go, ***has done it***.” (1 Nephi 6:24/Isaiah 48:17)

Verse 20 – It would seem that no instruction would be needed to flee the captivity, but when the time came, it was not so. Those only availed themselves of the edict of Cyrus “whose spirit God had raised to go up and build his house” (Ezra 1:5). The wealthier classes, Josephus tells us (‘Ant. Jud.’ 11:1), remained. The very poor, it is probable, *could* not leave. Motives of various kinds detained others. The result was that probably a larger number elected to continue in the country than to return to Palestine. Less than fifty thousand returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:64); less than two thousand males with Ezra (Ezra 8:2-20).

Verses 21-22 - (compare with Isaiah 43:19) We have no historical account of the journey made by the bulk of the exiles who returned with Zerubbabel; but they must almost certainly have experienced difficulties with respect to water; and it is quite possible that a miraculous supply was provided to them.

Such provisions are not granted to the wicked.
 “**And notwithstanding he hath done all this, and greater also**, there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.” (1 Nephi 6:29/Isaiah 48:22)

NOTES:

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

(1 Nephi 6:31-56)

1 Nephi 6:30 is added between the verses that end the 48th chapter of Isaiah and begin the 49th chapter of Isaiah in the KJV:

And again: Hearken, O ye house of Israel, all ye that are broken off and are driven out, because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people; yea, all ye that are broken off that are scattered abroad, who are of my people, O house of Israel.

Verses 1-2 – As chapter 48 broadened the scope of the message to all of the “house of Jacob” i.e., both Northern and Southern Kingdoms (Israel and Judah), now this chapter broadens even more to the “isles” i.e., everywhere, all of the earth.

Although there are those that attribute this “servant” to being Isaiah, Isaiah was not called from the womb. Isaiah was called as an adult to his role in God’s service.¹

Christ was designated for his office from the womb (Luke 1:31-33). He was also still “in the womb of his mother” when the name of Jesus was given to him (Matthew 1:21, Luke 1:31). His (Christ’s) words would be a sharp sword (Hebrews 4:12). In 1 Nephi 7, Nephi explains chapters 48 and 49 of Isaiah and he identifies this “prophet” as Christ.²

Verse 3 – It is through Israel that God shall be glorified.³

Verse 4 – This “servant” (Christ) laments over the lack of results from His effort (compare with Matthew 23:37)

“Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; (yet – KJV) surely, my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” (1 Nephi 6:34)

Verse 5 – This “servant” i.e., Christ would be “glorious” at a time when Israel was not yet “gathered”.

“And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb (that I should be/to be – KJV) his servant, to bring Jacob again to him: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” (1 Nephi 6:35)

Verse 6 – This “servant” would both restore Israel and be a light to the Gentiles (Christ).

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end(s) of the earth.” (1 Nephi 6:36)

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 6

² 1 Nephi 7:43-46

³ Isaiah 48:9-11

Verse 7 – The KJV adds “and” before his Holy One, giving the idea of another personage. In Nephi, “and” is omitted and “Holy One” is just additional description of the Redeemer of Israel.

“Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, (and – KJV) his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the (nations/*nation* – KJV) abhorreth, to (a – KJV) servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful. (*and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee* – KJV)” (1 Nephi 6:37)

Verse 8 – (Compare with Isaiah 42:6)

“Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, *O isles of the sea*, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee *my servant* for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;” (1 Nephi 6:38)

Verse 9 – The “prisoners” here are not of the Babylonian captivity, but rather those prisoners of sin, now released.

“That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that (sit/*are* – KJV) in darkness, (Shew/*Show* – KJV) yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.” (1 Nephi 6:39)

Verses 10-11 – Compare with John 4:14; 6:35.

Verse 12 – Will come from all directions. Sinim is uncertain, some thoughts are Egypt, Phoenicia or China.

“*And then, O house of Israel*, behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.” (1 Nephi 6:42)

Verse 13 – Nephi adds some interesting words. Who are those of the “east” that “shall be established”?

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; *for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established*; and break forth into singing, O mountains; *for they shall be smitten no more*: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.” (1 Nephi 6:43)

Verse 14 – Again we find important additions in Nephi. Although they may feel forgotten, they are not.

“But *behold*, Zion *hath* said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me; *but he will shew that he hath not*.” (1 Nephi 6:44)

NOTES:

Verse 15 – Although there are instances of mothers that “forget” i.e., fail to care for their children, as a whole a mother’s love for her infant child is considered the ultimate example of love, but it pales in comparison to God’s love for His people. “**For** can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, **O house of Israel.**” (1 Nephi 6:45)

Verse 16 – As a people they are always a part of God, like a tattoo on a person and the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem will not remain in ruins, but be rebuilt that they might be “continually before” God.

Verse 17 – Clearer in 1 Nephi, they would no longer be halted by their oppressors, but be assisted by them. “Thy children shall make haste **against** thy destroyers; and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.” (1 Nephi 6:47)

Verse 18 – Prepared as a bride for the groom. “Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and **they shall** come to thee. **And** as I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on (thee – KJV) **even** as a bride (*doeth* – KJV).” (1 Nephi 6:48)

Verses 19-20 – Only in recent times has the area of Palestine become too “narrow” or small for God’s people.

Verse 21 – In this time of expansion, they shall be astonished at the number of people that come.

Verses 22-23 – Israel shall become this nation with the assistance of the Gentiles.

Verse 24-25 – It is difficult to imagine prey that is in the mouth of the predator, escaping and surviving, but God says that He will do this with Israel, He will deliver them from the mouth of the predators that would seek to destroy them.

Verse 26 – Very true today! Israel’s oppressors war between themselves as much as they do with Israel.

Nephi explains Isaiah chapters 48 & 49 in 1 Nephi 7:1-70.

CHAPTER FIFTY

(2 Nephi 5:47-69)

Yea, for thus saith the Lord: Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off for ever? (2 Nephi 5:46) While quoting Isaiah, Jacob adds this verse between the verses of Isaiah 49:26 and 50:1 in the KJV.

Verse 1 – With the previous addition in 2 Nephi, this verse starts much softer and more loving than it does in the KJV with the omission. Those in the captivity may feel that God has forsaken them, but the challenge is given: when have they ever been forgotten, where are the divorcement papers?¹ Any complaints they may have is because of their own doing, not because they have been forgotten.

For thus saith the Lord: Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement? ***To*** whom (have *I/I have* – KJV) put thee away(? – KJV), or ***to*** which of my creditors (*is it to whom* – KJV)(have *I/I have* – KJV) sold you? ***Yea, to whom have I sold you?*** Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away; (2 Nephi 5:47-50)

Verse 2 – 2 Nephi makes it more clear than the KJV, when God called, it was Israel that ignored Him, not the other way.²

Wherefore, when I came, (there was/*was there* – KJV) no man (;/? – KJV) when I called, (yea, there was/*was there* – KJV) none to answer. ***O, House of Israel,*** is my hand shortened at all that it can not redeem, or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke, I dry up the sea, I make (the/*their* – KJV) rivers a wilderness ***and*** their fish (to stink/*stinketh* – KJV), because (the waters are dried up/*there is no water* – KJV); (and they die because of thirst/*and dieth for thirst* – KJV). (2 Nephi 5:51-53)

Verse 3 – God has complete control over all creation, He could darken the heavens if He chose to. If He chose to forsake Judah, there would be no question about it.

Verse 4 – Again 2 Nephi makes it clear that this is addressed to the house of Israel. It is only when they are “weary” that they will listen. God(the Father) has taught His Son (Jesus Christ – the servant in these chapters) how to make them weary and hear.³

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season (unto thee, O house of Israel. When ye are weary,*to him that is weary* – KJV) he waketh morning by morning. He waketh mine ear to hear as the learned. (2 Nephi 5:54-57)

NOTES:

¹ Deuteronomy 24:1

² Luke 13:34; 15:4

³ Matthew 11:28; John 8:28

Verse 5 – Christ was neither rebellious nor turned from what His Father asked.

The Lord God hath (appointed/*opened* – KJV) mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (2 Nephi 5:58)

Verses 6-7 – back to the smitters¹
not confounded²
hid not from shame & spitting³
face like flint⁴

Verses 8-9 - Christ will always be near and strengthened by His Father. He will be victorious and over come death, while is adversaries shall decay.

...(and the Lord is near and he justifieth me / He is near that justifieth me – KJV),. Who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near me... (2 Nephi 5:61-65)

I will smite him with the strength of my mouth: (2 Nephi 5:65) - Jacob adds this between Isaiah 50:8 and 50:9.

...(Behold – KJV) the Lord God will help me. (And all they who/*who is he that* – KJV) shall condemn me, (behold, all they/*lo they all* – KJV) shall wax old as a garment, ***and*** the moth shall eat them up. (2 Nephi 5:65-66)

Verse 10 - This question often troubles people with the thought of walking in darkness without light. It is most likely meant as a question of who will trust, follow and obey the Lord, even when you are in darkness and without light to see the outcome and purpose.

Who *is* among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light? (*let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God* - KJV). (2 Nephi 5:67)

Verse 11 – All that trust in the light that they kindle and not the light of the Lord shall lie down in sorrow.

NOTES:

¹ Matthew 27:26, 30; Mark 15:15, 19; John 19:1

² Matthew 26:59-60; 27:11-24; Mark 14:55-59; Luke 23:13-16, 22; John 18:19-21, 23, 33-38; 19:10-11

³ Matthew 26:67-68; 27:28-30; Mark 14:65; 15:17-20; Luke 22:61, 63-64; 23:11; John 18:22; 19:2-3

⁴ Matthew 27:12, 34; Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:9-10

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE
(2 Nephi 5:70-111)

Verse 1 - Hearken (unto/to -KJV) me, ye that follow after righteousness: (*ye that seek the LORD* - KJV) Look unto the rock from whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *from* whence ye are digged. (2 Nephi 5:70)

To those that endeavor to lead righteous lives (compare with verse 7) and do not “seek after idols,” as too many of the exiles did (Isaiah 40:19; 41:7; 44:9-20; 46:5-8, etc.). Look unto the rock... the hole; *i.e.* look back at the solid foundation of your beginnings and hole that you have dug for yourselves. Consider from what a slight and poor commencement — an aged man and a barren woman (verse 2) — you were raised up to be God’s people, a numerous nation, a multitude like the sand of the sea. How did you come to be in the condition that you now find yourself?

Verse 2 - Look unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah, *she* that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him *and increased him* - KJV. (2 Nephi 5:71)

Before they had any children, God selected Abraham and Sarah from whence to create this people.

Verse 3 - Much of Judea, during the absence of the exiles, became a “wilderness” and a “desert” (see Ezekiel 36:34). The Prophet Joel compares Judea before its desolation to “the garden of Eden” (Joel 2:3): and Ezekiel, like Isaiah, prophesies that it shall once more become “like the garden of Eden,” when the exiles have returned to it (Ezekiel 37:35). With Ezekiel, Eden represents all that is glorious, not in nature only, but in art (Ezekiel 28:13; 31:8, 9, 16, 18). As music ceases out of the land in time of affliction (Isaiah 24:8), so when a “time of refreshing from the Lord” arrives, there is at once singing and “melody” (compare Revelation 5:8; 14:2; 15:2).

Verse 4 - Hearken unto me, my people; *and* - KJV give ear unto me, O my nation: For a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light (for/of - KJV) the people. (2 Nephi 5:75-76)

The Christian “law” — the new covenant — is probably intended. This became, by the preaching of the apostles, “a light for the people”.

Verse 5 - “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). Isaiah always speaks as if the Messianic kingdom was to supervene almost immediately on the return of the exiles to Palestine. It was not revealed to him that there would be an interval of from five hundred to six hundred years between the two events. By God’s “righteousness” here we must understand his righteous plans for the redemption of his people through Christ and for the punishment of those who resist His will and remain rebellious.

Verses 6-8 – The heavens and earth shall pass away (Psalm 102:26; Matthew 24:35; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Psalm 102:26 and Hebrews 1:11). The new heaven and new earth promised by Isaiah (Isaiah 65:17;66:22), Peter (2 Peter 3:13), and John (Revelation 21:1) are created in the last times, because “the first heaven and the first earth have passed away.” Man disappears from the earth, but continues to exist somewhere. He has, by God’s gift, a life that is to be unceasing. To the righteous, this will be a good thing.

Verse 9 - Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, *in the generations of old*.- KJV Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? (2 Nephi 5:86-87)

“Rahab” literally means pride. It is by the righteous that pride is “cut” and the “dragon” (Satan) is wounded, ultimately this is fulfilled by Christ and here they are called to that “arm of the Lord”. It is also reference to Egypt.

Verses 10-11 – As the Lord delivered the Israelites out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21, 22), so He will prepare a way for them again to return .

Verse 11 - Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy *and holiness* shall be upon their (heads/head – KJV); *And* they shall obtain gladness and joy: *and* – KJV sorrow and mourning shall flee away. (2 Nephi 5:90-91)

Verse 12 - *I even I* – KJV am he; yea, ***I am he*** that comforteth you: ***Behold***, who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man, (which/that –KJV) shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made (like unto/as – KJV) grass; (2 Nephi 5:92-93)

Those that are “comforted” in the Lord have no reason to fear mortal men.

Verses 13-14 – As furious as the assault by the Babylonians was, they are not forgotten by God and through the Persians, they shall be released.

Verse 15 - But I am the Lord thy God that divided the sea, whose waves roared: the Lord of hosts is (my/is his – KJV) name. (2 Nephi 5:98)

The reference is once more to the great miracle wrought at the Exodus, when the Red Sea was “divided” before the host of Israelites (Exodus 14:21).

NOTES:

Verse 16 - Protected by God's hand from destruction, and kept in existence until the happy time should come when God would create a new heaven and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17) for Israel's dwelling-place and say unto Zion — *i.e.* to the "new Jerusalem" Revelation 21:2)

Verse 17 - Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling *and* – KJV wrung *them* - KJV out; (2 Nephi 5:101)

The cup of God's fury was poured out on Jerusalem when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the temple, the royal palace, and the houses of the nobles burnt (2 Kings 25:9), the walls broken down (2 Kings 25:10), and the bulk of the inhabitants carried away captive to Babylon (2 Kings 25:11; 2 Chronicles 34:25; Jeremiah 42:18; 44:6; Ezekiel 22:31, etc.).

Verse 18 – (And/There is – KJV) none to guide her among all the sons *whom* – KJV she hath brought forth; Neither *is there any* – KJV that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons she hath brought up. (2 Nephi 5:102-103)

From the time that Johanan, the son of Kareah, and the other "captains of the forces," quitted Judaea and fled into Egypt, taking with them Jeremiah and Baruch (Jeremiah 43:5-7), there was no one left in the country with any authority or any ability to direct affairs. The city, no doubt, suffered by this state of things, becoming more ruined and more desolate than it would have been otherwise. Had Johanan and the Jews under him remained in the land, God had promised to "build them, and not pull them down;" to "plant them, and not pluck them up" (Jeremiah 42:10). Thus Jerusalem's extreme desolation was not wholly the result of the Babylonian conquest, but was partly due to the after misconduct of the Jews left in the country.

Verse 19 - These two sons/things – KJV are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee: *thy* desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword: *And* by whom shall I comfort thee? (2 Nephi 5:104-105)

Second Nephi changes the "things" of KJV to "sons". These "sons" are undoubtedly the same ones in the following verse.

Verse 20 - Thy sons have fainted, *save these two*: they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God. (2 Nephi 5:106)

Second Nephi adds that these "two sons" have not feinted, unlike the others.

NOTES:

Verses 21-23 - Babylon, the oppressor of Judah, shall in her turn be made to drink of the cup of which Judah had so long drunk, and shall suffer nearly the same woes which she had inflicted. Meanwhile, Judah should cease to drink of the cup, and have "a time of refreshing."

CHIASMUS: Verse 17 - "You first drank the flag of the cup of scolding wine"

- a 49:11 ...and my **highways**...
- b 49:13 ...for the Lord hath **comforted**...
- c 49:21 ...and am **desolate**...
- d 49:22 ...bring thy **sons**...
- e 49:23 ...**I am the Lord**...
- f 49:24 ...the lawful **captive**...
- g 49:26 ...them that **oppress** thee...
- h 49:26 ...and thy **Redeemer**...
- i 50:2 ...**I dry up the sea**...
- j 50:9 ...**the moth shall eat them up**
- k 50:10 ...**trust** in the name of the Lord...
- l 50:11 ...**walk in the light**...
- m 51:1 **Hearken to me**...
- n 51:3 ...the Lord shall **comfort Zion**...
- n 51:3 ...he will **comfort** all her...
- m 51:4 **Hearken unto me**...
- l 51:4 ...for a **light of the people**...
- k 51:5 ...shall they **trust**...
- j 51:8 ...**the moth shall eat them up**...
- i 51:10 ...hath **dried the sea**...
- h 51:11 ...the **redeemed** of the Lord...
- g 51:13 ...**fury of the oppressor**...
- f 51:14 ...The **captive** exile...
- e 51:15 ...**I am the Lord**...
- d 51:18 ...all the **sons**...
- c 51:19 ...**desolation** and destruction...
- b 51:19 ...shall I **comfort** thee...
- a 51:23 ...and as the **street**...

NOTES: Verse 20 - The sons have faintly seen their way they lie in the path of a wild bull in a net they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO
(verses 1-2 2 Nephi 5:112-114)

Verse 1 – Awake, awake (Compare with 51:9,17). Zion is now exhorted to do her part, and put on her own strength. She is array herself in the glorious robes which befit her as a royal and a “holy city” and show herself once more a queen, instead of being content to remain groveling as a captive. Foreigners shall no more visit Jerusalem to injure her or insult her.

Verse 2 – “Shake thyself from the dust” (compare with the opposite command given to Babylon, “Come down, sit in the dust” Isaiah 47:1). Zion was to arise, shake from her all trace of the dust in which she had been so long lying, and then calmly seat herself upon a seat of dignity. In contrast, Babylon is to be removed from the life of royalty and brought down to the dust. Captives in ancient times were often fastened together by a thong or chain passed round their necks¹. Zion is to free themselves from their captive state.

Verse 3 – The condition they find themselves in, they have brought upon themselves and they have not profited from it. God received nothing when he allowed his people to become the slaves of the Babylonians. He took no price for them (see Isaiah 50:1), and therefore is free to claim them back without payment (Isaiah 45:13). He has but to say the word; and he is about to say it.

Verse 4 - Israel had experienced three captivities. They “went down” voluntarily into Egypt, on invitation, to sojourn, and were there cruelly and unjustly reduced to a servile condition (Exodus 1:13, 14). They (or a great part of them) were violently carried into captivity by the Assyrian kings, Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 15:29), Sargon (2 Kings 17:6), and Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13), who, without cause, grievously “oppressed” them. Now they are suffering under a third captivity in Babylonia. What is to be the Divine action under these circumstances?

Verse 5 - *What have I here?* i.e. what is the task before me — the work that I have to perform? There are three principal considerations by which the answer to this question has to be determined.

- (1) The Babylonians have obtained possession of the Israelites without purchase — for nought;
- (2) they use their authority harshly and brutally; and
- (3) they continually blaspheme the Name of Jehovah.

All three are grounds for bringing the captivity to an end, and coming forward with the cry of a deliverer, “Here I am.” Cruel taskmasters vexed the captives by insulting their God.

¹ Rawlinson, ‘History of Ancient Egypt,’ vol. 1 p. 473

Verse 6 - Because of the “howling” and the “blasphemy.” The “day” would come when God would come to their help and deliver them from their oppressors — when they would call upon him, and he would manifest himself (compare with Isaiah 58:9), responding to their appeal as distinctly as though he said, “Here I am.”

Verse 7 - Jerusalem’s deliverance is a type of the redemption of the world by Christ.

Verse 8 - The “watchmen” are regarded by some as the prophets of the Captivity-time, by others as the faithful who “waited for the redemption of Israel” and by others are considered angels, who “watch” over the fortunes of Israel, and sympathize with their plight (see Daniel 4:13, 17, 23, etc.). These “watchers” now “sing” or “shout” with joy. Isaiah sees God as the Leader of his people, not merely by his providence bringing them back, but “returning” at their head (compare with verse 12).

Verse 9 - (compare with Isaiah 44:26; 49:19; 64:10, 11). The city had not been wholly destroyed. Only the temple, the royal palace, and the houses of the nobles had been “burnt with fire” (2 Kings 25:9; 2 Chronicles 36:19). The poorer houses had been left. Even these, however, must in the space of fifty years have for the most part fallen into decay. The ruins are now called upon to join in the general chorus of rejoicing, as they rise from their ashes.

Verse 10 - It may well add to the general joy that the work wrought for Israel is not “a thing done in a corner,” but one on which the eyes of the “nations” have been turned and to which the attention of “the ends of the earth” has been called (compare with Isaiah 41:5). The holy arm of Jehovah, made bare for battle, has been seen far and wide. The world has stood in amazement at the contest between Persia and Babylon.

Verse 11 - The departing captives are instructed that they bring with them none of the Babylonian idols, none of the Babylonian charms, spells, and the like. The departing captives generally are called upon to avoid polluting themselves with the unclean things of Babylon; this is emphasized in particular for those who bear the vessels of the Lord. By “*the vessels of the Lord*” we must understand those which Nebuchadnezzar carried off from the temple (2 Kings 25:14-16; Daniel 1:2), and which, on the return of the Jews from captivity, were restored by Cyrus (Ezra 1:7-11) and Artaxerxes (Ezra 8:25-34).

NOTES:

Verse 12 – When they departed Egypt, they fled in “haste” (Exodus 12:33; 16:5), now there would be no need of hurry. They would have the free permission of their sovereign to depart at their own time, and might proceed with calm deliberateness. God would go before them, as he did on that former occasion (Exodus 13:21), though not now visibly; and he would also defend them from attacks by the way, being at once their Guide and their Rearguard.

Verse 13 – As in the preceding chapters, this “servant” is Christ, who shall deal “wisely” throughout his mission as to secure it the most complete success.

Verse 14 - The world was “astonished” to see, in One come to deliver it, no outward show of grandeur or magnificence, no special beauty or “comeliness” (Isaiah 53:2), but a Presence unattractive to the mass of men at all times, and in the end so cruelly marred and disfigured as to retain scarcely any resemblance to the ordinary form and face of man. Here Isaiah sits as if at the foot of the cross on Calvary, and sees the Redeemer as he hung upon the accursed tree, after he had been buffeted, crowned with thorns, smitten, scourged and crucified, when his face was covered with bruises and with gore, and his frame and features distorted with agony.

Verse 15 - That which had not been told them shall they see. They will learn the facts of Christ’s humiliation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven — events that it had never entered into the heart of man to conceive and of which, therefore, no tongue had ever spoken.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE
(Mosiah 8:16-27)

The Messianic interpretation of the chapter was universally acknowledged by the Jews until the time of Aben Ezra (about A.D. 1150). Although they may not have recognized Jesus as the Messiah, they believed these verses referred to the coming Messiah. It was also assumed as indisputable by the Christian Fathers. Almost all Christian expositors down to the commencement of the nineteenth century took the same view. It was only under the pressure of the Christian controversy that the later Jews abandoned the traditional interpretation, and applied the prophecy:

- (1) to Jeremiah;
- (2) to Josiah;
- (3) to the people of Israel.

During the twentieth century a certain number of Christian commentators have adopted one or other of the late Jewish theories, either absolutely or with modifications. It is impossible to examine and refute their arguments here. The “servant” was introduced in chapter 42 (see study notes for references to establish the servant as Christ) and here we must consider similar qualifiers:

- (1) the portraiture of “the Servant of the Lord” in this place has so strong an individuality and such marked personal features that it cannot possibly be a mere personified collective — whether Israel, or faithful Israel, or ideal Israel, or the collective body of the prophets; and
- (2) that it goes so infinitely beyond anything of which a mere man was ever capable, that it can only refer to the unique Man — the God-Man — Christ. It is, moreover, applied directly to Christ in Matthew 8:17; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37; John 12:37, 38; Acts 8:32, 33; Romans 10:16; and 1 Peter 2:24, 25.

As believers in the Book of Mormon we have the added testimony of Abinadi that these verses refer to Christ as the Messiah. Abinadi tells us that the Old Testament fulfillments were but “types” (Mosiah 8:8). In Mosiah 8:11-15, Abinadi speaks of the Messiah that of which “...the prophets...have prophesied...” and then refers to words of Isaiah before starting the quote of Isaiah 53.

Upon the conclusion of Isaiah 53, Abinadi again reaffirms that the words refer to Jesus Christ in Mosiah 8:28-37.

The words of Isaiah 53 are reproduced exactly in Mosiah with the exception of two words: evil/violence (Isaiah 53:9/Mosiah 8:24) and sins/sin (Isaiah 53:12/Mosiah 8:27)

NOTES:

Verse 1 - Isaiah felt that he spoke, mainly, to unbelieving ears (30:9-11; 42:23, etc.) and this lack of reception was fulfilled by Christ (John 12:35-38). Since chapter forty-two, the theme has been all that God will do for Israel. It is to Israel that the "arm of the Lord," would be revealed and it would be to them first to believe the report which had come from Isaiah (and other prophets) which would identify Christ as the Messiah.

Verse 2 - The Messiah will be a fresh sprout from the stump of a tree that has been felled; *i.e.* from the destroyed Davidic monarchy. As a root (Isaiah 11:10; Revelation 5:5). The "sapling" from the house of David shall become the "root" out of which the Christian Church will grow (John 15:1-6).

This would come either out of the "dry ground" of a corrupt age and nation or out of the arid soil of humanity.

"He hath no form nor comeliness" or rather, *he had no form nor majesty*. "The Servant" would have no splendid surroundings, no regal pomp nor splendor — nothing about him to attract men's eyes, or make them think him anything extraordinary.

Verse 3 - "He is despised" (Isaiah 49:7 and Psalm 22:6). Men's contempt was shown, partly in the little attention which they paid to his teaching, partly in their treatment of him on the night and day before the Crucifixion (Matthew 25:67, 68; 26:29-31; Mark 14:65; 15:18, 19, etc.). "Rejected of men" - our Lord had at no time more than a "little flock" attached to him. Of these, after a time, "many went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Some, who believed on him, would only come to him by night (John 3:2). All the "rulers" and great men held aloof from him (John 7:48). At the end, even his apostles "forsook him, and fled" (Matthew 26:56). "A Man of sorrows" - the "sorrows" of Jesus appear on every page of the Gospels. "We hid as it were our faces from him" - men turned their faces from him when they met him, would not see him, would not recognize him and would rather "despise" him.

Verse 4 - Having set forth at length the fact of the Servant's humiliation (verses 2, 3), the prophet hastens to declare the reason of it. Twelve times over within the space of nine verses he asserts with the most emphatic reiteration, that all the Servant's sufferings were for the purpose of saving another (always a plural: our, we, etc.). Compare with: Matthew 20:28; John 11:50-52; Romans 3:25; 5:6-8; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 8:9; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24, etc. They who saw Christ suffer, instead of understanding that he was bearing the sins of others in a mediatorial capacity, imagined that he was suffering at God's hands for his own sins. Hence they scoffed at him and reviled him, even in his greatest agonies (Matthew 27:39-44). To one only, and him not one of God's people, was it given to see the contrary, and to declare aloud, at the moment of the death, "Certainly this was a righteous Man" (Luke 23:47).

NOTES:

Verse 5 - Christ was "wounded"

- (1) by scourging (Matthew 27:26)
- (2) by the thorns (Matthew 27:29)
- (3) by the nails; and (Matthew 27:35)
- (4) by the spear of the soldier (John 19:34)

"bruised"

- (5) by blows (Matthew 26:67)
- (6) by the reed (Matthew 27:30)

"stripe-marks": from scourging

Verse 6 - "All we" means either the whole nation of Israel, which "went astray" in the wilderness of sin or else the whole race of mankind, which had wandered from the right path, and needed atonement and redemption even more than Israel itself. All had quitted "the way of the Lord" (Isaiah 40:3) to walk in their "own ways" (Isaiah 66:3).

God the Father, as the primary Disposer of all things, lays upon the Son the burden, which the Son voluntarily accepts. He comes into the world to do the Father's will. He prays to the Father, "Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but *as thou wilt*" (Matthew 26:39). So St. John says that the Father "sent the Son to be the Propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). And Paul tells us that God (the Father) "made him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). It does not lessen the Son's exceeding mercy and loving-kindness in accepting the burden, that it was laid upon him by the Father.

✓ Verse 7 - The silence of Jesus before his judges (Matthew 27:12-14; Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:9)). Although He could so easily have vindicated himself from every charge, He was silent and submitted, like a lamb submits to its owner, whether it be for slaughter or shearing.

✓ Verse 8 - Most scholars are in agreement that the wording in the KJV for this verse does not accurately convey the thoughts of the original text. Most believe that for correct understanding that it should read something like:

David 9: 26
By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. (NIV)

✓ Verse 9 - Those who condemned Christ to be crucified with two malefactors on the common execution-ground — "the place of a skull" — meant his grave to be "with the wicked," with whom it would naturally have been but for the interference of Joseph of Arimathaea. The word death in this use "and with the rich in death" was in the past tense in the original text, i.e., *after death*.

“He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth” – The sinlessness of Christ is asserted by himself (John 8:46), and forms the main argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews for the superiority of the new covenant over the old (Hebrews 7:26-28; 9:11-14). It is also witnessed to by Peter (1 Peter 2:21-22), by Paul (2 Corinthians 5:21), and by John (1 John 3:5).

As no other man was ever without sin, it follows that the Servant of the present chapter *must* be Jesus.

Verse 10 - The sufferings of Christ, proceeding from the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:22-24), and being permitted by him; were in some sort his doing. It “pleased him,” moreover, that they should be undergone, for he saw with satisfaction the Son’s self-sacrifice, and he witnessed with joy man’s redemption and deliverance effected thereby.

The “seed” of a teacher of religion are his disciples. St. Paul speaks of Onesimus as one whom he had “begotten in his bonds” (Philemon 1:10). He calls himself by implication the “father” of his Corinthian converts (1 Corinthians 4:15). Both he and John address their disciples as “little children” (Galatians 4:19; First John 2:1, 18, 25; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). It had long previously been promised that “a seed should serve” the Messiah (Psalm 22:30). Our Lord himself occasionally called his disciples his “children” (Mark 10:24; John 21:4). He has always “seen his seed” in his true followers.

Verse 11 – Compare with Philippians 2:7-11. And his efforts were not without result. The fruit of his teaching has been the justification of many (Romans 5:19, Revelation 7:1-17, etc.)

Verse 12 – “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great”; *i.e.* “I will place him among the great conquering ones of the earth” — an accommodation to human modes of thought analogous to the frequent comparison of Christ’s kingdom with the kingdoms of the earth (Daniel 2:44, 7:9-14; Philippians 2:9, etc.).

“Because he hath poured out his soul unto death” - Christ not only died for man, but, as it were, “poured out his soul” with his own hand to the last drop. The expression emphasizes the duration and the voluntariness of the Messiah’s sufferings.

“And he was numbered with the transgressors” - (Luke 22:37), Christ was condemned as a “blasphemer” (Matthew 26:65), crucified with malefactors (Luke 23:32), called “that deceiver” (Matthew 27:63), and regarded generally by the Jews as accursed (Deuteronomy 21:23).

“And he bare the sin of many” - compare with verses 6 and 11; and see also Hebrews 9:28.

“And made intercession for the transgressors” - the “intercession for transgressors” was begun upon the cross with the compassionate words, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). But it has continued ever since, and will continue until the last day (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

NOTES:

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR
(3 Nephi 10:9-25)

We find Isaiah 54 quoted by Christ in 3 Nephi chapter 10 in its entirety. Beginning in 3 Nephi chapter 9 and most certainly 3 Nephi 10:1-8, Christ clearly establishes the time for this fulfillment. It shall be in the last days, when Israel shall be gathered and the New Jerusalem will be established.

Verse 1 – “O’barren” – this is addressed to the Israelites of the dispersion and captivity. No longer a people or a nation, they appear “barren”. However, here they are called to “sing”, as when they are gathered into their lands of inheritance, they will be found to be numerous during their time of being “barren”, i.e., dispersed, than they were as the nation of Israel, when they were the “married wife”.

Verse 2 – So large will their numbers be that they will have to expand their boundaries and dwelling places to accommodate everyone.

Verse 3 – This gathering will include the “Gentiles”. (Isaiah 14:1-2; 49:22-23)

Verse 4 – This chapter is in many ways an answer to the concerns of Isaiah 49. There the people felt forsaken and “divorced” by God. Here Israel is pictured in her “mature” condition. At this time she will no longer remember nor be ashamed of the transgressions of her youth.

The “shame” of Israel’s many bondages, i.e., Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, etc. would fade away and cease. Israel became a “widow” when Jehovah withdrew his presence from her, when the Shechinah disappeared from the temple, and the temple itself was destroyed, and Jerusalem was a desolation, and the people captives in a far land. The special “reproach of her widowhood” was the Babylonian captivity, with the sins that had brought it about. This too would be forgotten in the good time to come, amid the glories of the Messianic kingdom.

Verses 5-6 – Christ will return in His role as the husband to his “wife”, whom He temporarily forsook, because of her conduct (50:1).

Verses 7-8 – Israel would find herself forsaken for a “small moment”, but the Lord will not forget her.

Verse 10 – This verse is troubling to scholars that apply this to the release of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity as well as those that believe that the Christian church is the modern day Israel, as both have continued to suffer. As we can see from 3 Nephi, this is not yet fulfilled. This is a promise to the gathered righteous, both Jew and Gentile at the time of the New Jerusalem. At that time will the trials past be like the flood and then will the Lord no longer be “wroth” with His people.

Verses 11-12 – Those that been “afflicted” (Isaiah 49:14-17) shall find themselves in the care and furnishings of the Lord (Isaiah 52:1-2; Revelation 21:9-27)

Verse 13 – See 3 Nephi 10:4

Verses 14-15 – It will be a time in which the Lord will protect His people. Although there will be those that gather against these righteous individuals, it will not be by the will of the Lord. In the past God has raised and/or allowed the enemies of Israel to come against them as a consequence for their actions. Such will not be the case this time. The enemies of the righteous will be the enemies of God.

Verses 16-17 – No matter the origin or source of those that would persecute the righteous, God is the creator of all things and has complete control and authority. Any persecution in the past was because God allowed it, the permission in now revoked.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

Having described the servant (Jesus Christ) and gathering (Zion) of the righteous, both Jew and Gentile, now the invitation to participate is given.

Verse 1 – It is offered free of cost (material) to those with a desire (thirsteth).¹

Verse 2 – Consider all the effort, time and resources invested in maintaining this temporal existence, which will not last, now come and partake of that which will sustain for eternity.

Verse 3 – From previous chapters, we know that the invitation is to Jew and Gentile alike, who can receive this “everlasting covenant”. To those that enter into this covenant, they will have the “sure mercies of David”.² David, although he had many sins, was loved by God.

Verse 4 – The “him” of this verse is not David, but the servant (Jesus Christ). A witness, leader and commander - Christ was all these. He “came to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37), and “before Pilate witnessed a good confession” (1 Timothy 6:13). He “feeds and leads” his people (Revelation 7:17), and is the “Commander” under whose banner they serve (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Verse 5 – Most scholars attribute this “nation” to being the Christian Church among the Gentiles. As believers of the Book of Mormon, we realize that there was a specific nation for this purpose, i.e., the United States.³ And “other nations” run unto it.

Verse 6 – Seek the Lord while you may.⁴ The chance will always be available.

Verse 7 – A general promise of forgiveness of sin upon repentance and amendment of life was first given to Israel through Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:14). The doctrine is largely preached by the prophets; but is nowhere more distinctly and emphatically laid down than in this place. God’s will is to “multiply pardon,” if man will only turn to him.

Verses 8-9 - Though man is made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), yet the nature of God in every way infinitely transcends that of man. Both the thoughts and the acts of God surpass man’s understanding. Men find it hard to pardon those who have offended them; God can pardon, and “pardon abundantly.” Men cannot conceive of coming changes, when they pass certain limits. God knows assuredly what changes are approaching, since they are his doing.

¹ Matthew 5:6; John 4:14, 7:37; Revelation 21:6, 22:17; 2 Nephi 7:99-102

² 2 Samuel 7:8-9; Psalm 89:23; Acts 13:32-39

³ 2 Nephi 7:12-21; 3 Nephi 10:1-8

⁴ Matthew 25:11-12; John 7:33-34, 8:21; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:13

Verses 10-11 - The rain and the snow are God's instruments, going forth from him, just as his word does. They have an appointed work to do, and do not return to him until they have done it. (Ecclesiastes 1:7). They have a purpose, which is to produce fruit.

Verses 12 - (Compare with Isaiah 49:11-13)

Verse 13 - "Briars and thorns" were to overgrow the unfruitful vineyard, according to Isaiah 5:6; and to cover the land of God's people, according to Isaiah 32:13. This would be literally the case to a large extent, while the land was allowed to lie waste. The literal meaning is not, however, the whole meaning, or even the main meaning, here. "Briars and thorns" represent a general state of wretchedness and sin. The "fir" and "myrtle" represent a happy external condition of life, in which men "do righteously." This "regenerated creation" will show forth the glory of God to mankind at large, and "get him a name" among them. They will be an enduring sign of the covenant. (Isaiah 54:7-10)

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

Verse 1 – Having given the invitation to “Zion” in the previous chapter, Isaiah now makes it clear that it will be received by those of a righteous heart and conduct that will be a part of it. It will be those that “keep judgment (justice) and do justice (righteousness) that will be part of this great work. This is more than just observing the “law” as is evident in verses 3 and 4.

Verse 2 – Those that keep the Sabbath and refrain from evil.

Verse 3 – Neither the son of the stranger (Gentiles)¹ nor the eunuchs should feel forgotten. Eunuchs were forbidden from the congregation under the Mosaic Law² and we find this restriction lifted under the “new covenant”.³

Verses 4-5 – The eunuchs (probably exemplifying in general the outcasts of society) that keep the sabbaths, choose that which pleases God and take hold of the “covenant” (Jesus Christ) will find in God’s house a name that will be better than that of a person with many children (sons and daughters) and a name that will not be lost (cut-off).

Using *Antithetic Parallelism*, draws a comparison between a eunuch that is scorned by society, has no children or hope that his name will be remembered, will find in the new covenant that he will have greater blessing than a large family and will have a name that will be remembered for eternity.⁴

Verses 6-6 – Like the eunuchs, the “sons of strangers” (Gentiles) that seek and desire to serve God, shall have a place in his house which “*shall be called a house of prayer for all people.*”⁵

Verse 7 – The Lord will gather the “outcasts of Israel” and “others” i.e.; Jew and Gentile. The call is to all that seek righteousness and love the Lord, not by nationality or position in society.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 2:2, 19:22-25, 25:6, 27:13, 42:1-4, etc.

² Deuteronomy 23:1

³ Acts 8:26-40

⁴ Revelation 20:15

⁵ Matthew 21:13

Verse 9 - Having given hope to the righteous, Isaiah now condemns the wicked that will not receive the invitation given. This theme continues into chapter 57 and verse 9 probably should be the beginning of the following chapter.

Now Isaiah addresses those outside of the covenant: "the beasts of the field" and "in the forest". Those that would seek to "devour" the righteous, but are not ordained of God for that purpose (compare with Isaiah 54:15-17).

Verse 10 - The "His" of this verse is not readily clear. It is my opinion (GAO) that it is a reference to the servant (Jesus Christ) that was introduced in chapter forty-two and continued through the following chapters. His "watchman" would fail in their responsibilities, it will be the "servant" that will have to accomplish the work.

Israel's "watchmen" are the nation's guides, teachers and prophets (Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 3:17; Habakkuk 2:1, etc.). At the time of which Isaiah speaks, they are "blind" (Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7, 16, 18, 19; 43:8, etc.), or without knowledge — like the "blind guides" of the Gospel (Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39, etc.). They have not the spiritual discernment which would enable them to lead the people to righteousness. Instead of acting as faithful watch-dogs, who give warning of the approach of danger by their barking, they remain apathetic, and utter no warning at all. It is as if they passed their lives in sleep.

Verse 11 - Not only do they fail in the way of neglect of duty, but they are actively culpable. Being worldly and not spiritually minded, they are "greedy" after gain. Anciently, the taking of a gift, or fee, from those who came to consult them was regarded as no dishonor to the prophetic office (Numbers 22:7; 1 Samuel 9:6-8; 1 Kings 14:1-3); but the nobler class of prophets declined to make a profit of their spiritual powers, and would receive no fee (2 Kings 5:15-16; Matthew 10:7-8; Acts 8:20). In Ezekiel and Micah the taking of gifts by prophets is regarded as discreditable (Ezekiel 13:19; 22:25; Micah 3:3).

Verse 12 - The prophets of the time are not only negligent of their duty, and covetous, but they are given to excess in wine and to long revels, such as even the heathen considered to be disgraceful (compare with Isaiah 28:7, where both priests and prophets are taxed with habitual drunkenness). Tomorrow shall be as this day; *i.e.* the drinking shall continue and be much more abundant.

NOTES:

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

Verse 1 – The theme of this chapter began in the previous chapter with verse 9. Isaiah in those verses gives warning to the unrighteous. These unrighteous and wicked individuals give no thought to the fact the righteous are being taken, either by premature death from persecution or a decreasing number of righteous. “Evil to come”, few appreciate how savage evil can be when there are no righteous individuals to slow its progress.

Verse 2 – Unnoticed by men, the righteous are remembered by God, who has a place prepared for them, when they depart this mortal existence.

Verse 3 – A call to the wicked to hear their condemnation.

Verse 4 - The idolatrous are addressed, who no doubt, made a mock of the few righteous who were still living among them and vexed their souls. The prophet asks, “Against whom do ye do this? Is it not rather against God, whose servants these men are, than against them?” “Are ye not children of transgression”? rather, *are ye not, yourselves, children of apostasy? and therefore more truly objects of scorn than they?* “A seed of falsehood” idols were viewed by Isaiah as “lies” (Isaiah 45:20; Romans 1:25; Revelation 22:15). Idolaters were therefore “a seed of falsehood” — men who put their trust in a lie.

Verse 5 – Although these later chapters of Isaiah are undoubtedly describing latter day (final) conditions, Isaiah describes conditions of evil present in his time and we may assume similar conditions in the final dispensation of mortal man’s existence.

Inflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree (Isaiah 1:29; 65:3; 66:17; 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10; Jeremiah 2:20; 3:6, etc.). The reference is to the practices in the sacred groves of Palestinian heathenism. “At the spring festival, called by some the ‘brandfeast,’ by others that of torches, which was attended by streams of visitors from every country, huge trees were burnt, with the offerings suspended on them. Even children were sacrificed; they were put into a leathern bag, and thrown the whole height of the temple to the bottom, with the shocking expression that they were calves, and not children. In the fore-court stood two gigantic phalli. To the exciting din of drums, flutes, and inspired songs, the Galli cut themselves on the arms; and the effect of this act, and of the music accompanying it, was so strong upon mere spectators, that all their bodily and mental powers were thrown into a tumult of excitement; and they too, seized by the desire to lacerate themselves, deprived themselves of their manhood by means of potsherds lying ready for the purpose.”¹

NOTES:

¹ Dollinger, ‘Jew and Gentile,’ vol. 1. p. 430)

Slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks. The sacrifice of their children to Moloch was largely practiced by the Jews in the later period of the kingdom of Judah. It seems to have been originally introduced by the superstitious Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, who “made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen” (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chronicles 28:3). Suspended during the reign of Hezekiah, it was renewed under Manasseh, who followed the example of his grandfather in himself sacrificing one of his sons (2 Kings 21:6). Under the last three kings it prevailed to a very wide extent, and the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel are loud in their denunciations of it (Jeremiah 7:31, 32; 19:2-6; 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20; 20:26; 23:37, etc.). Arguments have been brought forward to prove that the child was merely passed before a fire, or between two fires, and not burnt; but the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming: “The fire-god Molech was the tutelary deity of the children of Ammon, and essentially identical with the Moabitish Chemosh. Fire-gods appear to have been common to all the Canaanite, Syrian, and Arab tribes, who worshipped the destructive element under an outward symbol, with the most inhuman rites. According to Jewish tradition, the image of Molech was of brass, hollow within, and was situated without Jerusalem. “His face was (that) of a calf, and his hands stretched forth like a man who opens his hands to receive (something) of his neighbor. And they kindled it with fire, and the priests took the babe and put it into the hands of Molech, and the babe gave up the ghost.” Many instances of human sacrifices are found in ancient writers, which may be compared with the description in the Old Testament of the manner in which Molech was worshipped. Molech was the lord and master of the Ammonites; their country was his possession, Jer. 49:1, as Moab was the heritage of Chemosh; the princes of the land were the princes of Malcham. Jer. 49:3; Amos 1:15. His priests were men of rank, Jer. 49:3, taking precedence of the princes. The priests of Molech, like those of other idols, were called Chemarim. 2 Kings 23:5; Hos. 10:5; Zeph. 1:4.”¹ The rite belonged especially to the worship of Chemosh and Moloch by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Kings 3:27; Micah 6:7), from whom it was adopted by the Israelites (2 Kings 17:7) and Jews. The sacrifice was supposed to be expiatory (Micah 6:7). In the later times of the Jewish kingdom the place of sacrifice was the valley of Hinnom, west and north of Jerusalem, which is overhung by rugged rocks.

The knowledge of this is another support of only one author for the Book of Isaiah. If these latter chapters were authored by a second “Isaiah” during the Babylonian captivity, knowledge of these practices would not likely have been known.

NOTE: Although we read history of these practices of child sacrifice and are horrified, in our time is there really any difference with the methods of abortion used so that people can selfishly pursue their wants and pleasures at the blood of the unborn?

NOTES:

¹ William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet, *Smith's Bible dictionary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.

Verse 6 - Smooth stones, rounded by water-action, were among the objects worshipped by many Semitic peoples (compare with Genesis 28:18). Today polished gems and crystals are “worshipped” for both their value and perceived “powers”. Stones of this kind, the prophet says, had now become “the portion” of Israel, instead of Jehovah. **Should I receive comfort in these?** Can I, Jehovah, be comforted, when my people indulge in such practices?

Verse 7 – The unrighteous covet the position of height in their dwellings, rather than making their dwelling with the Lord (Isaiah 54:5).

Verse 8 – They have desired the “secret relationships” behind closed doors rather than the open relationship with God.

Verse 9 – They have desired the privilege of the powerful.

Verse 10 – Searching everywhere except God, they are wearied, but will not admit it.

Verse 11 – This devotion to new deities was caused by fear — the fear of man. This induced them to seek for help in each new superstition that presented itself. But how absurd to be driven by fear of man into offending God! God has held his peace for a time, but that time is about to end!

Verse 12 – God will declare their works! They will not profit from their wicked pursuits.

Verse 13 – To those that have put their trust in these alliances, let them deliver them. God’s promises are to those that place their faith in Him.

Verse 14 – For the righteous, there shall be a way prepared.¹

Verse 15 - God reign’s from high above His creation and for eternity. He will dwell with them of a contrite and humble spirit.²

Verse 16 – God will not continually be in opposition and angered with His creation.³ Were it otherwise, man’s spirit should fail before him. Man, *i.e.*, would be utterly unable to justify himself, and would faint and fade away before the Divine fury. The souls which God has made would, one and all, perish. He, however, has not made them for this purpose, but that they should live (Deuteronomy 30:19; Ezekiel 18:31); and has therefore devised for them a way of salvation (see Isaiah 53:5-10).

¹ Isaiah 40:3, 62:10-12

² 3 Nephi 4:49-50, 5:66

³ Psalm 103:8-12

Verse 17 – Among the sins that angered God most against the Jews of the later kingdom of Judah was their covetousness — that desire of unjust gain which led them continually to oppress their weaker brethren, to remove their neighbors' landmarks, to harass them with lawsuits, to obtain from the courts corrupt judgments against them, and so to strip them of their inheritances.¹ This was far from being their only sin; but it was their besetting sin, and it led on to a number of others. It would seem even to have been the principal cause of those judicial murders with which they are so constantly taxed by the prophets.² Isaiah selects the sin of covetousness here, as typical or representative of the entire class of Judah's besetting sins — the most striking indication of that alienation of their hearts from God, which constituted their real guilt, and was the true cause of their punishment. **And smote him.** The form of the verb marks *repeated* action. God gave Judah many warning's before the final catastrophe. He punished Judah by the hand of Sargon, by that of Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:14-16), by that of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:11), by that of Pharaoh-Necho (2 Chronicles 35:20-24), by that of the Syrians, the Moabites and the Ammonites (2 Kings 24:2), and others, during the hundred and forty years which intervened between the accession of Hezekiah and the completion of the Captivity. **I hid me** (compare with Isaiah 8:17; 54:8).

Verse 18 - God had seen the wanderings of his people in perverse ways, and his heart had been touched with pity towards them. The good Shepherd follows and recalls the wanderers of the flock. When they have suffered hurt he "heals" them. He is willing to "lead" them also — to go before them, and show them the way that they should walk in (Isaiah 49:10; Ezekiel 34:11-16), and "restore comforts" to them, especially to such of them as have begun to "mourn" over their perversity.

Verse 19 - By his tender treatment of the wanderers, God brings forth fruit from their lips in the shape of praise and thanksgiving. Peace, peace; or, *perfect peace*, as in Isaiah 26:3. Judah's prophets were apt to say to her, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11; Ezekiel 13:10). Isaiah is now commissioned to give the promise from the mouth of God (compare John 14:27; 20:21, 26). To him that is far off, and to him that is near; *i.e.* either "to both the Gentiles and the Jews," or "to both the scattered members of the Jewish body" (Isaiah 11:11; 43:5, 6) "and the collected nation in Canaan."

Verses 20-21 - The sea's restless action well expresses the unquiet of the wicked; and the mud and mire that it casts up resembles their evil thoughts and evil deeds. "There is no peace" for such persons, either bodily or spiritual, either in this world or the world to come. Compare verse 21 with Isaiah 48:22, where the prophet ends another section of this part of his work with almost the same words.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 1:15-23; 3:5, 14, 15; 5:8, 23; Jeremiah 6:13; Ezekiel 33:31, etc.

² Isaiah 1:15, 21; 33:15; 59:3; Jeremiah 2:34; 19:4; Ezekiel 7:23; 11:6; Hosea 4:2; Micah 3:10; 7:2, etc.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

This chapter begins the closing theme for the Book of Isaiah as the prophet looks to the time that the Messiah will return as Lord, Judge and King of the universe.

Most scholars attribute these words to Isaiah and a cry to his people to put aside their “show” religion and be true believers in spirit, not mere actions. However, as we have already discussed, Christ specifically addressed the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah and associated it with the last days. With that knowledge, there are certainly indicators that this and following chapters are latter day events, although there were undoubtedly counterparts in Isaiah’s time.

Verse 1 - A cry for people to recognize their sins. In Revelation, John describes a time like this just prior to the return of Christ:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (Revelation 18:4-5)

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (Revelation 19:1-2)

Verse 2 – NOTE: “they seek **me** daily and delight to know **my** ways”, these do not seem to apply to Isaiah, but would seem more appropriate spoken by the Lord.

Verse 3 – Those addressed feel that their fasts have not been heard. This is common to believers in an unrighteous world. Early in Revelation:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (Revelation 6:10)

It would not be fulfilled until Revelation 19:2 (see verse 1 comment).

Verses 4-5 – Their fasts (and ours?) have not been sincere, but for show and vindication.¹

NOTES:

¹ Luke 18:11-12; Matthew 6:16-18

Verses 6-7 – This verses are often refered to as “Isaiah’s Fast”, however on closer examination we see that the personage of verse 6 has chosen a fast so that others can accomplish verse 7. Consider the Lord as the speaker: it is He that has *loosed the bands of wickedness, undone the heavy burdens¹ and let the oppressed go free² so that ye break every yoke and tend to the hungry, the poor, the naked and no longer hide from our own flesh?*

Verses 8-11 – When these conditions are met, then shall the *light³ break forth and the righteous followers will have health⁴ and will know and be in the presence of the Lord.⁵*

Verse 12 – Compare with Isaiah 61:4 and Ether 6:4-5.

Verses 13-14 – Compare with Revelation 21:10-11, 22-27 & Isaiah 60:19-21.

B of C, P. 111 v. 1-25

¹ Matthew 11:28-30
² Acts 10:38
³ Matthew 24:27
⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:30
⁵ 3 Nephi 10:4; Revelation 21:3-4

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

This chapter lists to conditions of mankind during which “the Redeemer shall come to Zion” (verse 20). Most scholars attribute this to the conditions in Isaiah’s time. Although there were undoubtedly these conditions in Isaiah’s time, we must consider the reference by Christ in 3 Nephi 10 proceeding chapter 54 and the obvious reference in the following chapter to Christ’s return, that these conditions will also proceed our Lord’s return:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. (2 Timothy 3:1) -5

E₃ 33:16-11 Verses 1-2 – God’s hand is continually outstretched and His ears ready to hear his faithful. It is man by his conduct, that separates him from God.¹

Verse 3 – (Compare with Isaiah 1:15) In Isaiah’s time: the “innocent blood” shed by the Jews is recorded in 2 Kings 21:6, 16; 24:4; 25:25; 2 Chronicles 24:21; 28:3; 33:6; 36:16, etc.) It consisted in:

- (1) sacrifices of children to Moloch;
- (2) persecution of prophets; and
- (3) judicial murders, either actual (like that of Naboth, in Israel) or virtual, *i.e.* such perversion of justice as produced general poverty and misery, and tended to shorten men’s lives.

Your lips have spoken lies (compare with Isaiah 32:7). The wicked oppressors “devised wicked devices to destroy the poor with *lying* words.”

Verse 4 – The people would rather believe lies than receive the truth.

Verse 5- The cockatrice is a venomous snake. The meaning here is that the people gave themselves to brooding on and hatching purposes which were as dangerous and destructive as the eggs of venomous serpents. And weave the spider’s web; Their purpose is to ensnare others. He that eateth: If a man partake of their plans, he becomes morally as bad as they, and is smitten with spiritual death. If an attempt be made to “crush” and destroy their plans, the only result is the premature birth of a viper.

¹ Isaiah 50:1, 52:3

Verse 6 - The unsubstantial fabrics which they weave shall not serve them in any way as garments or be of any real value or utility. Their devices shall not take objective shape in such sort as to afford them "cover" or protection. Their works are works of iniquity; rather, *works of nothingness*, works that make a mere pretence of being works at all, and are in reality mere shams, impotent and delusive. And the act of violence is in their hands: violence creates nothing. At the best, it destroys.

Verse 7 - It is, however, only too true that they have a power to work evil. They cannot construct, their devices fall through, their "spinning" is to no purpose; but they can, in a rough and blind way, do enormous damage. "Their feet run to evil" — rush to it at full speed. The strong expressions with respect to shedding innocent blood, used here and in 2 Kings 21:16 and 24:4, seem to imply something like a massacre of the more godly Israelites by the ungodly in Manasseh's time.

Compare with Romans 3:16-18, where Paul looking to a time when God would judge the world (Romans 3:6), quotes several sources and ends with Isaiah 59:7-8.

Verse 8 - They have no desire for "peace," and neither "seek" it nor "ensue" it.¹ Peace can only be obtained through righteousness.² There is no judgment in their goings; rather, *no justice* — no recognition of other men's rights, no endeavor to observe right in their own acts and proceedings (compare with verse 4; and see also Isaiah 1:17, 21, 23; 3:14, 15, etc.). "They have made them crooked paths" (compare with Proverbs 2:15; 10:9; 28:6). The way that leadeth to life is straight. They have wandered from it, and made for themselves "crooked" paths, which can only lead to destruction. In such paths there neither is nor can be "peace."

Verses 9-15 - Without the "light" (Jesus Christ), they are lost and stumble and they cannot receive the "light" because of their sins (verse 2).

Verse 16 - It appears hopeless and there is no one to champion the cause of righteousness.³

Verses 17-19 - In Isaiah 9, the prophet described the coming Messiah (Christ's first advent), now he describes the Lord coming in judgment.⁴ Throughout Isaiah, regardless of the times that are addressed, Isaiah has seen a "standard" or "ensign" make itself known.⁵

Verses 20-21 - Then shall the Lord come unto Zion and no longer will the voice of judgment be heard.

¹ 1 Peter 3:11

² Isaiah 32:17

³ Revelation 5:1-14

⁴ Zechariah 14:1-4; Isaiah 63:3-6; Revelation 19:11-21

⁵ Isaiah 5:26; 13:2; 18:3; 31:9, etc.

CHAPTER SIXTY

This chapter is generally accepted as a prophesy of “Zion” and attributed to the “latter days”. Because most scholars assign the previous chapters to Israel of old, they note that this chapter is “out of place”. We have considered the previous chapters as also being latter day prophesy and therefore this chapters “fits” the picture that we have of these final chapters of Isaiah.

In many ways, chapter sixty is a counterpart of chapter forty-nine. In chapter forty-nine, the “isles” are called to witness the establishment of Zion. Now in chapter sixty, Zion is called to “arise” and be a light to the Gentiles.

Verses 1-2 - When this chapter is considered separate of the previous ones, it is not immediately clear to whom it is addressed until until verse 14, where it is found to be “the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” We have considered the previous chapters as a “call to Zion” and now Zion is told to arise and come out of the darkness. Compare with Revelation 18 where God’s people are called to come out of Babylon.

Verse 3- The Gentiles shall be drawn to the event (compare with Isaiah 49:22).

Verse 4 – Zion is called to look about for all that are coming (compare with Isaiah 49:18).

Verse 5 – Zion shall be blessed with great abundance. The description of that abundance follows in the next verses. (*forces* = wealth)

Verses 6-7 – The abundance to be found in Zion is described.

Verse 8 – The prophet is amazed at how easily the event occurs, as clouds in the sky and as doves to their *windows* i.e., roosts.

Verse 9 – Chapter 23 of Isaiah describes the destruction of Tyre and the ships of Tarshish. That chapter closes with the prophesy of her return and her abundance being used to support God’s work. Now Isaiah sees that fulfilled.

Verse 10 – This building of Zion shall be do ne with the assistance of those outside of Israel. In 3 Nephi 10:1, our Lord says that the Gentiles will “assist my people”.¹

Verse 11 – “forces” = wealth (compare with verse 5) All who seek salvation may have free access at all times. There is no fear of enemies (compare with Isaiah 26:1-4).

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 14:1-2, 49:23, 54:7-8; Revelation 21:24

Verse 12 – Compare with Zechariah 14; 2 Nephi 7:30; BofC 48:59-69 etc.

Verse 13 – Compare with Isaiah 29:17-24, 35:1-2.

Verse 14 – Compare with Isaiah 45:14-17, 49:23

Verse 15 – Compare with Isaiah 54:7, 62:4

Verse 16 – Israel's oppressors shall be the source of support for Zion. Compare with Isaiah 49:22-23; 2 Nephi 7:13 (1-70); 3 Nephi 10:1-4.

Verse 17 – No matter what is brought, God will make it greater and more valuable. Their officials shall be righteous.

Verse 18 – Compare with Isaiah 2:4, 11:6-9, 35:8-10; Hosea 2:18-23; Ezekiel 34:22-31.

Verses 19-20 – Compare with Revelation 21:4, 21:22 – 22:5. *The Rep. 10;*

Verse 21 - Here the prophet touches the root of the matter. Pain and sorrow are the fruit of sin. Once we let sin disappear, then sorrow goes with it.

This has all been done by God through the "servant" (Jesus Christ) introduced in chapter 42 (compare with Isaiah 5:1-7; Jacob 3:31-153).

Verse 22 – From that which is small and seemingly insignificant, God will make something great (compare with Matthew 13:31-32).

- Isa 60:1-3*
- a) **Arise,**
 - b) **shine;**
 - c) for thy **light** is come,
 - d) and the **glory**
 - e) of the **LORD is risen upon thee.**
 - f) For, behold, the **darkness** shall cover the earth,
 - f) and gross **darkness** the people:
 - e) but the **LORD shall arise upon thee,**
 - d) and his **glory** shall be seen upon thee.
 - c) And the Gentiles shall come to thy **light,**
 - b) and kings to the **brightness** of
 - a) thy **rising.**

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

Again we find ourselves at odds with most scholars and commentators in regard to Isaiah. To most, Isaiah is at best a hap-hazard collection of prophesy, that bounce all over the sequence and chronology of time.

I (GAO) do not believe that to be the case. The first portion of Isaiah is addressed to the type (Israel) from which we can find examples of the anti-type (Christian era). The last portion of Isaiah is addressed to the anti-type (Christian era) for which we can find in history examples of the type (Israel).

The beginning chapters of Isaiah speak of the slain and sacrificial personage of our Lord as He was born a child and died for the sins of mankind. The closing chapters have been of the "servant". This is the post-sacrificial savior and what He shall accomplish between His death and His return. The work of this "servant" continues in this chapter. Our Lord in 3 Nephi 10 gave us insight into chapter 54 and the following verses and now He again does so with chapter 61 of Isaiah in the New Testament, but it is frequently misapplied by scholars.

Most scholars attribute chapters 54 thru 59 to Israel, chapter 60 to Zion and chapter 61 to Christ's first advent. We have already discussed the chronology of chapters 54 thru 60 as being latter day prophesy, looking to the establishment of Zion and Christ's return for His Millennial Reign. Now consider chapter 61:

Verses 1-2 – Throughout Isaiah, we have found that many times the first person vocabulary is not Isaiah speaking of himself, but the Lord speaking of himself through His servant Isaiah. Here they cannot do that, because in Luke 4:16-21 Jesus quotes the opening of Isaiah 61 and in Luke 4:21 says, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," preclude the application of this passage to any other than the Lord himself. It is contrary to the entire spirit of Isaiah's writings so to glorify himself and specially unsuitable that, after having brought forward with such emphasis the Person of "the Servant" (Isaiah 42:1-8; 49:1-12; 52:13-15; 53:1-12), he should proceed to take his place, and to "ascribe to himself those very same official attributes which he has already set forth as characteristic features in his portrait of the predicted One.

We have considered these past chapters as latter day, but Christ attributes these verses to himself in Luke. Does that hinder our chronology? I do not believe that it does.

In Luke our Lord attributes to Himself:

- 1) The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me
- 2) the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek
- 3) he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted
- 4) to proclaim liberty to the captives,
- 5) and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound
- 6) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD

NOTES:

✓ To most scholars, He is speaking of Himself and His ministry and therefore that is of what Isaiah spoke, but is that completely true? Consider where our Lord stopped. He only started the second verse. He stopped at “proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD”. He did not continue to say “the day of vengeance of our God.” He was identifying Himself as this “servant” of which Isaiah had spoke and to the one that had spoke to Israel and the Gentiles (by recorded scripture) through Isaiah. Isaiah here presents him in the day that He will come in “vengeance”. Very much in line with what we discussed in the previous chapter. *Jacob 3:64-68*

✓ Verse 3 – The Lord will replace that which has been a source of burden and sadness with that which will bring joy and happiness.

✓ Verse 4 - Compare with Isaiah 44:26, 49:19, 58:12. Using the example of Cyrus who permitted and assisted the Israelites to return and rebuild the city and the Temple, so shall Christ make the way possible for the rebuilding of the Holy places for the establishment of Zion.

✓ Verse 5 – The Gentiles who join themselves with the Jews and form with them one community are continually in Isaiah also found to be recipients of the covenant .

✓ Verse 6 - *But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord* – Israel from its beginnings was called to this role.¹ The same calling was given to the Christian church.² Now that calling shall be answered and accomplished.

Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles – compare with Isaiah 60:5-9 and 16.

✓ Verse 7 - Instead of the shame and confusion of face which were the portion of Israel during the Captivity, now in Zion there shall be double the former glory and double the former territory.

✓ Verse 8 – The Lord despises injustice and rejoices in justice.³ With the righteous, He shall make an everlasting covenant.⁴

✓ Verse 9 – To understand this verse, we must remember to whom this is addressed: “them that mourn in Zion” (verses 1-2). In Isaiah 53:10 we identified the Lord’s “seed” as those righteous individuals who accept Jesus Christ as their savior and keep His word. Those that “mourn” in Zion, i.e., long for its fulfillment shall be throughout the world and when the Lord sets His hand to recover them, all shall acknowledge it.

¹ Exodus 19:6

² 1 Peter 2:1-5

³ Isaiah 59:15

⁴ Isaiah 55:3

Verses 10-11 – Verses 10 and 11 create some speculation as to who is speaking. To those that believe this is addressed to Israel, it would seem to be the nation of Israel or the Holy city of Jerusalem. We¹ our study it would seem more plausible to be either or the “servant” (Jesus Christ) rejoicing in His Father’s work through Him¹ or those righteous recipients that rejoice in their salvation through Jesus Christ.² The possibility of both being true is very strong.

¹ Isaiah 59:15-19

² Isaiah 54:17

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

Verses 1-2 – A continuation of the previous chapter, the righteous condition established in Isaiah 61:11 and 60:21. III Ref. 11:6

Verse 3 – God will exhibit Zion to an admiring world, as a man might exhibit a “crown” or “diadem” which he held in his hand. They will look on with admiration and reverence — “for they shall perceive that it is his work” (Psalm 64:9).

Verse 4 – Judah had believed herself “forsaken” of God (Isaiah 49:14) and had actually been, in a certain sense, forsaken “for a small moment” (Isaiah 54:7). No longer shall they be “desolate”, but as Ezekiel prophesied, “The land that was *desolate* is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited” (Ezekiel 36:35). Hephzibah; *i.e.* “my delight is in her.” Hephzi-bah was the name of Hezekiah’s queen, Manasseh’s mother (2 Kings 21:1). Beulah, or rather Be’ulah, means “married” (Isaiah 54:1). Zion would be “married”.

Verse 5 – There is a double employment of the analogy with marriage here. The land, personified as a female, is married to her sons, or her people, regarded (in this connection) as a male. The people, regarded as a female (“the virgin daughter of Zion,” Isaiah 37:22) is also married to Jehovah and recognizes him as her Bridegroom (Isaiah 54:5). As Bridegroom, God calls his bride “Hephzibah” — “my delight is in her.”

Verse 6 – “The Servant” has appointed watchers upon the walls of Zion — either “prophets” or “priests and prophets” or more possibly angelic beings or a combination of these, who keep perpetual watch and ward (Isaiah 52:8). Neither day nor night do they hold their peace or keep silence, but ever intercede with God for his people, like the “angel of Jehovah” in Zechariah 1:12, reminding him of his covenant with them, and his promises to them, and exhorting him to “awake, awake” for his own honor’s sake (Isaiah 51:9-11). It is generally allowed that the “watchers” in Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 are angels; and the same interpretation best suits the “watchmen” of the present passage.

Verse 7 – Compare with Luke 18:1-8.

Verses 8-9 – God solemnly binds himself by an oath to come to the relief of the people, to restore them to their own land and to give them the enjoyment of its fruits in peace. In the past, even when Israel was in possession of Palestine, its fruits were constantly destroyed, or carried off, by the raids of hostile neighbors. Now this plundering should cease.

NOTES:

Verse 10 - Compare with Isaiah 11:12, 40:1-3, 52:11-12, 57:14 and 60:11.

Verses 11-12 - While many scholars attempt to assign this and other final chapters of Isaiah to various times in history, these verses clearly lock this chapter in with those prophecies yet to see fulfillment and consistent with our considerations for these chapters as latter day prophesy. The Persians in some degree recognized this character in the Israelites (Ezra 1:2, 3; 6:8-12; 7:12-26) and so did Alexander, according to Josephus. The Romans, on the contrary, regarded them as the votaries of a degrading superstition. Since the Roman conquest, they have been almost universally despised.

"Thou" refers to Zion or Jerusalem. She should be called Sought out — *i.e.* a special object of desire — and A city not forsaken — the very opposite of her former name (verse 4), which was "Forsaken." All the conditions of her former existence would be altered and reversed in the future.

NOTES:

Verse 2 - There is a double employment of the analogy with marriage here. The land, personified as a female, is married to her sons, or her people, regarded in this connection as a male. The people, regarded as a female ("the virgin daughter of Zion," Isaiah 62:11) is also married to Jehovah and recognizes him as her Bridegroom (Isaiah 62:17). "My Bridegroom, God calls his bride 'Jehovah' — 'my delight is in him'."

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NOTES:

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

Isaiah has already announced “a great slaughter in the land of Idumaea” (Isaiah 34:5-10). He now recurs to the subject, and represents Jehovah, as a warrior with bloodstained garments, fresh from the field of battle in Edom, where he has trodden down his foes and taken a fierce vengeance on them. The Idumaeans probably represent the world-power; and the enemies of Israel (Zion). The “day of vengeance” would still be one in the future, in which the enemies of God will feel the weight of his hand.

Again most scholars believe this chapter to be “out of place” as they consider this to be a prophesy of the final days, but they regard the preceding chapters as past history. This prophesy is consistent with ^{our} thoughts in this study and is again chronological.

Verses 1-2 – Chapter sixty-two closed with the description of beautiful Zion that would be “sought out”. Now there someone (personification of people – not a single person) that approaches. Although recorded by Isaiah, the first person text implies that it is the “servant” (Jesus Christ) that is speaking and asks: “who is this?”

Edom (of which Bozrah was a principle city) is representative of those that oppose Israel (and therefore Zion and the Lord), compare with study notes on Isaiah 34. This personification comes with the appearance that he has been at the winepress and comes “in the greatness of his strength”.

The “servant” identifies Himself as the one that speaks in “righteousness” and is “mighty to save” and asks why do you look like that?

Verse 3 – Now the reason for the inquiry: the “servant” has trodden the winepress (judgment) **alone**, i.e., why are you claiming credit for what I have done?¹

Verses 4-6 – Compare with Isaiah 34:8, 61:2; Zechariah 14; Revelation 19. Isaiah 5:2, 41:27-29, 59:15-19.

Verse 7 – Now the speaker is those that have been spared the wrath of God and find themselves in His tender care. The address opens with pure and simple thanksgiving of the most general kind, God being praised for his loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathy with his people.

Verses 8-9 – From the very beginning, God has remembered His people and supported them.

Verse 10 – Despite this they rebelled and for a period were in opposition to God.

NOTES:

¹ Revelation 19:11-21; Matthew 7:21-23

Verses 11-14 - It is questioned *who* remembered, God or his people? Arguments can be made for either and yet we would be amiss if we did not consider the possibility of BOTH. For will not that be the accomplishment of Zion? When God will remember and fulfill His promises and the people will remember their God and what He has done?

Verses 15-19 - From thanksgiving and confession, the people now turn themselves to prayer and beseech God to look down from heaven once more, to have compassion on them, to acknowledge them and to save them alike from themselves (verse 17) and from their adversaries (verse 18, 19).

Throughout history, the Holy Land has been in possession of God's enemies, than it has been in possession of His people. Now established, the voice of Zion calls to God for His protection.

NOTES:

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

The prayer from Zion now continues and invites the manifestation of the Divine presence.

Verse 1 – A prayer that the heavens would open and God would descend. Flow ≠ shake or quake.

Verse 2 – As fire causes water to boil, so God's presence would cause His enemies to tremble.

Verse 3 – Terrible = awesome; flowed = shook.

Verse 4 – *Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. (NIV)*

Verse 5 – *You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? (NIV)*

Verse 6 – Compare with Isaiah 35:8, 52:9-12.

Verses 7-8 – On his own man can but fail, only when he allows God to “mold” him, can he succeed.¹

Verse 9 – They now cling to the promises such as Isaiah 1:18-19, 43:25-26 etc. that their wrong doings will no longer be remembered.

Verse 10 – As the chapter is an invitation for the Divine presence, this verse is most likely describing the “holy cities”, “Zion” and “Jerusalem”, which even in times of their greatest splendor as being a wilderness and a desolation without the Lord's presence.

Verses 11-12 – Everything that they received with the original promises (the Temple, etc.) have already been lost as a result of their transgressions. Will God consider everything they have already endured as sufficient punishment or is there more in store for them?

¹ Isaiah 29:16; 45:9

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

In these closing chapters, Isaiah now looks beyond Christ's return and His Millennial Kingdom to the "New Heaven and Earth" (verse 17). With that in mind, it would seem that this chapter opens on an unusually harsh note, but we must remember that although Isaiah is now describing a great event, this message has been aimed at the rebellious people of the southern kingdom of Judah in Isaiah's time. All the preceding chapters of Isaiah had been describing how the "servant" would accomplish this end result, despite the conditions of the people in Isaiah's time.

Verse 1 – Paul associates this verse to the conversion of the Gentiles in Romans 10:6-21. They were not "called by my (God's) name" and it was the Lord that called out to them: "I said Behold me..."

Verse 2 – The Lord has continually had His hands extended to Israel though they were "a rebellious people".¹ This is supported by Paul in the reading from Romans 10.

Verse 3 – "That sacrificeth in gardens": Now Israel is reminded of the conditions for which they were chastised at the very beginning of Isaiah (Isaiah 1:29) and would prohibit them from being partakers of the glorious image about to be portrayed. (Isaiah 57:5; 66:17).

Verse 4 – Monuments = tombs. The illusion is to those that desire to be with the dead. The obvious comparison is to the spiritual death that comes to all that are in opposition to God. They are associated with the dead because they rebel against God and His commandments.²

Verse 5 – They believe that they are "holier" or better than others by their conduct, which is absurd as it is an abomination before God. "A smoke in my nose": they are an irritation and an annoyance to God

Verse 6 - The misconduct of His people is "written" in God's book, which lies open "before him," so that their sin is ever in His sight (compare with Psalm 56:8; Malachi 3:16; Revelation 20:12).

Verse 7 – "Which have burned incense upon the mountains"³ and "blasphemed me"⁴

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 1:4,23; 30:1; 42:24 etc.

² Leviticus 11:7

³ 2 Kings 17:11; Hosea 4:13; Ezekiel 6:13; Isaiah 57:7

⁴ Isaiah 37:4, 17, 23, 24

Verse 8 - In Isaiah, and especially in chapters 40-66, promises are almost always intermingled with threatenings. The threats extend to the bulk of the nations; the promises are limited to "a remnant," since a remnant only could be brought to "seek" and serve God (verse 10). Here the announcement that a remnant would be spared is introduced by a simile from men's treatment of their own vineyards (verse 8). When even a single cluster of grapes is spied on a vine-stem, the vine-pruners say one to another, "Destroy not that stem, but spare it," so will God refrain from destroying those stocks in his vineyard, which give even a small promise of bearing good fruit.¹

Verses 9-10 - There shall be a "seed" from Jacob with those from the Gentiles. As Paul said in Romans 10:12-13: *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Verse 11 - "Troop" = Gad, literally "fortune". Number = Destiny, a pagan deity. There is ground for believing that "Gad" was a Phoenician deity, perhaps "the god of good fortune", though this is not clearly ascertained; sometimes worshipped as an aspect of Baal, whence the name, Baal-Gad (Joshua 11:17; 12:7); sometimes connected with other deities, as Moloch and Ashtoreth. The practice of "preparing tables" for the heathen gods was a common one. The tables prepared for the dead in Egyptian tombs were not very different, and implied a qualified worship of ancestors (Rawlinson, 'History of Ancient Egypt,' vol. 1. pp. 423, 424; vol. 2 p. 39).

Verse 12 - The wicked shall suffer the consequences of their rejection of God.

Verse 13 - This entire series of contrasts may be understood in two ways; literally, of the two classes of exiles, the religious and the irreligious; metaphorically, of God's servants and his adversaries at all times and in all places. The religious exiles would return to the land of promise as soon as permitted, and would there prosper in a worldly sense — have abundance to eat and drink, rejoice, and sing for joy (Ezra 3:11-13). The irreligious, would suffer hunger and thirst, endure shame, cry and howl for sorrow and vexation of spirit. This would be one fulfillment of the prophecy; but there would also be another. God's servants at all times and in all places would be sustained with spiritual food, and "rejoice and sing for joy of heart." His adversaries would everywhere feel a craving for the "meat" and "drink," which alone satisfy the soul, and would be oppressed with care, and with a sense of shame, and suffer anguish of spirit.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 5:1-7

Verse 14 – The contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous.

Verse 15 - The Jews had a tradition of saying, “The Lord make thee like” this or that person, or this or that class of persons (in the negative, as a curse – see Jeremiah 29:22). The name of those outside of the covenant should be used in this manner.

“Another name” – compare with Isaiah 62:2.

Verse 16 – The sequence of the argument is not altogether clear. Perhaps it is recant that God will call them *by his own Name* (Amos 9:12) — “the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9); and thence it will become natural for them to use no other name, either when they call for a blessing on themselves, or have to confirm a covenant with others.

When the blessed time has come wherein men call themselves by the Name of the Lord, and know of only one God as the Source of blessing and the confirmation of an oath, then the former state of human affairs, with all its “troubles,” will have passed away, and the new era will be inaugurated, which the prophet proceeds to describe at length (verses 17-25).

The final answer of God to the complaint and prayer of his people (chapter 64) is now given. The entire existing state of things is to pass away. God will create a new heaven and a new earth, and place his people therein; and the old conditions will be all changed, and the old grounds of complaint disappear. In the “new Jerusalem” there will be no sorrow, neither “weeping” nor “crying” (verse 19); life will be greatly prolonged (verse 20); men will always enjoy the fruit of their labors (verses 21, 22), and see their children grow up (verse 23). Prayer will be answered almost before it is uttered (verse 24). Finally, there will be peace in the animal world and between the animal world and man. No living thing will kill or hurt another in all God’s “holy mountain” (verse 25).

There is a great similarity between Isaiah 65 and Revelation 21. There are also differences.

Verse 17 – “I create” - the same verb is used as in Genesis 1:1; and the prophet’s idea seems to be that the existing heaven and earth are to be entirely destroyed (see Isaiah 24:19, 20) and a fresh heaven and earth created in their place out of nothing. Isaiah does not specify the Jerusalem referred to here as a “new Jerusalem”, but it must follow that if there is a new heaven and earth, this “new Jerusalem” cannot be the old Jerusalem renovated, but must be a veritable “new Jerusalem” (compare Revelation 21:1-2). The glory of the new heavens and earth would be such that the former ones would not only not be regretted, but would not even be had in remembrance. No one would even think of them.

Verse 18 – Like the “new heavens and new earth”, God will “create” the Jerusalem that shall be there. Compare with Revelation 21:2, “I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, *coming down from God out of heaven*, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”. The description which follows in verses 11 & 12 is quite unlike that of the old Jerusalem. The “new Jerusalem” was to be from the first all joy and rejoicing — a

scene of perpetual gladness. Her people also was to be “a joy” or “a delight,” since God would delight in them (verse 19).

Verse 19 - *The voice of weeping shall be no more heard* (compare with Revelation 21:4). The reasons there given are satisfactory: “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow... neither shall there be any more pain.” But these reasons scarcely apply here. For Isaiah’s “new Jerusalem” is not without death (verse 20), nor without sin (verse 20). Isaiah’s picture would seem to combine characteristics of the millennial state and the final condition of the redeemed. While this may seem confusing and at times contradictory, we must remember that this chapter appears to be in response to the petition of the righteous in chapter 64 and therefore both the millennial kingdom and the final state would be answers to that prayer.

Verse 20 - In “new Jerusalem” there shall not be death of any infant that is but a few days old. On the contrary, even “the youth” shall reach a hundred; *i.e.* one who dies when he is a hundred shall be regarded as cut off in his youth. The general rule shall be, that old men shall “fill their days,” or attain to patriarchal longevity. Even the sinner, who is under the curse of God, shall not be cut off till he is a hundred. What is most remarkable in the description is that death and sin are represented as still continuing.

Verses 21-22 - They shall enjoy the fruit of their labors. No enemy shall be able to deprive them of their crops and houses. Trees endure for many hundreds, perhaps for thousands of years. Life spans in length as the patriarchs possessed, seems to be implied.

Verse 23 - “*Bring forth*” = give birth. Women shall not bear children to see them carried off after a few days, or months, or years, by disease, or accident, or famine, or the sword of the invader. There shall be an end of such “troubles,” and, God’s blessing resting upon those who are his children, their children shall, as a general rule, “be with them;” *i.e.* remain to them during their lifetime, and not be lost to them by a premature decease.

Verse 24 - God is always more prepared to hear our prayers than we are to offer them. In the “new Jerusalem” he will be prompt to answer his people’s prayers almost before they are spoken or thought. The will of the people shall be in harmony with the will of Jehovah and their prayers will therefore be acceptable prayers.

Verse 25 - Compare with Isaiah 11:6-8; Hosea 2:18. Here we have a new feature, not contained in the earlier description. Serpents shall become harmless and instead of preying upon beasts, birds or reptiles, shall be content with the food assigned to the “serpent” (Satan) from the beginning: “Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and *dust shalt thou eat* all the days of thy life” (Genesis 3:14). Whatever implications may be present, the meaning is that there shall be no violence of any kind, done either by man or beast, in the joyous period described.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

Verse 1 – This final chapter in Isaiah leaves no doubt as to whom is speaking: “Thus saith the Lord”. This verse points to the magnitude and immensity of God. He is far greater than man. Nothing of man’s doing will carry over into God’s kingdom.

Verses 2-3 – Everything that man has taken pride in, has been accomplished with what God has created and allowed man the use of. God has made all that exists and all of mankind, but for His kingdom, He will only see those that are “poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.”¹ Any other attempt at an offering will be an abomination to the Lord.

Verse 4 – Those that would not obey or hear the Lord in the past, will now. He will be the source of their “delusions” and “fears”.

Verse 5 - The scoffs which have long greeted those who believed God’s promises and expected the restoration of Zion, will be put to shame. The silence in which Zion has lain will be broken; she will be once more a city “full of stirs, a tumultuous city” (Isaiah 22:2). Suddenly, without any pains of travail, she will bring forth; and her offspring will be “a nation born at once” (verse 8). The godly exiles are called upon to rejoice at the prospect (verse 10), and promised peace and comfort in the restored city (verses 11-14).

Verse 6 – The “voice of the Lord” shall be heard both from the city and the temple.

Verses 7-8 – The “she” of verse 7 is difficult to identify, though we have some clues in verse 8. Who or whatever this “she” is, she shall give birth to a “man child” quickly and without pain.

From verse 8, we learn that this is not normal and the comparison is to the earth or a nation coming into being. It would seem from the end of verse 8 that Zion and her population are referenced. The event shall come about quickly and without difficulty.

Verse 9 – Although the event may be as a surprise to some, it has been the plan of the Lord from the beginning. Would He not see it to its completion?

Verse 10 – The call to rejoice for the event!

Verse 11 – To those that rejoice in the event, they shall be fed and/or nourished there i.e., they shall be cared for.

NOTES:

¹ Isaiah 57:15; 3 Nephi 4:49-50, 5:66

Verses 12-13 – Israel’s destruction from her enemies came like a “flood” (Isaiah 8:7-8). Now Zion shall relax in peace as beside a flowing river or stream and as a child in the care of its mother.

Verse 14 – Compare with Isaiah 58:11. In the time of calamity, Israel’s “bones” have been “consumed” (Psalm 31:10), and “waxed old” (Psalm 32:3), and “burned with heat” (Job 30:30). Now they shall enjoy a time of refreshing from the Lord. New life shall enter them, and health and growth shall follow. The nation shall be rejuvenated, and “flourish” in more than its pristine strength. *The hand of the Lord shall be known*; or recognized, both in this merciful treatment of his servants, and also in the indignation with which he will visit his enemies. This last clause conveniently introduces the following verses.

Verse 15 - “Fire” is a usual accompaniment of the presence of God. God descended on Sinai “in fire” (Exodus 19:18), and led the Israelites through the wilderness by the pillar of the cloud and of fire (Exodus 13:21, 22), and filled the tabernacle with a glory as of fire (Exodus 40:34), and “answered David from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering” (1 Chronicles 21:26), and in the same way answered Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:1) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:38). Isaiah almost always describes such an experience as “coming with fire” (see Isaiah 10:16-18; 27:4; 29:6; 30:27, 30; 33:12, 14, etc.). The agency of fire in the judgment that will overtake the wicked simultaneously with Christ’s second coming, appears in 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Peter 3:7-10. *With his chariots* (compare with Psalm 68:17; Habakkuk 3:8). “Chariots,” in the plural, may be regarded as symbolizing the “hosts” of natural and supernatural forces that God has at His command.

Verse 16 - The “sword of Jehovah” is spoken of also in Isaiah 27:1 and 34:5, 6 (compare with Revelation 19:15, 21). Will the Lord plead with all flesh; rather, *will the Lord judge all flesh* (compare with Jeremiah 25:31, where the same phrase occurs).

Verse 17 - *They that sanctify... themselves in the gardens* (compare with Isaiah 1:29; 65:3). It seems quite unlikely that “one” can mean “one tree,” when no tree has been mentioned and gardens do not necessarily contain trees. The marginal rendering, “one after another,” is also unlikely. The “one in the midst” would most likely refer to a particular tree that has been set aside for ceremony or as an image of a deity. *Eating swine’s flesh* (compare with Isaiah 65:4) and the abomination. The word is used generically of all the “abominable things” forbidden to be eaten.

NOTES:

Verse 18 – The work shall be among all nations and tongues.

Verse 19 – To reinforce the previous verse in regard to “all nations and tongues”, the nations listed here are in all four directions (north, south, east and west) from Israel. In addition “the isles afar off” are included. It would appear that at this time there shall be none that shall not know of the Lord.¹

Verse 20 – The lost remnant of Israel shall be brought unto the Lord.²

Verse 21 – Compare with Isaiah 61:6.

Verse 22 – As the “new heaven and earth” shall remain forever, so is the promise to righteous.

Verse 23 - Not that “new moons” and “sabbaths” will continue to be observed, for “new moons” have already lapsed, and “sabbaths” too will lapse when life is one perpetual sabbath passed in the worship of God. The phrase, used by the prophet is intended to express absolute continuance without an interval.

Verse 24 – The closing verse of Isaiah creates what is more likely imagery and is difficult to understand literally. The carcasses could not remain always to be looked at, nor while they remained could the sight of them be otherwise than loathsome to God’s redeemed. Again, they could not be at the same time burnt with fire and eaten by worms. Does Isaiah mean that the redeemed shall have in their thoughts, at any rate from time to time, the fact that, while they have by God’s great mercy been saved and brought into His kingdom, there are those who have not been saved, but lie for ever under the awful sentence of God’s wrath? If so, this knowledge which the redeemed would have may well produce a salutary effect on them, intensifying their gratitude and maintaining in them a spirit of reverent fear.

It cannot be by chance that the evangelical prophet concludes his glorious prophecy with this terrible note of warning. Either he was divinely directed thus to terminate his teaching, or he felt the need that there was of his emphasizing all the many warnings dispersed throughout his “book” by a final, never-to-be-forgotten picture. The undying worm and the quenchless fire — images introduced by him — became appropriated thenceforth to the final condition of impenitent sinners and were even adopted by our Lord himself in the same connection (Mark 9.). The incongruity of the two images shows that they are not to be understood literally; but both alike imply everlasting continuance, and are incompatible with either of the two modern heresies of universalism or annihilationism.³

THE END

March 08

¹ 1 Nephi 3:192-203

² 3 Nephi 9:106 – 10:4

³ Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Isaiah 48:22, 57:21; Revelation 20:14-15; Alma 19:45-47

